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**David Marchant** LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) CEng FICE FCMI  
**Chief Executive**

## **CABINET AGENDA**

**Date:** **Wednesday 16th April 2014**

**Time:** **7.00pm – 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>

**Cabinet Enquiries:**  
**Reference:**  
**Publication Date:**

**John Riley, ext. 2417**  
**8/2013/2014**  
**Tuesday 8th April 2014**

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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 19th March 2014.

**4. Forward Plan**

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

**5. Environment - Civic Pride**

**5(a) Canvey War Memorial**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Leisure and  
Cabinet Member Waste Floods and Water Management)*

**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) South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Growth Deal & Strategic Economic Plan**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

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

**6(c) Housing Progress Report**

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

**6(d) Disabled Grant Policy Review**

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report following the Wellbeing Policy & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7.4.2014.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing)*

**7. Improving the Council**

**7 (a) Annual Refresh of Key Strategies (Resources)**

The Cabinet will be asked to approve the revised strategies.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member Corporate Policy Resources and 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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**11. New Flats at 35 Long Road**

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

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

*(Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Policy Resources and Performance  
Homes & Customer Engagement)*



## CABINET

**19TH MARCH 2014**

### **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 Egan	Homes and Customer Engagement
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 Goodwin.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Blackwell, Campagna, S Cole, Hart, Ladzrie, Sharp and Tucker.

### **95. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of Members' interests.

### **96. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26.2.2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to an amendment to Minute 87 in the third paragraph to remove the words "involve Members more inclusively in" and substitute the words "refer to full Council".

### **97. 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 2014. The plan was reviewed each month.

In order to reflect the decision to amend the Minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet (Minute 96 above refers), an amendment to the Forward Plan that the decision on John H Burrows Park is to be taken by the Council was noted.

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



## **98. SURFACE WATER FLOODING UPDATE**

The Cabinet received an update report on surface water flooding. The Cabinet Member explained the meetings and actions that had occurred to address the problems of flooding in the Borough. In response to a request from the County Council, five top locations had been identified in the Borough and notified to the County Council for an intense period of activity from initial funding of £1M made available to respond to the severe weather conditions.

The Cabinet Member responded to questions and statements about these priority locations and also issues arising from the David Wilson Homes site, at Bilton Road/The Avenue/The Crescent/Meadow Road, Hadleigh and at Broomfield, Hadleigh.

**Resolved:** To note the content of the report.

## **99. LEISURE AND COMMUNITY HALLS UPDATE**

The Cabinet received an update report on the performance in Leisure Services and Community Halls since completion of recent refurbishment and improvement projects.

The Cabinet Member responded to a number of questions and statements about the facilities provided and lettings to in-borough and out-borough customers, maintenance and cleanliness issues, customer feedback and comments and car parking improvements for blue badge holders.

**Resolved:** - To note the information contained in the report.

## **100. JOHN H BURROWS PARK**

The Cabinet received a report on the outcomes from recent consultation relating to the condition of the existing Council-owned building and other facilities at John H Burrows Park in Hadleigh.

During the debate which ensued, the Cabinet Member responded to comments and questions from Members.

The Cabinet Member also invited the Cabinet to agree the provision of temporary public conveniences within the Park at an estimated cost of £23,000 in the first year and ongoing annual costs of £6,000. In addition, the Cabinet Member sought approval of further investigations into the costs of demolition, landscaping and reinstatement of Hadleigh Hall for future consideration as part of the development of the Council's Leisure and Recreation Strategy.

With regard to the proposal to install temporary toilets, discussion took place on the need to have regard to accessibility and safeguarding issues. Debate on the proposed demolition or reinstatement of Hadleigh Hall

confirmed the need for further exploration of options for the future of the site.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the Cabinet considers the results from consultation and other comments and views which have been received by the Council (including the petition received from the Solby Residents Association) as shown in this report.
- 2) That any changes to the future use of John H Burrows Park should be considered as part of the ongoing preparation and development of the Council's leisure and recreation strategy for the parks, recreation grounds and sports and leisure services which are maintained by the Council.
- 3) That the Council should continue to make application for third party funding and private sector investment to maximise the various leisure opportunities which are available to residents in the Castle Point area.
- 4) In principle, to approve the provision of temporary public conveniences in John H Burrows Park, subject to safeguarding and accessibility issues being addressed, at an estimated initial first year cost of £23,000, together with an annual maintenance cost estimated at £6,000.
- 5) To approve further investigations into the costs of demolition, landscaping and reinstatement of Hadleigh Hall for future consideration as part of the development of the Council's Leisure and Recreation Strategy, referred to in 3 above.

## **101. EQUALITY SCHEME REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Council's revised five year Equality Scheme.

**Resolved:** - To approve the five year Equality Scheme.

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

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

The Cabinet Member responded to questions and statements about the problems of speeding vehicles in Roscommon Way and measures to install cameras in this location. He also responded to statements on the recording of incidents reported to the Police.

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to refer to the good work being undertaken in the Borough in conjunction with partners, notably the continuing development of the Befriending Scheme by CAVS and the

reminder from the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for residents to test their smoke alarms when clocks were put forward on 30 March.

**Resolved:**

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

**103. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

There were no matters.

**104. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO THE STATUTORY COMMITTEES**

There were no matters.

Chairman



# **Castle Point Borough Council**

## **Forward Plan**

**APRIL 2014**

# **CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **FORWARD PLAN**

**APRIL 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>
April 2014	<u>Community Safety Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Safer Communities	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
April 2014	<u>Regeneration Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
April 2014	<u>Disabled Facility Grant policy</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Health & Wellbeing	Head of Environment
April 2014	<u>Resources Strategies : To note revisions</u>	Improving the Council	Council	Deputy Leader	Head of Resources
April 2014	<u>Housing Progress Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Homes & Customer Engagement	Head of Housing & Communities
June/Sept 2014	<u>Financial Update</u>	All	Cabinet	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
June 2014	<u>New Corporate Plan</u>	All	Council	Leader	Head of Performance & Service Support
June/ July 2014	<u>Leisure and Recreation Strategy</u>	Environment Civic Pride	Cabinet	Environment & Street Scene	Head of Environment
June /July	<u>New Local Plan Report of the T&amp;F Group on responses to consultation</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Council	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
July	<u>Report on SELEP Bids</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration

<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>
July /Oct	<u>Regeneration Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Sept	<u>Statement of Accounts</u>	All	Council	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources

**CABINET**

**16th April 2014**

**Subject: Canvey War Memorial**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Burch – Leisure & Councillor Howard**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**This report contains a proposal to replace the War Memorial at the Paddocks on Canvey Island with a new monument after consultation and with support from a local community group.**

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

**Environment**

**3. Recommendations**

**That the Cabinet agrees to replace the existing War Memorial with a rebuilt monument to the design which is shown in this report and which has been approved and supported by the local community group.**

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**4. Background**

- 4.1 The War Memorial at the Paddocks on Canvey Island is showing signs of ageing and decay and there have been various discussions over previous recent years to improve the quality and appearance of the memorial.
- 4.2 The site at the Paddocks is the focal point for the Annual Service of Remembrance on Canvey Island and large numbers of people attend the site for the service and to pay their respects at the memorial.
- 4.3 The Council and local people are anxious that the service and both public and private acts of remembrance should take place in suitable surroundings and that the War Memorial should provide a fitting tribute to the Fallen.
- 4.4 The War Memorial Hall Committee comprising local people (and Reverend Tudor, the Dean of Hadleigh, together with County/ Borough Councillor Ray Howard and Town Councillor Mrs Joan Liddiard) has expressed a desire to work with the Council and agree a scheme for a new replacement monument to be constructed at the site to replace the existing memorial wall.



## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 The Council's Project Officer and the Property Technical Officer have consulted and agreed upon a suitable scheme with members of the War Memorial Hall Committee and other interested parties. The new monument will be built to a similar design and scale and replace the existing structure but it will be constructed to a modern standard and use best quality materials. It will stand in the same location and be a like for like replacement and retain many of the original features but be built to a better and more solid standard.
- 5.2 A drawing showing the existing and proposed design is attached to the report. The monument will again be a memorial wall and will be constructed using masonry bricks and be adorned with memorial plaques to commemorate those in the Armed Forces who have lost their lives in the service of their country.
- 5.3 It is proposed that subject to formal agreement by the Cabinet that the existing memorial will be replaced after the Armed Forces Day celebrations on 23 June 2014 and that the rebuilding works will commence soon after to allow the new memorial to be available for Remembrance Sunday on 9 November 2014. There is acceptance that any building work may be subject to delay because of adverse weather or due to other unforeseen circumstance and that the above dates may vary.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

This is a project which involves the community and the Council. The design and general specification has been the subject of lengthy discussion between the War Memorial Hall Committee and the Council's staff. There is general consensus regarding the type of replacement monument, the location and materials to be used together with the process which needs to be undertaken to agree permission and allow the works to be commenced at the site.

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

The War Memorial Hall Committee has agreed to act as the funders and sponsor for the rebuilding project. They have funds available from public donations which are sufficient to pay for the construction costs. No works will be undertaken until the Committee has agreed the final costs and committed to provide sufficient finance for the project to be completed to a satisfactory standard.

The Council is providing the technical expertise and will undertake responsibility for obtaining all necessary consents and permissions and for appointing the contractor to carry out the works and supervising all aspects of the building works. There is a cost associated to this technical support and supervision which will be borne directly by the Council.

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

The Council is the landowner for the Paddocks site and will ensure that all necessary consents and permissions are obtained to carry out the works and

that the works comply with all necessary health and safety requirements and that an approved and reputable contractor is appointed to carry out the works.

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

**Human Resources**

The Council's Property Technical Officer is the designated War Memorials Officer for the Council and is registered with the War Memorials Trust. He will be responsible for the completion of the works and will liaise as appropriate with all other parties.

**Equality Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and the impact of the proposal is neutral.

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

The Council will be looking to enter into a future venture with the War Memorial Hall Committee or other local community groups or organisations to assist with the upkeep and maintenance of the site and the new memorial.

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

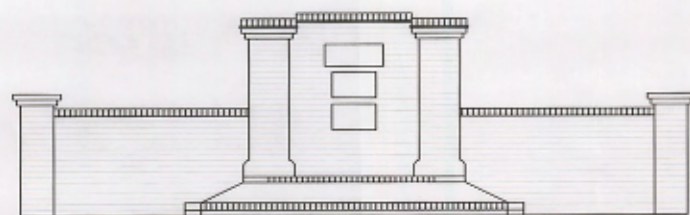
Once constructed it is envisaged that the new War Memorial will serve the community for many years and that the site will provide a place of remembrance for future generations and be an example of the Council working in partnership with a local community group to accomplish the successful completion of a project which is dear to local people.

The project is subject to the risks which are shown in the report,

**8. Background Papers**

Equality Impact Assessment

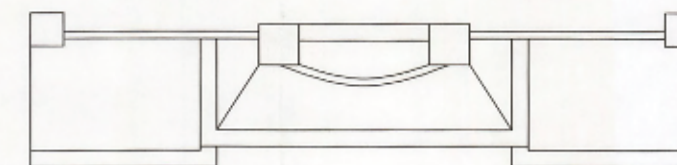
**Report Author:** Andrew Roby Smith – Project Officer



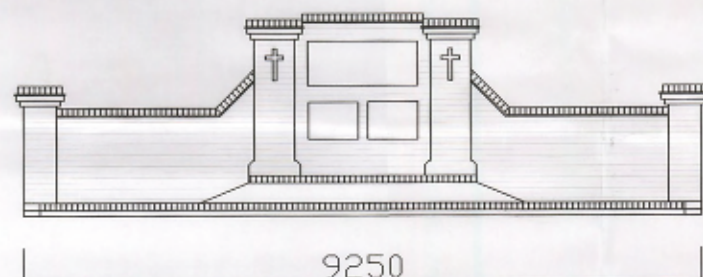
Existing Front elevation



Existing Side elevations



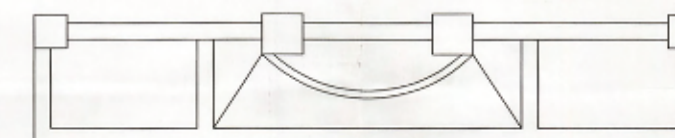
Existing plan



Proposed Front elevation



Proposed Side elevations



Proposed Plan



Castlepoint Borough Council

PROJECT  
Re-build Canvey war memorial, The  
Paddocks Long Road Canvey Island, Essex.

TITLE  
Floor plans, Elevations.

Drawn S Murray	Date 13-03-2014	Scale 1:50
Checked		

Drawing No. PP/03/13/E	Revision
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**CABINET**

**16th April 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 first quarter of 2014, 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;
- *South East Local Economic Partnership Economic Plan*
  - *Hadleigh Town Centre – potential disposal of key site*
  - *Hadleigh Legacy – work on site on visitor centre*
  - *Canvey Town Centre – development options work*
  - *West Canvey – access road for Land Trust*
- 4.6 A separate report appears elsewhere on this agenda concerning the South East Local Economic Partnership and its Strategic Economic Plan.

## **5. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial Implications**

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

### **b. Legal Implications**

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**

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

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

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**

The Regeneration Partnership is continuing to pursue the ambitions described originally in the Regeneration Framework.

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



### Canvey Island

The regeneration of the **central Town Centre site** is a priority, and good progress is being made with relevant landowners, as well as the chosen development partner, Aquila. There is a shared understanding of the objectives of any redevelopment scheme, which has been helped by the adoption of the Master Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document. Discussion is underway on a number of alternative approaches to the redevelopment of the central area with partners so that options can be discussed and evaluated before any final agreement reached.

The potential redevelopment of a site at the north-west corner of the town centre, close to the junction of Furtherwick Road, Knightswick Road and Vaagen Road, is being discussed with relevant land owners. A number of options have been prepared which provide for new commercial floorspace and residential units together with improved access to and from the Lake and town centre. The viability and deliverability of these is now being assessed.

Work continues on the land management of the **former oil refinery site at West Canvey**, also incorporating an adjacent area of land near to the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Land Trust has appointed the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (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 creation of a vehicular access and a car park from Northwick Road has commenced, and good progress has been made. The West Canvey Members Liaison Group meets on a regular basis to review the operations.

The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) is shortly to re-market its **land at Northwick Road**, following an unsuccessful attempt to conclude a disposal earlier this year. There remains a clear determination on the part of the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to bring forward business park proposals. Discussions are underway to incorporate a planning brief and the long-standing planning permission into the marketing particulars.

### Hadleigh

The **Hadleigh Town Centre Master Plan** contains ten propositions for the regeneration of the town centre. Although 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, elements of the plan concerning shops and the central island site continue to be used to guide development aspirations.

The County Council, together with relevant land owners is 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.

## **Cabinet - Regeneration Update Schedule - April 2014**

The former **Crown Public House** 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 the central island site in this part of the town centre. The HCA, County Council and Borough Council are now in discussion regarding planning and development advice for marketing particulars.

The County Council's proposals to designate a public right of way through the site were opposed by the Borough Council at a public inquiry on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The Inspector determining the case anticipated a decision in April.

Proposals for a legacy facility at the **Olympic Mountain Bike** venue are now being pursued by Essex County Council in partnership with the Salvation Army. 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. Work commenced on multi-user trails in October 2013, and demolition of buildings around Sayers Farm has been completed, with groundworks for the new visitor centre now underway.

### **Business matters**

The **Castle Point Business Forum** is next scheduled to meet at the Oysterfleet Hotel Canvey Island on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014, when County Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Infrastructure will address the meeting.

A programme of works has now been completed at the two main industrial estates. Work at **Charfleets Trading Estate** involved highway improvements, CCTV provision, entrance features to the estate and landscaping works. A recent estate inspection with the County Council and Pinnacle has led to a series of actions, resulting in improvements to the public realm. On-going maintenance works to the landscaping at the Charfleets northern approach have also been commissioned. A programme of road and direction signage is to be implemented later this year.

Entrance feature works at the **Manor Trading Estate** were also completed including CCTV column provision, kerbing and footway works. Recent discussions have taken place with occupiers and owners concerning 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.

### **Regional matters**

The **South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)** (covering East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock) has recently focussed its attention on the preparation of a draft **Strategic Economic Plan**, submitted to Government on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.



## **Cabinet - Regeneration Update Schedule - April 2014**

The Plan, if supported with Government funding, is designed to facilitate 200,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes across the SELEP area by 2021. It intends to focus on four components;

- Investing in growth corridors
- Boosting productivity with universities driving growth
- Enhancing wealth and improving skills
- Accelerating investment in housing

The Partnership also suggests a growth deal with Government, which concentrates on specific actions to achieve the Plan. The growth deals have a local focus. For Thames Gateway South Essex this translates to 23,000 new jobs and 5,500 new homes by 2021. Particular emphasis is placed on the A13 corridor and investments across that corridor include access to Canvey and the Woodman's Arms junction. The A127 corridor is similarly identified, with works to Fair Glen to be considered.

The SELEP has also supporting projects funded through the Government's **Growing Places Fund**. Thames Gateway South Essex is represented by a project at the site of the Grays Magistrates Court. Other projects in Essex include the Harlow Enterprise Zone, and Chelmsford North West Urban Extension.

The Partnership has decided that it's **Local Transport Body**, which was formerly responsible for the identification and promotion of the strategic regional transport priorities funded by the SELEP will now be disbanded and its work carried forward through a sub group of the main board of the Partnership.

### **County matters**

In order to ensure that the priorities for Essex are promoted at the regional level, work has been taking place on 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 SELEP, Government and from Europe. The Thames Gateway South Essex Council's have ensured that the Plan reflects ambitions for regeneration across the gateway.

A rolling investment fund has also been created by the County Council to support key projects.

### **Thames Gateway matters**

The **Thames Gateway South Essex Planning & Transport Board** meets on a quarterly basis, 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.

## **Cabinet - Regeneration Update Schedule - April 2014**

The Thames Gateway South Essex Planning & Transport Strategy was agreed at the Cabinet in November 2013. 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.

**CABINET**

**16th April 2014**

**Subject:** South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) – Growth Deal & Strategic Economic Plan

**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**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the publication of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's (SELEP) Strategic Growth Deal and Economic Plan on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

The Cabinet should also note that at this stage the Growth Deal and Plan represent bids for funding, rather than committed projects, which will be considered by the Government alongside bids from other partnerships later in the summer.

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

The projects and programmes 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**

**3.1 That the Cabinet**

- notes the publication of the SELEP's Growth Deal & Strategic Economic Plan
- welcomes the proposals for investment in Castle Point in
  - access to Canvey Island
  - A129 Woodman's Arms junction
  - Northwick Road and Town Centre Canvey Island
  - Fair Glen junction as part of A127 corridor
- requests that an update be given in summer 2014 on the Government's funding decision for the Plan

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The SELEP was established by Government in 2011. It is the largest LEP in the country covering East Sussex , Kent and Essex, including unitary councils.
- 4.2 The LEP is governed by a Board of 23 members drawn from business and local government. It has put in place a federated delivery arrangement so that decisions on projects can be taken more locally by business and councils in that area.
- 4.3 The Government required all LEPs to prepare a Growth Deal and a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for their areas.
- 4.4 The Government envisages that Growth Deals will include
- greater influence over key levers affecting local growth and freedoms and flexibilities
  - a share of the Local Growth Fund for Local Enterprise Partnerships to spend on delivery of their Strategic Economic Plan
  - commitments from Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and the private sector on their resources and levers for delivery of the Strategic Economic Plans, including through
    - better use of local authority assets to unlock resources to be reinvested in growth
    - commitments to pro-growth reforms, for example a co-ordinated approach to the development of local plans by local planning authorities across the relevant economic geography
    - commitment to collective decision making involving all local authorities within a Local Enterprise Partnership
- 4.5 There is no set format for the SEP, in line with the principles of localism. However the Government makes clear that it expects plans to consider:
- Demonstrating wider commitment to growth that is sustainable for the whole Local Enterprise Partnership area across local spending and decision-making
  - Aligning or pooling local authority capital and revenue spend on growth – particularly on housing, transport, economic development, regeneration, planning and infrastructure
  - Effective collaboration on economic development activities - for example, merging teams and agreeing shared plans where possible to deliver efficiencies and a more joined up approach
  - Maximising the synergies with wider local growth programmes delivered in each Local Enterprise Partnership area, including for example,

European Structural and Investment Funds, City Deals, Enterprise Zones, and revolving funds such as the Growing Places Fund.

4.4 Growth Deals and SEPs were submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The Government will now review each plan and it is anticipated that LEPs will be advised of the funding allocation for their projects by July 2014.

4.5 The SELEP SEP presents five key opportunities and challenges;

- Building on the economic strengths
  - LEP seaports, workforce, entrepreneurial culture, universities, and strong economic sectors such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences, transport and logistics
- Boosting productivity
  - Enterprise zones, access to finance and promoting innovation
- Improving skills
  - Increasing participation by young people in the workforce, improving basic skill levels
- Building more houses and re-building confidence
  - Ensuring there is sufficient land in local plans, bring forward land in public ownership
- Investing in growth corridors
  - In Essex these include the A120, the A12, the M11, the A127, and the A13

4.6 The SELEP Growth Deal makes a case for investment from the Government's Local Growth Fund (LGF) of £200million per year from 2015 to 2021. It includes five elements;

- Creating a SEFUND as a funding mechanism
- Deliver a local transport programme
- Raise business productivity
- Invest in skills capital projects
- Increase the pace of house construction
- Accelerate development in the Thames Gateway

4.7 In return the SELEP asks Government to commit to a variety of projects and programmes of which the most relevant to Castle Point in terms of geography are;

- Commit to a Lower Thames Crossing
- Upgrade the A13 to London Gateway

- 4.8 The SEP also includes Area Growth Deals, including one for Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE). This Area Growth Deal explains in more detail projects which support the A13 Growth Corridor and for transport projects mentions access to Canvey Island and improvements to the A129 Woodman's Arms Junction. Projects to be supported by the SEFUND include Canvey Gateway at Northwick Road and the regeneration of the Knightswick Centre in the Town Centre.

## **5. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial Implications**

The projects described in this report, if agreed, would be funded through the LEP and its delivery agencies, rather than the Council.

### **b. Legal Implications**

Any projects which required the Council to enter into a contract or commit expenditure would be the subject of separate reports to the Cabinet.

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

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

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

If Government and SELEP funding is agreed, the projects are designed to be delivered between 2015 and 2021. Any apparent risks which may affect the Council and need to be managed will be the subject of a separate report to the Cabinet at the appropriate time.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The South East LEP and Growth Deal provides the opportunity for significant funding to be secured for strategically important regeneration projects across the SELEP area, including Thames Gateway South Essex.
- 6.2 If approved by Government and the LEP, those programmes and projects with a direct impact on Castle Point will generate significant new investment in local infrastructure and the economy.

### **Background Papers**

The South East LEP and Growth Deal March 2014

[http://southeastlep.com/pdf/South\\_East\\_LEP\\_%E2%80%93\\_Growth\\_Deal\\_and\\_Strategic\\_Economic\\_Plan.pdf](http://southeastlep.com/pdf/South_East_LEP_%E2%80%93_Growth_Deal_and_Strategic_Economic_Plan.pdf)

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

**CABINET**

**16th April 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 March 2014.

**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 seen significant progress of some major projects. The Service continues to evolve and strives to meet the challenges of ensuring that the service provided and the available housing 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 – Ozonia Gardens**

- 5.1.1 The works at Chapman Court have been completed. This contract was closely monitored by South Essex Homes.
- 5.1.2 The refurbishment works have included a complete facelift to the complex with new entrance doors and entry security system, new external storage facilities for all residents; new secure refuse collection area, new front doors to all units, replacement soffits and fascias, decoration of the stairwells and a new courtyard surface laid.

- 5.1.3 The official opening by the Mayor of the scheme as Ozonia Gardens took place on 4 April 2014.

## **5.2 Sheltered Scheme Refurbishment Programme**

- 5.2.1 The refurbishment of Gowan Court commenced in September 2013 and continues to make good progress.
- 5.2.2 The refurbishment has been completed in 10 bedsits and 6 flats at the time of preparing this report.
- 5.2.3 The tender has now been awarded for the refurbishment of Amelia Blackwell to provide all bedsits so that they include a wetroom. Resident meetings have been held and the project plan for the works is being prepared.
- 5.2.4 These contracts are being closely monitored by South Essex Homes through their Disability Specialist Project Manager.

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

- 5.3.1 The contracts for these works commenced on 1 April 2014.
- 5.3.2 The provider of the Responsive Repairs and Voids works is Keir Services and the provider of the Gas Servicing and Gas Maintenance work is Aaron Services.
- 5.3.3 The mobilisation of these contracts has shown that we have the full support of both these providers in ensuring that Tenants receive a good service.

## **5.4 Capital Programme**

- 5.4.1 Capital works undertaken during 2013/14:
- Kitchens and Bathrooms – 97 properties for kitchens and 38 for bathrooms
  - Roofing – 39 properties
  - Electrical Works – 85 properties for rewiring and 300 properties for periodic electrical inspection
- 5.4.2 The Housing Service has been in contact with Tenants affected by these programmes and 90% have stated that they are satisfied with the works undertaken.

## **6. New Project**

- 6.1 Since the new arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account and Right to Buy were put in place, the Council has sold 24 homes reducing the housing stock to 1,509 homes and the corresponding rental income. There is currently a strong demand for Council homes with approximately 1,570 people on the Housing Needs Register waiting for a variety of different size homes.
- 6.2 The use of income received from a Right to Buy is restricted by legislation and if the Council cannot begin to build or acquire new affordable housing by 2015/16 it will begin to repay the receipts from Council house sales to the Government and be liable to pay backdated interest on the balance returned.



- 6.3** The Housing Service has begun to look at development options including the development of garage sites and working with partner agencies to establish available opportunities.
- 6.4** Within this context, a new opportunity has arisen from the recent development and construction of two blocks of flats at 35 Long Road, Canvey where there is a S106 requirement to provide 10 affordable homes.
- 6.5** There are currently commercially sensitive details to be considered before further negotiations can take place which are the subject of a report to be considered under Part II of this Cabinet agenda.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial Implications**

The works noted above have been, and continue to be, undertaken within current Housing Budgets. The financial implications relating to Section 6 are covered in the Part II report.

### **b. Legal implications**

As the Landlord for 1,509 properties the Council has an obligation to ensure that tenant's 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.

### **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.

## **8. Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report April 2013 – Housing Update

Cabinet Report July 2013 – Housing Update.

Cabinet Report October 2013 – Housing Update

Cabinet Report January 2014 – Housing Update

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

**CABINET**

**16th April 2014**

**Subject: Disabled Facilities Grants Policy**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs W Goodwin – Health and Well Being**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**This report seeks the approval of Cabinet for a new Disabled Facilities Grants Policy for Castle Point Borough Council following consideration by the Wellbeing Policy and Scrutiny Committee.**

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

**The new policy links directly to the Council's Community Safety Priority.**

**3. Recommendation**

**That Cabinet approves the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy appended to this report.**

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**4. Background**

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants available to disabled persons when works to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and when it is deemed reasonable and practicable to do so having regard to the age and condition of the property, and they provide financial assistance towards the cost of essential adaptation work to make a house fit for a disabled person.

The mandatory grant (up to £30k) is given to enable a disabled person primarily to both gain access to their home and to enable them to access essential amenities and facilities within the dwelling. Grants are means tested except in relation to the provision of an adaptation for a child where the parent / guardian is in receipt of child benefit for the person concerned.

Discretionary grants may be given where the cost of the works deemed necessary to meet the needs of a disabled person exceed £30k. The discretionary grant may be given for the balance of the cost of the works.

The Council has only finite resources and as the number of people seeking adaptations and the cost of providing them grows, this is likely to mean that it cannot provide immediate help to all those needing assistance. It is therefore important that the Council has a policy in place which sets out how grant applications will be processed and prioritised.

Following the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 it is a requirement for any new policies, updates or revisions to be formally adopted.

The Disabled Facilities Grants policy (Appendix 1) is intended to explain how the Council will use its resources to help those who need disabled adaptations and how decisions will be made about the help that it gives.

On 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Cabinet received a report seeking approval for a consultation exercise on a new Disabled Facilities Grants Policy.

At that meeting Cabinet resolved:

1. To note the content of the report and the draft Disabled Facilities Grants Policy;
2. To approve a consultation exercise on the draft policy and consideration by the Wellbeing Policy & Scrutiny Committee before being brought back to Cabinet to be formally adopted; and
3. To delegate authority to determine discretionary grants up to a maximum of £10k to the Head of Environment following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being together with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources Policy & Performance and the Head of Resources.

As agreed by Cabinet, a consultation exercise was subsequently undertaken last autumn.. The draft Disabled Facilities Grants Policy was sent to a variety of stakeholders including:

- Essex County Council Occupational Therapist Services
- Papworth and Basildon Home Improvement Agencies
- Members of the Castle Point Association of Volunteers
- Housing Associations and social housing providers operating in Castle Point.
- Relevant charities including Age UK.
- Published on the Council website with front page link.
- Press release to local paper

Only one response was received on behalf of Circle 33 Housing Trust which stated “I have read through the draft DFG policy and it seems consistent to a majority of the policies in place with other Local Authorities we deal with.”

The Draft policy was considered by the Wellbeing Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Following a presentation giving an

overview of the main aspects of the policy and details of the consultation feedback on the draft policy, the Committee resolved to endorse the Draft Disabled Facilities Grants Policy and recommend it to Cabinet for approval.

## **5. Corporate Implications**

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

Central Government provides annual capital grant funding towards the provision of DFGs. The amount of grant awarded each year is normally confirmed early in the year in question and in recent years the amount awarded has been around £255-£260k. Grant notification is not usually provided in advance for future years, only one year at a time. The budget approved in February 2014 is based on Central Government funding of £225k per annum. Additional amounts of grant are sometimes also awarded late in the financial year although this is not always guaranteed every year. No amount is budgeted for any additional grants until such time as it is confirmed.

The Central Government funding is not specifically ring fenced for mandatory DFGs, however all Councils are required to submit to Central Government an annual declaration that grant conditions have been complied with as well as a return detailing amounts spent on DFGs and other supporting information, such as age of the grant recipient. In practice it has been Council policy for many years that the total grant received from central Government is fully allocated to mandatory DFG spend. Furthermore, subject to availability of capital resources the Central Government amount is normally topped up with internal Council funding to increase the total available to spend on DFGs. This top up is normally up to £121k each year.

Reallocation of budget to discretionary grants above the £30k mandatory maximum will reduce the amount available for other mandatory grants below £30k.

The total amount of capital spend on DFGs in recent years and budgeted for future years is as follows:

2010/11: £399k spent

2011/12: £281k spent

2012/13: £376k spent (unaudited amount)

2013/14: £543k budgeted, (which includes some amounts deferred from 12/13)

2014/15 and ongoing: £346k budgeted per annum (subject to confirmation of Central Government funding each year)

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

The draft policy requires formal adoption in order to satisfy the requirements of individual Acts of Parliament/ Statutory Instruments and this includes revision or review of such policies.

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

There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

**(d) Equality Implications**

There is a potential for a positive impact on the following groups of people: -  
Adults and Children with Disabilities.

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

Once approved, the policy will take immediate effect.

**8. Background Papers**

Cabinet report - 19 June 2013

Presentation to Policy and Scrutiny Committee - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014

# **Disabled Facilities Grants Policy**

**Version 1.1**

**Castle Point Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Kiln Road  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 1TF**

**April 2014**

- **Strategy or policy:** Disabled Facilities Grants Policy
- **Date adopted:**
- **Date last revised and reasons for revision:**
- **Links to Council priorities:**

<b>Council priority</b>	<b>Linked?</b>
Environment – Civic Pride	No
Regeneration and Homes	Yes
Improving the Council	Yes
Community Safety	Yes

- **Links to other strategies and policies:**
  - Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Strategy
- **SMART action plan included?:** Yes
- **Name of lead officer responsible for implementing the action plan:**

Simon Llewellyn, Environmental Health Operational Manager

Phone: 01268 882320

E-mail: [slllewellyn@castlepoint.gov.uk](mailto:slllewellyn@castlepoint.gov.uk)

- **Name of lead Member and Member body responsible for monitoring implementation of the action plan:**
  - Cllr Mrs W Goodwin, Cabinet Member responsible for Health and Well Being
- **Equality Impact Assessment undertaken:**
- **Sustainability appraisal undertaken:**
- **Policy register on N Drive updated:**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Perfectly good homes can be quite unsuitable for occupants with mobility needs, to the extent that they can actually be dangerous and isolating. Adaptations are needed by many disabled people so that they can remain safe and independent in their own home. They can be needed by people of all ages, but as our population ages and life expectancy increases, the number of people needing assistance to adapt their homes is expected to grow.
- 1.2 Castle Point Borough Council is committed to helping disabled residents and will administer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) (and other forms of assistance such as discretionary grants, where available) so as to help them achieve a home which meets their needs.
- 1.3 The Council has only finite resources and as the number of people seeking adaptations and the cost of providing them grows, its finite resources are likely to mean that it cannot provide immediate help to all those needing assistance.
- 1.4 Following the regulatory reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 it is a requirement for any updates or revisions of the Council's policies in respect of the allocation of housing grants to be formally adopted.
- 1.5 This policy document sets out how the Council will use its resources to help those who need disabled adaptations and how decisions will be made about the help that it gives.

## **2 DFG Summary**

- 2.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were introduced in 1990 but the principle legal provisions are now contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA) and regulations made there under.
- 2.2 DFGs are mandatory grants available to disabled people when works to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and when it is reasonable and practicable to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. The Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council



assess whether any works are necessary, and discuss the best available options with the Environmental Health Service at Castle Point Borough Council.

- 2.3 DFGs are generally subject to a means test which means that the applicant's income and savings have to be assessed to determine whether any contributions are required to be made by them towards the costs of the required work. The way in which the means test is carried out is governed by regulations and the Council does not have any discretion in applying it. Applicants in receipt of certain specified benefits are "passported" through the means testing process and children are exempt from the means test (where the parent / guardian is in receipt of child benefit for the person concerned.)
- 2.4 Subject to all the eligibility criteria being met, the Council must 'determine' (i.e. approve) properly made applications 'as soon as reasonably practicable' but no later than 6 months from the application date.
- 2.5 The maximum amount of DFG is currently set by statute at £30,000. However the Council will consider payment of a discretionary grant in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.6 The DFG will be recovered following the sale of the property within ten years of payment of the grant provided the Council "is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment". Grants below £5,000 are excluded from repayment, and the maximum amount recoverable in any one case is limited to £10,000. Where the grant is in excess of £5000, only the amount in excess of £5000 is recoverable up to the maximum of £10,000. In the case of discretionary grants, the Council will seek to recover the value of the grant in full following the sale or transfer of the property.
- 2.7 In the event of an applicant's death before works are complete, the Council has the discretion to pay grant towards any fees incurred, any works already carried out or any 'other relevant works.'
- 2.8 The Council promotes and supports the Handy Persons scheme which provides low cost essential adaptations and small practical jobs to help people to keep safe and secure in their home. No formal assessment is made; however it is only available to people aged 60 and over. The purpose of the scheme is to provide quick access to measures that will prevent a fall. There is a flat rate hourly charge for the service.

### **3 Regulatory Framework**

There are a number of legal provisions governing DFGs and the application process including:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (“The Act”) (as amended)
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to Approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 (“The Order”)
- The Housing Renewals Grants (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008
- The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008
- Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People – A good practice guide (June 2006)
- The Equalities Act 2010

### **4 Responsibility**

- 4.1 The HGCRA makes the Council responsible for providing DFGs. The Council cannot, in law, refuse to process a properly made DFG application it receives from an owner-occupier or tenant. If the eligibility criteria and proper process are satisfied, the Council must approve the appropriate grant.
- 4.2 The Council is given a sum of money each year by the government, which is specifically used for providing grants to help disabled people adapt their homes.
- 4.3 DFGs are available to homeowners, owners of qualifying houseboats, owners of qualifying park homes, tenants of private landlords and tenants of Housing Associations. Grants are available for adaptations to the common parts of buildings containing one or more flats. DFGs are not however normally available to tenants of Council owned homes and any necessary adaptations to Council owned property are dealt with by the Housing Service in accordance with its policy and procedures.

### **5 Use of Home Improvement Agencies**

- 5.1 Castle Point Borough Council has chosen to offer customers the choice of two Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) to provide Services as part of the grants process. Papworth Trust Housing Solutions and Basildon Borough Council act on behalf of the

clients in all administrative and legal respects for the provision of the disabled facilities grant.

- 5.2 The Services provided by the HIA to the applicant include: completing the application form with the client; preparing any plans which need to be submitted with the application; confirming the work specifications; seeking tenders; obtaining any specific permissions to undertake works, supervising the works and liaising with all parties in respect of completion and payment of the grant. For these Services, the HIA will charge no more than 12.5% of the costs of the tendered works, which is added to the grant amount.
- 5.3 The applicant does not need to use a HIA to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, and may choose to administer the process themselves. However, all applicants are advised of the complexity of the whole grant process at the outset.

## **6 The Disabled Facilities Grant Eligibility Criteria**

- 6.1 DFGs are available to fund adaptations to the homes of elderly or disabled residents to enable them to live independently at home or be cared for at home. Grants are dependent on;
- The works being necessary and appropriate;
  - The works being reasonable and practicable; and
  - A financial assessment of the applicant's ability to fund the works themselves.
- 6.2 Eligibility criteria for DFGs are laid out in Section 23 of The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration (As Amended) Act 1996 and primarily relate to accessing principle rooms within the home and accessing and using essential facilities including access to gardens and outside areas of a property.
- 6.3 The Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers at the Castle Point Borough Council seek to support all applicants but by the nature of grant funding it is a formal process.

### **6.4 *Necessary and Appropriate***

- 6.4.1 Necessary and Appropriate works are determined through an assessment of the client and their home environment by an Occupational Therapist from Essex County Council. This concentrates on the client's ability to remain living independently in their own home and must distinguish between works which are desirable, and those, which are necessary and appropriate.

6.4.2 Occupational Therapists from Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers from Castle Point Borough Council regularly meet to:

- a) Discuss proposed applications;
- b) Determine whether applications meet the necessary and appropriate criteria with reference to the legislation;
- c) Determine if the works are likely to be reasonable and practicable.

Due to limited funding and the need to make the most effective use of available funding difficult decisions do often have to be made. Applications are prioritised in accordance with the advice provided by the Occupational Therapists.

6.4.3 When identifying and agreeing adaptations we will ensure that:

- They are the simplest, least disruptive and most cost-effective adaptation to meet the needs;
- They are designed to fit within the existing structure of the home; this may involve using the home in a different way i.e. sleeping in a ground floor room or sub dividing space; and that
- Providing additional space within a home is only considered if all other options have been fully exhausted and if it is practicable to provide additional space.

## **6.5 Reasonable and Practicable**

6.5.1 There are times when it is simply not reasonable and practicable to adapt a property, for instance where there are excessive changes in level; where there are space constraints; or where moving existing services is prohibitively expensive. Rather than investing funding to poorly adapt a property, grants may be declined because the works are not reasonable and practicable.

6.5.2 If works are not considered reasonable and practicable within the home this will involve asking clients to seriously consider if they are currently in the most appropriate housing or if moving to more readily adaptable level access accommodation would be a better option.

6.5.3 In owner occupied premises where work is not considered reasonable and practicable, Disabled Facility Grant aid may be available to help with some of the basic costs of moving home. This would be dependent on the Means Test and each case would be judged individually on its merits.

- 6.5.4 In Housing Association accommodation, Housing Associations are usually happy to work with clients to identify alternative suitable housing. Where clients may be under occupying a home this has an added advantage of freeing up much needed family housing and there are monetary incentives available from the housing association for this. By promotion of the incentives to move to smaller accommodation by the housing associations it is hoped that such decisions can be made proactively rather than at a crisis point in reaction to a mobility need.

## **6.6 Financial Assessment (The Means Test)**

- 6.6.1 Applications for Disabled Facilities Grants are generally subject to a Means Test.
- 6.6.2 The way in which the Council carries out the Means Test is governed by regulations and the Council does not have any discretion in applying it. Once the applicant's income and savings have been recorded on the application form, this information is used to calculate whether any contributions are required to be made by them towards the costs of the required work.
- 6.6.3 There are a number of circumstances when a means test is not necessary, and this is as follows:
- Where the recommendation for adaptations is for a child, (where the parent / guardian is in receipt of child benefit for the person concerned.)
  - The applicant is in receipt of a "Passporting Benefit".
- 6.6.4 In April 2013, the government commenced the implementation of Universal Credits and this will affect the way Disabled Facilities Grants are to be Means Tested. As of June 2013, the way in which Universal Credits are to be Means Tested has not been determined by the government. This Policy will be updated once these changes have been announced by Parliament.

## **7 The Disabled Facilities Grant Process**

### **A. Occupational Therapist Referrals**

- 7.1 The Occupational Therapy Service at Essex County Council submits recommendations for Disabled Facilities adaptations to the Council for all tenures.

- 7.2 All recommendations from the Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council are prioritised based into **High priority** or **Standard priority** cases.

7.2.1 High Priority

This is assessed as service users whose adaptations should be a priority due to their identified level of risk. High priority will be given to those requests where there is a serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the occupant, or service users have a progressive illness which will deteriorate rapidly and become unmanageable without the provision of an adaptation. These cases are identified by the Occupational Therapist as **Critical**.

7.2.2 Standard Priority

Those who do not meet the above criteria, but are considered to be at some risk, and have an identified need for the recommended adaptation. These cases are identified by the Occupational Therapist as **Substantial**.

- 7.3 The Council will maintain a list of all recommendations received, and cases will be processed initially by the Occupational Therapists priority and then by the date of referral.

- 7.4 On receipt of a recommendation from the Occupational Therapist at Essex County Council, the details will be recorded by the Council and an initial test of resources is undertaken at this stage to determine whether the applicant will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of the works.

**B. Application**

- 7.5 Should the proposed recommendations require a feasibility study this will involve the Occupational Therapists at Essex County Council and Environmental Health Officers from the Council meeting to discuss this matter as previously described in paragraph 6.4.2 above. The Council, as a Statutory Regulator of the Housing Act 2004 is unable to allow works to take place which will result in the creation of Housing Health and Safety Rating System Hazards.

- 7.6 When sufficient financial resources are available to the Council to pay for these works, the applicant is informed by letter and asked whether they would like to use a HIA Partner to act on their behalf in all administrative and legal respects for the provision of this disabled facilities grant, or whether they want to administer and make arrangements for the preparation of an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant themselves.

- 7.7 If the disabled person is the tenant of a private landlord or Housing Association, the landlord/owner must give permission for the work to be carried out. Fixed items such as level access showers will usually become the property of the owner.

- 7.8 Should the applicant choose to use a HIA partner, a home visit will be arranged where the proposed adaptation works will be discussed, and the grant application process will be explained. A grant application form will be completed and a full Means Test will be carried out (unless the applicant is in receipt of a Passporting Benefit).
- 7.9 Once the HIA partner has discussed the specifics of the proposed adaptations with the applicant, they will draw up detailed drawings and a proposed schedule of work. The Occupational Therapist at Essex County Council is often liaised with at this stage of the process as they can help and advise in ensuring the work will meet the identified need of the applicant. These will be submitted to the Environmental Health Officers at Castle Point Borough Council for approval. Environmental Health Officers from Castle Point Borough Council will confirm in writing whether these plans and Schedule of Works are satisfactory or not.
- 7.10 Once the items in point 7.9 have been approved by Castle Point Borough Council, the HIA partner will obtain three itemised, competitive estimates for the cost of the identified works using the approved plans and Schedule of Works.
- 7.11 Applications which do not involve “Passporting Benefits” will require the financial information section of the application form to be completed. Castle Point Borough Council has deemed it appropriate that **three months** statements for each bank account held by all relevant persons must be provided with the application. Information regarding other bank equities, premium bonds, pensions received will be required to be submitted with the application.
- 7.12 There may be occasions where Castle Point Borough Council may require a further 3 months financial information in line with its commitments against fraud.
- 7.13 The Council expects the following information to be submitted with all applications for a Disabled Facilities Grant; namely:
- Completed application form;
  - Completed Owner / Tenant / Landlord Certificate;
  - Proof of Title from Land Registry;
  - Any permission letters from landlord, Housing Association;
  - A copy of the Occupational Therapists recommendations;
  - Three estimates for adaptations proposed;
  - Completed Financial Information; and
  - Any fee notifications (only applicable if using Home Improvement Agency)

Once all of this information has been provided, the Council will deem the application as being “duly made.”

- 7.14 Environmental Health Officers at Castle Point Borough Council will make every effort to assess “duly made” applications as soon as possible. However, the Council has six months to formally approve a grant once a formal application is “duly made”; in reality we will endeavour to approve grants sooner than this. However at times of severe budget pressure there may have to be delays in the approval process to ensure spending is maintained within budget limits.
- 7.15 All submitted applications are checked and any quotes included are evaluated to ensure they are like for like, cover only the identified works and represent value for money. If considered excessive the Council may requested the HIA or applicant to obtain further estimates. Once estimates are accepted the amount of grant offered will be based on the lower of the three estimates.

**C. Approval**

- 7.16 Once Environmental Health Officers at Castle Point Borough Council have assessed an application, they will be write to the applicant advising of their decision and where appropriate include a Notice of Approval. This Notice will detail the amount of grant approved by the Council, and whether it is necessary for the applicant to make any contribution towards these costs. If the applicant has chosen to use a HIA partner, the Council will also advise them of our decision.
- 7.17 Any Disabled Facilities Grants works approved must be completed within 12 months of the grant approval. It is the applicants’ responsibility to ensure that works are completed within this time-scale as the Council is unable to pay for works completed after the twelve month anniversary date of approval.
- 7.18 Once the Disabled Facilities Grant has been approved, by the Council, the HIA partner will place an order for the agreed work to be undertaken, and tell the contractor when to start. The HIA partner will monitor the completion of the work by the contractor to ensure it is undertaken to a good standard. If the applicant has submitted the application themselves, they will have to make the arrangements themselves for these works to begin, and monitor the contractor.
- 7.19 **Only the works approved by Castle Point Borough Council may be undertaken utilising the grant funding and any necessary planning permissions or building control consents must be sought first before beginning any works.**
- 7.20 Should any additional works be required as a result of unforeseen circumstances, these will need to be reported to the Environmental Health Officer at Castle Point Borough Council immediately for approval. Environmental Health Officers from Castle Point Borough Council will visit the applicants’ premises to assess the works and determine whether they are unforeseen and necessary. Should the Environmental Health Officer deem these necessary, reasonable and unforeseen,



the Council will issue a Variation Notice to the applicant advising of the additional approved works and the revised grant approval amount.

- 7.21 **Additional works carried out prior to written approval by Castle Point Borough Council will not be paid for, and these costs will need to be borne by the applicant (or HIA partner if used).**

#### **D. Completion & Payment**

- 7.22 At the completion of the works, the HIA partner will undertake a completion visit to ensure the applicant is satisfied with the works and may ask for a form to be signed confirming this. The HIA partner will submit this form, with any invoices and electrical or gas certificates to the Environmental Health Officer for processing.
- 7.23 Upon receipt of this information, the Environmental Health Officer will visit the applicant to inspect the works approved and ensure they have been undertaken satisfactorily. The Environmental Health Officer will then make arrangements to pay the contractor and HIA partner.
- 7.24 If the applicant has chosen to undertake the works themselves, they will need to submit all invoices and electrical or gas certificates to the Environmental Health Officer so that he may make arrangements to visit and process payment.

### **8 Prioritisation**

- 8.1 All appropriate steps will be taken to minimise the waiting time before a grant case can be worked on and approved. The waiting list mechanism is kept under review to ensure it is operating as intended and as circumstances require.
- 8.2 Prioritisation of cases is based on:
- a) Prioritisation in terms of need (i.e. high/standard priority) based on the recommendation of the Occupational Therapist. (Refer to Section 6)
  - b) Date of receipt of referral report from the Occupational Therapist.
- 8.3 In the event that changes are required to the prioritisation mechanism, they will be determined by the Head of Environment.
- 8.4 The length of time someone has to wait on the list will depend on the size of the grant budget available to the Council, staff workload and the number of cases with a higher

priority (i.e. High priority cases will usually be processed before standard priority cases.) Applicants will be notified in writing if there is likely to be a prolonged delay in progressing their case (which is most likely to be due to a lack of available funding.)

- 8.5 The Council however reserves the right to start processing some cases out of strict priority order in exceptional cases (as determined by the Head of Environment) for instance, where it is determined that it is necessary to ensure efficient allocation of staff resources, or budget allocation and spend.

## **9 Applicant Funded Works**

- 9.1 In some cases applicants may wish to carry out works above and beyond those that can be grant funded. This is acceptable provided the guidelines below are adhered to.

- If an alternative scheme is pursued it must meet all the mobility needs the grant would have met. To ensure this the plans must be agreed by the overseeing Occupational Therapist.
- The grant will only be based on works agreed by the Council as necessary and appropriate.
- In order to calculate the amount of grant the applicant is entitled to, three competitive estimates must be provided for the works agreed by CPBC as necessary and appropriate.
- Any unforeseen items are the applicant's responsibility.
- No interim payments will be made on alternative schemes, as it is not possible to assess from work in progress correct levels of interim payments.
- Full and final monies will only be released once all alternative scheme works are completed and an assessment can be made that the completed works fully meet the identified needs.

## **10 Maintenance**

- 10.1 A Disabled Facility Grant is in effect a one off good faith payment to provide a specific adaptation. Any ongoing maintenance becomes the responsibility of the grant recipient.

## **11 Grant Repayment Conditions**

- 11.1 In order to make the most of limited funding, the Property Charges introduced under The Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008, provide a method for Castle Point Borough Council to reclaim a proportion of the Disabled Facilities Grants monies it paid in certain circumstances.

- 11.2 In accordance with this General Consent, repayment requirements will apply where the applicant disposes of the premises (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise), in respect of which a Disabled Facilities Grant was paid, within 10 years of the certified date of completion. This will apply to grants over £5000 with a maximum repayment condition of £10,000. Grants below £5,000 will be exempt from repayment.

- 11.3 Table 1 provides examples of how this will work.

**Table 1 – Repayment Calculations**

Grant £	Repayment Requirement £
30,000	10,000
25,000	10,000
20,000	10,000
15,000	10,000
10,000	5,000
5,500	500

- 11.4 Where a premises for which Castle Point Borough Council has approved a Disabled Facilities Grant is disposed of, the Council will normally seek to recover the value of the grant that it is legally entitled to recover. However, before requiring repayment the Council will take into account the following:

- A. Whether the recipient will suffer financial hardship were he/she be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- B. Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment or to change the location of his/ her employment;
- C. Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- D. Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with or near any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.

## **12 Discretionary Grants**

- 12.1 There are a number of circumstances where it may be appropriate to offer help by way of a discretionary grant. For instance a discretionary grant may be considered where:

- the existing home is unsuitable for adaptations and the grant will enable the occupant to relocate to a more suitable property and this is a more cost effective solution.
- The grant awarded to an applicant is insufficient to carry out the works recommended by the Occupational Therapist i.e. the required works are in excess of £30,000 and the applicant is unable to raise the money required. For instance where a property extension is required and relocation is not a suitable or cost effective option.

12.2 The Head of Environment in consultation with both the Cabinet Member with responsibility for DFGs and the Head of Resources is authorised to agree a discretionary grant of up to £10,000 in exceptional circumstances subject to budget availability. Discretionary grants in excess of £10,000 will be determined by Cabinet.

12.2 Where payment of a discretionary grant is being considered any such course of action will be discussed with all relevant organisations including the applicant, Social Services and the Occupational Therapist. Alternative sources of funding will initially be sought, wherever possible. A test of resources will be applied to such grants and a land charge will be put on the property where a discretionary grant is given.

12.3 The Council will seek to recover the value of the discretionary grant in full when the property is sold or disposed of.

### **13 Performance and Review**

13.1 Overall responsibility for the performance management of the grants process rests with the Head of Environment and the Environmental Health Operational Manager assisted by the Environmental Health Team Leaders.

13.2 Regular meetings and reviews of the activity of the Home Improvement Agencies will take place to ensure that grants and works are carried out in accordance with the policy and to ensure excellent customer satisfaction and value for money.

13.3 Regular meetings are held between the Council and Occupational Therapists to discuss progress with cases and feedback any matters of concern.

13.4 The status of applications will be reviewed on a regular basis and queries will be raised with the appropriate organisation or officer in the case of unexplained delays at any stage of the process.

13.5 Regular information reports are submitted to the Council's Financial Services department which allows for the monitoring of expenditure on grants throughout the year.

## **14 Conclusions**

- 14.1 This policy document outlines the policies and processes relating to DFGs which are designed to help elderly or disabled residents live independently in their own home or are cared for at home.

**CABINET**

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Subject: Annual Refresh of Key Strategies (Resources)**

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

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**1. Purpose of Report**

To present the following key strategies to Cabinet for approval:

- Human Resources (HR) Strategy and Workforce Plan
- Asset Management Plan (AMP)

**2. Links to Council Priorities**

Improving the Council.

**3. Recommendation**

That the strategies referred to in this report are approved and adopted.

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**4. Background**

- 4.1 It is current practice to regularly review and update key strategies and policies and present them to Members where significant changes have been made.
- 4.2 The Human Resources Strategy and Asset Management Plan were last presented to Cabinet in April 2013 and this covering report explains the changes made since that time.
- 4.3 Copies of the revised documents have been placed in the Members Rooms rather than reproduce them in full as part of this report.

**5. HR Strategy and Workforce Plan**

- 5.1 The HR strategy reflects the key workforce development themes and includes the workforce development plan as an appendix. This plan contains a number of specific actions intended for implementation during the course of the financial year and which support the HR Strategy.
- 5.2 The actions contained within the plan are in addition to normal operational and management tasks and responsibilities and are predominantly the responsibility of the Head of Resources and the HR Services Team to deliver.

- 5.3 The HR strategy itself remains largely unchanged from previous years. The workforce development plan has been refreshed to reflect the organisation's current requirements and planned service actions.

## **6. The Asset Management Plan (AMP)**

- 6.1 This document reflects the Council's processes for the management of Council Assets and contains a summary of asset related actions which are planned to be undertaken across all services during the course of the current financial year.
- 6.2 The version on deposit in the Members room incorporates these changes. The Council's approach to asset management has not changed from earlier years.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial implications**

The financial implications of both strategies are already incorporated within the approved medium term financial forecast.

### **b. Legal implications**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **c. Human Resources and Equality implications**

None arising directly from this report.

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

- 8.1 The strategies and actions are ongoing.

## **Background Papers:**

Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/15 (Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014)  
Department Service Action Plans 2014/15

**Report Author:** Chris Mills – Head of Resources

**CABINET**

**16th April 2014**

**Subject: Update on Safer Communities Initiatives**

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

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**1. Purpose of Report**

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

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

**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**

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

**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 CSP.**



## 5. Progress and activities

- 5.1 Essex Trading Standards has completed their **Free Electrical Safety Testing Scheme for Small Domestic Appliances**. A Trading Standards officer, together with a qualified electrician, provided free electrical safety portable appliance testing service for all small appliances (such as kettles, hairdryers, kitchen mixers) in the home. To qualify, the residents had to be over 65 or require additional support due to a disability.
- 5.2 Seven full days of testing were carried out in Castle Point in homes of targeted vulnerable groups to decrease the chance of accidental small fires. Items failing the tests were brought up to standard by the electrician on the visit, and nine faulty items were replaced.
- 5.3 During the visits, referrals were also made to the Fire Service for a smoke alarm and free home safety visit if needed and to other support agencies if other vulnerabilities were discovered.
- 5.4 The scheme was funded in 2013/14 by the CSP and due to the popularity and excellent feedback from recipients, it is hoped that the scheme can be continued this year.
- 5.5 The Essex County Fire and Rescue Service monthly campaign for April focusses on **fire safety for smokers**. Smoking materials are a prevalent cause of fires in the home; each year more than 1,700 people in the UK are killed in fires started by smoking materials. The campaign features the hard hitting message "NO BUTTS! - It only takes a second for your world to go up in smoke."
- 5.6 Essex Police **Rogue Trader Week** took place between the 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April. Castle Point was one of the identified hot spot areas for targeted action. In addition to joint Trading Standards and Police enforcement action, advice was delivered widely through leafleting, advertising, Neighbourhood Watch newsletters and home visits. The event will have raised public awareness of doorstep crime and increase reassurance, thereby reducing the fear of crime.

## 6. Corporate Implications

### a. Financial implications

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

### b. Legal implications

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

### c. Human resources and equality implications

There are none.

### d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

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

## **7. Conclusions**

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