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**Chief Executive**

## **CABINET AGENDA**

**Date:** **Wednesday 15th January 2014**

**Time:** **6.00pm – N.B. TIME**

**Venue:** **Council Chamber**

**This meeting will be webcast live on the internet.**

### **Membership:**

<b>Councillor Mrs Challis OBE (Chairman)</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Councillor Stanley (Vice Chairman)</b>	<b>Deputy Leader of the Council Corporate Policy, Resources and Performance</b>
<b>Councillor Burch</b>	<b>Leisure</b>
<b>Councillor Dick</b>	<b>Responding to Challenge</b>
<b>Councillor Mrs B. Egan</b>	<b>Homes and Customer Engagement</b>
<b>Councillor Mrs Goodwin</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>
<b>Councillor Howard</b>	<b>Waste Floods and Water Management</b>
<b>Councillor G. Isaacs</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities</b>
<b>Councillor Riley</b>	<b>Environment and Street Scene</b>
<b>Councillor Smith</b>	<b>Economic Development &amp; Business Liaison</b>

<b>Cabinet Enquiries:</b>	<b>John Riley, ext. 2417</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>6/2013/2014</b>
<b>Publication Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 7th January 2014</b>

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**AGENDA  
PART I  
(Business to be taken in public)**

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**1. Apologies**

**2. Members' Interests**

**3. Minutes**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2013

**4. Forward Plan**

To review the Forward Plan - *(Report of the Leader of the Council)*

**5. Environment - Civic Pride**

**6. Regeneration and Homes**

**6(a) Regeneration Update**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Leader of the Council*

*Cabinet Member Economic Development & Business Liaison)*

**6(b) Housing Progress Report**

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Homes & Customer Engagement)*

**6(c) John H Burrows Park**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Economic Development & Business Liaison)*

**7. Improving the Council**

**7(a) Corporate Plan**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member Corporate Policy Resources & Performance)*

**7(b) Technical Reforms of Council Tax**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Corporate Policy Resources & Performance)*

**7(c) Authority to Represent the Council**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Corporate Policy Resources & Performance)*

## **8. Community Safety**

### **8(a) Update on Safer Communities Initiatives**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities)*

## **9. Matters to be referred from /to Policy & Scrutiny Committees**

## **10. Matters to be referred from /to the Statutory Committees**

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### **PART II**

**(Business to be taken in private)**

**(Item to be considered with the press and public excluded from the meeting)**

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### **6(b) Housing Progress – Update - Report back on Tenders**

Exempt Information Paragraph 3 Local Government (Access to Information)  
(Variation) Order 2006

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Homes & Customer Engagement)*



## **CABINET**

**20TH NOVEMBER 2013**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Mrs Challis OBE,	Leader of the Council
Chairman	
Councillor Stanley	Corporate Policy, Resources and Performance
Councillor Burch	Leisure
Councillor Dick	Responding to Challenge
Councillor Mrs Goodwin	Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Howard	Waste, Floods and Water Management
Councillor Isaacs	Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities
Councillor Riley	Environment and Street Scene
Councillor Smith	Economic Development & Business Liaison

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Mrs Egan.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Blackwell, Hart, Ladzrie, Mrs G Watson and N.Watson.

### **57. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Mrs Challis, OBE., disclosed non-pecuniary interests in relevant agenda items as a member of the Active Essex Board, the Essex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB.

Councillor Howard disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5(a) – Leisure and Recreation Strategy – as a trustee of the Veolia Trust.

### **58. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16.10.2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **59. FORWARD PLAN**

To comply with regulations under the Localism Act 2011, the Leader of the Council presented the Forward Plan to the meeting which outlined key decisions likely to be taken within the next quarter 2013. The plan was reviewed each month.

**Resolved** – To note and approve the Forward Plan as amended.

## **60. LEISURE AND RECREATION STRATEGY**

The Cabinet received a report on proposals for the development of a Leisure and Recreation Strategy.

Councillor Burch responded to questions and statements about the inclusion of the golf course, the playground renewal scheme, the use of the leisure centre as an emergency rest centre, the inclusion of all councillors through the consultation process and the possible inclusion of the athletics track at Waterside Farm Recreation Ground.

### **Resolved:**

1. To approve the preparation of a Leisure and Recreation Strategy and notes the timetable for development of the Strategy by July 2014.
2. To note the funding achieved for additional leisure and recreation provision.

## **61. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2013/14 – REVISED WASTE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Cabinet received a report on the revised waste collection arrangements over the Christmas and New Year period.

Cabinet Members commented on the exceptional work undertaken by the waste collection teams.

**Resolved:** To note the waste collection schedule for the Christmas and New Year period.

## **62. FLOODING UPDATE**

The Cabinet considered a report on plans for a Surface Water Engagement Day.

Councillor Howard updated Cabinet on multi-agency meetings held to discuss the response to recent flooding incidents in South Essex, and he advised on the date and arrangements for a Surface water Engagement Day. Councillor Howard also responded to statements from members broadly supporting the opportunity for residents to address their questions and concerns to the Lead Flood Authority at the engagement day.

**Resolved:** To note the content of the report and the arrangements for a Surface Water Engagement event to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre between 4pm and 7pm.

### **63. THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX PLANNING AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered a report seeking endorsement of the Thames Gateway South Essex Planning and Transport Strategy.

Councillor Mrs Challis OBE., explained the significant opportunities presented by the strategy for regeneration and economic growth across South Essex.

**Resolved:** To endorse the Thames Gateway South Essex Planning and Transport Strategy in order to enable the Planning and Transport Board to work effectively to deliver key regeneration and transport schemes across the South Essex area.

### **64. NEW LOCAL PLAN – ANNUAL HOUSING SUPPLY EVIDENCE**

The Cabinet received a report on the findings of annual housing supply evidence, prepared to inform the preparation of the New Local Plan.

Councillor Smith responded to questions and statements.

**Resolved:** To approve the inclusion of the Castle Point Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update 2013 and the Castle Point Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13 within the evidence base for the New Local Plan, and to have regard to them in the plan-making process.

### **65. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Cabinet received a report on the latest position in relation to the General Fund financial forecast for the period 2013/15.

Councillor Stanley responded to questions and statements about cashable efficiencies, the current year efficiency work programme and Government plans to require future pooling of the New Homes Bonus.

**Resolved:** - To note the report.

### **66. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (LCTS) – UPDATE AND PROPOSED LOCAL SCHEME 2014/15**

The Cabinet received an update on the results of consultation on proposed changes for 2014/15 and recommended changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2014/15.

**Resolved:** - To note the summary of responses to the consultation.

**Recommended:** - That the Council approves the changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme as set out in the report.

#### **67. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCORECARD QUARTER 2 – 2013/14**

The Cabinet considered a report on the cumulative performance figures for the Corporate Performance Scorecard for Quarter 2, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

Councillor Mrs Challis OBE., noted good performance in a number of key service areas.

**Resolved:** - To agree the inclusion of two further indicators set out in section 4.1 of the report for future monitoring.

#### **68. UPDATE ON SAFER COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES**

The Cabinet considered an update report on the position concerning neighbourhood and safer community matters.

Councillor Isaacs responded to questions and statements about crime figures and the potential impact on certain crimes from the proposal to switch off street lighting at night.

**Resolved:**

To note the activities regarding neighbourhoods and safer community matters from the previous month as set out in the report.

#### **69. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

There were no matters.

#### **70. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM /TO THE STATUTORY COMMITTEES**

There were no matters.

Chairman



# **Castle Point Borough Council**

## **Forward Plan**

**JANUARY 2014**



# **CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **FORWARD PLAN**

**JANUARY 2014**

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.

<b>Date</b>	<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b>Council Priority</b>	<b>Decision by Council/ Cabinet</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>
Jan/March 2014	<u>Regeneration Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Jan/ 2014	<u>Community Safety Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Safer Communities	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Jan /April 2014	<u>Housing Progress Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Homes & Customer Engagement	Head of Housing & Communities
January 2014	<u>John H.Burrows Park</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Economic Development & Business Liaison	Strategic Director Corporate Services
January 2014	<u>New Corporate Plan</u>	All	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Performance & Service Support
February 2014	<u>Budget and Policy Framework</u> To consider and make recommendations to Council on the Council tax and budget setting	Improving the Council	Cabinet/ Council	Deputy Leader	Head of Resources
February 2014	<u>Housing Revenue Account Rent Levels 2014/2015 etc</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Homes & Customer Engagement	Head of Housing & Communities Head of Resources

<b>Date</b>	<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b>Council Priority</b>	<b>Decision by Council/ Cabinet</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>
February 2014	<u>New Local Plan Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
March 2014	<u>Financial Update</u>	All	Cabinet	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
March 2014	<u>Disabled Facility Grant policy</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Health & Wellbeing	Head of Environment
March 2014	<u>Equality Scheme Approval</u>	All	Cabinet Council /Dec	Homes & Customer Engagement	Head of Law
March 2014	<u>Resources Strategies : To note revisions</u>	Improving the Council	Council	Deputy Leader	Head of Resources
April 2014	<u>Leisure and Recreation Strategy</u>	Environment Civic Pride	Cabinet	Environment & Street Scene	Head of Environment

**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Update on Regeneration Matters**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Challis OBE Leader of the Council – Strategic Regeneration & Thames Gateway**

**Councillor Smith – Economic Development & Business Liaison**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**This report is to inform the Cabinet of the strategic regeneration initiatives underway during the last quarter of 2013, as well as those activities which support local businesses in Castle Point.**

**2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**

**The initiatives described in this report are directly linked to the Council's Regeneration & Homes priority – more local employment and the creation of business opportunities.**

**3. Recommendations**

**That the Cabinet notes the progress underway on these initiatives, and requests that a further update report is made to the Cabinet for the next quarter.**

**4. Background**

**4.1 One of the Council's four key priorities is Regeneration & Homes. Objectives within this priority are the creation of more local employment and business opportunities.**

**4.2 This priority and these objectives form a key component of the work of the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership (CPRP). This partnership comprises public sector and private sector organisations whose shared vision for Castle Point is "a community where everyone can prosper be safe and live in a high quality environment". A key ambition below this high level vision is the regeneration of the local economy and places, through supporting the**

regeneration of town centres and key employment areas as well as assisting local businesses to grow and develop skills within the community.

- 4.3 In order to further its vision for Castle Point, the Regeneration Partnership published a Regeneration Framework entitled “Where Ambitions Come Alive” in 2008. This set out the key priorities on which the Partnership focused its work, and which was used to support successful bids for grant from central and regional government for master planning Canvey Island and Hadleigh town centres and for improvements to industrial estates.
- 4.4 The grant awarded to the Partnership has been used to prepare comprehensive master plans for Canvey Island town centre and Hadleigh town centre, as well as enhance industrial estates at Charfleets on Canvey Island and Manor Trading Estate in Thundersley.
- 4.5 The Cabinet receives a regular update on the activities of the Partnership and the significant regeneration initiatives underway in the Borough. These include initiatives in order to regenerate the Borough’s Town Centres, as well as to support local businesses, and these are more fully described in the attached Appendix. Particular highlights from the last quarter involve;

- *Castle Point Business Forum*
- *Thames Gateway Economic Plan*
- *Hadleigh Town Centre – ECC road revisions*
- *Hadleigh Legacy*
- *Canvey Town Centre – Development Partner*

## **5. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The initiatives described in this report were funded through regional and government agencies to which claims were made for expenditure incurred.

### **b. Legal Implications**

- 5.2 The Council on behalf of the Regeneration Partnership was the accountable body for the purposes of any government grant. Accordingly it ensured that all contracts and expenditure were in accordance with its procedures.

### **c. Human Resources & Equality Implications**

- 5.3 There are no implications of this kind arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **d. Timescale for implementation & risk factors**

- 5.4 It is recommended that the Cabinet receives regular updates on regeneration initiatives as described in this report together with any apparent risks which need to be managed at that time.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Regeneration Partnership is continuing to pursue the ambitions described originally in the Regeneration Framework.
- 6.2 Furthermore officers continue to work with representatives of local businesses in order to provide any necessary advice as well as discussing potential initiatives that may improve their competitiveness as well as the local environment within which they operate.

## **Background Papers**

None

**Report Author:** Steve Rogers – Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
Strategic highways matters	<p>Work on <b>Roscommon Way</b> was completed and the road open to traffic at the end of 2011. Appropriate signage directing goods traffic is now to be reported to the Local Highways panel.</p> <p>The major upgrade of the <b>Sadler's Farm</b> interchange was completed in March 2013. The <b>A13 Sadler's Farm to Tarpots Corridor</b> works are also complete..</p>
<b>Canvey Island</b>	
West Canvey	<p>Work continues on the land management of the <b>former oil refinery site</b> at West Canvey, also incorporating an adjacent area of land near to the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Homes &amp; Communities Agency (HCA) has transferred the freehold interest of its part of the SSSI to the Land Trust, together with land for vehicular access and a car park from Northwick Road. The Land Trust has appointed the RSPB to manage the land on its behalf, taking into account advice from Natural England and from Bug Life. Grant aid has been secured from SITA Trust to assist in phase 1 of these works. The West Canvey Members Liaison Group accepted an invitation for a site visit in September, and followed that with a discussion concerning the habitat restoration works of tree removal and bare ground creation at the site. The works are to be reviewed after their first year in operation.</p> <p>The HCA is actively seeking to dispose of its interest in <b>land at Northwick Road</b> to allow a</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
	<p>private developer to bring forward business park proposals. Discussions between the relevant parties are at an advanced stage. The site has the benefit of a long-standing planning permission.</p> <p>The National Grid land to the south of Roscommon Way has been sold recently to the Inner London Group for development on which details are awaited.</p>
<b>Hadleigh Matters</b>	
Hadleigh Town Centre Master Plan	<p>The <b>Hadleigh Town Centre Master Plan</b> was referred to the Special Policy Development Group (SPDG) by Cabinet for it to consider how it can be taken forward as supplementary planning guidance. As part of its consideration, traffic matters were considered to be a key issue, and further information was requested.</p> <p>Accordingly further traffic study work was commissioned by the CPRP, and undertaken in the town centre during October 2012. The data from this survey has now been analysed, and Essex County Council as Highways Authority has indicated that it would not be able to support changes to the strategic route network as originally envisaged.</p> <p>The County Council is now considering other adjustments to the highways layout (involving removal of bus lanes and the access and egress arrangements to Morrison's) consistent with the ambitions for regeneration of the town centre, as well as the views of the Hadleigh Town Centre Members Liaison Group.</p>



**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
	<p>The <b>Crown PH</b> was purchased by the Borough Council in March 2011, given its pivotal location in the town centre regeneration plans. This site will form an integral part of the new development proposals for this part of the town centre.</p> <p>The County Council's proposals to designate a public right of way through the site have been challenged by the Borough Council. The matter is now to be heard by an independent Inspector at a public inquiry in March 2014, at which evidence will be presented to assist the Inspector in determining the case.</p>
Hadleigh Farm Olympic Legacy	<p>The successful <b>Olympic Mountain Bike</b> event took place on site in August - in a spectator survey of Olympic venue, Hadleigh was mentioned as one of the easiest venues to access.</p> <p>Proposals for a legacy facility are now being pursued by Essex County Council in partnership with the Salvation Army. The Borough Council also owns land affected by the legacy facility, and this is also being discussed with the County Council. The legacy proposals involve the creation of permanent recreational trail facilities on land at Hadleigh Farm and land in the Hadleigh Country Park, construction of new permanent visitor centre and replacement business units on land at Sayers Farm; supporting permanent new ancillary infrastructure is to include car parking, access, landscaping and utility services.</p> <p>Funding for the project has recently been agreed by the County Council and contracts have been let for alterations to trails, and the construction of the visitor hub, in accordance with the planning permission. It is anticipated that work will commence on site in early 2014.</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
John H Burrows Hall	<p>A planning brief was agreed by Cabinet for <b>John H Burrows Hall and the John H Burrows Recreation Ground</b> in Rectory Road, Hadleigh to inform any future development.</p> <p>The CPRP tested the potential for redevelopment of the hall through inviting expressions of interest.</p> <p>A proposal from the private sector was received in mid-May to deliver a regeneration solution on part of the site. Cabinet agreed that the proposals for a family restaurant and other amenities for the larger sports fields (including changing rooms and toilets) were appropriate and approved further discussion regarding design with the developer; it was also agreed that Hadleigh Members Liaison Group should be consulted on any scheme. The outcome of these discussions are reported elsewhere on the Cabinet's agenda.</p>
<b>Business matters</b>	
Castle Point Business Forum	<p>The <b>Castle Point Business Forum</b> met on 28th November 2013 in Benfleet. This was extremely well attended again; presentations included an update regarding regeneration in the Borough, the launch the Mayor's Business awards, as well as other speakers concerning current business support, post 16 education and development initiatives.</p>
Thames Gateway Green Business	<p>The <b>Thames Gateway Green Business Initiative</b> was a three year project, and has now</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
Initiative	<p>come to a conclusion. This has provided a co-ordinated range of support to individual businesses, including expert advice on making business “greener”, such as how to use products and services more efficiently, identifying carbon reduction solutions and providing small capital grants for investment in carbon reduction processes and equipment.</p> <p>As at 23/08/2013, the statistics for Castle Point local business engagement in the programme is summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>108 Castle Point businesses are actively ‘engaged’ on the programme. 41 local businesses have received free green business audits.</i></li> <li>• <i>42 Castle Point businesses have been awarded grant funding totalling £131,987 to implement “low carbon” solutions to their businesses, including apprenticeship grants.</i></li> </ul> <p>A proposal to expand the programme has recently been approved by Government, awarding the programme an additional £559k of European funding. This will enable the programme to continue to benefit businesses in South Essex as well as to extend the programme to three mid-Essex local authorities - Brentwood, Chelmsford and Maldon.</p> <p>The CPRP is continuing to ensure take up of this opportunity by Castle Point businesses.</p>
Industrial Estates Improvements	<p>A programme of works has now been completed at the two main industrial estates. Work at <b>Charfleets Trading Estate</b> involved highway improvements, CCTV provision, entrance features to the estate and landscaping works. On-going maintenance works to the</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
	<p>landscaping at the Charfleets northern approach have also been commissioned. A programme of road and direction signage is presently being evaluated for implementation later this financial year.</p> <p>Entrance feature works at the <b>Manor Trading Estate</b> were also completed including CCTV column provision, kerbing and footway works. Recent discussions have taken place with the occupiers and owners concerning a prospective programme of improvements to the surface of the access roads on the estate, and advice has also been given to businesses by the Environment Agency regarding drainage issues on the estate and in the surrounding area.</p>
Local Enterprise Partnership	<p>The <b>South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)</b> (covering East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock) has considered and prioritised applications for project funding from the Government's Growing Places Fund.</p> <p>The SELEP has also created thematic groups to advise and promote strategic objectives (Thames Gateway, coastal communities, rural economy and strategic growth locations) and relevant enabling activities (such as transport infrastructure, broadband, skills, financial instruments and research into key industrial sectors).</p> <p>Discussion at the SELEP has most recently focussed on how to promote a more locally based approach to decision-making on key regional and sub-regional issues, and the Thames Gateway South Essex area is seen as a strong and credible sub-regional entity for appropriate decision-taking.</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
	<p>The Partnership has also created a <b>Local Transport Body</b> which is now responsible for the identification and promotion of the strategic regional transport priorities funded by the SELEP.</p>
Integrated County Strategy	<p>In order to ensure that the priorities for Essex are promoted at the regional level, work has been completed on an <b>Integrated County Strategy for Essex</b>. This document highlights key priorities of a County wide significance for investment.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out as its strategic focus three broad areas; Thames Gateway South Essex, key towns (Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford and Colchester) and low carbon energy.</p> <p>Within those areas of focus priority themes (such as town centre improvements) and priority investments (such as supporting the delivery of the Thames Gateway port) have been established.</p> <p>A rolling investment fund has also been created by the County Council to support key projects.</p> <p>The County Economic Growth Strategy is also at present under review. A new draft Economic Plan for Essex. It is intended that this document will set out the case for economic development across the county and its respective quadrants, and provide the basis for applications and bids for funds from the LEP/Government and from Europe.</p>

**Regeneration Update  
Cabinet January 2014**

PROJECT	POSITION STATEMENT
Thames Gateway South Essex Planning & Transport Board	<p>The Thames Gateway South Essex authorities, transport and port operators meet on a quarterly basis, as the <b>Thames Gateway South Essex Planning &amp; Transport Board</b>, to review key “flagship” projects in the sub-region and to ensure that appropriate liaison across planning and transport schemes is achieved. This also provides an opportunity to advocate the case for investment in projects in the area, as well as ensure co-ordination and co-operation between highway and planning authorities in South Essex.</p> <p>Current strategic planning and highways matters include delivery of key strategic housing and employment sites, delivery of key transport improvements, consideration of the Lower Thames Crossing issues and aviation capacity matters. Furthermore the Thames Gateway South Essex Planning &amp; Transport Strategy was agreed at the Cabinet in November.</p>

**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Housing Progress Report**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs B Egan – Homes & Customer Engagement**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

To provide the quarterly progress report for the Housing Service for the quarter ending 31 December 2013.

**2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**

The Housing service is explicitly linked to the Regeneration & Homes priority.

**3. Recommendations**

That Cabinet notes the progress and achievements for the last quarter period and requests officers to provide future quarterly progress reports.

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**4. Background**

- 4.1 The period covered by this report has continued to see improvements being made by the Housing Service and significant progress of some major projects. The Service continues to evolve and strives to meet the challenges of ensuring that the stock meets the needs of Tenants. This report provides information on the progress being made and the achievements of the Service to date.

**5. Summary of Achievements**

**5.1 Chapman Court Improvement Programme**

- 5.1.1 The works at Chapman Court continue to make good progress. The contract is being closely monitored by South Essex Homes and is due for completion in February. Additional structural repair works identified during the project extended the contract by 6 weeks .

- 5.1.2 The replacement soffits and fascias, Velux roof lights to stairwells, replacement soil/rainwater drains and gullies have all been completed. Works currently in progress include the internal decorating of the stairwells, replacement gutters and

down pipes and building works for the new storage and refuse facilities.

## **5.2 Gowan Court Refurbishment Programme**

5.2.1 The refurbishment of Gowan Court commenced in September 2013 and continues to make good progress. The contract is being closely monitored by South Essex Homes.

5.2.2 The replacement heating and hot water system for the scheme was completed in November. The hot water provision is now powered via solar panels.

5.2.3 The refurbishment of the void bedsits has been completed and they are being used for residents to stay in whilst their own units are refurbished. At the time of preparing this report 5 bedsits and 4 flats have been completed.

## **5.3 Responsive Repairs and Gas Servicing Contracts**

5.3.1 The contracts with the current providers of these services both expire in March 2014.

5.3.2 The procurement of a contractor to provide these services with effect from April 2014 has been undertaken and managed by South Essex Homes.

5.3.3 Following the advertisement to procure service providers in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) 6 tenders were received in respect of the Responsive Repairs Contract and 7 tenders were received in respect of the Gas Servicing Contract.

5.3.4 The evaluation process and the recommended outcomes are subject to a report to be considered under Part II of this Cabinet agenda.

## **5.4 Capital Programme**

5.4.1 Capital works are being undertaken as follows:

- Kitchens and Bathrooms – 172 properties for kitchens and 149 for bathrooms
- Roofing – 33 properties
- Electrical Works – 100 properties for rewiring and 300 properties due for electrical inspection

5.4.2 The Housing Service is making contact with Tenants to arrange for completed works to be inspected and to assess the level of satisfaction.

## **5.5 Right to Buy**

5.5.1 Since 1 April 2013 the Council has completed on thirteen sales under the Right to Buy legislation. These sales have resulted in total income of £827k, of which, dependent upon any future adjustments based on sales levels, £343k could be used to support a minimum £1.143m expenditure on new developments of affordable housing.

5.5.2 The balance of the receipt is split between the Treasury, Local Authority General Fund as well as HRA receipts in respect of Self-financing debt compensation and administration allowance.



## **5.6 Tenant Participation Compact**

- 5.6.1 The Tenant and Leaseholder Group continue to monitor the action plan.
- 5.6.2 The new Sheltered Housing and Leaseholder Handbooks have been distributed to the users of those services.

## **5.7 Housing Options**

- 5.7.1 The Housing Options Service works hard to assist those who find themselves facing potential homelessness.
- 5.7.2 Work has begun on key actions outlined in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan including;
- a review of website and use of the current self service E-form for customer enquiries,
  - a review of existing Private Sector Leased and Short Term Temporary accommodation
  - quarterly analysis of the impact of Welfare Reforms on private rent sector migration.
- 5.7.3 There has been a slight decrease in homelessness applications. A total of 80 homelessness applications have been taken between January 2013 and current date. This compares to 84 applications taken during the same period in 2012. In addition from January 2013 the team have received in excess of 1,700 enquires with a total of 59 households being prevented from becoming homeless. This is a result of positive action provided by the Housing Options Team in the form of assistance from the Rent Deposit scheme, mortgage rescue, and financial assistance from the Homelessness Prevention Fund.

## **5.8 Garage Site Development**

- 5.8.1 Following initial consultation with residents and Ward Members in the summer and Autumn of last year, an architect has been appointed to undertake planning work for two pilot sites (St Christopher's Close in Canvey and Kingsmere in Hadleigh) and initial plans have been drafted. In addition a Flood Risk Assessment has been completed for St Christopher's Close which has led to the development of more detailed plans.
- 5.8.2 Before the plans are submitted for planning consent, some more detailed negotiations are required to clarify rights of way matters and the impact this has on more detailed planning issues. Due to the nature of this work, it is difficult to be precise on key milestones at this stage. We will continue to monitor and report on progress.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial Implications**

The works noted above have been, and continue to be, undertaken within current Housing Budgets.

**b. Legal implications**

As the Landlord for 1,511 properties the Council has an obligation to ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

The Council should ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of its homes and communal areas demonstrating an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs and value for money.

During the procurement process in relation to the Responsive Repairs and Gas Servicing Contracts contractors have disclosed commercially sensitive information to the Council which must at this time remain confidential

**c. Human resources and equality**

The actions outlined in this report will be undertaken within available operational resources.

There are no direct equality implications at this stage from the information provided in this report. However, each individual project is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as appropriate.

**d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

Monitoring of progress will be undertaken by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

**7. Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report January 2013 – Housing Update

Cabinet Report April 2013 – Housing Update

Cabinet Report July 2013 – Housing Update.

Cabinet Report October 2013 – Housing Update

**Report Author:** Wendy Buck, Head of Housing & Communities

**CABINET**

**15th JANUARY 2014**

**Subject: John H Burrows Park**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Smith- Economic Development & Business Liaison**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

To obtain Cabinet approval to deliver new facilities and amenities at John H Burrows Park as set out in this report.

**2. Links to Council Priorities and Objectives**

Environment – Civic Pride  
Regeneration and Homes

**3. Recommendations**

1). That the Cabinet agrees to accept a proposal from Greene King PLC to provide improvements at John H Burrows Park to include the following:

- Delivery of a new family restaurant/bar/cafe/ community venue
- New sports pavilion with four separate changing rooms large enough to be capable of accommodating any sporting pursuit. The pavilion to be designed to Sport England standards and also to provide a clubroom, kitchen, showers and toilets together with patio and external seating
- Provision of a Tennis/Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) – capable of providing multi-sporting activities to include tennis, football, basketball hockey and informal games
- Resurfacing and refurbishment of car park and access roads including the allocation of additional car parking spaces to provide a total of 173 spaces
- A new Trim Trail with 6 work stations placed strategically around the parkland
- Reinvigoration of site landscaping
- Site information and signage
- Improved pedestrian access and footpaths
- Campus wide CCTV

- on site supervision and management (Manager/Assistant Manager of new premises to live on site)
- Scheme to be compatible with and complement existing assets of Solbys House, Playground, Hadleigh Bowls Club and Hadleigh Cricket Club and to allow access to new facilities by WRVS and other local organisations

2). That the Council, subject to suitable terms and conditions, agrees to enter into a 99 year lease with Greene King PLC at a nominal rent for the new premises which comprises 1.14 acres of the site as shown in red on the attached drawing(to follow). For the benefit of the lease and subject to contract and all necessary consents and permissions, Greene King PLC to pay a premium of £750,000 or provide agreed facilities to a value of the same sum at John H Burrows Park in lieu of the premium.

3). That the Council submits proposals to third party funding agencies to seek to maximise the financial gains of the improvement programme for the Park.

4). That the Council prepare a detailed specification jointly with Greene King PLC and submit a full planning application to seek planning consent for the relevant improvements.

#### **4. Background**

The previous operator of the Hall went into receivership in mid 2011 leaving the premises vacant and in a very poor condition and state of disrepair and subsequently the building were closed for public use.

A Planning Brief for the site was agreed by Members and the Cabinet then requested the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to pursue potential commercial interest in the site to assist the Council to provide new facilities and services at John H Burrows Park.

Expressions of interest were received from both local groups and national companies and following evaluation the Partnership recommended that the Council pursued an offer from Greene King PLC to provide new on site facilities (changing rooms; toilets etc) and who were interested in opening a new premises at the site and contributing to the provision of other community facilities.

The proposal was considered by Cabinet in September 2013. It was agreed that the proposal made by the external operator provided the most suitable and satisfactory outcome for the Council in terms of the establishment of new facilities and services at John H Burrows Park and to maintain the Council's ongoing financial security.

The proposal presented a unique and singular opportunity to the Council to improve the area and remove the disused building with the added bonus of the creation of new local employment in the area in the form of approx 45 new job appointments at the premises.

The Cabinet requested that the Project Team progress negotiations with the other party and produce a further report setting out specific design details relating to the site and the provision of the new facilities.

## 5. Proposals

Negotiations have progressed to enable terms to be finalised and further details have been submitted to the Council and presented to Members. The final improvement proposal is shown in the attached drawing together with a visualisation of the new premises. (Appendix 1 to follow).

The other party is prepared to enter into a 99 year lease at a nominal rent for an area of land at the site as shown in red on the attached drawing. In consideration of the grant of a long lease, subject to contract and the necessary consents and permissions, Greene King PLC is prepared to pay a premium of £750,000 or to provide agreed facilities to a value of £750,000 at John H Burrows Park in lieu of the premium.

The proposal includes:

- A future total investment of £3M at John H Burrows Park
- Delivery of a new community venue
- A new sports pavilion
- The delivery of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).
- Improved car parking and access roads
- A new Trim Trail
- site landscaping and signage
- Improved pedestrian access
- Enhanced security
- Retention of existing assets
- Removal of disused and vacant buildings

It is envisaged that in lieu of the premium of £750,000 the Council will accept the following new and improved facilities;

○ New Changing Pavilion	£470,000
○ Tennis/ Multi-Use Games Area	£120,000
○ Demolition of Hadleigh Hall	£70,000
○ Trim Trail	£30,000
○ Demolition of WRVS Hall	£20,000
○ Extra Car Parking	£40,000

The above costings are purely indicative and based on comparable facilities. Greene King PLC have agreed to provide the facilities as part of the general improvement at the site and make available an open book accounting system for any costings which will evolve from a formal bill of quantities and support any legal formalities.

Members have undertaken a familiarisation visit to a similar outlet and have received a presentation setting out the company's aspirations to support the Council and its intentions for the site. The Project Team have also undertaken

a consultation exercise with the existing users of the Park and the scheme has been adjusted to take into account feedback from the users to minimise the impact of the development on their sporting activities and other pursuits. .

If the Cabinet is satisfied with the improvement scheme the Project Team will now liaise with the other party to accomplish the following 3 objectives. Firstly appropriate legal documentation will be prepared and executed. Secondly action will be taken to maximise the financial benefits of the scheme by sourcing and preparing appropriate documentation to access grant funding from Sport England; Veolia Trust etc. to contribute to the costs of providing and operating the facilities and any grant received will be offset against the envisaged premium to be received from the other party. Finally appropriate documentation will be prepared to enable a detailed planning application to be submitted to the Council in due course.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

Options will be explored regarding operating the new sports pavilion as a community-managed facility by interested parties. If this should not be possible and the Council becomes responsible for managing the building there will be an ongoing revenue cost, to cover cleaning, utilities, repairs and maintenance, etc. This has currently been estimated at a net cost of approximately £8,000, after allowing for charging for use of the facility to football clubs, etc. There may also be a small additional ground maintenance cost payable to Pinnacle for the overall site, for example for the new “Trim Trail.”

Pending the outcome of the options to be considered, any final additional revenue cost that the Council will be responsible for will be subject to a further report on a later date.

The Council will not be involved in the operation of the new restaurant premises and will not incur any revenue costs. Under the new business rates retention arrangements the Council will receive a portion of the additional business rates charge payable on the building, however part of this business rate income will be required to be shared with Central Government, Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority. This amount is not yet quantifiable.

### **b) Legal Implications**

The Council will abide by any restrictions which apply to the public open space and the rights enjoyed by other occupiers/users of buildings and land at John H Burrows Park and will strictly comply with any rules relating to the disposal of council owned land.

### **c) Human Resources and Equality Implications**

The completion of any arrangements with Greene King will involve professional staff employed by the Council and are presently engaged in

Borough wide regeneration programmes that are being undertaken by the Council, and the Council Solicitor.

d) IT and Asset Management Implications

The recommendations in this report will involve the granting of a new long leasehold interest on 1.14 acres of Council owned land. A valuation is being obtained from the District Valuer to ensure that best consideration has been obtained. The proposal will also involve the demolition of two existing Council owned buildings to be replaced by a new sports pavilion and multi use games area. Any value obtained from the disposal of the land is to be reinvested into the new facilities.

## **7. Timescale for Implementation and Risk Factors**

The other party has committed to include the site in their 2014 development programme and therefore would wish to enter into an agreement to lease the site as soon as is practicable. It is anticipated that all relevant legal formalities can be completed and a detailed planning application submitted in the Spring with a planning consent being achieved in the Summer. If achieved it is expected that a start on site for the improvement work will take place at the end of the forthcoming cricket season and that there will be a construction period of between 35-40 weeks. The completion date for all elements of the project is likely to be Easter 2015.

If the Cabinet is unable to provide assent for the scheme then it is possible that the other party will withdraw from the negotiations and the Council will lose the financial incentives and other benefits arising from the proposal and be unable to provide a sustainable or realistic deliverable alternative for the reuse of the site.

## **8. Background Papers:**

Cabinet on 18 January 2012 (Agenda Item No 6(c)) and the report presented to the Policy and Performance PDG on 19 March 2012 (Agenda Item No 3). Cabinet on 20.6. 2012 (Agenda Item No 5(a) Item 3 Place & Communities PSC 17.7.2012 & 7.10.2012. Item 6(e) Report and Supplementary Report to Cabinet 17.10.2012: Cabinet on 18th September 2013 (Agenda Item No 6 (c)):

Member Brief Items

16.6.2011; 23.6.2011; 7.7.2011; 22.9.2011; 17.5.2012; 15.11.2012; 28.2.2013; 4.7.2013.

**Report Author:** Andrew Roby Smith – Project Lead x2433





**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Corporate Plan**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs. Challis OBE – Leader of the Council**

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**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 agrees to forward it to full Council for further consideration.**

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**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 The Council adopted a five year Corporate Plan back in 2007, and has refreshed the plan annually with a process that includes full Council consideration in June of each year. The plan came to the end of its useful life in 2012 and has been subject to further development during 2013 following a Cabinet decision to re-develop a new Corporate Plan.
- 4.3 Consequently a draft corporate plan has been subject to detailed consideration initially by the Policy and Performance Policy and Scrutiny Group and then latterly the Place and Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee during the spring and summer of 2013 that concluded with a final consideration of the plan on the 8<sup>th</sup> October. At that meeting the Committee agreed that the plan should now be forwarded for consideration by Cabinet and Full Council

## **5. Report**

### **Consultation used to help inform the development of the Plan**

- 5.1 During the summer a consultation process was undertaken, and views were sought from councillors, the public, partners and staff. A public questionnaire was distributed and promoted and made available either electronically through the Council's website and paper versions were distributed to members of the public who were once members of the citizen's panel or who had expressed an interest in being consulted on issues for the Council. Paper copies were also made available at Council offices and by some Council partners in reception areas. In addition a lunchtime learning session was held with staff and was followed up by a workshop.
- 5.2 The Place and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee considered the detail of the plan and the consultation programme. During this time the plan was subject to a number of revisions. The detailed results of the consultation were considered by the group on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and these are summarised in Chapter 5 of the plan attached as Appendix 1.

### **Key Themes**

- 5.3 In addition to the consultation on important services and objectives for improvement, the Corporate Plan also includes other consultation results, such as the consultation undertaken in 2012 as part of the development of the Local Plan, as well as the place survey undertaken by Essex County Council. Analysis of all of the consultation results demonstrated a number of key themes that are either regarded as important or to be improved:

#### **Issues of Importance / to be improved**

- Community Safety
- Developing Transport Infrastructure
- Development
- Efficient & Effective Council Services
- Highway Condition
- Improved Housing
- Leisure and Recreation
- Parking
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Partnership / Joint working to improve services
- Protecting the Green Belt
- Public transport
- Street Scene

- 5.4 These issues, along with the other challenges facing the Borough, and business considerations for the Council, as detailed in the Corporate Plan help to develop future objectives.

## **Impact on the Development of the Corporate Plan**

- 5.5 The results of the consultation have resulted in the development of four proposed new aims as well as medium term targets and annual objectives. These are further detailed in Chapters 6 and 7 of the Corporate Plan. The four new aims, known under the acronym 'PETE' are to replace the current priorities known under the acronym of 'ERIC' and are based on analysis of the issues facing the borough as well as the results of the consultation. They are:

Public Health & Wellbeing  
Environment  
Transforming our Community  
Efficient and Effective Customer Focussed services

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1 The aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan will be used in the development of service and team plan actions and targets for all Council services as well as key projects such as the Transformation programme. They will also be considered in the development of key strategies and plans. For example the Local Strategic Partnership is currently looking to re-develop its Community Strategy and the plan will help assist in the future development of this document.
- 6.2 There are annual objectives set out in the plan which will be further refreshed as set out in the process outlined in page 25 of the appendix, beginning in the autumn of this year.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial implications**

The Corporate Plan has significant resource implications including the need to secure significant financial savings.

### **b. Legal implications**

Some of the actions set out in the corporate plan are subject to legal requirements following national legislation such as the Localism Act.

### **c. Human resources and equality**

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

### **d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

This is set out in the Corporate Plan.

## **8. Background Papers:**

Corporate Plan 2014/17

Castle Point Borough Council  
Corporate Business Plan  
2014 – 2017

**‘Turning  
Opportunity  
into Reality’**

V3.1




6<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## Foreword

We are proud to introduce this corporate plan, which provides an overview of our strategic direction for the next four years and outlines our key aims for service improvement.

In this time of austerity the Council faces some serious challenges and difficult decisions. It is essential for our country's economy that the national debt is reduced. Local government is playing a big part as central government funding for this Council will have fallen 29% by April 2014, and will continue to decrease over the next couple of years.

Despite these austere times, the Council has risen to the challenge and secured real outcomes for the community whilst making savings. For example, over the last three years we have worked with partners to secure regeneration of our Borough and the partnership has achieved the following:

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- 
- I. Transport infrastructure improvements including the A130 development at Sadlers Farm Roundabout and the extension of Roscommon Way in Canvey.
  - II. Traffic flow improvements to Tarpots with intelligent traffic lights replacing the roundabouts
  - III. Improvements to the infrastructure of Industrial estates at Charfleets in Canvey and Manor Road in Benfleet after securing £1m funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.
  - IV. The establishment of a brand new skills campus in Canvey which will provide vocational training for young people.
  - V. The successful construction and completion of two new secondary schools in Canvey to replace tired old facilities - Cornelius Vermuyden and Castle View.
  - VI. A new NHS Clinic at the Paddocks, Canvey Island.
  - VII. The creation of a nature reserve run by the RSPB at West Canvey Marshes. The largest single area of green space on Canvey Island. This wetland includes nearly two miles (3 km) of new nature trails, three viewing points, a picnic area and children's adventure area.
- 

The Council has also successfully undertaken regeneration of its own facilities, and examples include:

- I. The Paddocks, Canvey Island, this public facility has been refurbished with improved public halls and a refurbished paddling pool for children.
- II. A very successful playground renewal programme across the Borough with 10 brand new playgrounds established.
- III. The refurbishment of Runnymede Swimming Pool and Hall in Thundersley, Benfleet.

The £5.4m refurbishment of Waterside Farm Leisure Centre has been hugely successful and described by the local media as: “..the world-class facility set to inspire a new generation of sporting stars.”

The centre, was, built in the 1970s, and was barely recognisable after the 15-month transformation. Improvements include:

- A glass-fronted, open-plan reception area, complete with a new coffee and juice bar lounge
- Remodeled swimming pools with a new roof, walkways and heating system
- Refurbished spin studio rooms and fitness studios
- Remodeled changing rooms with a sauna and steam room
- New conference and community space
- State-of-the-art fitness suite which has expanded to include an extra studio
- A new, all-weather sports pitch
- A completely redecorated interior and exterior.

We are also proud to be an Olympic Borough and worked closely with others to secure a highly successful Olympic Mountain biking event at Hadleigh Castle in 2012. We are now working with partners to secure a sustainable legacy for the future use of a facility for all residents and visitors to the borough.

We have also worked to improve key services, and examples include:

- The implementation of food waste recycling which has seen the proportion of waste recycled increase to over 50%.
- The work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has seen overall crime decrease. For example there were 4,381 crimes recorded for the financial year 2009/10. The number of incidents of crime in the Borough was 3311 for the 2012/13 year. Anti-social behaviour also demonstrates a positive trend with 1,901 incidents over the 2012/13 year, 1.357 fewer incidents than the 2010/11 year.

We have also secured very substantial savings, which include:

- £96k for part year savings in 2012/13 on retender of the Council's ICT contract. Full year savings of £358k from 2013/14;
- £234k part year saving in 2013/14 on retender of the Council's Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing contract. Full year saving of £338k from 2014/15;
- £64k in 2012/13 following the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement partnership; and

- £31k income in 2012/13 from renting out vacant space at the main Council Offices and associated buildings in Kiln Road, Benfleet, increasing to £36k per annum from 2013/14.

We have not just made efficiencies, but have also secured grant funding to help improve our services and have had some significant successes. Examples include:

- Grant funding from a number of sources including Veolia and Essex Council in excess of £550k for the Playground Renewal Programme
- Funding from Veolia for the Refurbishment of Waterside Farm totalling £430k
- Essex County Council (ECC) funding for Kitchen and Garden Waste Recycling scheme - £504k of start-up capital funding in 2011/12, and 25 years of ongoing revenue funding in excess of £500k per annum.
- £3.3m of regeneration scheme funding over the 5 years to 2011/12, from various bodies including Homes and Communities Agency, East of England Development Agency and Essex County Council.
- Adizone a multi-use games area, featuring a climbing wall and outdoor exercise equipment facilities placed in Kismet Park with a value of £150k.

Staff are our greatest asset and we recognise that we could not have secured our achievements without them. The Council has worked with staff closely to implement change and will continue to do so in the future. Our approach to staff has been recognised by twice achieving the Investors in People Gold award in 2010 and 2013.

We continue to face a very challenging future. For example, although we have managed to secure savings of £1m for the financial year 2014/15, there still remains some very significant savings to be found in future years. We must not, and will not, be complacent. In these times of austerity we must become even more business focused. We must continue to deliver vital services to you and to shape your borough for the future by making more effective use of our shrinking resources. This means we face some tough decisions ahead and may have to make some stark choices.

To ensure the Council continues to remain viable we must evolve new ways of working. That is why the Council is about to embark on a transformation project which will involve a whole scale review of services to see if we can develop working practices and use information communication technology to be as efficient and effective as possible. We will also continue to explore new ways of providing services in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sector. We aim to evolve as one of the most cost effective district council's in the country.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to develop a stronger, leaner council that will continue to deliver the high performing public services the people of Castle Point

deserve. We will work closely with councillors, our community, our staff and our partners to achieve this.

Councillor Pam Challis, OBE

Leader of the Council

David Marchant

Chief Executive



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## Chapter 1: The Strategic Framework

This corporate business plan is part of a wider and more complex strategic framework which is expressed at national levels in legislation and national strategies and regional levels as well as at a local level. The key elements will be explored in more detail within this plan, whilst the table below provides a summary:

National	Sub National	Local
Sustainable Communities Plan	Essex Partnership Strategy	Corporate Business Plan
Localism Act	Community Strategy	Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Delivery plans
National Planning Policy Framework	Local Enterprise Partnership	Local Plan (in development)
Health and Social Care Act		
Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) / Welfare Act		Other cross cutting strategies and plans
Welfare Reforms		
Energy Act		Medium term financial forecast
National Housing Strategy	Thames Gateway Housing Strategy	Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
National Waste Strategy		
Equality Act 2010		

## Our Values

Our values influence everything that we do and how we interact and shape our community. They impact on our priorities and focus for the future and help form our key targets for improvement.

Our values demonstrate that how we work to deliver our priorities is important to us and that in everything we do - we all work to the same framework of values:

**Equality:** fair treatment for all

**Respect:** respect each other

**Integrity:** integrity in all of the work we do

**Caring:** listening and acting on staff, Councillor and customer needs

**Innovation:** seeking new, improved and sustainable ways of working

**Teamwork:** valuing everyone's contribution

**Accountability:** We will be open and accountable to our residents, customers, partners, Councillors and staff.

## **Safeguarding Policy Statement**

Castle Point Borough Council provides a wide range of services and facilities. The Corporate Plan supports an overarching approach to safeguarding which covers all services. Castle Point Borough Council will promote the welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults within all services by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Preventing abuse by promoting good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.
- Taking seriously and responding appropriately and promptly to all concerns, incidents and allegations.
- Providing training appropriate to the level of involvement with children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure that employees understand the different forms of abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under the Council's Codes of Conduct and the Combined Safeguarding Policy.
- Requiring organisations that the Council contracts with or that provide the Council with services, to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Not tolerating harassment of any Members, employees, volunteers, contracted service providers or children/vulnerable adults who raise concerns of abuse.
- Ensuring that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults through the Council's 'Safe Recruitment Procedure.'
- In order to stay at the forefront of safeguarding, Castle Point Borough Council is committed to reviewing its safeguarding policies and procedures every year.

This policy applies to all services within the scope of Castle Point Borough Council. In addition to employees and Members, it also applies to volunteers, outside hirers, outside organisations delivering services on behalf of Castle Point Borough Council, contractors and grant funded organisations.

## The Castle Point 'Golden Thread'

The strategic planning framework is an inter linked process and this Corporate Plan is a key element of the process. Our planning framework ensures everything is linked in what is known as the 'Castle Point Golden Thread'. This is a process which ensures all our important plans consider each other. This starts with the Community Strategy, which outlines our long term ambitions that we have drawn up with our partners. These ambitions also consider the medium term priorities written into this Corporate Plan, which outline what the Council wants to achieve over the next five years. Linked to the Corporate Plan are Service Plans for approximately twenty service areas within the Council. These set out what each service aims to achieve over the next few years. Finally linked to the service plans are personal performance development plans for each employee, which set out personal targets for each employee that link with the targets in the service plan. All our plans consider the needs of residents, customers and users through consultation processes, and there are a number of other strategies that our plans also consider. The Castle Point Golden Thread process is illustrated in the following diagram:



## **Chapter 2:**

### **A summary of the challenges faced by the Borough and the Council**

The Borough faces a variety of challenges and opportunities that arise from its unique identity. This includes a range of environmental and social factors. In addition new national challenges have emerged over the last few years. This includes the challenging economic climate and the national focus to cut public expenditure and obtain greater efficiencies. New legislation such as the Localism Act also place new expectations and responsibilities on local authorities.

There are a range of issues that face the Borough and the Council, which we believe we can help to improve through actions either by ourselves or with others. These are set out below:

#### **2.1 Things we need to do in partnership with others:**

We need to help create more confidence in the Economy by undertaking regeneration work that:

- Regenerates our Town Centres
- Helps create more local employment;
- Increase the level of affordable housing.

Lack of affordable housing remains a significant issue in Castle Point, for example 44.86% (November 2012) of first time buyers cannot afford a flat or maisonette based on a mortgage at 3.0 times their income. House prices are now increasing and for example lower quartile prices in Castle Point were £163,000 in February 2013 increasing to £166,000 in August 2013, a percentage increase of 1.8% in 6 months. Affordable Housing is a generic term and includes rented social housing provided by a local authority or housing association, as well as schemes such as shared ownership and rent to buy (known as intermediate housing) to help people get on the property ladder.

We need to raise the skills and knowledge of the local workforce so that:

- Employers are attracted to locate in Castle Point;
- Improve the life chances of our residents.

We need to regenerate town centres and improve the quality of social housing and of the Parks and Open Spaces to be able to:

- Make the Borough a place of choice to live, work and play;
- Reduce the fear of crime
- Meet the needs of a diverse and ageing population.

We need to ensure that public services for our communities, irrespective of the provider, are accessible, tailored and targeted to support the wellbeing of the area such that:

- Services are valued by all of the Borough's communities;
- Reduces social inequality;

- Disadvantaged residents are supported appropriately;
- Our communities are sustainable.
- The health of our residents improve, including reducing obesity and encouraging exercise
- We support the engagement of our community and help deliver high quality public services

## **2.2 Things we need to do ourselves or through services we commission:**

We need to maintain and improve the local Environment by:

- Ensuring our street cleansing service provider adheres to the contract requirements;
- Improving satisfaction with our street scene services
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the Borough through the effective management of our parks, woodland and open spaces;
- Delivering high quality refuse and recycling collection services for residents and local businesses;
- Utilising our enforcement powers and targeting known hot spots for environmental crime; and by
- Adopting a risk based approach to the inspection of businesses operating within the Borough.

We need to help transform our community by:

- Developing a local plan in consultation with our community that helps to regenerate our town centres whilst ensuring Castle Point is a place of choice to live, work and play.
- Developing more effective ways of engaging with our communities to strengthen our decision making and also to encourage them to become more involved in issues that affect the local community; and by
- Developing our approach to the way we manage our estates to enable the regeneration of sheltered housing and to explore how our estates can be further developed for affordable housing.
- Considering the needs of our residents in the design and delivery of services.

We need to develop wellbeing in the Borough by:

- Developing and enhancing our leisure/ recreational facilities and community halls and by encouraging a more diverse usage of our facilities
- Improving the quality of housing, both Council and privately owned
- Providing support to voluntary groups to help people deal with debt issues and to provide a greater range of services to older people

- Ensuring that businesses operating in the Borough do so in a safe manner and comply with all relevant legal requirements.

We need to ensure our services provide the best possible value for money by:

- Transforming the way we work and using new technologies and new working practices to be a more efficient and effective organisation.
- Looking to provide services in other ways such as by the private sector, community organisations or other public bodies.
- Reviewing the value for money provided by services and implementing improvements.

## **Chapter 3: Our Vision for the Borough**

This is an exciting time for the Borough. The Council is working hard with partners to regenerate the Borough and improve it as an area to live, work and play. We want to see a re-vitalised Borough with the development of town centres at Canvey and Hadleigh with improved infrastructure, more housing and better employment opportunities. Our vision is:

“To help reduce social inequality, improve the health of our communities and develop the economy by working closely in partnership with other agencies. We want to improve the wellbeing of our community with clean streets, pleasant open spaces and good quality housing. We will nurture community resilience and work closely with our partners to help the community help itself and to enable greater participation in decision making.”

We recognise that working and planning for the future, in partnership, is key to maximising opportunities for the Borough. As such we have joined with our partners through a Local Strategic Partnership, to share high level ambitions for the Borough. This links in with other partnership organisations both regionally and more locally.

### **3.1 Local Enterprise Partnership**

The partnership consists of the upper tier and unitary authorities of Essex, Kent and East Sussex. It has the mission to ‘Create the most enterprising economy in England’ through four strategic objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1: Secure the growth of the Thames Gateway

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote investment in our coastal communities

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen our rural economy

OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations

### **3.2 Essex Partnership Board**

The Essex Partnership Board is the wider strategic partnership for Essex, including all district councils, the County Council as well as partners such as the Police, Fire and Health services and from the voluntary sector. The partnership has several priorities, and recent focus includes the Whole Essex Community Budget (WECB) pilot. The pilot was one of four awarded nationally. Essex was the only large complex rural county chosen with mixed governance arrangements that included two Unitaries and twelve District/Borough Councils.

This partnership focuses on six themes. These are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Reduce Re-offending
- Family Solutions
- Strengthening Communities
- Social Investment
- Skills

Programme arrangements are in place to implement the key themes. For example a Family Solutions Project has developed a county wide approach with 8 multi-disciplinary teams placed within the districts of Essex to focus support to families with complex needs. Work is also being undertaken through partnership arrangements via the Local Strategic Partnership. For example work to reduce re-offending and domestic abuse is being undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership.

### **3.3 Thames Gateway South Essex**

The Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) partnership is a significant strategic partnership that includes Castle Point, Southend, Thurrock, Rochford and Basildon. The partnership is based at Castle Point, and is independently resourced from contributions from the five partners as well as some Registered Social Providers (RSP's). Key achievements included a wide variety of work ranging from the joint commissioning of a recent strategic housing market assessment to securing £5.88m grant funding to support Decent Homes and Empty Homes initiatives in the region. The partnership focuses its work on Strategic Housing issues for the sub region.

### **3.4 The Local Strategic Partnership**

Castle Point and Rochford share a strategic partnership with a joint vision for our communities. It has brought together at a local level the different parts of the public sector, as well as representatives from the private, business community and voluntary sectors, so that different initiatives and services support each other and



work together. We have built up experience and now have a successful record of productive partnership working.

Our LSP believes that the best way to achieve this vision is by working together, with people and communities, with local businesses, organisations and interest groups, and with a wide range of other partnerships and providers of local services.

During 2013/14 the partnership will be re-developing its ambitions and priorities

## **Chapter 4: National Framework and Legislation**

### **4.1 National Performance Management Framework**

Since the election of the coalition government in 2010, a new approach has been taken to the regulation of local government with significant changes. These include:

- The dissolution of the national performance management framework.
- Significant reductions in requirements to collect performance indicators and information
- The cessation of national targets
- The cessation of the Audit Commission inspectorate
- Reduced national role for external audit with the focus on financial regularity

Furthermore instead of setting targets, the coalition government is using financial incentives or restrictions to effect government policy, whilst giving authorities some freedoms in the implementation. For example:

The New Homes Bonus is paid each year for 6 years. It's based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised for new-build homes, conversions and long-term empty homes brought back into use.

The coalition government has also reduced the amount of Council tax benefit paid to each local authority by 10%. Councils have some freedom in the criteria to be used to apply this to residents by devising their own local council tax scheme, but there are restrictions to the criteria. For example, the elderly and vulnerable are protected. Castle Point Council adopted its own local council tax scheme for 2013/14 in November 2012.

### **4.2 Austerity**

One of the greatest challenges faced by all local authorities is the need to find substantial savings. In 2010, the coalition government announced a four year austerity programme which began in April 2011. This had a significant impact on Castle Point Borough Council with a cut in the revenue support grant received of 17% over a two year period. A further reduction in revenue support grant was made for two further financial years 2013/14 and 2015/16 and the Council agreed a budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast in February 2013 which aims to secure additional savings of £1m by the end of March 2016.

The significant cut in expenditure has meant that the Council has had to find new ways of delivering services. Furthermore the Council needs to continue to do so and there has never been a greater time to be as efficient and effective as possible with bureaucracy kept to a minimum. Whilst every effort will be made to protect front line service delivery, this cannot be guaranteed.

### **4.3 Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act is an important piece of legislation that impacts on all councils in England. It helps underpin the government's vision for a 'Big Society' and the commitment to provide greater freedoms to Councils. It has a number of provisions aimed at local government and the community.

## **Chapter 5: Consulting with our Communities**

### **5.1 Public Consultation**

The Council consults service users as part of service reviews and as part of normal service operation. Many services conduct regular surveys to inform decision making and gauge levels of satisfaction.

In the summer of 2013 a public consultation was held on the corporate plan and members of the public were asked to complete a questionnaire which asked questions on the relative importance of council services, service objectives and service satisfaction. There were about 500 responses, and the results are consistent with previous consultations as summarised below:

**Table 1 – Top 5 Most Important Services**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	Refuse collection
2	Keeping public land clear of litter and refuse
3	Environmental Health Services
4	Parks & Open Spaces
5	Working with the Police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

**Table 2 – Top 5 Least Important Services**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	Events like the Castle Point Show and Fireworks Fiesta
2	Land Charge services
3	Local Meetings with Councillors
4	Easter & Summer out of school activities for young people
5	Benefits payments

It is clear from the results that the most important services relate to Environment, including Refuse Collection and Recycling and Street Scene. Community Safety is

also an important service, as is Council Tax collection. Conversely the least important services relate to Events and Neighbourhood Meetings. Some statutory services such as Land Charges and Benefit payments also feature. When asked what the priorities for improvement were, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as well as having a well run council featured strongly:

**Table 3 – Priority Areas for Improvement**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Priority Area</b>
1	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with the police and other agencies.
2	Having a well run Council that looks to provide value for money services with improvements in service quality whilst keeping costs down.
3	Provide better quality sheltered housing for older people.
4	Work with other organisations to improve services.
5	Develop opportunities for residents to have more say in Council decisions such as through community events.
6	Work more closely with the business community to help develop opportunities for businesses in the borough.
7	Use new technology to be more efficient and reduce bureaucracy.
8	Work with volunteers and community groups to improve 'hotspots' for example with community litter picks.
9	Improve access to homes for local people with low household incomes.
10	Improve the health of our community through joint working with partners and by providing activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.
11	Work with the community to improve the Town Centres of Canvey and Hadleigh.
12	Give responsibility to local community organisations to run services where possible.
13	Only provide support to charities and the voluntary sector where Council services are being enhanced.
14	Improve the way the Council communicates with its community such as using e-mail, twitter, facebook and the internet?

It is also clear that residents see having more say in Council decisions as important, as well as better quality sheltered housing for older people.

## 5.2 Service Satisfaction

A service satisfaction survey was also undertaken in January 2012 for a range of services:

Rank	Service	Percentage Satisfied or Very Satisfied
1	Recycling facilities	95.8
2	Waste collection service	94.9
3	Overall satisfaction with Council Services	90.4
4	Parks and Open Spaces	86.1
5	Benefits Service	85.2
6	Playground facilities for young children	82.7
7	Events such as the Castle Point Show and Fireworks display.	81.6
8	Sports and Leisure facilities	78.1
9	Keeping land clear of litter and refuse	73.5
10	Building Control services	67.8
11	Planning services	67.7
12	Dealing with Complaints	66.8

There is strong satisfaction with recycling and waste collection services. Furthermore satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces is strong and overall satisfaction with Council services is high.

There is weaker service satisfaction for planning and building control. It is likely that there are a range of explanations for this. For example any decisions made by planning and building control services, could impact on service perception if the decision did not go according to customer expectations.

The Council has used results of the service satisfaction survey to help develop and improve services. This includes, for example, the refurbishment of Waterside Farm as well as developing the approach to community engagement and procuring a new grounds maintenance and street cleansing contract.

## 5.3 Place Survey

In 2013, Essex County Council commissioned a place survey, which looked at issues such as satisfaction with the local area and Council as well as issues of feeling safe after dark for all districts in Essex. A report was provided to Castle Point in December. A total of 371 people in Castle Point were surveyed with the following results:

### Satisfaction with the Area as a Place to Live

Across the twelve districts, residents living in Maldon (91.2%), Chelmsford (87.9%), Uttlesford (87.7%) and Rochford (86.4%) are more likely to be satisfied with levels of overall satisfaction significantly higher than the county average (80.7%). There are lower levels of satisfaction in Harlow (69.1%), Basildon (74.5%), Castle Point (76%) and Colchester (77.2%) than elsewhere.

The Council has a key role to play in how residents perceive their local area. In addition to providing value for money, well-run services, where residents also feel that the Council is promoting the interests of their community then satisfaction with the area is higher. The physical and social aspects of the local area also play a part in satisfaction – feeling safe, living in a clean and litter free environment and among people who respect others all appear as influences on satisfaction with the area.

There are also a number of environmental and social factors which affect the perception of an area for which the Council may not have a significant impact; this includes for example, the amount of historical buildings and architecture, the density of households as well as the availability of pleasant countryside. In a recent national survey (March 2013) the historic town of Harrogate scored very highly. The lowest score was for East London.

### **Satisfaction with Local Council**

A total of 63.2% of Castle Point Council were satisfied with the way their local council runs things. The average for all Essex districts was slightly higher at 64.5%. The highest scores were for Rochford (75.4%) and Maldon (71.6%) whilst the lowest scores were Harlow (53.75) and Colchester (55.7%). Some care needs to be taken when viewing these figures as some County Council services (such as highways) can be confused with some of the local services provided by the Council.

### **Neighbourhood Belonging**

A total of 72.3% of Castle Point residents felt that they belonged to their local area. This was above the Essex average (68.8%) and significantly higher than Harlow (55.7%) and Basildon (57.5%) residents. Areas with the highest score included Maldon (78%) and Rochford (75.6%).

### **Feeling Safe**

Levels of perceived safety after dark vary considerably by area. Perceived safety is significantly lower than average in Harlow (36.7% feel safe), Basildon (48.4%). It is the more rural areas of areas of Uttlesford (74.7%) and Maldon (67.7%), where people feel most safe after dark. Castle Point's score of 49.4% is relatively low and below the average for Essex at 58.5%. This may be partly explained by a population which is significantly older than most other district council's in Essex.

## **5.4 Consultation for the Local Plan**

As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, a detailed and extensive consultation exercise was undertaken in the winter / spring of 2012. Questionnaires were sent to 39,911 residential and business addresses. A total of 3,798 responses were received, giving a response rate of 9.52%.

The leaflet invited all residents and businesses to attend a neighbourhood meeting, a coffee morning and/or the business forum. Officers also attended the Youth Conference and two Age Concern lunches, meeting a number of local residents falling within the younger and older age categories.

### **What is good about where you live / operate your business in Castle Point?**

This question was answered by 3,048 (80.27%) of the respondents to the questionnaire. The top 10 ranked responses are set out below:

<b>Question 1 – What is Good (Strengths)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Green / Open Space	1
Shops – access	2
Bus Service	3
Quiet	4
Community Facilities	5
Rail Connectivity	6
Seafront / Coastal	7
Woodland	8
Green Belt	9
Community Spirit	10

Environmental factors are clearly seen as important to residents, and this also fits with the importance given by residents to Council services that are Environmental in nature.

### **What needs improving where you live / operate your business in Castle Point?**

This question was answered by 3,125 (82.3%) of the respondents to the questionnaire.

<b>Question 2 – What needs improving (Weaknesses)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Road and Pavement Maintenance	1
Traffic Congestion	2
Town Centre / Shops	3
Street Cleaning / Litter / Dog Fouling / Weeding	4
On – Street / Illegal Parking	5
Public Transport	6
Too much building	7
Lack of Police	8
Car Parking	9
Lack of Youth Provision	10

The questions above differ for the questionnaire used to help develop the corporate plan because the corporate plan is more focussed on services provided by the Council. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that a significant element of the written feedback received for the corporate plan refers to Road and Pavement maintenance, and in the consultation used for the local plan, this appears as the top issue that needs improvement. Street Scene is also a significant area for improvement.

### **Imagining the future, what issues do you think might affect your quality of life or business success?**

This question was answered by 3,060 (80.59%) of the respondents to the questionnaire.

<b>Question 3 – future impacts (Threats)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Development causing congestion	1
Development causing over development / over population	2
Traffic congestion	3
Loss of Green Belt	4
Development impacting on infrastructure capacity	5
Development causing a loss of open space	6
Policing / Crime	7
Lack of variety of Shops	8
Empty / Closure / Lack of Shops	9
Road proposals in Hadleigh Masterplan	10

The impacts of development were a key concern for the future amongst residents. Residents were of the view that development was likely to result in additional congestion, over development, a loss of Green Belt, impacts on infrastructure capacity and a loss of open space. All these concerns featured in the top 10 concerns for the future in Castle Point. There have also been a significant number of concerns raised in this area during the consultation for the corporate plan.

### **What services and infrastructure are needed to make Castle Point better for residents and businesses?**

<b>Question 4 – Services and Infrastructure (Opportunities)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Improved road network	1
Third Road	2
Improved public Transport	3
Town Centre Improvements	4
Road & Pavement Maintenance	5
Improved Policing / Safety	6
Improved Environmental Services	7
Improved Youth Provision	8
Free / Improved Parking	9
Lower rates, business support and growth	10

There is a considerable resident view of the need to improve the infrastructure of the borough, particularly for transport. These issues will need to be carefully considered in the development of the Council's Local Plan.

## **5.5 Core Business Considerations**

When considering the results of consultation, a number of factors need to be further considered as set out in Chapter 2. Key issues include the following:



**Limitations of consultation work.** It is not always easy to explain different concepts such as 'improve the health of our community' in a survey questionnaire and it is possible that respondents will have different ideas about what this means. As a result they may respond in different ways.

**Political priorities.** This includes the commitments given by members as part of the election process and is a key feature of democratic accountability. For example, commitments provided to improve the housing and leisure services, to refurbish Waterside Farm and to keep bureaucracy to a minimum.

**Cost effectiveness.** For example, whilst events are not a high priority in the citizen's panel survey, they are enjoyed by a significant proportion of the population in Castle Point. As a result, the Council has managed the service provision of events to be largely cost neutral. I.e. the cost of managing and maintaining events is offset by the income raised.

**Partner priorities.** For example, there is a requirement for schools to teach children to swim. As there are no swimming pools at Canvey Schools, it is important for schools to have access to good quality public swimming pools within a reasonable distance. There are also important partner priorities for regeneration and vibrant town centres is an element in ensuring a sustainable community.

**Statutory business functions.** There are a number of statutory services which may not necessarily be a priority from resident surveys but which are a legal requirement to be provided and important for the sustainability of the community. Examples include Building and Development Control, Environmental Health, Licensing and the Benefits Service.

## **Chapter 6:**

### **Our Vision and Medium Term Aims and Targets**

Our vision is to reduce social inequality, improve the health of our communities and develop a prosperous economy through targeted regeneration of the Borough. We want to improve the wellbeing of our community with clean streets, pleasant open spaces and good quality housing. We will nurture community resilience and work closely with our partners to help the community help itself and to enable greater participation in decision making. We want to achieve this through the following four aims:

- **Public Health and Wellbeing**
- **Environment**
- **Transforming our Community**
- **Efficient and Effective Customer Focused Services**

#### **Aim: Public Health and Wellbeing**

We will seek to secure the wellbeing of our community and will work closely with our partners to achieve outcomes that have an impact on people's lives. We will work



closely with residents, local businesses and our partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. We will work to improve the wellbeing and health of our community by improving our leisure and recreational facilities and by working with our partners to promote healthy living. We will engage more closely with our community and develop services in partnership with other public sector organisations to improve the quality of people's lives and assist with dealing with the needs of an ageing population as well as provide for needs of younger people through sport, recreation and play facilities. We will work closely with the voluntary sector to provide essential services for those facing difficulties in this challenging economic climate through debt advice and support.

### **Our Targets:**

#### **Develop opportunities for volunteering work that helps to ensure key community issues are resolved.**

*Rationale: Public services face significant budget pressures and additional added benefit services are more difficult to supply. Furthermore the proportion of the population involved in at least one voluntary activity is low when compared to other Essex districts. There is a potential to obtain more added value services for the community through voluntary work.*

#### **Continue to support the Community Safety Partnership in meeting its strategic priorities of reducing anti social behaviour, domestic abuse, acquisitive crime and re-offending**

*Crime and feeling safe after dark remains a significant priority for residents and the Council is engaged in partnership work to reduce anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse acquisitive crime and re-offending by supporting key partnership initiatives and programmes. .*

#### **Increase the proportion of people participating in physical activity by:**

- **At least 200 additional older people participating in leisure and social activities provided by the sheltered housing service. (March 2016)**
- **Develop and Implement a revised Leisure and Recreation Strategy (October 2014)**

*Rationale: Some of the key health issues facing the Borough relate to lifestyle factors including obesity, poor eating habits and below national average physical activity. The targets above are designed to promote physical and wellbeing activities and increase the proportion of people participating in physical activity.*

### **Aim: Environment**

The environment is consistently a high priority for residents, who want to see well maintained parks and open spaces, and streets that are clean and free from litter, refuse, graffiti and fly posters. We want to improve and maximise any positive

impacts on the environmental quality of the Borough with high quality parks and open spaces and by encouraging a reduction in waste production and participation in our recycling services as well as promoting energy efficiency. We will continue to promote our services and facilities and to ensure that outsourced services or facilities maintained by voluntary groups are delivered to the required contract standard or in accordance with the approved management plans.

#### **Our Targets:**

**At least 55% of household waste sent for recycling or composting (March 2016)**

**Maintain high satisfaction (over 90%) with the refuse collection service**

*Rationale: To maintain a good quality refuse collection and recycling service.*

**At least 85% satisfaction with parks and open spaces (March 2016)**

*Rationale: To maintain high satisfaction with parks and open spaces and encourage greater participation in physical activity.*

**At least 80% satisfaction with Council's efforts to keep public land clear of litter and refuse (March 2016)**

*Rationale: To ensure a high quality grounds maintenance and street cleansing service.*

#### **Aim: Transforming our Community**

We aim to transform our community to ensure we provide a sustainable future for all who live, work and play in the Borough. We will do this by setting the right planning framework in place, in consultation with our community, which allows for a sustainable future and the regeneration of town centres. We will also contribute to the regeneration of the Borough by ensuring our services are fit for purpose now and in the future. This includes the development of our assets such as a major refurbishment of our leisure facilities as well as our sheltered housing. We will work with others to achieve lasting benefits for the Borough such as maintaining an Olympic legacy of excellent mountain biking facilities at Hadleigh. We will work with the community and with partners to develop community resilience and to help the community help itself.

#### **Our Targets:**

**Construction of homes in accordance with the five year housing land supply agreed by full Council.**

**All Sheltered Housing Schemes are fit for purpose with no shared bathing facilities (March 2016)**

*Rationale: The Council has 8 sheltered housing schemes, two of which retain shared bathing facilities which are no longer appropriate for modern living.*

**Progress the development of the Local Plan in accordance with the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme**

*Rationale: It is important for any development in the Borough to be undertaken in a planned way to protect the green belt as well as allow for appropriate development in our town centres and in the construction of housing.*

**Encouraging the regeneration of Hadleigh and Canvey Town centres through the planning process (March 2015).**

*The fabric of the town centres has decayed over the years and needs to be reinvigorated to meet the needs of the community and provide modern retail, residential and transport infrastructure.*

### **Aim: Efficient and Effective Customer Focused Services**

There is a challenging economic climate and the government has taken action and will continue to take action to reduce public expenditure. At the same time the demand for good quality customer focused public services remains high and there are a range of improvements required by elected members and residents. To deliver this challenging agenda, Council services must be as lean as possible with as little bureaucracy as necessary. We will achieve this by reviewing our services and will explore working practices and utilise new technology to maximise efficiency and working practices. We will seek to provide services in the most cost effective way and will work with partners in the private, public and with the wider community to secure the best value for money service provision.

#### **Our Targets**

**Savings identified and delivered to achieve a balanced budget in current and future years. (Ongoing).**

**Implementation of organisational transformational programme to transform the Council by March 2016 by using new technology and working practices to:**

- **Reduce costs by maximising the use of estates and assets**
- **Utilise new technology to transform working practices and procedures**
- **Develop customer interface and communication channels to maintain high customer satisfaction with all Council services.**

*Rationale: To achieve a balanced budget through cost reduction and more efficient working practices.*

## **Objectives**

### **How we develop, agree and monitor our objectives**

**Draft objectives are developed as part of the service planning process in the autumn of each year**

**Key corporate projects are also assessed and any relevant objectives determined.**

**Draft objectives are discussed with Cabinet portfolio holders and Heads of Service.**

**Objectives are then discussed and agreed by Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Portfolio holder early in the calendar year.**

**Progress in the achievement of the objectives is monitored by Policy and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet as required. This includes a quarterly corporate scorecard report to Cabinet.**

**The Corporate Plan, including the annual objectives, is annually considered by full Council before the end of March and in time for the coming financial year.**

## Chapter 7:

### Our Annual Objectives for 2014/15

For each of the four aims we agree a set of annual objectives for the year, which are designed to ensure we can achieve our medium term corporate targets.

#### Aim: Public Health and Wellbeing

##### Annual Objectives:

1. **Improve the Health & Wellbeing of Castle Point residents through the provision of value for money Leisure and Recreation Services that increases the percentage of adults aged 16 or over participating in sport at least once a week.**

##### **Outcomes to be measured by:**

- Maintain monthly leisure membership levels in excess of 2,000
- The percentage of adults aged 16 or over participating in sport at least once a week.
- Development of a Leisure and Recreation Strategy.

**Rationale:** Consultation results and comments demonstrate that leisure is important for residents and the significant investment in Waterside farm should help encourage more people to participate in sport and Leisure activities. It is also important for the Council to obtain and improve value for money for the leisure and recreation services and increase the number of visits to the facilities.

2. **Develop Strategic Partnership working with the public, private and voluntary sector organisations to help achieve joint priorities and obtain efficiencies.**

##### **Outcomes to be measured by:**

- Implementation of appropriate safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Work in partnership with the voluntary sector to increase volunteering in the borough and develop services for the community.
- Work with the community safety partnership to continue to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

**Rationale:** Community safety is seen as a key issue for residents, as well as the need to work in partnership with others to be efficient and effective, both the work of the community safety partnership and safeguarding involves working with other organisations. Volunteering is also a significant element to a strengthened approach to community engagement.

**3. Continue the transformation of the Housing Services and achieve the following outcomes:**

**Outcomes to be measured by:**

- Refurbishment of Amelia Blackwell House so that all residents have their own bathing facilities and a significant number to have their own bathing facilities at Gowan Court by March 2015.
- Pilot two garage sites for development with planning permission
- Develop the Sheltered Housing Service and allow elderly non-resident people to participate in the social activities of Sheltered Housing Schemes (to be subject to project planning).

**Rationale:** Improvements to sheltered housing was seen as important by respondents to the corporate plan survey. In addition to developing the sheltered housing service, there is a need to look at further development opportunities for general housing on Council owned brownfield sites and development on housing owned land will continue to be explored.

**Aim: Environment**

**Annual Objectives:**

**4. Ensure high quality grounds maintenance and street scene cleansing is delivered through pro-active monitoring and rectification.**

**Outcome to be measured by:**

- Percentage of streets inspected which are deemed to be unsatisfactory using Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse methodology
- Target 90% of flytips removed within 1 working day

**Rationale:** Environment services stands out as one of the most important issues for residents, and the need to have a highly effective grounds maintenance and street scene service must be seen as a high priority.

**Aim: Transforming our Community**

**Annual Objectives:**

**5. Progress development of the Local Plan for the Borough**

**Outcome to be measured by:**

- Progress against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme.

**Rationale:** In both the Corporate Plan survey and the Local Plan survey, the importance and concerns of development, the protection of the green belt and the development of infrastructure such as roads and Town Centres were very high priorities for residents. These complex issues need to be considered as part of the rigorous development of the local plan and associated planning framework.

**6. Progress the regeneration of Canvey and Hadleigh Town Centres.**



**Outcome to be measured by:**

- Progress in delivering the agreed proposals as described in the Canvey and Hadleigh Town Centre Masterplans.

**Rationale:** The issues for this objective are similar to the issues for the development of the corporate plan. There is very significant public interest in the development of these two Town Centres with complex issues which must be resolved through the careful development of master planning.

**Aim: Efficient and Effective Customer Focussed services.**

**Objectives:**

**7. Implement organisational change to transform the Council by March 2016 by using new technology and working practices to:**

- **Reduce costs by maximising the use of estates and assets**
- **Utilise new technology to transform working practices and procedures**
- **Develop customer interface and communication channels to improve opportunities for self-service as well as maintain high customer satisfaction with all Council services**

**Rationale:** The Council has successfully secured the necessary cost reductions through the implementation of an effective efficiency programme for a number of years. However, whilst efficiencies have been secured for the short term, there still remain very challenging financial pressures which can no longer be met through the current approach.

It is now necessary to undertake significant work to transform working practices through the introduction of modern working methods linked to the improved use of IT systems and software. This will include a thorough review of department and service working practices to elicit further efficiencies, as well as review service charges.

The results of the public consultation demonstrate that there is a need for the Council to be as efficient and effective as possible.

A programme for transformation will be developed over the Autumn and Winter period and further details of the expected outcomes will be set out for consideration by Cabinet and full Council when available.

**Addendum**

## 1. A Short Profile of Castle Point

Welcome to Castle Point. We are located in South Essex at the heart of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region between Basildon and Southend.

Just over 60% of Castle Point's land area is designated as Green Belt, and there are a number of important wildlife areas in the Borough including a special protection area and six sites of specific scientific interest. As a result, most of the Borough's population of 89,400 people live within one of four towns:

Benfleet 22%  
Canvey Island 43%  
Hadleigh 14%  
Thundersley 21% *(based on 2001 census data)*

There are a number of factors that characterise the area of castle point:

**Contrasting Towns** - Castle Point is a Borough located on the north bank of the Thames Estuary. It is a Borough most easily characterised by its contrasting features. Castle Point comprises two urban areas of Canvey Island and the mainland towns of Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley. These towns have different landscapes, built environments and social conditions. This presents both issues and opportunities when developing a vision for the future.

**Diverse Natural Environment** - Castle Point's urban area is tightly bound by the Thames Estuary and the metropolitan green belt and as a result the Borough benefits from a diverse natural environment including six Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area and wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. These nationally and internationally important sites are threaded together by local wildlife sites that are distinctive to the varying landscape in Castle Point and include marshland, grassland and ancient woodland. The diversity of the natural environment is a very important attribute of the Borough due to its location in the urbanised Thames Gateway South Essex Sub-region.

**Low Skilled Economy** - The level of out-commuting both impacts on and is influenced by the quality of local employment opportunities. Jobs within the Borough are typically low skilled and are provided by small businesses that are less able to invest in high quality premises or training and development of their staff. As a result, local jobs are largely located in rundown employment areas and pay is in the bottom 20% of districts nationally at about £388 per week. The average salary increases to £524 per week when the salaries of commuters are also considered, and the bulk of employment for local people is outside of the Borough.

**Town Centres in need of vitality** - 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 and Bluewater because people are more willing and used to travelling for what they need and want. As a result, the town centres in Castle Point are in need of regeneration in order to make them more attractive to existing residents and as business and housing locations in order to enhance their vitality. Regeneration is necessary to address the significant



under investment in public space that has occurred within town centres in Castle Point.

**Public Safety** - The residential nature of the Borough is also an issue in respect of the risks posed to the Borough by the major hazardous installations (Calor and Oikos) located on Canvey Island, the risk of flooding and the associated access difficulties that might prevent a successful evacuation of parts of the Borough in the event of an incident. In light of the Buncefield Initial Report, planning authorities should address the risk issues associated with hazardous installations located in close proximity to the residential population. As both forms of development are already present it is necessary to consider which form of development is most appropriate in creating a sustainable community in Castle Point.

**Ageing Population** - The population of the Borough is ageing with the proportion of people over the age of 65 expected to increase to 30% by 2030. This has implications for accommodation provision and healthcare services in particular and should be reflected in plans for the future of the Borough.

**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 in particular are met. The under 15 age group is expected to decrease by 6% over the next 5 years. There is currently a perception that young people do not have enough to do, resulting in crime and anti-social behaviour. This issue needs to be addressed in order to achieve greater community cohesion.

**Ethnicity** - The diversity of the population in Castle Point is not extensive. Approximately 95% of the population regards themselves as white British. The next highest ethnic group is Asian at about 1.7% of the population. There are no particular concentrations of ethnic population in districts within the Borough.

**Impact of the Recession** - Castle Point Council are monitoring the current economic climate, and ensuring our anti poverty strategy and working practices are realigned to minimise the impact of the current recession. Economic activity and the employment rates are volatile. Some key facts provided by government agencies are set out below:

**Key Facts:**

Area 45.08 km<sup>2</sup> (17.41 square miles)  
Rural Land Area 60%

Population 88,011 (2011 Census)  
Population Density 1,921.2/km<sup>2</sup> (4,976 / square mile)  
Households 36,730  
Workforce 44,300

Unemployment: 2.9% receiving Jobseekers allowance (March 2013). A total of 7.3% of the working population are not working. The national average is 7.9% for all non working people and 3.8% for those receiving Job Seekers allowance (March 2013).

Ethnicity:

White 96%  
Asian 1.5%

Black 1.1%

## 2. Medium Term Financial Forecast

		2011/12	2012/13	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
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The Council's corporate planning process includes financial planning as part of an integrated approach, to ensure resources are properly aligned with priorities. For example, as part of the development of action and service planning, managers and heads of service develop any budgetary assumptions accordingly, and this is considered as part of the corporate plan and medium term financial forecast.

This section sets out a summary of our Revenue Spending Plans. In addition the Council has an Efficiency service review programme which is available on request.

## Revenue Spending Plans

No	General Fund Net Service Expenditure	Actual	Estimate	Revised	Estimate	Estimate
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	<b>Central &amp; corporate services</b>					
1	Civic Governance and Democratic Representation	1,187	1,273	1,265	1,132	1,272
2	Other central functions and corporate costs	1,068	1,559	1,283	1,273	1,530
	<b>Net total - Central and corporate services</b>	<b>2,255</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>2,548</b>	<b>2,405</b>	<b>2,802</b>
	<b>Communities &amp; Housing</b>					
1	Homelessness and Housing	424	431	447	396	410
2	Revenues and Benefits	1,056	1,261	1,253	1,329	1,377
3	Other Communities and Housing services	14	52	50	26	31
	<b>Net total - Communities &amp; Housing</b>	<b>1,494</b>	<b>1,744</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>1,751</b>	<b>1,818</b>
	<b>Environment</b>					
1	Environmental health	667	1,140	803	1,025	784
2	Street scene and operational services	1,180	1,285	1,260	1,279	1,323
3	Refuse & recycling	1,184	1,365	1,014	1,192	1,236
4	Parks & open spaces	1,619	1,222	1,116	996	1,013
5	Leisure centres, golf course and community centres	1,439	2,019	1,876	1,676	1,871
6	Public conveniences	215	132	131	143	148
7	Parking	(377)	(353)	(368)	(111)	(511)
	<b>Net total - Environment</b>	<b>5,927</b>	<b>6,810</b>	<b>5,832</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>5,864</b>
	<b>Regeneration &amp; Neighbourhoods</b>					
1	Development control	647	558	644	602	563
2	Building control	143	148	178	163	177
3	Regeneration	696	275	275	261	154
4	Partnerships, community engagement and community safety	371	429	370	387	320
5	Licensing and public transport schemes	77	56	72	112	120
	<b>Net total - Regeneration &amp; Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>1,934</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>1,334</b>
	<b>Resources</b>					
1	All resources departments	77	287	75	77	80
	<b>Net total - Resources</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>80</b>

### **3. Corporate and Service Action Planning**

The Council has a corporate and service action planning process which includes a corporate action plan that is refreshed annually.

DRAFT

**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Technical Reforms of Council Tax**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Stanley – Corporate Policy, Resources and Performance**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

This report sets out proposals for Castle Point Borough Council to change its policy with regards to some discounts currently available to Council Tax payers. Legislative changes were brought about by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 which, amongst other matters, replaced certain Council Tax exemptions in respect of empty properties with locally defined discounts set by the Council. A decision is required in relation to the level of discounts to be set locally from 1 April 2014.

**2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**

- Sound and strategic financial management - Improving the Council
- Efficient and Effective Services

**3. Recommendation**

**That Cabinet agrees to the recommended level of discounts to be applied from 1 April 2014.**

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**4. Background**

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced certain changes to the operation of Council Tax in England. From 1 April 2013, Class A and C exemptions were abolished and replaced with locally set discounts of between 0% and 100%. The Council set a discount of 100% from 1 April 2013 for such categories, which in essence maintained the status quo. The new powers also provided the Council with the discretion to charge a premium of up to 150% of the Council Tax liability for properties that have been empty over two years. The decision to impose this premium was deferred for one year.

Some authorities within Essex took advantage of these reforms and introduced varying levels of discounts from 1 April 2013 so there is now some experience to draw upon.

The main beneficiary of any additional income raised through the reduction or removal of such discounts would be Essex County Council but the cost and burden of administration lies solely with the Council as the billing authority.

## **5. Recommendations to take effect from 1 April 2014:**

- **Class D (major repairs/structural alterations) Discount (0 to 12 months)**

Vacant dwellings where major repair works or structural alterations are required, underway or recently completed were previously subject to an exemption (formerly Class A) for a maximum period of 1 year. From 1 April 2013 this became a locally defined discount which was set at 100% for one year maintaining the previous status quo. The value of exemption granted in 2011/12 was £116,628.25 and in 2012/13 was £110,907.68.

- i) *The recommendation is to award a 0% discount on such properties from 1 April 2014*

Within this preferred option it is recognised that there may be some circumstances where the empty period is outside the control of the liable person and is unavoidable, for instance:

- Major damage arising from flooding or fire;
- Subsidence;
- Some legal matter preventing sale of a property

In such circumstances it is considered that the existing powers for awarding reductions in Council Tax under Section 13A of the Local Government Act 2003 are available to provide a remedy where available. The Head of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Policy Resources and Performance, already has delegated powers to determine individual applications. Budget provision is currently £7,900 for dealing with such cases as the cost in these circumstances is borne solely by Castle Point.

- **Class C (empty and unfurnished) Discount (0 to 6 months)**

Where a dwelling is vacant and unfurnished, it previously qualified for a maximum 6 month 100% exemption. From 1 April 2013 this was replaced by a locally set discount which mirrored the previous qualifying criteria. The value of exemption granted in 2011/12 was £406,981.25 and in 2012/13 was £416,949.59

- i) *The recommendation is to award a 100% discount on such properties from 1 April 2014 to a maximum of 4 weeks.*
  - ii) *To qualify for a discount Class C the property must qualify under the same rules that would have been required to qualify under an Exemption Class C, if that exemption had not been abolished from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013*

A substantial number of Class C discounts are for relatively short periods, typically following changes in ownership and occupation. The introduction of a 0% discount for the entire six month period would therefore result in a high proportion of small account balances, which would potentially lead to dispute

and be difficult to collect. Granting a discount for the first four weeks mitigates this issue.

- **Premium on properties empty for more than two years**

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 allows a billing authority to set a premium of not more than 50% of Council Tax in respect of long term empty properties (vacant for two years or more). This has proven to be one of the most contentious changes, where introduced by other authorities, and there is evidence of significant avoidance tactics by taxpayers e.g. misuse of other discounts such as single person discounts, fraudulent tenancies etc.

Furthermore, the Government has prescribed two classes of dwelling to be exempt from the premium which are:

- A dwelling which would otherwise be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services, who is absent from the property as a result of such service.
- A dwelling, which forms part of a single property that is being treated by a resident of that property as part of the main dwelling.

Government guidance also stipulates that due consideration should be given to the health of the local housing market when making determinations and that owners should not be penalised where there is evidence that the property is genuinely on the housing market for sale or rent. It is clear that administrative and collection difficulties will arise given such a background and what is regarded by some practitioners as unworkable guidance.

The number of properties which fall within the age range varies at any time between 110 and 130 (but some are empty caravans at Thorney Bay)

- i) *The recommendation is not to introduce the premium on properties vacant for two years or more*

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial implications**

There is potential to generate additional Council Tax income from the existing tax base by varying the level of discounts as recommended. Estimating the potential income that may arise by changing the level of discount is not straightforward as there will be collection difficulties and potential behavioural changes by taxpayers to avoid such charges. For indicative figures see appendix A.

It should also be noted that as a 'landlord' in respect of the Council's housing stock there may well be an additional cost to the Housing Revenue Account.

In addition, only approximately 15% of any additional Council Tax collected will be retained by Castle Point Borough Council, with the remainder being distributed to the other precepting authorities in line with their overall share of Council Tax

**b. Legal implications**

There is a legal requirement for the Council to make a decision in respect of Discount Classes C and D as existing discounts granted to taxpayers will cease from 1 April 2014.

**c. Human resources and equality implications**

All residents would be affected equally by these recommendations, which relate primarily to empty properties. There is no identified detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and the impact of the proposal is neutral.

**d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

The Local Government Finance Act states that any changes to a discount can only be introduced at the start of a financial year and in relation to the options set out in this report they have effect for the financial year commencing 1 April 2014.

If the Council decides to reduce or remove the discount for any class of property then it is required to publish a notice of the changes in at least one local newspaper within 21 days of the determination being made.

**7. Background Papers:**

Technical reforms of Council Tax – Government consultation

Technical reforms of Council Tax – Summary of responses report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-reforms-of-council-tax>

Technical reforms of Council Tax – when dwellings should not be liable to the empty homes premium – Government consultation

Technical reforms of Council Tax – when dwellings should not be liable to the empty homes premium – Summary of responses report

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-reforms-to-council-tax-when-dwellings-should-not-be-liable-to-the-empty-homes-premium>

**Report Author: Gary Burns – Revenues Manager**



**Appendix A -  
Council Tax - Variation of Existing Discounts**

Description of Current Discount	Proposed Amendment to Discount	Value £	Assumed collection rate following change %	Potential Revenue £	CPBC Officer Rec. £	Additional Information	Approximate Number of Properties/Periods Affected
<b>Second Homes</b> Residents with second homes are granted a discount of 10% against their Council Tax for their second home.	Removal of remaining discount (10%)	(6,000)	98.6%	(5,916)	<b>Not to implement</b>	This will be difficult to monitor going forward as there is no incentive for taxpayers to notify the Council of their second home.	
<b>Class D</b> Vacant properties where major repair or structural works are in progress are granted a discount of 100% for up to 1 year.	Removal of entire discount. Incentive to complete works and return property to occupation quickly.	(111,000)	65.0%	(72,150)	(72,150)	Some of these could subsequently fall into new class C for one month only, if class C policy is changed as indicated.	40+
<b>Class C</b> Empty and unfurnished properties, possibly subject to probate or progression of sale are currently granted a discount of 100% for up to six months.	Replacement with a discount of 100% for one month. Full tax will then apply. Incentive to return properties to occupation quickly.	(242,600)	65.0%	(157,690)	(157,690)	Collection rate adjusted for ease to reflect some class A falling into class C for one month only.	200+
<b>Empty Homes Premium</b> Currently subject to full Council Tax.	Relates to properties which have been empty for two years + In addition to full Council Tax Charge an additional charge of 50% would be levied.	(80,000)	60.0%	(48,000)	<b>Not to implement</b>	Tax payers only have to occupy for six weeks in order to start clock ticking again.	2,000+
							100+
		(439,600)		(283,756)	(229,840)		

<b>Financial Benefit:</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>% of Charge</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
Billing Authority	234.09	15.31%	(43,450)	(35,195)
Essex County Council	1,086.75	71.09%	(201,716)	(163,389)
Police Commissioner	141.48	9.25%	(26,261)	(21,271)
Essex Fire	66.42	4.34%	(12,329)	(9,986)
<b>Total Gain to All Authorities</b>	<b>1,528.74</b>		<b>(283,756)</b>	<b>(229,840)</b>
Returned by Major Preceptors to Billing Authority		25.00%	(60,076)	(48,661)
<b>Total Gain for Billing Authority</b>			<b>(103,527)</b>	<b>(83,856)</b>

**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Authority to represent the Council**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Stanley - Corporate Policy, Resources and Performance.**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to obtain authorisation to allow two members of the Council's Law Team presently employed by the Council to represent the Borough Council in proceedings before the Magistrates' Court and County Court.

**2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives**

This proposal would support the Council's priority to generally improve the Council and provide better services.

**3. Recommendations**

That the following member of the Law team be authorised to appear before the Magistrates' Court and County Courts to represent the Borough Council in legal proceedings pursuant to Section 223 Local Govt Act 1972 and Section 60(2) County Courts Act 1984:-

**Ms Katie Turner – Trainee Legal Executive**

**Ms Bethany Brown – Trainee Solicitor**

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**4. Background**

Solicitors who are employed by the Council have automatic rights of audience to appear before the Courts to represent the Council and un-admitted legal staff who are undergoing training to obtain legal qualifications may also appear and represent the Council provided they are specifically authorised to do so by the Council.

**5. Proposals**

It would be beneficial for the Council to allow its trainee legal executive and trainee solicitor currently on secondment to the Council to appear to represent the Council in legal proceedings before the Courts and the appropriate

authorisation would also allow for the proper training and development of these staff members.

It is therefore proposed that the trainee legal executive employed by the Council be authorised to appear to represent the Council in legal proceedings before the Courts pursuant to Section 223 Local Govt Act 1972 and Section 60(2) County Courts Act 1984.

It is also proposed that the trainee solicitor seconded to the Council be authorised to appear to represent the Council in legal proceedings before the Courts pursuant to Section 223 Local Govt Act 1972 and Section 60(2) County Courts Act 1984.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

In some circumstances where no other solicitor or legal officer employed by the Council is available it may be necessary to incur extra costs by instructing Counsel or a solicitor agent to represent the Council at Court.

### **(b) Legal Implications**

Without authorisation from the Council the trainee solicitor/legal executive employed by the Council are unable to appear before the Courts to represent the Council in legal proceedings.

### **(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications**

It would assist the management of the Council's legal services for the trainee solicitor/legal executive to be authorised to represent the Council at Court.

### **(d) IT and Asset Management Implications**

There are none to be addressed by this report.

## **7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors**

The proposal will be implemented as soon as it is approved by the Cabinet.

## **8. Background Papers**

None.

### **Report Author:**

Fiona Wilson – Head of Law

**CABINET**

**15th January 2014**

**Subject: Update on Safer Communities Initiatives**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor G Isaacs  
Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**1.1 This report is to update the Cabinet on the position with neighbourhood and safer community matters.**

**2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives**

**2.1 The initiatives described in this report are directly linked to the Council's Community Safety priority – reducing levels of crime by working with the police and other parties – and the Improving the Council priority by engaging the community in local decision-making.**

**3. Recommendation**

**3.1 That the Cabinet notes the activities regarding neighbourhoods and safer community matters from the previous month as set out in the report.**

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**4. Background**

**4.1 The Council is an integral partner in a number of key partnerships across the Borough.**

**4.2 The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Castle Point and Rochford works as an overarching strategic body ensuring the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In particular the "Feeling Safer" ambition involves the police, probation officers and other partners.**

**4.3 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory partnership established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is a partnership between the police, local authorities, the probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, local residents and businesses. The Council is a leading partner in the Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership.**

**5. Progress and activities**

**5.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has announced that the New Initiative Fund will remain open for new applications. Further information is available from the PCC's office.**

- 5.2 Special Christmas cards were sent to 120,000 homes across Essex in a bid to help cut burglaries in the county. The independent crime-fighting charity Crimestoppers is launching the campaign to get residents to pass on any information they may have about burglaries or stolen goods – and they could even get cash reward.
- 5.3 The appeal by the charity follows a crackdown on burglary in Essex by police. The PCC has funded the campaign, understanding that not everyone wants to speak with the police.
- 5.4 The special postcards are being put through letterboxes of homes in the districts of Castle Point, Rochford, Chelmsford, Maldon, Tendring, Epping Forest and Brentwood during Christmas and into the New Year.
- 5.5 The Castle Point and Rochford CSP recently set its priorities for 2014 as:
- Domestic Burglary
  - Anti social Behaviour
  - Reducing Reoffending
  - Domestic Abuse

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **(a) Financial implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **(b) Legal implications**

- 6.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **(c) Human resources and equality implications**

- 6.3 There are no human resource or equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **(d) Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

The projects described in this report are on-going matters.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The Council continues to carry out regular engagement on a variety of matters to ensure the safety of communities in Castle Point.

**Background Papers:** None

**Report Author:** Melanie Harris - Head of Partnerships and Safer Places