



Council Offices, Kiln Road,
Thundersley, Benfleet,
Essex SS7 1TF.
Tel. No: 01268 882200
Fax No: 01268 882455



CABINET AGENDA

Date: Wednesday 22nd September 2021

Time: 7.00pm NB Time

Venue: Council Chamber

This meeting will be webcast live on the internet.

Membership:

Councillor Sheldon	Chairman - Leader of the Council
Councillor Cutler	Waste & Environmental Health
Councillor Mrs Egan	People – Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Hart	Place – Infrastructure
Councillor Isaacs	People – Community
Councillor Johnson	Resources
Councillor Mrs Thornton	Growth - Economic Environment & Sustainability
Councillor Varker	Special Projects (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Cabinet Enquiries: Ann Horgan ext. 2413
ahorgan@castlepoint.gov.uk
Reference: 3/2021/2022
Publication Date: Tuesday 14th September 2021

AGENDA
PART I
(Business to be taken in public)

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Members' Interests**
- 3. Minutes**
To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2021.
- 4. Forward Plan**
To review the Forward Plan.
- 5. Corporate Performance Scorecard Performance 2021/2022 Quarter 1**
(Report of the Cabinet Member Special Projects)
- 6. Corporate Plan**
(Report of the Cabinet Member Leader of the Council)
- 7. Financial Update**
(Report of the Cabinet Member – Resources)
- 8. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities – Establishment of a Joint Committee**
(Report of the Cabinet Member Special Projects, Leader of the Council)
- 9. Petition**
(To consider a report on a Petition submitted to Council)
- 10. Matters to be referred from /to Policy & Scrutiny Committees**
- 11. Matters to be referred from /to the Standing Committees**

PART II
(Business to be taken in private)
(Item to be considered with the press and public excluded from the meeting)

There were no items at time of publication of this agenda.



CABINET



21ST JULY 2021

PRESENT:

Councillor Sheldon	Chairman – Leader of the Council
Councillor Cutler	Waste & Environmental Health
Councillor Mrs Egan	People – Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Hart	Place – Infrastructure
Councillor Isaacs	People – Community
Councillor Johnson	Resources
Councillor Mrs Thornton	Economic Development Delivery
Councillor Varker	Special Projects – Deputy Leader of the Council

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: Acott, Anderson, Fortt, Gibson, Greig, S Mountford, C Mumford, S Mumford, Palmer, Sach, Savage, Skipp and Tucker

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Mrs Thornton

11. MEMBERS' INTERESTS:

No declarations were made.

12. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16.06.2021 were approved as a correct record.

13. FORWARD PLAN:

To comply with regulations under the Localism Act 2011, the Leader presented a revised Forward Plan to the meeting which outlined key decisions likely to be taken within the next quarter of 2021. The Plan was reviewed each month.

A slight amendment was made to the Lead Member for Item – Corporate Score Card to show Deputy Leader of the Council rather than the Cabinet Member for Resources.

Resolved: To note and approve the Forward Plan.

14. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCORECARD PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2021/2022

Cabinet considered the proposed indicators for the Corporate Performance Scorecard for 2021/22.

Each year, the indicators in the scorecard were reviewed to ensure that they remained

relevant.

In previous years, the new indicators were included in the same report as yearend performance. This year, the proposed indicators were in a stand-alone report to allow for more focussed discussion.

Appendix 1 detailed the proposed changes to some performance indicators on the 2020/21 corporate scorecard and Appendix 2 detailed the proposed suite of indicators for the scorecard in 2021/22. These have been developed to reflect the work planned for 2021/22, whilst continuing to pay attention to the areas of the Council's business that had been impacted by Covid-19 and will likely continue to be affected over 2021/22 financial year. The indicators were grouped under the four new priority areas in the emerging Corporate Plan 2021-24: Economy & Growth; People; Place; Environment plus some grouped under "Enablers", which included Leadership; Democracy; Partnerships; and Resources.

The refreshed scorecard included quarterly and annual performance indicators with one six-monthly indicator. Additional indicators proposed for inclusion were:

- Number of apprenticeship starts in the Borough [Annual]
- Percentage of businesses that report local skills shortages when recruiting [Annual]
- Number of businesses operating in Castle Point [Annual]
- Amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allocated as a percentage of overall budget [Quarterly]
- Percentage of people who agree that there is a strong sense of community in their local area [Annual]
- Number of new homes built in the Borough [Annual]
- The delivery of the ASELA five-anchor programmes against targets set out in those programmes, including the preparation of a strategic planning framework [Annual – will be a short update report]
- Amount of CO2 produced from the Council's buildings and operations
- Overall satisfaction with the Council

It is further proposed that the scorecard should be flexible and take into account any performance issues arising during the year.

Resolved: To approve the Corporate Performance Scorecard Indicators for 2021/22.

15. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report providing an update on the financial outturn for 2020/21 (subject to audit); the latest 2021/22 forecast in respect of the General Fund (GF); developments of a financial nature, which might impact on the Council's financial plans in respect of either the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or Capital Programme and developments in relation to the impacts of COVID-19 on the Council and the assistance received from Government.

Cabinet noted the Government had extended the reporting deadlines for the Statement of Accounts for a further two years. The extension of the accounts closure process for a small authority like Castle Point elongated the overall

process so that it clashed with the budget cycle which commenced in September. For this reason, the Finance Team had worked to adhere as far as possible with the original, earlier timeframe. However, the external audit process would not be completed before October meaning that there would still be some strain on resources for the period of September and October.

Draft outturn including impact of COVID-19 and Government assistance (subject to audit) were summarised in Appendix 2. Cabinet were pleased to hear that the Council had closed the financial year in an underspend position on General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, and the Capital Programme.

A draft Statement of Accounts (SoA) would be published (ahead of timetable) on the Council's website and Members would receive an email prompt to view the document and an invitation to raise questions. The External Auditor will present their findings to the Audit Committee and the SoA would be formally presented to Council at meetings subsequent to the conclusion of the audit.

A table in the report showed the forecast net impact of COVID- 19 and the service areas affected. Whilst the Council had already created a significant earmarked reserve, it is insufficient to fully meet the current forecast impact. The current gap in funding was shown in the report

Budget changes which had occurred since the February budget report was presented to Cabinet and Council were listed in the report.

As previously reported to Cabinet, a new IT management contract commenced from 1st April following a full tender exercise. A period of due diligence and transition took place during the months preceding commencement of the new contract, during which the new contractor verified information that was provided by the former service provider as part of the procurement process.

As a result of further lengthy and detailed negotiations with the Council, additional on-going costs of £32k were agreed (against an original contract variation request of £106k). These costs would be funded by reserves earmarked for IT.

The revenue /Capital budgets "on watch" were highlighted in the report .This term referred to expenditure and income budgets where there was reason to believe that performance might not meet expectations and where the impact on the Council's overall financial plan was likely to be material.

Throughout the pandemic and up until the relaxation of measures the Knightswick Shopping Centre had remained largely closed with the exception of Sainsburys. There has therefore been an impact on traders and their ability to meet their rent and service charge commitments to the Council. At the current time no debts had been written off, but arrears have accumulated. The managing agent was working with tenants to ensure that as far as possible all debts were discharged.

Updates to key financial developments were provided covering external audit fees, Essex Region Business Rates Pool; Council Tax Preceptors Sharing Agreement ;Housing Management System and changes to retained additional Right to Buy receipts.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to new risks posed by a potential for a Government directive to discontinue charging for the removal of garden waste following the outcome of a consultation on national waste strategy. A further update will be provided to Members as and when available.

The financial forecast indicated an unbalanced budget for years 2022/23 and beyond. Work was currently underway to close the funding gap however there was great uncertainty in relation to the future of government funding and the ongoing and lasting impact of the pandemic on the council's financial position.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to an increased risk. The Castle Point Local Plan. The current costs were budgeted for and there are a few charges to incur between now and adoption. Delay in the adoption of the local plan might expose the Council to the potential for additional costs and would have an impact on the ongoing annual budgets beyond the current financial year. Financial implications could arise from the non-adoption of the local plan and, should the scenario occur, these would be detailed in a separate report to Cabinet.

Resolved:

1. To note the report and 2021/22 financial forecast at Appendix 1.
2. To note the financial outturn for 2020/21 (subject to audit) at Appendix 2.

16. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Leader presented the report in the absence of Councillor Mrs Thornton.

Cabinet were pleased to consider and welcomed a comprehensive report presenting a Climate Change Action Plan, describing work that the Council intends to carry out to contribute towards the local, national, and global push towards combating the effects of climate change and to work towards carbon neutrality within our organisation.

Cabinet were provided with the background information and the reasons for production of this report.

Resolved:

1. To reaffirm the Council's commitment to combat the effects of climate change and to work towards carbon neutrality within its organisational activities.
2. To approve the Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix A).
3. That periodic reports be made to Cabinet to provide updates of the work of the Operational Management Team (OMT) Climate Change Group to allow progress to be monitored and highlighted to a wider audience.

17. WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE: REVIEW OF WASTE COLLECTION OPTIONS

Council had commissioned a report to consider potential future waste collection options which could improve service efficiency and environmental benefits. Cabinet was asked to refer the waste collection options set out in the report to the Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee to consider and report back to Cabinet on its preferred collection option.

Resolved:

To request the Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee to consider the collection options detailed in the report and report back to Cabinet with its preferred option.

18. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM / TO POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters.

19. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM / TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no matters.

Chairman



Castle Point Borough Council

Forward Plan

SEPTEMBER 2021

CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2021

This document gives details of the key decisions that are likely to be taken. A key decision is defined as a decision which is likely:-

- (a) Subject of course to compliance with the financial regulations, to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates subject to a threshold of £100,000; or
- (b) To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the area of the local authority.

The Forward Plan is a working document which is updated continually.

Date	<u>Item</u>	Council Priority	Decision by Council/ Cabinet	Lead Member(s)	Lead Officer(s)
September 2021	<u>Corporate Performance Score Card Quarter 1</u>	All	Cabinet	Special Projects	Strategy Policy & Performance Manager
October 2021	<u>Commercial Strategy</u>	A Commercially and Democratically Accountable Council	Cabinet	Resources	Strategic Director (Resources)
October 2021	<u>Housing Strategy</u> – revision for approval	Housing and Regeneration	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	Head of Housing
October 2021	<u>Housing Management System</u>	Housing and Regeneration	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	Head of Housing
September 2021	<u>ASELA</u> – appointment of a joint committee to give formality to the Memorandum of Understanding	A Commercially and Democratically Accountable Council Housing and Regeneration	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	Strategic Director (Resources)
September 2021	Corporate Plan	All	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	Strategy Policy & Performance Manager
September 2021	Petition	A Commercially and Democratically Accountable Council	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	Head of Governance

October 2021/ February 2022	<u>Budget and Policy Framework</u> To make recommendations to Council on the Council tax and budget setting.	All	Cabinet/ Council	Resources	Strategic Director (Resources)
October 2021	<u>Planning Policy Update</u> -to note	Housing and Regeneration	Cabinet	Growth – Leader of the Council	Head of Place & Policy
October 2021	<u>Midterm Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Report –</u> for review	A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council	Cabinet	Resources	Strategic Director (Resources)
November 2021	PSAA Audit Appointment	A Commercially and Democratically Accountable Council	Cabinet/Coun cil	Resources	Strategic Director (Resources)
November 2021	Local Council Tax Scheme 2022 /23 Review – for review & approval	Housing and Regeneration	Cabinet/ Council	Resources	Head of Customer and Digital Services

CABINET

22nd September 2021

Subject: Corporate Performance Scorecard Quarter 1 2021/22

Cabinet Member: Councillor Varker – Special Projects

1. Purpose of Report

To set out the performance figures for the Corporate Performance Scorecard for Quarter 1 2021/22.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

The scorecard is explicitly linked to the Council's priorities.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet notes the report and continues to monitor performance.

4. Background

4.1 The corporate scorecard reports on performance indicators for important service outcomes that are relevant to the Council's priorities.

4.2 The indicators and targets for the corporate performance scorecard for 2021/22 were considered and approved by Cabinet in July 2021.

5. Report

5.1 Summary of performance

5.1.1 Appendix 1 sets out the performance achieved by the Council against the measures in the scorecard, together with trend data and commentary on performance.

5.1.2 Of the 27 indicators reported, 22 are at or above target, a further 4 are near target and 1 indicator is below target. Trend in performance shows that there is improving performance in 15 indicators, declining performance for 3 indicators and performance levels maintained for 5 indicators. The remaining 4 indicators do not have an indication of trend.

5.1.3 Performance is set out against the four priorities in the new corporate plan as follows:

Economy & Growth

The indicators under this priority area are reported annually and therefore there is no performance to report this quarter.

People

The Homelessness performance indicator is split into two parts and looks at the success rate of the homelessness team in preventing and relieving homelessness. Performance is derived from Government-verified statistics which, at the time of publication of this report, show performance to the end of March 2021. Over the year, the service secured accommodation for 7 out of every 10 households to whom the Council owed a Prevention duty and 5 out of 10 households owed a Relief duty.

Satisfaction with Leisure Services is measured by a Net Promoter Score which can range from -100 (where everybody is a detractor and would not recommend the service) to +100 (where everybody is a promoter and would recommend the service). Both Runnymede and Waterside Farm Leisure Centres scored well over the quarter (71 and 73, respectively), Nationally, leisure facilities score around 40-45 for Net Promoter Score. The Council's Leisure Team recently won the Regional (London and Surrounding areas) Best Operator of the Year Award at the UK Active Awards and was runner up for the National Centre of the Year Award.

The number of leisure memberships stood at 2,321 at the end of the quarter, which was an increase in memberships from the same period last year. The number of memberships continues to increase each month and the service is on track to reach its target of 3,000 members by the end of the financial year.

The number of vacant allotments decreased over the quarter from 22 to 17. Overall, 138 of the 155 usable plots are now being worked and there are just 11% vacant.

95% of rated food premises (452 of 477) were classified as 'broadly compliant' with food regulations, having been awarded 3 stars or above on the Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme.

A new measure for 2021/22 is the Amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allocated as a percentage of overall budget. At the end of the quarter, 100% of available budget had been allocated. Delivery of the improvements will allow 111 people to live comfortably and safely in their own homes.

Place

Tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance is now reported monthly by the new contractor. All jobs are rated out of 10 with anything below 7.5 considered as dissatisfied. Over the course of quarter, only two fell below the threshold resulting in performance of 94.7%. On void turnaround times, the performance of the new contractor missed the target, in part due to legacy voids held over from previous contractor in the transition at the end of March, and because of complications accessing one property to carry out the works. However, an average of 24.9 days represents a significant improvement in performance.

The percentage of planning applications processed within target times has two measures – one for major and one for non-major applications – and gives a longer-term view of performance, looking over a rolling two-year period. Nationally set standards have been comfortably achieved and performance has improved when compared with the same period last year.

The building control service ensured all applications were processed within statutory timescales.

Full Council approved the draft Local Plan for Regulation 19 consultation on 22 October 2019. The Council also approved the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The plan was submitted for examination in public on the 2 October 2020. The Plan is now in the examination phase. An Inspector conducted examination Hearing Sessions during May and June 2021. His post-hearings letter is expected in September 2021.

Environment

The percentage of household waste recycled or composted (including food waste) was 54.36% at the end of the quarter, slightly down on last year but above target.

The good performance for street cleanliness continues this quarter and is on target with just 5.13% of inspected streets deemed unsatisfactory, down from 5.95% over the same period last year.

Whilst no default notices were served for highway verge grass cutting, the contractor undertook weekend work and extended days to catch up on the grass cutting work. The number of services requests for grass cutting was comparable with last year and comfortably below maximum tolerance levels.

Fly tipping removal is above target, maintaining high levels of performance with 100% of fly tips removed within one working day. The number of fly tips over the quarter is as follows: April 103, May 98 and June 118.

Enablers

The First Contact team continue to deal with queries effectively; 96% of calls received were dealt with at the first point of contact without the need to transfer to the back office. This is above target and maintains a consistently high level of performance.

At the end of the quarter, there were 12,562 subscribers to the wheeled bin garden waste collection service. This is an improvement on the same period last year and is above target.

The sickness absence indicator has been split between short-term and long-term (4 calendar weeks or more) with targets adjusted down to reflect lower levels seen over the previous year. At 3.1 days against a target of 4.1 days, short-term absence remains low. Managers report that home workers are able to continue working when suffering from minor health conditions and this is shown in the reduction in sickness leave being taken. Long-term sickness absence is 2.2 days,

better than the target of 3.4 days. These absences are mainly reported by operational employees.

The Council is keen to encourage members of the public and businesses to transact with the Council online. The “channel shift” indicators cover the numbers signed up to the e-billing service for council tax and business rates and a measure of Council Tax transactions using online forms. The number signed up to e-billing at the end of the quarter was 8,753 above target and an improvement on last year. Over the quarter, there were 686 online form transactions and increase on the same period last year.

The average time to process housing benefit claims is split into new claims and change of circumstances. For new claims, an increase in work resulting from year-end changes, implementing a new Full Case Review process, and some recent staff vacancies have caused a slight drop in performance over the quarter (23 days against a target of 21 days). This is expected to improve across following quarters. Change of circumstances are processes in 6 days, an improvement on the same period last year.

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

Good performance on some indicators can lead to reduced costs.

b. Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications at this stage.

c. Human resources and equality

There are no direct human resource or equality implications at this stage.

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

Monitoring of the Corporate Performance Scorecard is ongoing throughout the year.

7. Background Papers:

None

Report Author: Ben Brook bbrook@castlepoint.gov.uk

Corporate Performance Scorecard

Quarter 1 2021/22

Appendix 1



Economy and Growth

Annual indicators (reported at Q4):

- E&G001: Number of apprenticeship starts in the Borough
- E&G002: Percentage of businesses that report local skills shortages when recruiting
- E&G003: Number of businesses operating in Castle Point

People

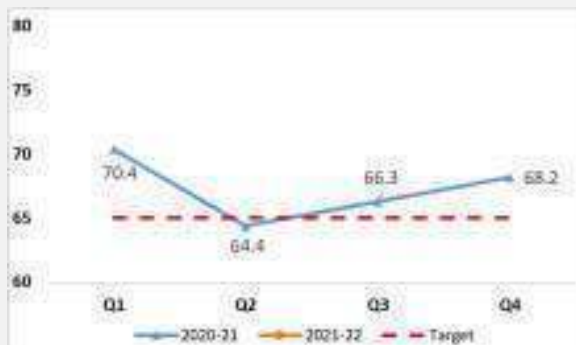
HOT021a: Percentage of homelessness *prevention* duties which ended during the quarter with a successful outcome

On target ✓

Declining ↓

Target
65%

Latest Performance
68.2%



Over the year, the prevention duty ended for 107 households of which we secured housing for 73 households (68%) which is above target, although slightly lower than the same period last year.

Note: Figures represent cumulative performance to the end of March 2021 as Government-produced statistics to the end June 2021 are not yet available.

HOT021b: Percentage of homelessness *relief* duties which ended during the quarter with a successful outcome

On target ✓

Improving ↑

Target
45%

Latest Performance
53.3%



Over the year, the relief duty ended for 135 households of which we secured housing for 72 households (53%) which is above target and higher than the same period last year.

Note: Figures represent cumulative performance to the end of March 2021 as Government-produced statistics to the end June 2021 are not yet available.

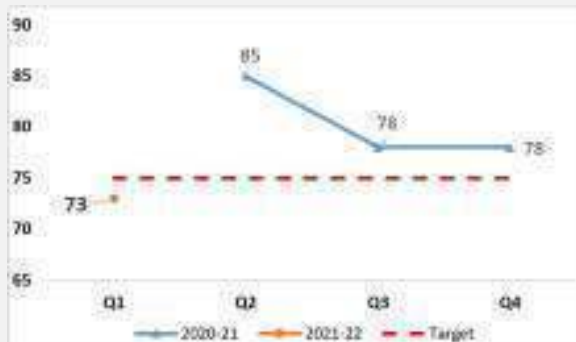
L001a: Leisure satisfaction – Net Promoter Score (NPS) Waterside Farm

Near target ⚠

N/A – no survey Q1 2020/21

Target
75

Latest Performance
73



Although slightly below the challenging target of 75, an exceptionally high NPS score was achieved again in Q1 2021/22.

Nationally, leisure facilities score around 40-45 for Net Promoter Score.

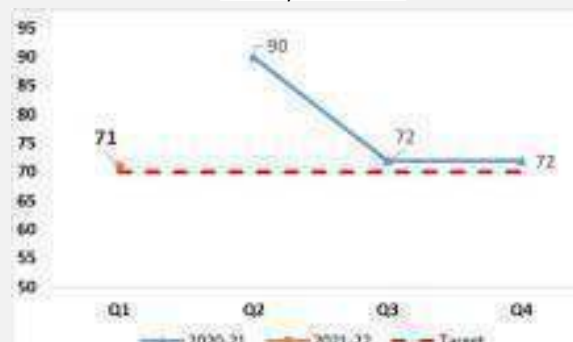
L001b: Leisure satisfaction – Net Promoter Score (NPS) Runnymede

On target ✓

N/A – no survey Q1 2020/21

Target
70

Latest Performance
71



Runnymede leisure centre achieved a NPS of 71 which is a high score and above target.

The Council's Leisure Team – across both leisure centres – recently won the Regional (London and Surrounding areas) Best Operator of the Year Award at the UK Active Awards and was runner up for the National Centre of the Year Award.

People

L003: Leisure Memberships

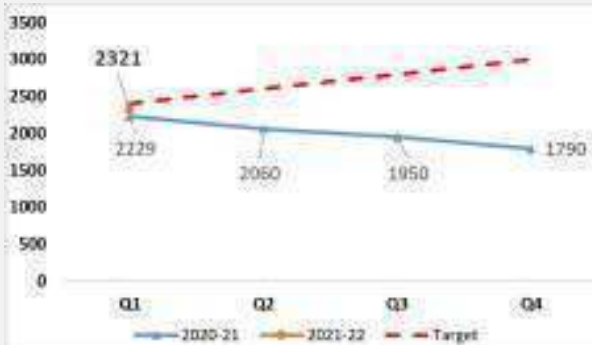
Near target



Improving

Target
2,400

Latest Performance
2,321



At the end of Q1 2021/22, there were 2,321 leisure members, just 3% below the target of 2,400 members by this stage of the year.

However, the number of memberships continues to increase and the service is on track to reach its target of 3,000 members by the end of the financial year.

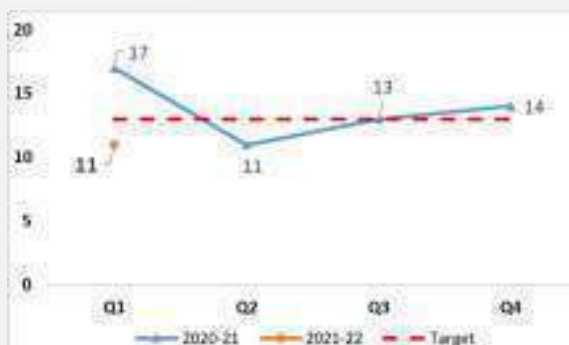
PE002: Percentage of usable allotment plots owned and managed by Castle Point that are vacant

On target

Improving

Target
13%

Latest Performance
11%



During Q1 2021/22, the number of usable vacant plots has decreased by 5 from 22 to 17.

Overall, 138 of the 155 usable plots are now being worked and there are just 11% vacant.

EH002: Percentage of food premises that are awarded a score of at least 3 on the food hygiene rating scheme

On target

Improving

Target
90%

Latest Performance
95%



452 of 477 rated premises were classified as 'broadly complaint' with food regulations, having been awarded 3* or above on the Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme.

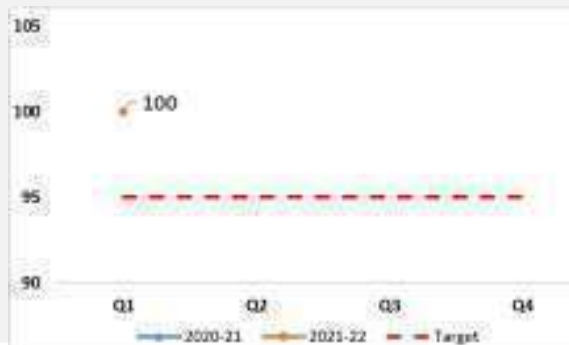
EH012: Amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allocated as a percentage of overall budget

On target

N/A – new indicator

Target
95%

Latest Performance
100%



At the end of Q1 2021/22, 100% of the Disabled Facilities Grant budget had been allocated.

Delivery of the improvements will allow 111 people to live comfortably and safely in their own homes.

People

Annual indicators (reported at Q4):

- PE001: Percentage of people who agree that there is a strong sense of community in their local area
- PE003: Proportion of people participating in physical activity
- LCT13: Proportion of people who feel safe after dark

HOS001: Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

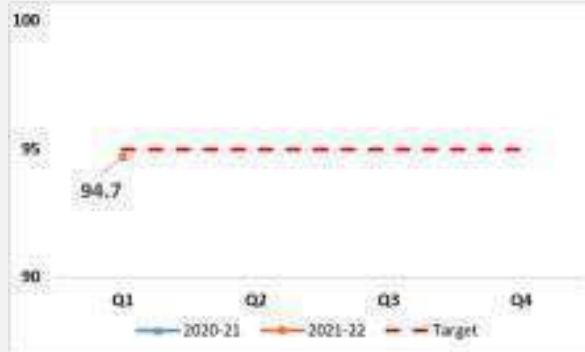
Near target



N/A – new methodology

Target 95%

Latest Performance 94.7%



Surveys now reported from new maintenance contractor monthly. All jobs are rated out of 10 with anything below 7.5 considered as dissatisfied.

Over the course of Q1 of all the responses received only two fell below the threshold resulting in performance just short of target.

HOS006: Average Void Turnaround Time

Off target

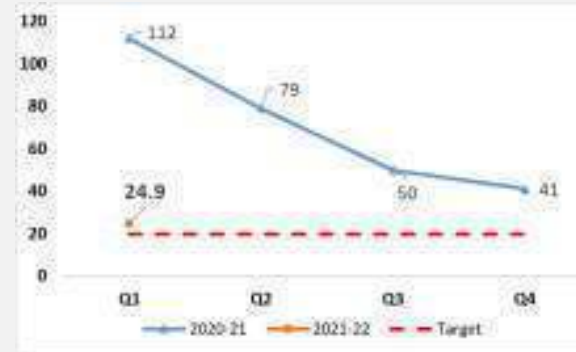


Improving



Target 20 days

Latest Performance 24.9 days



Q1 performance of the new contractor missed the target, in part due to legacy voids held over from previous contractor in the transition at the end of March, and because of complications accessing one property to carry out the works.

Target otherwise would have been met.

DC007: Percentage of planning applications processed within target time limits for major applications

On target



Improving



Target 80%

Latest Performance 100%



Performance is shown on a two-yearly rolling basis. Performance determining major applications is 100%, has improved since the same period last year and is comfortably above target.

Note: Figures represent 24 months cumulative performance to the end of March 2021 as Government-produced statistics to the end June 2021 are not yet available.

DC008: Percentage of planning applications processed within target time limits for non-major applications

On target

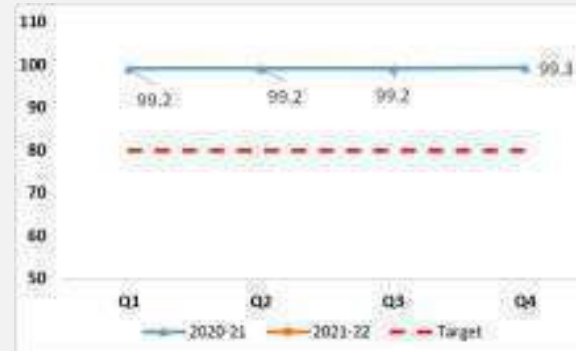


Improving



Target 80%

Latest Performance 99.3%




Performance is shown on a two-yearly rolling basis. Performance determining non-major applications is 99.3%, has improved since the same period last year and is comfortably above target.

Note: Figures represent 24 months cumulative performance to the end of March 2021 as Government-produced statistics to the end June 2021 are not yet available.

BC001: Percentage of Building Control applications processed within statutory time limits

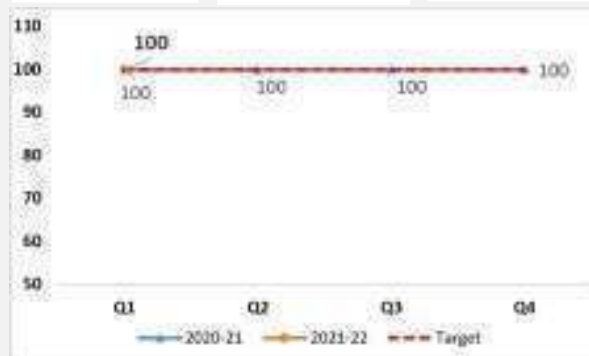
On target 

Maintained 

Target
100%


Latest Performance
100%

All applications continue to be processed within time limits.



PP001: Progress of Local Plan against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme

On target 

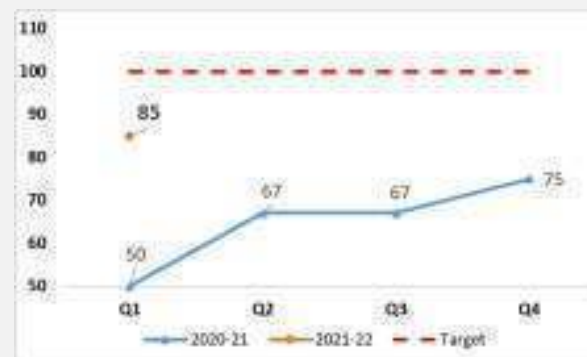
Improving 

Target
100%

Latest Performance
85%

Full Council approved the draft Local Plan for Regulation 19 consultation on 22 October 2019. The Council also approved the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The plan was submitted for examination in public on the 2 October 2020. The Plan is now in the examination phase.

An Inspector conducted examination Hearing Sessions during May and June 2021. His post-hearings letter is expected in September 2021.



Annual indicators (reported at Q4):



PP003: Number of new affordable homes in the Borough

PP004: Number of new homes built in the Borough

NEW: The delivery of the ASELA five-anchor programmes against targets set out in those programmes, including the preparation of a strategic planning framework.

Environment

OPS004&OPS005: Percentage of Household Waste Recycled or Composted (inc. food waste)

On target  Declining  Target 50%





Latest Performance
54.36%

At the end of Q1 2021/22, the amount recycled and composted is marginally lower than last year but is above target.

Note: Figures are early calculations and may be subject to change.

SS002: Percentage of streets inspected which are deemed to be unsatisfactory using Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse methodology



On target  Improving  Target <10%

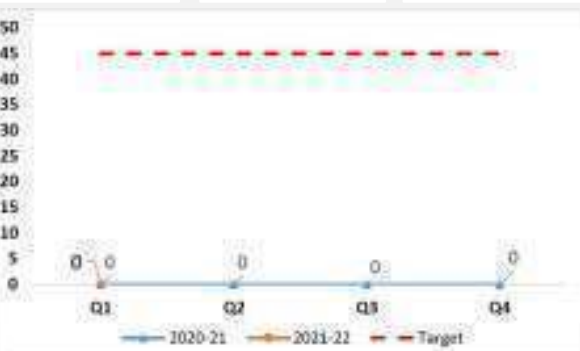


Latest Performance
5.13%

Litter levels in the Borough remained low during April and May with a slight rise in June, however across the quarter unsatisfactory levels stayed below 10%.

SS014: Number of default notices served in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting



On target  Maintained  Target <45

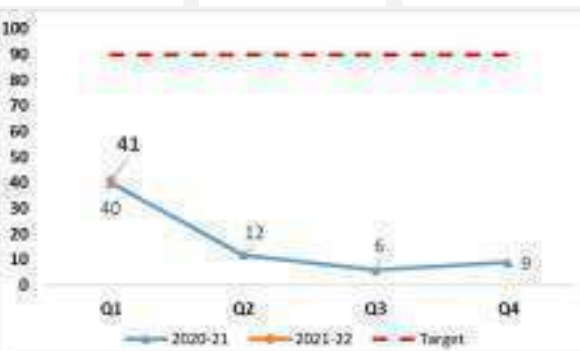


Latest Performance
0

Whilst no default notices were served, the contractor undertook weekend work and extended days to catch up on the grass cutting work.

SS013: Number of service requests received in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting

On target  Maintained  Target <90





Latest Performance
41

Despite some problems with grass cutting this quarter, service requests stayed below the target and were comparable to last year.

Environment

SS003: Percentage of fly tips removed within one working day

On target 

Maintained 

Target
90%

Latest Performance
100%

100% of all fly tips reported were removed within one working day.

The number of fly tips over the quarter is as follows: April 103, May 98 and June 118.



Annual indicators (reported at Q4):

- OPS002: Satisfaction with maintaining parks and open spaces
- OPS003: Satisfaction with household waste collection, including recycling and composting
- SS001: Satisfaction with Council's efforts to keep public land clear of litter and refuse
- EH013: Amount of CO2 produced from the Council's buildings and operations

Enablers

FC001: Percentage of calls taken from customers by First Contact that are dealt with without the need to transfer to the back office

On target

Maintained

Target
95%

Latest Performance
96%



The First Contact team continue to deal with queries effectively; 96% of calls received were dealt with at the first point of contact without the need to transfer to the back office.

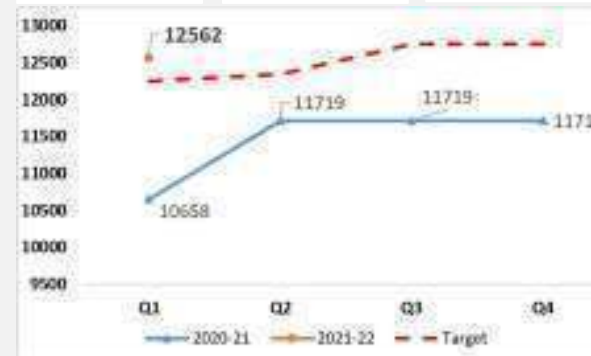
OPS016: Number of wheeled bin garden waste subscribers

On target

Improving

Target
12,250

Latest Performance
12,562



At the end of Q1 2021/22, there were 12,562 subscribers to the wheeled bin garden waste collection service.

This is an improvement from the same period last year and is above target.

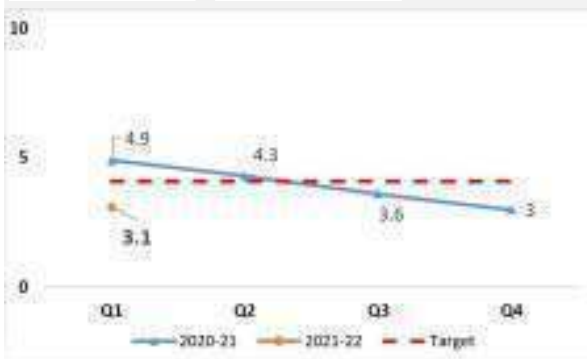
CORP1a: Average number of days sickness absence per FTE staff for all Council Services (rolling year) *short term*

On target

Improving

Target
4.1 days

Latest Performance
3.1 days



Sickness absence is reported on a rolling year. Short-term sickness absence is 3.1 days, a slight increase but better than the target of 4.1 days.

Managers report that home workers are able to continue working when suffering from minor health conditions and this is shown in the reduction in sickness leave being taken.

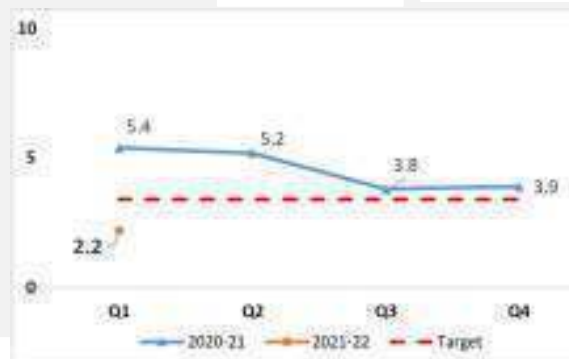
CORP 1b: Average number of days sickness absence per FTE staff for all Council Services (rolling year) *long term*

On target

Improving

Target
3.4 days

Latest Performance
2.2 days



Sickness absence is reported on a rolling year. Long-term sickness is defined as 4 calendar weeks or more.

Long-term sickness absence is 2.2 days, better than the target of 3.4 days. These absences are mainly reported by operational employees.

Enablers

REV006: Channel shift to online services: take up of e-billing for Council Tax and Business Rates

On target 

Improving 

Target
8,015

Latest Performance
8,753



The number of customers signed up to the e-billing service has increased since the same period last year and is on track to meet the year-end target of 9,000 customers.

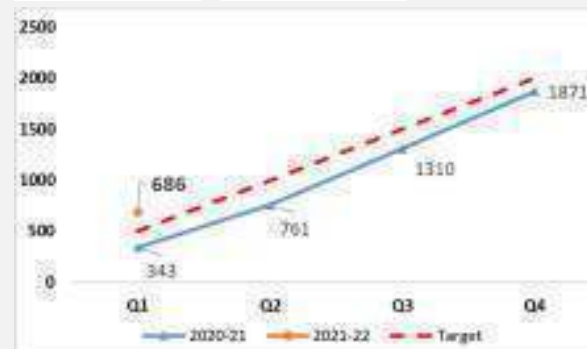
REV011: Channel shift to online services: use of Open Channel online forms

On target 

Improving 

Target
2,000 (A)


Latest Performance
686




At the end of Q1 2021/22, there were 686 people signed up to the OPENChannel.

This is an improvement on the previous year and on target for 2,000 users by the year end.

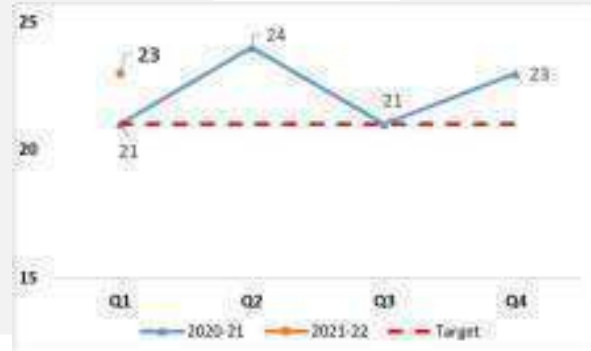
BEN001: Average time to process benefits claims: new claims

Near target 

Declining 


Target
21 days

Latest Performance
23 days



An increase in work resulting from year-end changes, implementing a new Full Case Review process, and some recent staff vacancies have caused a slight drop in performance in Q1. This is expected to improve across following quarters.

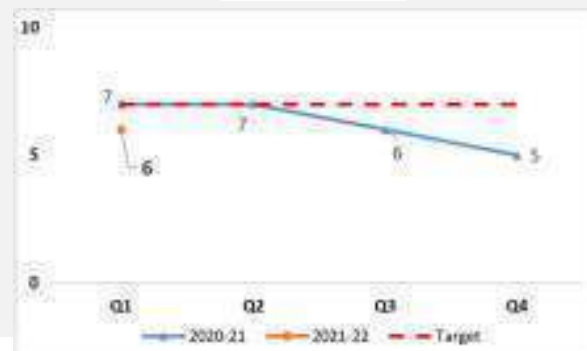
BEN002: Average time to process benefits claims: change of circumstances

On target 

Improving 

Target
7 days

Latest Performance
6 days



Performance times processing change of circumstances has improved since the same period last year and is on target.

Enablers

Annual indicators (reported at Q4):

ENA001: Overall satisfaction with the Council

CABINET

22nd September 2021

Subject: Corporate Plan 2021-24

Cabinet Member: Councillor Sheldon, Leader of the Council

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed draft Corporate Plan.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

The Corporate Plan is explicitly linked to all of the Council's priorities.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet considers the Corporate Plan set out in Appendix 1 and recommends the Corporate Plan to Council for formal approval.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is an important document for the Council. It sets out the strategic direction for the organisation as well as how the Council will achieve its aims and priorities through appropriate action planning.
- 4.2 This plan 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.
- 4.3 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.

5. Report

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan is attached as Appendix 1 and sets out, at the front of the document in Section 1, the medium-term priorities for the Council which are:

- Economy and Growth
- People
- Place
- Environment

alongside a series of objectives and targets to be delivered over the lifetime of the plan.

- 5.2 These priorities, objectives and targets are based on an analysis of needs and issues for the Borough, which is summarised in Section 3 of the Corporate Plan, as well as consultation results which are set out in Section 4.
- 5.3 Section 7 is a high-level roadmap of activities to deliver the priorities in the Corporate Plan as well as looking towards the medium and long term. Section 8 sets out the annual initiatives for 2021/22, the first year of this plan, and will be subject to a refresh each year.
- 5.4 The Corporate Plan also includes an annual report in Annexe 1, detailing the Council's achievements over 2020/21.

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

The Corporate Plan has significant resource implications including the need to secure significant financial savings. A summary of ongoing financial pressures is included in Section 5 of the corporate plan.

b. Legal implications

Some of the actions set out in the Corporate Plan are subject to legal requirements following national legislation or guidance.

c. Human resources and equality

The plan has significant human resource and equality implications which are further considered in service and project planning.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the new Corporate Plan. This assessment concludes that the corporate plan does not have the potential to make a negative contribution to equality as the delivery of the corporate plan will either benefit residents universally or have a positive impact on some groups with protected characteristics.

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

This is set out in the Corporate Plan.

8. Background Papers:

Corporate Plan 2021-24
Equality Impact Assessment

Report Author: Ben Brook, Strategy, Policy and Performance Manager
bbrook@castlepoint.gov.uk

CORPORATE PLAN 2021-24



Great Place
Great People
One Community

Contents

Foreword	4
1. Introducing our Vision, Priorities, Objectives and Targets.....	6
2. The Strategic Framework.....	14
3. Profile of Castle Point and Key Challenges.....	16
4. Consulting with our Communities.....	21
5. Ongoing Financial Pressures	33
6. Our Partnerships.....	35
7. Our Roadmap	36
8. Our Annual Initiatives for 2021/22	41
Annexe 1: Annual Report 2020/21	47
Annexe 2: Our Partnerships.....	56

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

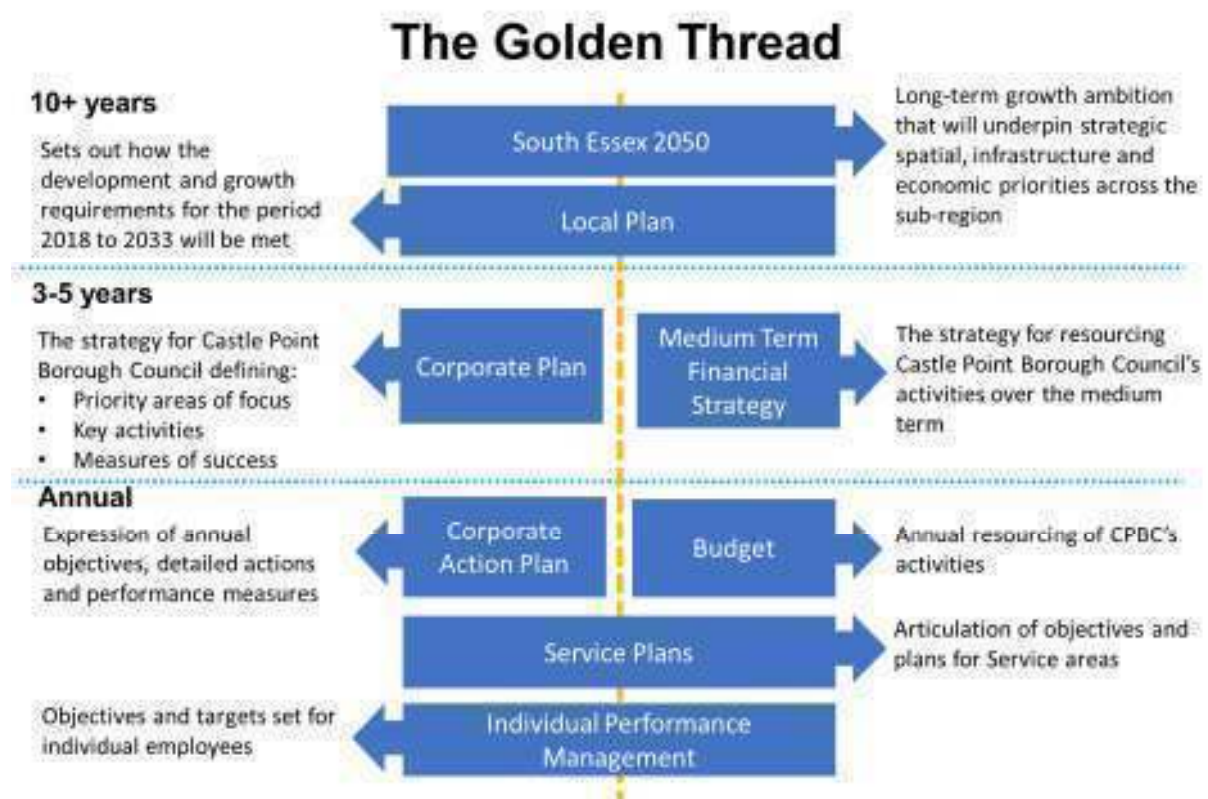
E8: Reduce the amount of CO2 produced from the Council’s building and operations by 15% by 2024 (from the 2020 baseline of 2051 tonnes)

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 an 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

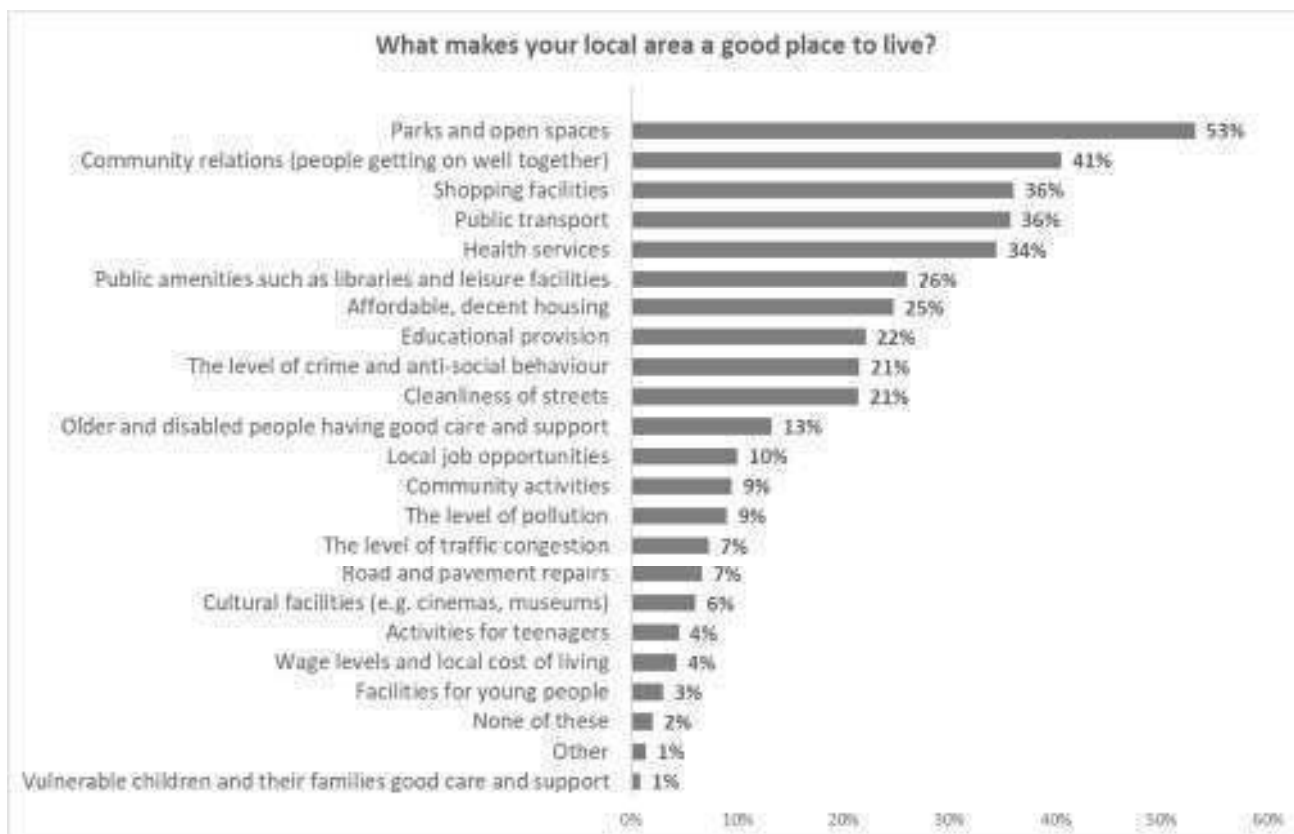
- 4.1 The Council consults with service users as part of normal service operation and before implementing plans to change or stop providing services. Many services conduct regular surveys to inform decision making and gauge levels of satisfaction. Major policies and strategies are also subject to consultation. 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.

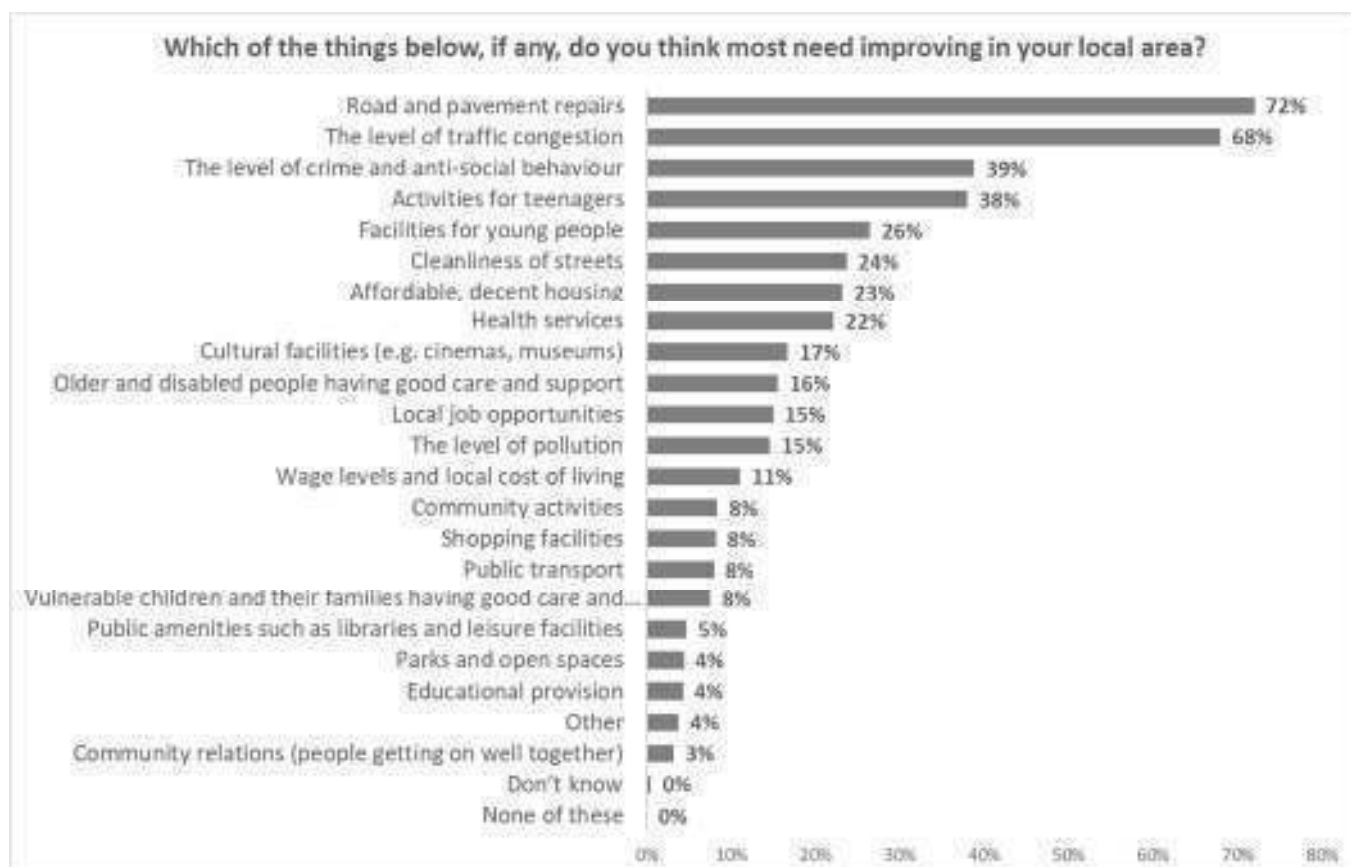
Area as a Place to Live

- 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.

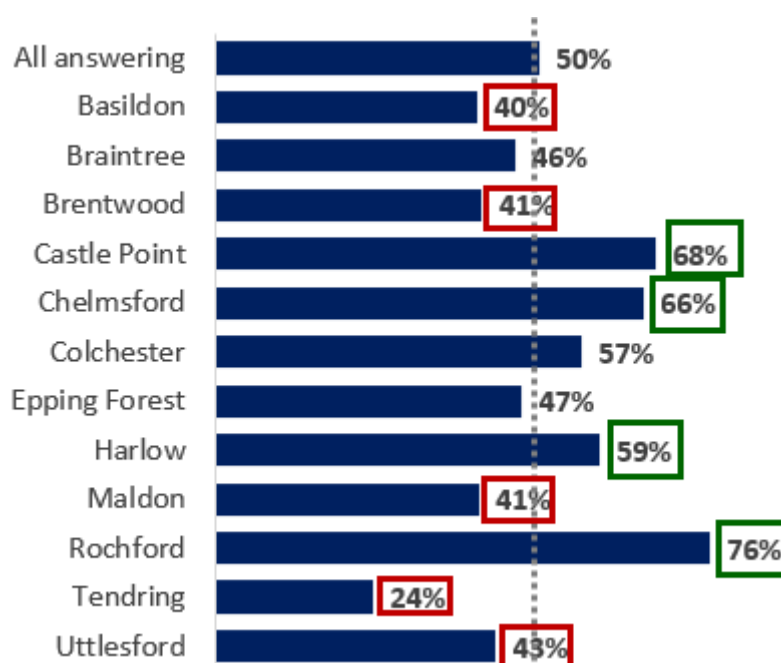


Source: Essex Residents Survey 2020

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.



Percentage of respondents who indicated that Traffic congestion levels need improving

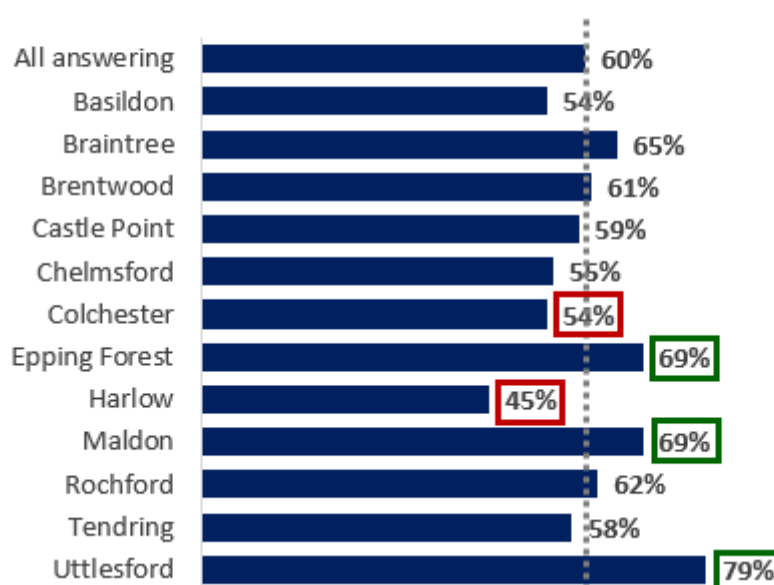


Community Cohesion

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%).

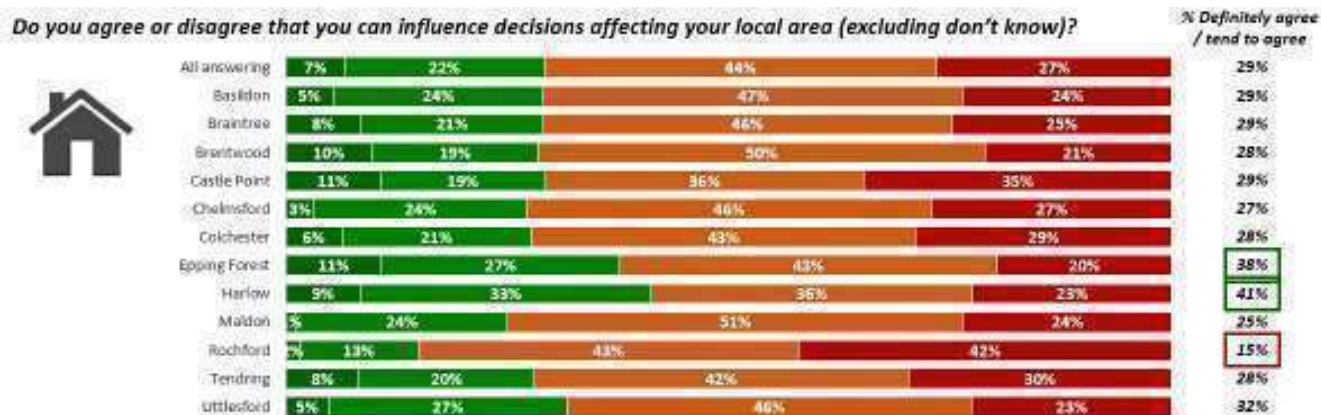
To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of community in your local area?

% 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%).

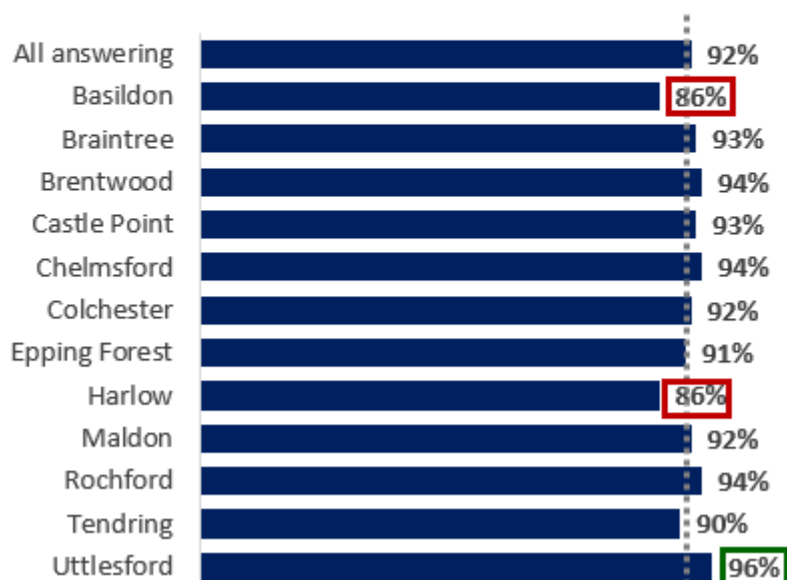


Fear of Crime

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.

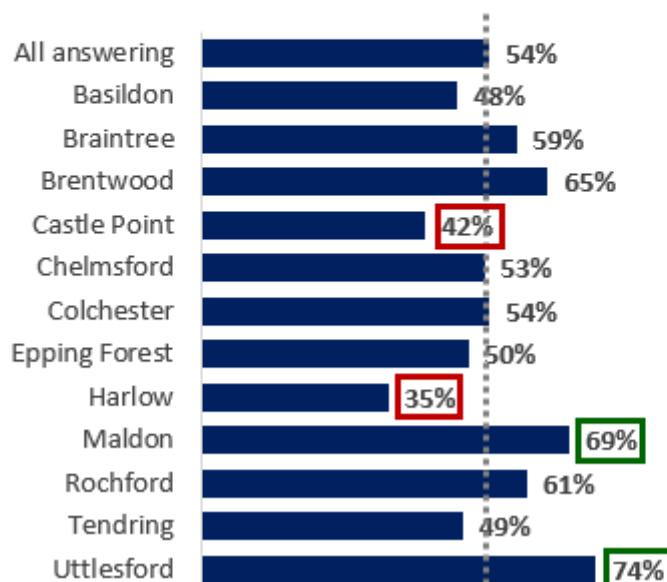
How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

% 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.

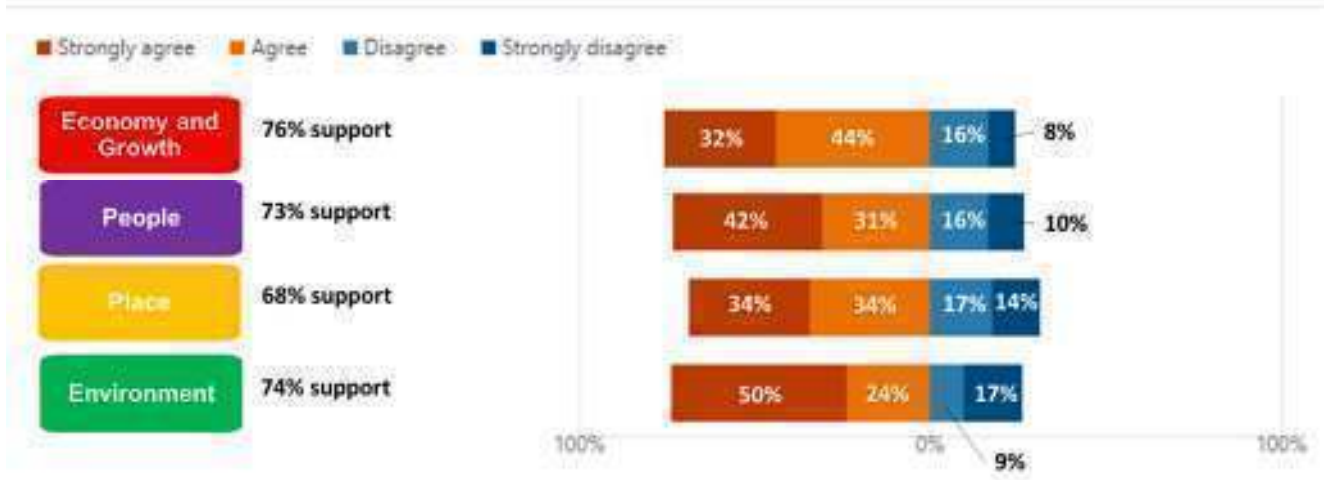
4.4.2 There were 213 responses, with the results set out below.

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)

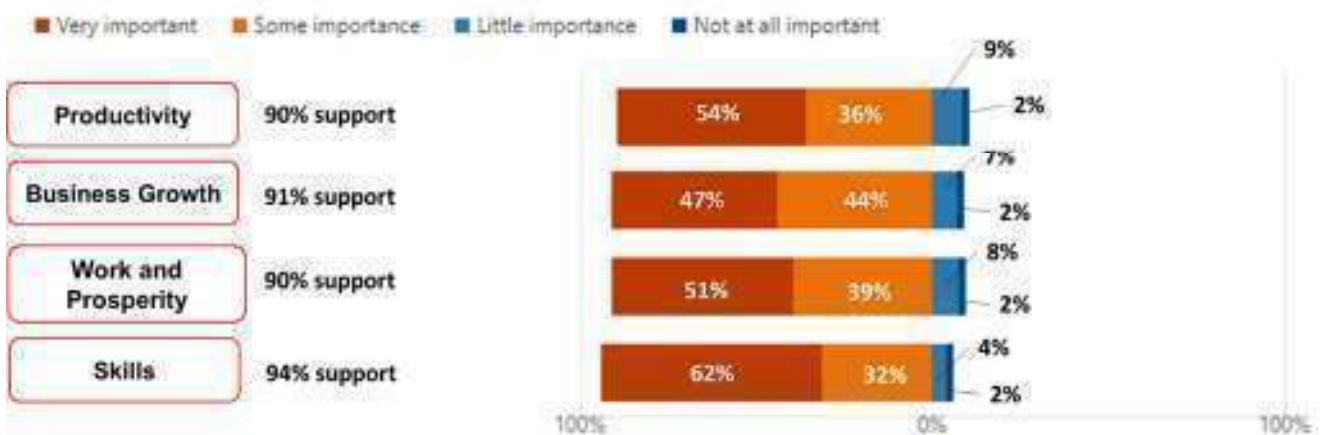


Objectives

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.

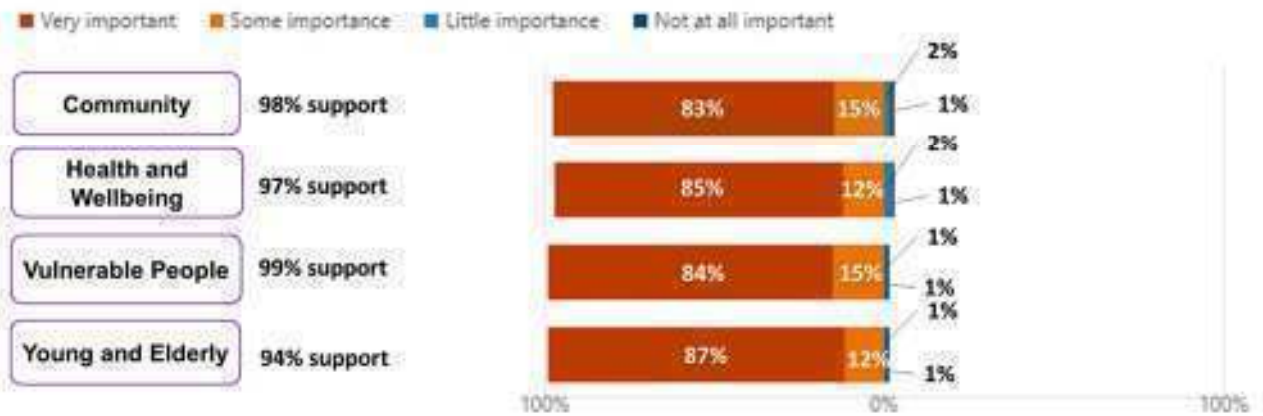
Economy & Growth Objectives

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



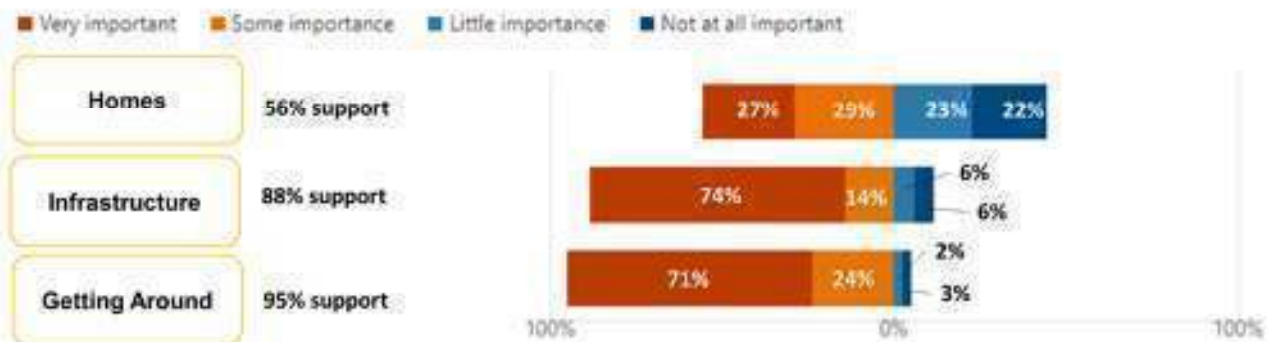
People Objectives

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



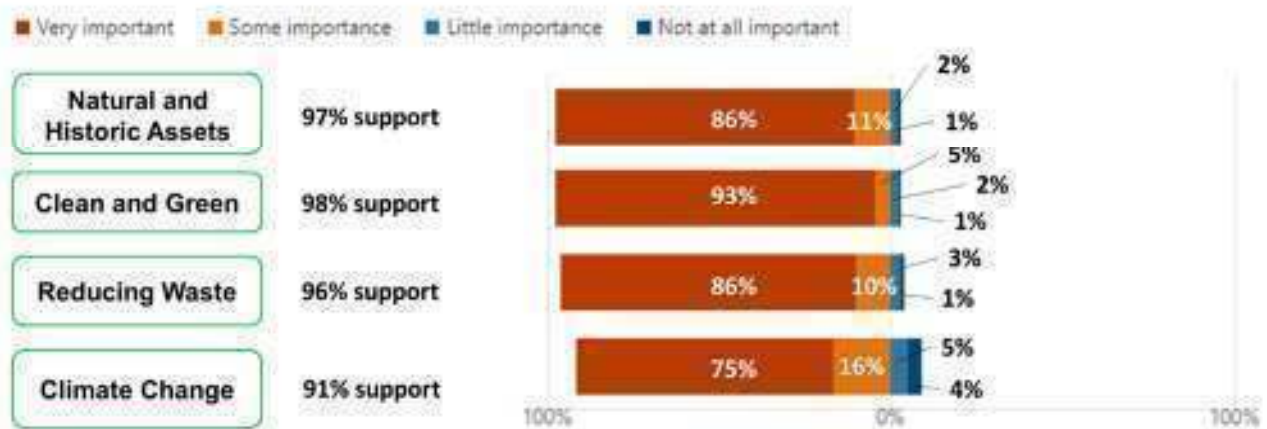
Place Objectives

(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

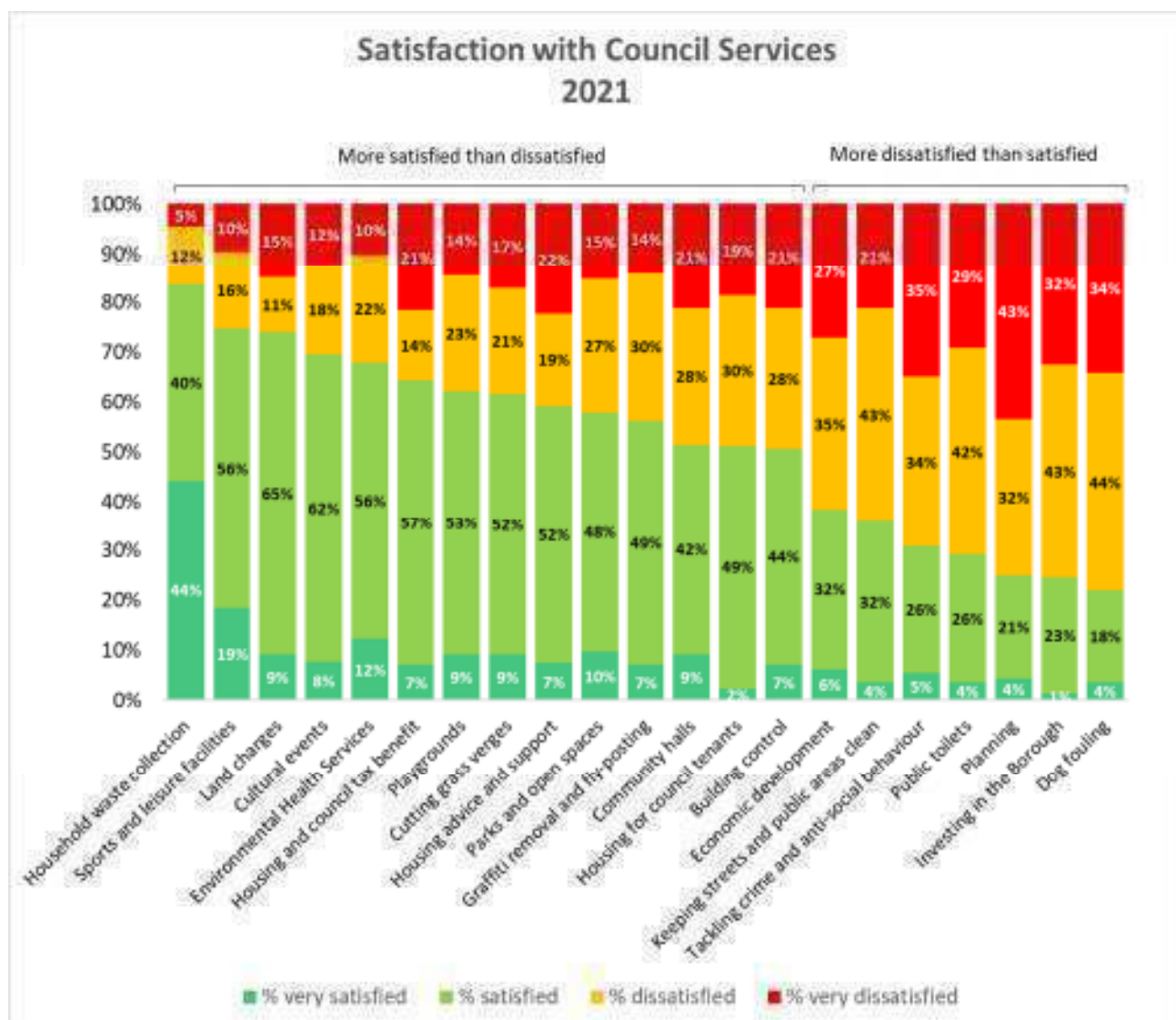
- Access to social housing, including schemes supporting residents obtaining their first home – shared ownership, rent to buy etc.
- Greener travel – more cycling and pedestrian provision
- Preventing pavement obstructions by vehicles
- Potholes and pavement maintenance
- Road infrastructure

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.

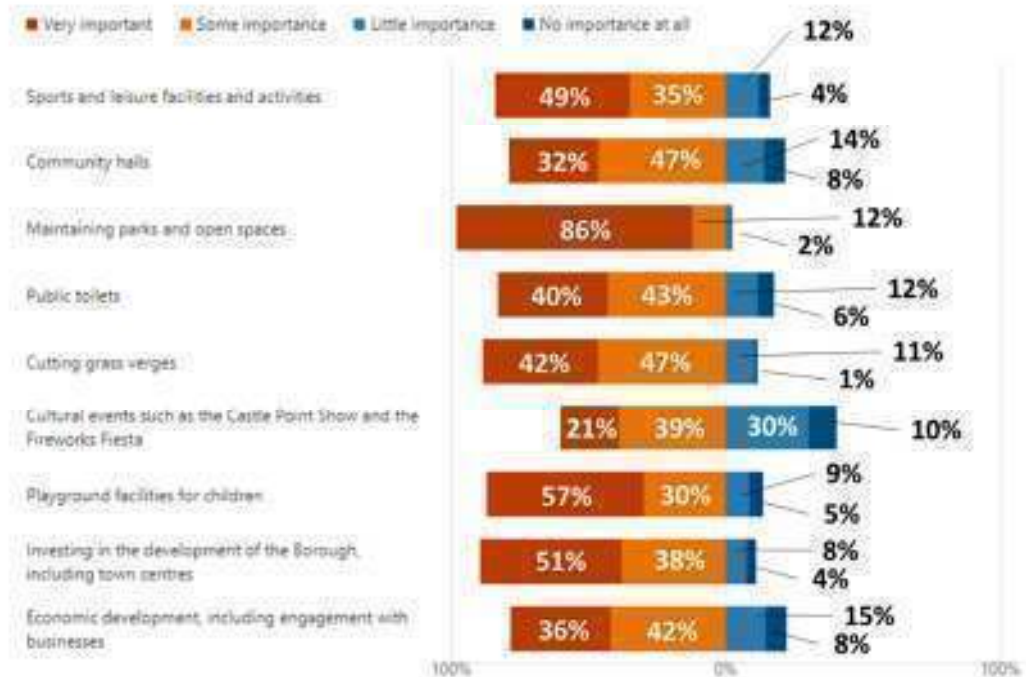


Relative Importance of Discretionary Services

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)
- Castle Point and Rochford Community Development Partnership
- Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership
- Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board
- 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 		

Great Place. Great People. One Community.

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 		

Great Place. Great People. One Community. Place



Homes

Infrastructure

Getting Around

Short Term 2-5 Years

- **Local Plan**
 - 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**
 - Implementation of Housing Strategy to 2026
- **Strategic Transport**
 - Engagement with partners and emergence of a joint approach to transport planning
 - Agreement with Government
- **ASELA**
 - Housing Delivery Board partnership between ASELA and Homes England in Place
 - Agreement with Government
 - Small housing site quick wins delivered
- **Homelessness**
 - Implementation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to 2024 (Prevention; Temporary Accommodation; Settled Accommodation; Support)

Medium Term 5-10 years

- **Local Plan**
 - 1st Review of Local Plan in accordance with the South Essex Plan
 - Medium term implementation
 - Infrastructure delivery in accordance with IDP
- **Housing Provision**
 - Implementation of Housing Strategy to 2031 and then to 2036
- **Strategic Transport**
 - Early implementation of strategic transport improvements
- **ASELA**
 - Medium term and medium sized sites being delivered
 - Long term growth locations in planning stages
- **Homelessness**
 - Implementation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to 2029 and then to 2034

Long Term 10+ years

- **Local Plan**
 - 2nd Review of Local Plan in accordance with South Essex Plan
 - Continued delivery including long term growth allocations
- **Housing Provision**
 - Implementation of future Housing Strategies
- **Strategic Transport**
 - First stages of integrated transport system in place
 - Funding in place for latter stages
- **ASELA**
 - Long term growth locations underway
- **Homelessness**
 - Implementation of future Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies

Great Place. Great People. One Community.

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>

Castle Point and Rochford Community Development Partnership

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

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/>

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/>

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/>

CABINET

22nd September 2021

Subject: Financial Update

Cabinet Member: Councillor Johnson - Resources

1. Purpose of Report

This report is intended to:

- **Provide Cabinet with the latest 2021/22 forecast in respect of the General Fund (GF).**
- **Update Cabinet on developments of a financial nature, which may impact on the Council's financial plans in respect of either the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or Capital Programme.**
- **Update Cabinet on developments in relation to the impacts of COVID-19 on the Council and the assistance received from Government.**

2. Links to Council Priorities and Objectives

This report is linked to the Council's priority of "*A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council*".

Sound and strategic financial management is essential in order to ensure that resources are available to support the Council's priorities and maintain or improve services.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet note the report and the 2021/22 financial forecast at Appendix 1.

4. Background & basis of the financial forecast

- 4.1** The Financial Planning Strategy is incorporated within the Policy Framework and Budget report which is approved by Council in February each year. The strategy requires the submission of a Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), enabling the Cabinet to monitor latest estimates of future spending and resources, and take appropriate action to ensure that the Council's financial targets are met.

5. Financial Impact of COVID-19 and Government Assistance 2021/22

- 5.1** Known and reasonably certain financial impacts arising from COVID-19 were incorporated into the detailed budget which was presented to Cabinet/Council in February 2021. Less certain impacts have either been reflected in the Council's calculation of its minimum level of General Reserves or funds set aside within an earmarked reserve. The earmarked reserve currently holds a sum of **£1.1m** which is comprised of funding from Central Government and Castle Point BC and

includes an additional **£200k** added from budget underspends achieved in 2020/21.

- 5.2 Since the July Financial Update, the forecast impact of Covid-19 has reduced. In July, based on data as at the end of May, the net impact was forecast at **£1.632m** and was based on a number of prudent assumptions. Data is now available to the end of August and assumptions have been revised to take into account actual experience following the lifting of lockdown restrictions. The revised forecast impact for the year is **£1.2m** and assumes a reasonable degree of prudence given the remaining uncertainty between now and the end of the financial year. The following table shows the forecast impact of **£1.2m** on a service basis:

Service Area	Income Shortfall £000's	Expenditure Saving £000's	Net Impact £000's
Car Parks	530	(2)	528
Leisure & Halls	496	(38)	458
Revenues & Benefits	218	(17)	201
Other	29	(16)	13
Total	1,273	(73)	1,200

- 5.3 The Council as part of its budget created an earmarked reserve of **£1.1m** to help smooth the impact of Covid-19. By utilising this and other funding available the forecast impact is fully funded as shown in the table below.

	£000's	£000's
Forecast net impact of COVID-19		1,200
Funded by:		
Application of Earmarked Reserve	(911)	
Utilisation of Sales, Fees and Charges scheme	(272)	
Utilisation of Furlough scheme	(17)	
Total funding		(1,200)
Unfunded pressure		0

6. Changes to approved budgets

- 6.1 The following 2021/22 budget changes have occurred since the last financial update report to Cabinet.

	£000's	Description
1.	24	Additional costs of Runnymede Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) works (funded from general reserves).
2.	117	Grant income relating to Test & Trace and New Burdens funding for Covid 19.
3.	13	Government income relating to Verified Earnings and Pension (VEP) which is currently funding a role within the benefits team.

4.	55	Costs relating to additional licenses and broadband capabilities (funded from IT Earmarked Reserve).
5.	53	Income recovered from contractor relating to additional costs associated with implementation of new IT contract (see para 6.2).

- 6.2 As previously reported to Cabinet, a new IT management contract commenced from 1st April 2021. **£73k** of additional cost was incurred as a result of the transition process of which **£53k** has been recovered from the former contractor, following negotiations.

7. **Revenue/Capital budgets “on-watch”**

- 7.1 This section of the report highlights revenue or capital budgets, HRA or General Fund, which are identified by the Strategic Director (Resources) as “on-watch”. This term refers to expenditure and income budgets where there is reason to believe that performance may not meet expectations and where the impact on the Council’s overall financial plan is likely to be material.

- 7.2 For the purpose of this report, items will be included if they have a full year financial impact of at least **£50k** and / or are felt to be of interest to Cabinet.

	£000's	Description
1.	TBA	<p>The co-mingled waste contract provider is currently Viridor. At the time of writing this report, April to June 2021 invoices have been received for the 2021/22 financial year. Charges range from £37.14 to £52.58 per tonne with a weighted average price per of £45.86.</p> <p>The pricing of this contract is particularly volatile; in the 2020/21 financial year the lowest price per tonne was £39.53, with the highest being £84.57. The weighted average price per tonne was £69.00.</p> <p>In addition to volatile pricing, the collected tonnages increased significantly in 2020/21 from 2019/20 – an additional 806 tonnes were collected, which is the equivalent of having almost two additional months in the year. The tonnages collected to the end of June are 35 tonnes more than at the same period last year and 222 tonnes higher than the same time in 2019/20.</p> <p>Should tonnages for July 2021 to March 2022 be as per last year, using the average price of £45.86 would lead to an underspend of £157k. The weighted average price for the remainder of the year would need to exceed £76.85 for an overspend to materialise. The expectation is for the weighted average to rise from its current £45.86 and until we are later in the year there is low confidence in any underspend materialising due to the volatility in pricing and uncertainty regarding tonnages.</p> <p>Action: continue to monitor.</p>

2.	TBA	Refuse collection agency budget for 2021/22 was set at £204.2k for the full year. Spend for the period up to 15 th August 2021, adjusted for spend against budgeted vacancies, has reached £141.3k which is around 69% of the year's budget. Action: continue to monitor.
3.	130	HRA Repair and Maintenance is currently forecasting an overspend. A new contract was let earlier in the year and this overspend is thought likely to result from a backlog of repairs not progressed by the previous contractor coupled with price increases in the supply chain as is being experienced and reported on nationally. Action: continue to monitor

8. **Budget Process 2022/23**

8.1 The process for setting the 2022/23 budget and Council tax has now commenced. Cabinet will note from the forecast at appendix 1 that there is a funding gap predicted for years 2022/23 and beyond. Work on closing this gap is in progress and includes:

1. Detailed review of the revenue budget and capital programme items with revenue implications.
2. Detailed review of earmarked reserves and supporting work programmes and assumptions.
3. Identification of options for both revenue generation and cost reduction across all services.

8.2 Cabinet are reminded that the two great unknowns at the current time are 1) the future of local government funding and 2) the lasting impact of the pandemic on revenue streams and service demand, both of which could have a significant impact on the councils spending plans.

8.3 A further update will be provided to Cabinet in November.

9. **Financial risk factors**

9.1 The budget report presented to the Cabinet meeting in February and Council on the same night indicated some risk areas that the Cabinet should be mindful of until the position and risk relating to each has been clarified. The Financial update report to Cabinet in July provided an updated position on the risk associated with the local plan and informed Cabinet of a new risk associated with the national waste strategy consultation.

10. **Corporate implications**

a) **Legal implications**

This report is presented on behalf of the "section 151 officer" – the officer appointed to have responsibility for the Council's financial administration. It is their duty to ensure that the Council is regularly informed and updated on these matters.

b) **Human Resources and equality implications**

There are no Human Resource or equality implications arising directly from this report.

c) Timescale for implementation and risk factors

The financial implications of COVID-19 on future years are yet to be determined.

Report Author: Chris Mills, Strategic Director (Resources)

Background Papers:

- Policy Framework & Budget Setting 2021/22, incorporating the Financial Planning Strategy. (February 2021)
- Financial Update Report(s) to Cabinet – July 2021
- COVID-19 Financial modelling (CPBC) (on-going)

Medium term financial forecast (MTFF)		2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	Report Section Ref	Notes
Line	Current policies and service plans						
1a	Net service expenditure (Budget set February 2021)	12,328	11,537	13,338	11,528		
1b	Changes to budget	901	8	2	4		
1c	Net service expenditure	13,229	11,545	13,340	11,532	3	Fluctuations predominantly caused by phasing of expenditure some of which is "offset" by earmarked reserves.
2	Council Tax	(8,311)	(8,533)	(8,797)	(9,070)	4	
3	Business Rates (related transactions)	(2,795)	(2,286)	(2,320)	(2,366)	5	
4	Capital grants, other grants and contributions	(2,567)	(307)	(295)	0		Includes grants in relation to the seaford and labworth & council tax shareback agreement.
5	Net Collection Fund(s) (surplus) / deficit	3,451	37	37	0	6	2021/22 deficit relates to previous year and is funded by s31 grant from central government applied through earmarked reserves at line 7.
6	Net expenditure / (income) before reserves	3,007	456	1,966	96		
7	Transfer to / (from) Earmarked reserves (net)	(3,072)	664	(849)	1,294	7	
8	(Surplus) / Deficit on General Fund	(64)	1,119	1,116	1,389	7	
9	General Reserves balance at end of year	(5,641)	(3,324)	(1,723)	469	7	
10	Earmarked Reserves balance at end of year	(11,930)	(12,303)	(11,149)	(12,162)	7	

The column headed "Report Section Ref" relates to the section of the budget report presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2021.

The movement on row 1b includes movements reported in previous reports including budgets rolled forward from the last financial year. Some movements on this line have compensating movements within rows 4 & 7 of the forecast.

CABINET

22nd September 2020

**Subject: Association of South Essex Local Authorities
(ASELA) Update and Appointment of a Joint Committee**

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council – Councillor Sheldon

1. Purpose of Report

Cabinet is asked to consider the report from ASELA providing an update on work being undertaken and consider the future governance arrangements for the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) seeking agreement to move to a statutory Joint Committee.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives
This report links to all the Council priorities

3. Recommendations

1. To note the updates provided in this report.
2. To formally agree to become a Member of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Joint Committee in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, to oversee ASELA and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programmes.
3. To approve the governance arrangements of the Joint Committee in accordance with governing documents set out in Appendix 1.
4. To appoint the Leader of the Council as their representative on the Joint Committee, and to appoint the Deputy Leader as the Substitute Member, as set out in the governing documents.

4. Background

Presentations have been made to all Political Groups on the Council in advance of the report providing an update on the work undertaken by ASELA and the proposal to formalise the governance arrangements for ASELA and seek agreement to move to a statutory committee.

The Association of South Essex Authorities (ASELA) is a partnership of neighbouring authorities that have come together to deliver growth and prosperity in the region with collaboration focussed on three key areas:

- Tackling problems, that cannot be solved individually
- Creating collective scale and impact
- Providing place leadership to promote and sell 'South Essex' proposition

Castle Point Borough Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2018 to work together with other local authorities in South Essex through a partnership collectively known as the Association of South Essex Local Authorities ("ASELA" or "Partner Authorities").

The Partner Authorities comprise - Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Councils

At the meeting of Cabinet on 22nd July 2020 Cabinet considered a report from ASELA providing an update on work it had recently undertaken and its planned engagement with Central Government over the next few months and the recommendations to Partner Authorities. Cabinet agreed:

1. To note ASELA's intention to immediately engage with Central Government ahead of the autumn Spending Review, regarding the economic agenda for the South Essex region, how it can deliver new jobs, new transport infrastructure, new homes, and the future governance arrangements to deliver better outcomes for its existing, and new, residents and businesses as set out in the 'Growth and Recovery Prospectus 2020' at Enclosure No. 2;
2. To note the work commenced by ASELA to begin to consider and explore the most appropriate and effective future governance arrangements to realise South Essex's full economic and social potential and shared ambitions as set out in the independent Review of Governance in South Essex at Enclosure No. 3. This report does not seek approval or endorsement of any specific governance proposals; and
3. To note that a further report will be presented later in the calendar year to provide an update on the outcome of the discussions with Central Government and any proposals for more formal interim governance arrangements for ASELA to ensure transparency and accountability.

The report from ASELA further referred to the fact that a key consideration for ASELA at that time was the appropriate governance arrangements and resources to facilitate and enable delivery going forward which was referred to in the report from ASELA in July and that this matter was being taken forward and would be the subject of a planned further report from ASELA in early 2021.

Attached at **Appendix 1a** is the latest report from ASELA which sets out the outcome of its consideration of appropriate governance arrangements and its

proposal that a joint committee of constituent members to oversee ASELA and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programme be established.

5. ASELA Update

ASELA is a partnership of neighbouring councils that have come together to deliver growth and prosperity in the region. The local authority partners are Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, and Essex County Council.

(ASELA is not about delivering homes – although initially established to drive the establishment of a Joint strategic plan across member authorities ASELA has evolved and this is no longer the case.)

ASELA has spent the past three years looking at how working together across local government boundaries will help deliver improved infrastructure and economic growth.

ASELA aims to support the south Essex region to be a UK leader in economic recovery, and drive sustained economic growth and prosperity within its communities. There is a bold and ambitious plan to create greater prosperity and quality of life for all its residents and for the benefit of the UK. Part of this plan will be to ensure its businesses and residents recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, improve the economy locally and nationally.

On 31 July 2020, ASELA submitted a [Growth and Recovery Prospectus](#) to central government. The ambition outlines ten delivery programmes across five key themes (Economy, Transport & Connectivity, Infrastructure & Housing, Climate & Environment, and Vibrant Communities) and will see south Essex contribute an additional £15 billion to the UK economy and create 100,000 new jobs by 2050.

These programmes will directly and indirectly benefit Castle Point and its residents.

ASELA Anchor Programmes

Since the submission of the ASELA Growth and Recovery Prospectus last year there has been substantial progress on delivery of five ‘Anchor Programmes’

In 2021, ASELA will enhance focus on delivery of five ‘anchor programmes’:

1. South Essex Estuary (SEE) Park – providing a parkland setting across 1/3 of South Essex.
2. Superfast Digital – to provide every household, business and community facility with highspeed digital connectivity by 2025
3. Technical University – Partnership with employers, providers and stake holders to provide skills for high skilled jobs

4. Thames Freeport - driving economic growth across the Thames estuary
5. Infrastructure and Housing – ensuring infrastructure is delivered to support homes across the region

The latest position on these is set out in **Appendix 2** for Members information.

These programmes combine to provide strategic place shaping and delivery on a regional scale that is not possible by any organisation or agency acting alone or in sub partnerships.

By working together across all South Essex Local Authorities, the area has been able to create a compelling case for a trail blazing strategic place-based partnership with Homes England. Now agreed in principle, by the Homes England Executive Board, it will be just one of two such partnerships in the country. A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared for ASELA's consideration, along with a joint Business Plan. The intention is that these will be agreed by ASELA and formally launched in September 2021. Homes England remain committed to provide capacity funding for this programme for 2021/22 and the outputs of the joint work on the Business Plan will also feed into the Spending Review in the Autumn.

There is now a clear requirement for governance arrangements to oversee these programmes, to provide transparency over decision making, to demonstrate to investors that South Essex is "investor ready" and provide the accountability arrangements for investment received. South Essex Leaders have agreed that the most appropriate form of governance in this respect would be a Joint Committee.

6. Proposals

An ASELA Joint Committee

What is a Joint Committee?

At the ASELA Leaders meeting on 10th December 2020, it was agreed that work would be undertaken to seek approval from constituent authorities to move towards a joint committee arrangement. Attached at Appendix 1a is a report from ASELA Leaders that was approved on 21 January 2021 to be considered by all ASELA councils. The paper recommends a Joint Committee model in order to provide appropriate overview, scrutiny and co-opted membership and allow ASELA to deliver its ambitious growth programme.

A Joint Committee formalises the business of an Association and would be established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The joint committee would set the strategic and policy direction as well as commission and co-ordinate the delivery of projects and programmes.

Joint committees have been established between local authorities for various purposes, including:

- To provide a forum for local authorities to collaborate on and co-ordinate plans affecting a particular area/region.
- To direct shared services arrangements, whether for front line functions, such as waste collection and disposal, or back office services, such as finance, HR and IT services, including joint procurement.
- To manage parks extending across local authority boundaries, crematoria, and museums and other cultural or recreational attractions.

Joint committees are a common and favoured feature amongst councils because they provide a transparent and accountable means to achieving combined goals whilst ensuring the individual sovereignty of each body remains. Joint committees do not become involved in the daily business of councils outside of the purposes for which it was established.

There would, therefore, be no transfer of powers currently held by any constituent authority to the Joint Committee. It would also mean that no decision could be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority, unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal.

An example of a Joint Committee is the South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee which was formed by the collaboration of seven councils in Essex and manages the South Essex Parking Partnership.

Why is a Joint Committee right for ASELA?

The current governance arrangement is based upon a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), agreed by all Councils in January 2018, which recognised that decision making and accountability arrangements for ASELA would need to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

In response to progress of the programme of work into the delivery stage, it is now an appropriate time to review the current arrangement. With the imminent requirement to manage large sums of government and private sector investment, there is a pressing need not only to demonstrate increased confidence in financial management but also to validate a combined commitment to the governance and operational delivery of the programme. A more formal, accountable, and transparent governance arrangement would also support:

- enhanced openness and accountability to constituent authorities and residents;
- providing greater local control over direct investment and related financial considerations
- a signal to private investors, especially long-term investors, that ASELA is capable and committed; and

- a signal to government departments and investors that ASELA is financially sustainable, and a trusted and reliable delivery partner.

In addition to oversight of the growth delivery programme a Joint Committee:

- provides management and oversight of expenditure and activity associated with funding received from Government and other sources.
- will agree the level of financial contributions to be sought from each local authority to support the work of ASELA.
- ensures effective relationships and collaboration as necessary to achieve ASELA's vision, with central Government and other regional and national bodies including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Practicalities of the ASELA Joint Committee

The proposal for an ASELA Joint Committee would include the following features:

- Eight members and co-opted members are anticipated: Basildon; Brentwood; Castle Point; Essex County Council; Rochford; Southend, Thurrock; and The Federated Board of the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Each Council will appoint a member.
- A Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed.
- Matters will be decided through voting (co-opted members can speak but not vote) and decisions reached through majority.
- **No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal.** Thereby maintaining the principle of subsidiarity.
- One authority will act as an 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA which shall be agreed by the Joint Committee. Currently Castle Point Borough Council is the accountable body.
- A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the joint committee
- It is proposed that scrutiny of ASELA will take place through each partner councils' existing processes as the most efficient and effective arrangement at the present time. However, arrangements should be kept under review.

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide ASELA with the governance arrangements required to enable delivery of the Growth and Recovery Prospectus and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programme.

Alternative Options Considered

Do nothing – this option is not recommended. Continuing with the existing informal arrangements does not support ASELA's ability to secure large scale investment from Government and the private sector. Nor does it provide transparency of decision making or accountability for delivery.

If a Council determines that it does not want to join the Joint Committee, it is proposed that it can become a co-opted member. Councils that are co-opted members of the Committee will be able to speak on all matters in front of the Committee but will not have a vote. If a Council is not a member of a joint committee it will have not agreed to jointly discharge their functions with the other members of the committee and in essence the Joint Committee would not cover that Council area.

The Council would not benefit from any of the programmes, funding or investment.

The recommendation, therefore, is that each ASELA Council should use its powers and agree to become members of the joint committee. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the council to develop proposals that provide the best possible outcome for Castle Point's residents while satisfying Government requirements.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

As mentioned earlier Castle Point Borough Council is currently acting as the accountable body for ASELA.

To date an annual subscription of £60,000 has been paid to ASELA by each of the member authorities and an equivalent sum has been built into the Council's 2021/22 budget. Going forward it will be for the Joint Committee to decide its required budget and associated contributions, if any, required from each constituent authority. The intention is that the Joint Committee should explore funding from other sources such as grants and private sector investment. If there was any further call on the public purse, the Joint Committee would need to be satisfied that the sums requested were justified and provided value for money. The Leader would not be entitled to agree any financial commitment on behalf of the Council without the relevant internal Council governance being satisfied

(b) Legal Implications

Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a local authority to enter into arrangements for the discharge of its functions jointly with, or by one or more other authority. Under Section 102 of the 1972 Act, local authorities are empowered to appoint Joint Committees.

Under the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the 2012 Regulations"), if the Council proposed to establish a Joint Committee and the arrangements involved the discharge by the Joint Committee of:

- a. one or more of the Council's non-executive functions, then only Full Council can give approval to the proposal (including the number of Members and their term of office); or

b. one or more of the Council's executive functions, then only the Executive can give approval to the proposal (including the number of Members and their term of office) and all borough Councillors on the Joint Committee must be Executive Councillors; or

c. one or more of the Council's executive functions and one or more nonexecutive functions, then the appointment of Councillors to the Joint Committee (including the number of Members and their term of office) shall be made by Full Council with the agreement of the Executive, provided that at least one Member of the Joint Committee is an Executive Councillor.

There would be no transfer of powers or functions currently held by the Council to the Joint Committee. It would also mean that no decision could be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of the Council, unless it indicates its agreement with the proposal. This would require a further report back to Cabinet or Council dependent on the discharge of the functions under the 2012 Regulations.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

There are no impacts either positive or negative on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

These are addressed by this report.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

A decision to join the Joint Committee would have immediate effect.

Continuing with the existing informal arrangements does not support ASELA's ability to secure large scale investment from Government and the private sector. Nor does it provide transparency of decision making or accountability for delivery.

Councils that are co-opted members of the Committee will be able to speak on all matters in front of the Committee but will not have a vote. If a Council is not a member of a joint committee it will have not agreed to jointly discharge their functions with the other members of the committee and in essence the Joint Committee would not cover that Council area.

The Council would not benefit from any of the programmes, funding or investment.

8. Background Papers

Minute 56 Special Council 17.1.2018

Cabinet Item 7 22 July 2020

**Report from the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
Good Governance and Accountability – Proposals for Establishment of a Formal Joint Committee**

Introduction

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for the future governance arrangements for the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and to seek agreement of constituent authorities to now form a Statutory Joint Committee.
- 1.1 The ASELA Board is currently operating to provide growth and strategic place leadership across the whole of the South Essex region and comprises the local authorities of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock. Its governance is based on a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was agreed by all Councils in January 2018. The MOU recognises that the decision making and accountability arrangements for ASELA will need regular review to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- 1.2 South Essex has received an initial tranche of funding from Government, and is currently in negotiation with Government and the Private Sector for new investment to support economic growth. This will require a formal governance model to provide accountability to investors and good governance and transparency in the local management and use of any funds received.
- 1.3 In addition, the ASELA Board has served and is likely to continue to need to provide the aligned functions of:
 - a. Strategic direction, monitoring, delivery and co-ordination of current and future Growth strategy, programmes and implementation of any Growth funding
 - b. Governance body that secures strategic collaboration and delivery across the councils and with the federated body of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on place, economic performance and infrastructure matters
 - c. Acts as the place leadership body for South Essex that provides a single voice to Government, also identifies, promotes, lobbies for South Essex's interests and for funding
 - d. Oversight, accountability for and prioritisation of any South Essex investment fund

Recommendations

- 1. **That constituent local authorities formally agree to become a members of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Joint Committee in accordance with governing documents set out in Appendix 1, and**
- 2. **Appoint the Leader of the Council as their representative on the Joint Committee, and a substitute member as set out in the governing documents.**

Background

The ASELA Board and its current programmes

- 2.0 The ASELA Partners have invested significant capital in the work that has been undertaken on the Growth programmes so far, through the dedication of political, officer and financial resources. The arrangements are tailored to meet the collective requirements of South Essex and the progress that it has made is important. The programmes that have been developed and the outcomes that are being sought in place and economic terms will deliver significant benefits to South Essex residents and businesses.
- 2.1 Since the submission of the ASELA Growth and Recovery Prospectus there has been substantial progress in delivering the core programmes as set out in the report from ASELA to constituent authorities in December 2020, and especially in certain programmes. This includes:
- Creative Industries – work has been commissioned to produce a sector designed set of investable infrastructure projects that will focus on key creative clusters across South Essex and the specific maker space and skills support needed to enable them to flourish;
 - New Generation University – a specialist team have been appointed to develop a feasibility study, which will report to ASELA Leaders in March 21; working to a plan to have the first graduate apprenticeships commence in September 2023;
 - Digital Network – roll out of the local full fibre network remains on track and work with the Thames Estuary Growth Board on a single network and data centres/services is due to be launched;
 - Infrastructure and Housing – as well as the pipeline of shovel ready schemes, strategic engagement with Housing Associations is underway, and a summit meeting with Small Medium Sized Enterprises took place in January;
 - South Essex Estuary Park – an award winner of blue and green infrastructure design, and work is now pressing ahead to build the detailed master planning and infrastructure investment proposals needed to deliver a pathfinder implementation project across the Central Thames Marshlands area;
 - Stimulating Economic Recovery – the Economic Recovery Taskforce with Opportunity South Essex has been established for over two months: additional resources have been made available to support the Growth Hubs, which has seen unprecedented demand; and there is a clear action plan in place to support jobs.

There have also been a number of discussions with investors and Homes England have now confirmed £265k capacity funding for 2020/21 to support work on infrastructure and housing. It is clear, that if South Essex is to secure the level of investment that is required to achieve its full potential, the area needs to represent its collective scale; a pipeline of projects that deliver long term returns; unity and joint commitment.

- 2.2 The ASELA Board is focused solely on economic growth and recovery activity that can only be achieved collectively and on programmes that cross local authority boundaries. It is not concerned with any matter that it is the preserve of a constituent council. Its focus also keeps it separate from other questions about the future delivery of public services in South Essex.

Establishing a formal model of Governance for ASELA

- 3.0 ASELA recognised in its report to constituent local authorities in July 2020 the importance of ensuring that its governance and operational arrangements are fit for purpose. The Association committed to bring forward proposals for more formal interim governance arrangements for ASELA which this report now does.
- 3.1 There are several benefits for moving to a new model of decision making and accountability. These include:
- enhanced openness and accountability to constituent authorities; the joint committee will operate in accordance with the same legislative provisions as other local authority committees.
 - providing a more formal governance model to provide accountability to Government and Private Sector investors;
 - providing greater local control over direct investment and related financial considerations e.g. s106
 - good governance and transparency in the local management and use of any funds received; and
 - giving unity and joint commitment to ASELA and delivery of the programme developed.
- 3.1 Continuing with the existing informal governance arrangements does not support securing large scale investment from Government and the Private sector. Nor does it provide transparency of decision making or accountability for delivery. The recommendation therefore, is that each ASELA Council should use its powers and agree to form part of a Joint Committee.

The main features of an ASELA Joint Committee

- 4.0 Proposed governing documents for the joint committee which each constituent authority is asked to adopt is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.1 A summary of the main features is set out below:
- The Joint Committee of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities will be formally established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Joint Committee will comprise those authorities who formally agree to being a member and become effective from 1 April 2021.
 - Each Council will have a seat at the Committee and appoint a member to the joint committee who shall have voting rights – it is intended that this will be the Leader of the Council. Another elected member will act as a substitute member to act in the absence of the member appointed.

- A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the Joint Committee. Appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair shall take place by the end of June each year, following the annual meetings of all constituent councils. The Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee when present. No business of the joint committee shall be transacted unless at least half of constituent council Members or substitute members appointed are present.
- Any matters that are to be decided by the joint committee will be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that question. Such a majority will include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- Each member, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, will have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote. If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried.
- No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal. Thereby maintaining the principle of subsidiarity
- An 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee
- A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the joint committee
- Principles of good governance require that there should be some form of scrutiny of the decision-making process within the Joint Committee. It is considered that the most efficient and effective arrangement at the present time, would be for this to be provided for via each of the partner councils' individual Overview & Scrutiny process.
- The governing documents and arrangements set out therein shall be subject to review by the joint committee on an annual basis.

- 4.1 If a Council determines that it does not want to join the joint committee, it is proposed that it may become a co-opted member. Councils that are co-opted members of the joint committee will be able to speak on all matters in front of the committee, but will not have a vote. If a Council is not a member of a joint committee and it will have not agreed to jointly discharge their functions with the other members of the committee, then the joint committee would not cover that Council area.
- 4.2 The joint committee shall have the ability to appoint other appropriate co-opted members who would not have voting rights. It is anticipated that this is likely to include The Federated Board of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)

Joint Committee Agreement and Constitution

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.
- 1.2 The Joint Committee will focus on the strategic opportunities, regardless of individual local authority boundaries for the South Essex economic corridor to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 1.3 This agreement sets out how the ASELA Joint Committee shall operate in seeking to deliver its overarching purpose, what powers and functions it holds, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.
- 1.4 The Joint Committee shall come into effect from 1st April 2021.
- 1.5 The Association shall operate and discharge its functions through a Joint Committee between all local authorities formally established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and who have agreed to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the joint committee. It has * members, being
 - a councillor (elected member) appointed by each of the 'Constituent Councils' which includes -
 - o *

(to be updated to reflect the authorities who have agreed to form the joint committee)
- 1.6 The Joint Committee shall have the ability to agree to additional local authorities, who it is considered are able to contribute to the aims of the Joint Committee, to join the committee as a 'constituent council'. Any such authorities will need to have formally agreed, in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the Joint Committee.
- 1.7 The Joint Committee is subject to overview and scrutiny through constituent authorities' own scrutiny arrangements.

2. Principles

- 2.1 This agreement and the terms of reference provide a basis for the work of ASELA. A review of this document shall be undertaken by the Joint Committee at the end of the 2021/22 municipal year and annually thereafter
- 2.2 There shall be no transfer of powers currently held by any constituent authority to the Joint Committee and this document makes no provision for such.
- 2.3 No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent borough/district authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal.
- 2.4 An 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee
- 2.5 A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the Joint Committee which shall be agreed by the Joint Committee

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

A. JOINT COMMITTEE

1. Overview

- 1.1 The Joint Committee has been formally established by all constituent councils in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to discharge the functions of ASELA as set out in this Constitution.

2. Membership

2.1 Appointment.

Membership of the Joint Committee shall consist of the Constituent Council Members who comprise the Joint Committee, whereby each shall appoint –

- (i) one of its elected members as a member of the joint committee, preferably to be the Leader of the Council; and
- (ii) another elected member as a substitute member to act in the absence of the member appointed under (i) above

The joint committee shall have the ability to appoint co-opted members (without voting rights) to the Joint Committee as they see fit.

2.2 Term of Membership

- (a) Members or substitute members cease to be a member or substitute member of the joint committee –
 - (i) if they cease to be a member of the constituent council that appointed them; or
 - (ii) A person may resign as a member or substitute member of the joint committee by written notice served on the proper officer of the council of the constituent council that appointed them; or
- (b) Where a member or substitute member's appointment ceases the constituent council that made the appointment must, as soon as practicable, give written notice of that fact to the Association's Secretariat and appoint another of its elected members in that person's place;
- (c) A constituent council may at any time terminate the appointment of a member or substitute member appointed by it to the Association and appoint another of its elected members in that person's place.

- (d) Where a constituent council exercises its power under subparagraph (c), it must give written notice of the new appointment and the termination of the previous appointment to the Association's Secretariat and the new appointment shall take effect and the previous appointment terminate with immediate effect.

2.3 **Chair** – A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the joint committee. Appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair shall take place by the end of June each year, following the annual meetings of all constituent councils. The Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee when present.

2.4 **Quorum.** No business of the joint committee shall be transacted unless at least half of the Constituent Council Members or substitute members appointed are present.

3. **Meetings and Procedure**

3.1 **Voting**

- (a) Subject to those matters at paragraph (d) below, any matters that are to be decided by the joint committee are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that question at a meeting of the joint committee, such majority to include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- (b) Each member, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, is in post is to have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote.
- (c) If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried. There shall be no casting vote.
- (d) A decision on a question relating to a matter that is in the preserve of a specific local authority shall require the support and agreement of that specific authority.

3.2 **Procedure**

- (a) The joint committee will conduct business in accordance with the meeting standing orders set out in these terms of reference.
- (b) The proceedings of the joint committee are not invalidated by any vacancy among its members or substitute members or by any defect in the appointment or qualifications of any member or substitute member

4. Sub-Committees and advisory bodies

4.1 The joint committee -

- (a) may establish such other sub-committees, which may include the co-option of any non-voting members, as it sees fit; and
- (b) may establish such advisory panels and ad-hoc working groups as it considers may be expedient to assist it.

5. Delegation

5.1 The exercise of the joint committee's functions may be delegated to:

- (a) a sub-committee; or
- (b) an officer.

A record of such delegations shall be maintained

6. Core Purpose, Aims and Functions

Core Purpose and aims

- 6.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.
- 6.2 The Joint Committee will focus on the strategic opportunities, regardless of individual local authority boundaries for the South Essex economic corridor to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 6.3 The primary aims of Joint Committee will be to:
 - Provide place leadership;
 - Open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development by developing a spatial strategy;
 - Transform transport connectivity;
 - Support the sectors of industrial opportunity;
 - Shape local labour & skill markets;
 - Create a fully digitally-enabled place;
 - Secure a sustainable energy supply;
 - Influence and secure funding for necessary strategic infrastructure; and
 - Work with and provide a voice for South Essex working with the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Principles of collaboration

6.4 Collaboration will be focused on three key areas:

- Tackling problems we can't solve individually
- Creating collective scale and impact
- Providing the place leadership to promote and sell the 'South Essex' proposition

Specific Functions

6.5 The functions of the joint committee are as follows:

- a. Provide oversight and direction of programmes of work aligned to the core purpose and aims of the joint committee set out above.
- b. Commissioning and co-ordination of delivery of programmes, projects and development of policy against in accordance with the core purpose and aims of the joint committee and allocate resources accordingly
- c. Submission of bids for funding to Central Government and other bodies as considered appropriate to deliver the vision and objectives, subject to the advice and approval of the Chief Financial (S151) Officer of the accountable body.
- d. Provide oversight and direction associated with the Joint Strategic Plan and approve any strategic planning framework proposals for consideration by individual local authorities
- e. Management and oversight of expenditure and activity associated with funding received from Government and other sources
- f. Agree the level of financial contributions required from each local authority as a member of the joint committee to support its work.
- g. Ensure effective relationships and collaboration as necessary to achieve ASELA's vision, with Central Government and other regional and national bodies including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Opportunity South Essex.

MEETINGS STANDING ORDERS

1. Interpretation, Suspension and Chair's Ruling

- 1.1 These Standing Orders apply to meetings of the joint committee, and where appropriate, to meetings of any sub-committees. Any reference to committee in these Standing Orders also refers to sub-committees.
- 1.5 The ruling of the Chair on the interpretation of these Standing Orders in relation to all questions of order and matters arising in debate shall be final.

2. Revisions to Standing Orders

- 2.1 Standing Orders may be changed by the joint committee, which will be subject to a unanimous vote, either at the Annual Meeting or by a motion on notice made at a meeting of the joint committee.

3. Chairing of Meetings

- 3.1 The Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee whenever he or she is present.
- 3.2 In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting shall appoint another member to chair the meeting.
- 3.3 The Chair (or the Vice Chair or any other Member presiding in the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair) shall not have a casting vote on any issue.

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Annual Meeting of the joint committee shall be held annually in June on a date and at a time following the annual meetings of all 'Constituent Councils'
- 4.2 Ordinary meetings of committee for the transaction of general business shall be held on such dates and at such times as the committee shall determine.
- 4.3 All meetings of the committee shall be open to the public (including the press) except to the extent that they are excluded whether during the whole or part of the proceedings either:
 - (a) In accordance with Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972; or

- (b) By resolution passed to exclude the public on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. Any such Resolution shall identify the proceedings or the part of the proceedings to which it applies and state the description, in terms of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 of the exempt information giving rise to the exclusion of the public.

5. Notice of Meetings

- 5.1 At least five clear working days before a meeting of a committee:
 - (a) notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be published;
 - (b) a summons to attend the meeting, specifying an agenda for the meeting, shall be sent to all Members of the joint committee by electronic mail.
- 5.2 Lack of service on a member of the committee of the summons shall not affect the validity of a meeting of the committee.
- 5.3 Each constituent authority shall ensure a link from their own website to information regarding meetings of ASELA and copies of agendas and minutes.

6. Meeting Agendas

- 6.1 The Chair of the Joint Committee will decide upon the agenda for the meetings. The Chair may put on the agenda of any meeting any matter which the Chair wishes.
- 6.2 Any Member of the committee may require that an item is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of the committee for consideration.
- 6.3 Any item proposed to be included on the agenda for any meeting of the committee in accordance with sub-paragraph 6.2 above, which is not submitted in writing before 7 working days of the meeting, shall not be included on the agenda for that meeting unless it is agreed by the Chair. In this case the amended agenda for the meeting will state the reason for the late acceptance of any such item.

- 6.4 The agenda for each meeting of the committee shall set out the items of business requested by Members (if any) in the order in which they have been received, unless the Member concerned has given notice prior to the issue of the agenda, for it to be withdrawn. If the Member concerned is not present at the meeting when an item of which they have given notice comes up for discussion, this item shall, unless the committee decides otherwise, be treated as withdrawn.

7. Access to Information

- 7.1 Access to agenda, reports and associated documents in respect of a meeting of the committee are as determined by Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Meetings and Documents of Certain Authorities, Committees and Sub-Committees).

8. Quorum

- 8.1 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of a committee unless at least half of the Members or substitute members appointed by the constituent councils are present.
- 8.2 If at the time for which a meeting is called, and for 15 minutes thereafter, a quorum is not present, then no meeting shall take place.
- 8.3 If during any meeting of the committee the Chair, after counting the number of Members present, declares that there is not a quorum present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair. If there is no quorum and the Chair does not fix a time for the reconvened meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the committee.

9. Order of Business

- 9.1 At every meeting of the committee the order of business shall be to select a person to preside if the Chair or Vice-Chair are absent and thereafter shall be in accordance with the order specified in the agenda for the meeting, except that such order may be varied -
- (a) by the Chair at his/her discretion; or
 - (b) on a request agreed by the committee
- 9.2 The Chair may bring before the committee at their discretion any matter that they consider appropriate to bring before the committee as a matter of urgency.

10. Standing Orders of Debate

- 10.1 The Chair shall decide all questions of order and any ruling by the Chair upon such questions and the interpretation of these Standing Orders of Procedure and upon matters rising in debate shall be final and shall not be open to discussion.

11. Voting

- 11.1 Subject to sub-paragraph 11.6, any matters that are to be decided by the committee are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that matter at a meeting of the committee, such majority to include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- 11.2 Each member appointed according to the provisions in paragraph 1, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, and the Chair, or the Vice-Chair acting in his or her place is to have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote.
- 11.3 If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried.
- 11.4 Whenever a vote is taken at meetings it shall be by a show of hands. On the requisition of any member, supported by one other Member who signifies their support, and before the vote is taken, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Member present gave their vote for or against that question or abstained from voting.
- 11.5 A Member, or Substitute Member acting in that Member's place may demand that his/her vote be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.
- 11.6 A decision on a question relating to a matter that is in the preserve of a specific local authority shall require the support and agreement of that specific authority.

12. Conduct

- 12.2 In the event of general disturbance, which in the opinion of the Chair, renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impossible the Chair, in addition to any other power vested in the Chair may, without question put, adjourn the meeting of the committee for such period as the Chair considers expedient.

13. Disturbance by Members of the Public

- 13.1 If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting of the committee the Chair shall warn him or her. If they continue the interruption the Chair shall order his or her removal from the room. In the case of general disturbance in any part of the room open to the public the Chair shall order that part to be cleared.

14. Notification and Declaration of Interests

Members of the committee shall comply with their respective councils Code of Conduct for Members.

1. South Essex Estuary (SEE) Park - This flagship programme aims to provide an extraordinary parkland setting that encompasses all of South Essex, bringing environmental, social, and economic value to the region. It will cover 1/3 of South Essex at 23,000ha (in line with government's aim of protecting 30% of England's countryside by 2030) and will comprise five large-scale landscapes, selected because of their capacity to perform multiple functions, while offering many benefits. ASELA leaders gave support for pressing ahead with building the case for investment in the SEE Park and for working up more detailed proposals to deliver a pathfinder implementation project across the Central Thames Marshlands. Since then work has been underway to design an implementation approach around creating early successes; building momentum and confidence with local residents and investors alike. Initial activity over the next 12-24 months will be focused around four workstreams:

- a. Launching the SEE Park - with a distinctive branding, establishing a marketing & comms plan with web/social media presence; and creating options for a future operating model;
- b. Development of a Landscape framework plan - and design guide to ensure future development work across the 5 constituent landscapes reflects the GBI Strategy and objectives;
- c. Delivery of the Central Thames Pathfinder - as a 'demonstrator' project with a series of wave1 implementation deliverables within an initial 18-month period;
- d. Creating a Green Finance Strategy – looking to access Government grant / capacity funding in the short-term and to build a long-term green investment model to attract private sector infrastructure funding.

A case for investment has been developed and it describes the work and resource envelope (c.£7.5m) that will be needed to get the SEE Park up and running and to deliver the Central Thames Marshlands Pathfinder. The majority of funding for this will need to be sourced from outside of direct investments from ASELA Local Authorities; through a combination of related strategic programmes such as Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) and the Thames Freeport, Government capacity funding and private sector green financing models. This is the main area of focus over the coming months.

2. Superfast Digital - the principal objective of this programme is to provide gigabit connectivity to every household and premises by 2025. The Local Full Fibre Network project which was funded by DCMS (£4.4m) to connect fibre to public sector owned facilities has been delivered on time and on budget resulting in 130km of spine and 129 public buildings being connected with full fibre across South Essex. In addition to the LFFN funding, ASELA has secured from the South East Local Economic Partnership an additional £2.5 million of MHCLG funding to extend the current LFFN deployment. This funding means that by March 2022 the fibre rollout will have been extended into more rural areas, specifically around Brentwood borough and Rochford district, and connected up additional public sector/community sites with full fibre including: GP surgeries/care homes, rural schools, community centres and village halls; is complete. This activity is attracting significant private sector investment and up to £100m has now been committed to South Essex by Openreach, Virgin and CityFibre collectively. The next phase of this programme will be to develop the digital solutions that will be at the heart of the Thames Freeport, the Technical University and the South Essex Estuary Park.

3. Technical University - in March 2021 ASELA Leaders approved the feasibility study for a technical university. The intention is to create degree apprenticeships with local employers, providing opportunities for local people, leading to high skill local jobs. This is a business led venture, with a number of the leading businesses in the area identifying requirements for both young people and

reskilling of existing employees. A Partnership Board has now been established, which includes senior representation from DP World, Leonardos, Olympus, Nat West Bank, Ford, and Southend Airport. Higher Education providers are also represented through Anglia Ruskin University, University of Essex and the University of East Anglia. The programme will reach into the school system to encourage students from communities that wouldn't historically have considered higher skills as attainable. The next steps that are now underway include the procurement of a Higher Education provider for the first tranche of degree apprenticeship courses, starting in September 2023, and the development of the full business case by November 2021.

4. Thames Freeport - the Government announced in the Chancellor's March Budget, that the Thames Freeport was one of eight successful bids. The Thames Freeport bid is private sector led (DP World, Forth Ports, and Ford) and covers the geography of the local authorities of Thurrock, LB Havering, LB Barking and Dagenham. Thurrock Council is the lead local authority and the accountable body for public sector investment. Since March 2021 the Government has agreed the interim governance arrangements and approved initial capacity funding of £300k. Work on an Outline Business Case is now underway and the target is to submit to Government by 31 July. Simultaneously work is in train to establish Tax and Custom sites within the Freeport area. These bring significant financial incentives to the private sector partners and create the potential for business rate retention for the designated areas. The initial feasibility study identified substantial economic benefits including over 25,000 new jobs and over £5bn of inward investment. In addition, the priority policy objective is to capitalise on the Thames Freeport opportunity as a catalyst for regeneration and levelling up deprived communities. These benefits and policy areas will be tested and expanded as part of the business case development over the following weeks.

5. Infrastructure and Housing - the focus of this programme is the provision of infrastructure and homes that are needed to support the economy and meet existing housing needs. Over the last 12 months a detailed pipeline of housing schemes has been developed with a specific focus on schemes that are stalled because of issues of viability. By working together across all South Essex Local Authorities, the area has been able to create a compelling case for a trail blazing strategic place based partnership with Homes England. Now agreed in principle, by the Homes England Executive Board, it will be just one of two such partnerships in the country. A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared for Leaders' consideration, along with a joint Business Plan. The intention is that these will be agreed and formally launched in September 2021. Homes England remain committed to provide capacity funding for this programme for 2021/22 and the outputs of the joint work on the Business Plan will also feed into the Spending Review in the Autumn. In addition to this activity, progress is also being made through joint working with regional housing associations, through a new initiative to create greater opportunities for small and medium sized builders.

CABINET

22nd September 2021

Subject: Petition

Cabinet Member: Councillor Sheldon – Leader of the Council

- 1. Purpose of Report**
To report receipt of a Petition to Council and determine the response if any.
 - 2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**
This report is linked to the Council's priority of "*A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council*".
 - 3. Recommendations**
To note receipt of the Petition and inform the Chief petitioner of the actions taken to address the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review.
-

- 4. Background**
Council Procedure Rules require that a report be made to determine the response action required to a petition submitted to Council.

- 5. Proposals**
A Petition was submitted to Council through 38 degrees an online campaigning organisation. The petition contains 1,616 signatures of 2000 and is as follows:

'We the residents of Castle Point demand an immediate government inquiry into the behaviour of those members (and former members) of the local Conservative party, implicated in the PEER Review and/or Wilkin Chapman report.

Why is this important?

We demand a full government inquiry into what has been going on here in Castle Point, so that any lessons can be learned and those found guilty of any serious wrongdoing can be held to account.

It is time for change here in Castle Point.'

Petition can be viewed online.

No action is proposed to address the petition which is addressed to Government and concerns a local political party.

Cabinet will of course be aware that actions have been implemented to address in full the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review referred to including a new Development Management Committee with stringent procedures and safe guards in place so that resident may have confidence in decisions made by the Committee. These were considered and approved by Cabinet in July 2020.

Cabinet may wish to refer the Petition to Government.

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

None to be addressed by this report.

b. Legal implications

None to be addressed by this report.

c. Human resources and equality implications

None to be addressed by this report

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

None to be addressed by this report

7. Background Papers:

Petition

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/government-inquiry-into-castle-point-borough-council>