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Chief Executive

CABINET AGENDA

Date: **Wednesday 18th September 2013**

Time: 7.00pm – N.B. TIME

Venue: Council Chamber

This meeting will be webcast live on the internet.

Membership:

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

Cabinet Enquiries:
Reference:
Publication Date:

John Riley, ext. 2417
3/2013/2014
Tuesday 10th September 2013

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

1. Apologies

2. Members' Interests

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2013

4. Forward Plan

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

5. Environment - Civic Pride

5(a) Severe Flooding in South Essex

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

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

5(b) Consultation Regarding Part Night Time Lighting in the Borough of Castle Point

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

(Report of the Cabinet Member Environment and Street Scene)

6. Regeneration and Homes

6(a) Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2013 – 18: Policy and Scrutiny Review

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

(Report of the Cabinet Member Homes and Customer Engagement)

6(b) New Local Plan Progress Report

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

(Report of the Leader of the Council)

6(c) Hadleigh Hall & Surrounding Areas

(Report of the Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member Economic Development & Business Liaison)

7. Improving the Council

7(a) Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/2015

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

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

7(b) Financial Update

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

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

7 (c) Local Council Tax Support Schemes 2014/2015

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

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

7(d) Corporate Scorecard Quarter 1 2013/14

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

(Report of the Cabinet Member Responding to Challenge)

7(e) Councillor and Community Meetings

The Cabinet will be asked to consider a report.

(Report of the Cabinet Member Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities)

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

See item 6(a) Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2013 – 18: Policy and Scrutiny Review

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

PART II

(Business to be taken in private)

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



CABINET

17TH JULY 2013

PRESENT:

Councillor Stanley (Chairman)	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	Neighbourhood & Safer Communities
Councillor Riley	Environment and Street Scene

APOLOGIES: The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Challis OBE., and Councillors Mrs Goodwin and Smith.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Blackwell, Campagna, S.Cole, Mrs. Govier, Hart, Ladzrie, Mrs.Watson and N.Watson.

15. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Howard disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5b - Waterside Farm Leisure Centre Refurbishment – Progress Report - as a Trustee of the Veolia Trust.

Councillor Stanley disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6d – Update on Regeneration matters – as Chair of Governors of Cornelius Vermuyden School.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19.6.2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. FORWARD PLAN

To comply with regulations under the Localism Act 2011, the Deputy 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.

18. OFF STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER UPDATE

The Cabinet received an update report on the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Off-Street Parking Places Order proposing changes to the charging regime and waiting restrictions for Council-owned car parks. During the course of the consultation five petitions had been received which were presented at the meeting. Members present at the meeting spoke on the proposals.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the responses to consultation would be analysed and a further report on the consultation would be made to a future meeting.

Resolved: To note the content of the report.

19. WATERSIDE FARM LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet received an update report on the refurbishment works to Waterside Farm Leisure Centre and announcing the official opening date of 16th August 2013. This news was welcomed by all Members present.

Resolved: To note the information contained in the report.

20. HOUSING PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet received a quarterly progress report for the Housing Service for the quarter ending 30 June 2013.

Resolved: To note the progress and achievements for the last quarter period and to request officers to provide future quarterly progress reports.

21. HOUSING SERVICE – 2013/14 CAPITAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The Cabinet received a report on the programme of capital maintenance works for the current financial year and the current progress of capital projects.

Resolved: To note the content of the report.

22. GLEBELANDS APPEAL DECISION – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NEW LOCAL PLAN

The Cabinet received a report on the Glebelands appeal decision and its implications for the new Local Plan.

Resolved:

1. To note the outcome of the Glebelands appeal, and the implications for plan-making in Castle Point.
2. To welcome the acknowledgement by the Secretary of State that the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, causing harm to its openness, character and appearance, and its purposes of preventing sprawl, preventing encroachment onto open countryside and preventing the merger of settlements. To note his comments regarding the housing land supply position, but also to welcome his reaffirmation that these matters and particularly Green Belt reviews should be undertaken as part of the local plan process. The Cabinet therefore instructs officers to prepare a revised Local Development Scheme to enable such work to be undertaken.

23. UPDATE ON REGENERATION MATTERS

The Cabinet received a report on strategic initiatives underway during the second quarter of 2013, as well as those activities which support local businesses in Castle Point.

Resolved: To note the progress underway on these initiatives and to request that a further update report is made to the Cabinet for the next quarter.

24. FINANCIAL UPDATE

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

Resolved: - To note the report and approve the changes to the approved budget as set out in section 5.

25. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2012/13

The Cabinet considered a report on treasury activity and actual prudential indicators for 2012/13.

Resolved:

1. That following scrutiny, the Treasury Management Activity Report for 2012/13 is approved.
2. To approve the actual 2012/13 prudential indicators as shown in annexe D to the report.

26. BUSINESS RATES POOLING

The Cabinet considered a report on the potential benefits of the Council joining a Business Rates Pooling arrangement with other Essex councils.

Resolved: To note the report and approve:

1. In principle to the Council joining a pool for non-domestic rates.
2. That a scheme similar to that in existence in Suffolk be explored on the basis that no authority can be worse off in the pool than they would be outside it.
3. That work on developing a county wide pool is supervised through the Essex Strategic Leaders & Finance Officers Group (ESLF).

27. CORPORATE SCORECARD REFRESH 2013/14

The Cabinet considered a report on a refreshed corporate scorecard for monitoring in 2013/14 and updating on the progress in developing the Corporate Plan.

Resolved:

To note approve the refreshed corporate scorecard as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and to note the progress in the development of the Corporate Plan.

28. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES

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

Resolved:

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

29. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters.

30. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM /TO THE STATUTORY COMMITTEES

There were no matters.

Chairman



Castle Point Borough Council

Forward Plan

SEPTEMBER 2013

CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2013

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

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

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

Date	<u>Item</u>	Council Priority	Decision by Council/ Cabinet	Lead Member	Lead Officer(s)
July & Sept – deferred to Oct 2013	<u>Off – Street Car Park: response to consultation</u>	Environment Civic Pride	Cabinet	Environment & Street Scene	Head of Environment
Sept 2013	<u>Homelessness Strategy – for approval</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Homes and Customer Engagement	Head of Housing & Communities
July/Sept/Nov 2013	<u>Regeneration Update – Hadleigh Hall</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Sept 2013	<u>Community Safety Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Safer Communities	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Sept/Nov 2013 Jan/March 2014	<u>Financial Update</u>	All	Cabinet	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
Sept 2013	<u>Policy Framework and Budget Setting</u>	All	Cabinet	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
Sept/Nov/Dec 2013	<u>Local Council Tax Support scheme</u>	All	Cabinet Council /Dec	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
Sept 2013	<u>Statement of Accounts</u>	All	Council	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources

Date	<u>Item</u>	Council Priority	Decision by Council/ Cabinet	Lead Member	Lead Officer(s)
October 2013	<u>New Local Plan: Evidence Base (Transport Modelling Report and Local Wildlife Site Review) New Local Plan:SHLAA (Essex Demographic Forecasts Phase 4 and TGSE SHMA Review)</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Sept/ October 2013	<u>New Local Plan</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
October 2013	<u>Regeneration Update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
October 2013	<u>Community Safety update</u>	Regeneration & Homes	Cabinet	Leader Economic Development	Head of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
October 2013	<u>Treasury Management Mid Year Report</u>	All	Cabinet	Deputy Leader of the Council	Head of Resources
November 2013	New Corporate Plan	All	Cabinet	Leader	Head of Performance & Service Support

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Severe Flooding in South Essex

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Howard – Waste, Floods and Water
Management**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider:

- (1) The impact that the torrential rain which fell on 24 August 2013 had on South Essex and in particular on Castle Point residents and businesses; and**
- (2) The action taken by the various agencies both during and after this extraordinary flooding event.**

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

Environment – Civic Pride and Improving the Council.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the content of this report.

4. Background

- 4.1** Torrential rain caused severe flooding across much of South Essex on Saturday 24 August 2013 with Canvey Island and Benfleet being amongst the worst hit areas within the Borough of Castle Point. Despite their best endeavours many householders had to contend with the devastating impact of their properties being flooded internally.
- 4.2** The BBC Weather Centre reported that 59mm of rain had fallen across the south of Essex on that day. Whilst yet to be confirmed the early indications are that the rainfall within a six hour period equated to somewhere between a one in thirty five and a one in one hundred year rainfall event. Even if the amount of rain that fell is nearer to the lower end of the predictions the

amount of rain which fell was extraordinary and something which fortunately many people have never previously experienced.

- 4.3 Essex Police and the Fire and Rescue Service were called upon to deal with numerous reports of flooded roads and properties. The Rayleigh Weir was closed along with various parts of the A127 and many roads throughout the borough were completely submerged and impassable.
- 4.4 The South Essex Homes Careline Service which provides an out of hours emergency call handling service for the Council has confirmed they were overwhelmed with calls over the weekend of this exceptional flooding event. To put this into context they would on average deal with about a dozen out of hours enquiries over a weekend for us but on this weekend they received 130 calls from Castle Point residents alone. They also had to field an unprecedented number of calls from Southend residents who were experiencing similar problems to our residents. Having looked at the breakdown of calls that they received from Castle Point residents, 100 were related to flooded highways/drains which should more appropriately have been made to ECC's contact centre.
- 4.5 The Council's Emergency Planning Officer liaised closely with the Police Incident Commander throughout the day and made the necessary arrangements for the opening of a rest centre had it been deemed necessary.
- 4.6 Whilst the Castle Point Wildlife Group sought despite the treacherous conditions to ensure the weed screen at Prittle Brook remained free from obstruction, surface water run-off from West Wood caused adjacent roads to flood with some properties being flooded internally.
- 4.7 Canvey Island is reliant on surface water being pumped into the river by pumps designed and maintained by the Environment Agency to pump water away even in the case of a one in one hundred year rainfall event at high tide. These pumps should have been more than capable of dealing with the rain that had fallen.
- 4.8 Subsequent to the water receding this Council made arrangements for roads which had been flooded to be swept and cleared of the debris which had been deposited on them.
- 4.9 Subsequent to the flooding event the Chief Executive arranged a meeting on 30 August with representatives from the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Essex Highways, Lead Local Flood Authority, Essex Emergency Planning, Castle Point's Member of Parliament Rebecca Harris, Members and Officers from Castle Point Borough Council so as to get an initial understanding of how the various agencies had responded to the flooding; a further formal multi agency debrief for later this month has been arranged by ECC's Emergency Planning Officer.
- 4.10 Communication during the event and the difficulty in contacting the various agencies during the flooding event is one of the issues that has been

identified and there will inevitably be further discussion about how this can be improved at future meetings.

- 4.11 ECC acting in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority has agreed to co-ordinate a report on details of the flooding in Castle Point, as well as the response to it. In order to do this it has asked the various agencies the following questions:

- (1) What was your authorities overall response to flooding on Saturday 24th August (before and during)?
- (2) Did your authority exercise any specific flood risk management functions (as listed in Section 4 of the Food and Water Management Act 2010) in response to this incident?
- (3) How are the general public advised to get in touch with your authority during an incident?
- (4) What is the process/procedure/standard for your authority in recording and responding to flood incidents?
- (5) How were any assets under your authority's ownership/responsibility operating during the incident of 24th August?
- (6) How many enquiries did your authority receive in response to this incident?
- (7) How many reports of internal property flooding are your authority able to confirm?
- (8) Any further information or comments you think would be beneficial to the report

- 4.12 The Head of Environment is co-ordinating this Council's response and has requested information from officers and members.

- 4.13 By gathering as much information as possible about the flooding that occurred over the Bank Holiday weekend, the Lead Local Flood Authority will be better placed to capitalise on any external funding opportunities which would help to mitigate future flooding events.

- 4.14 Coincidentally on Monday 9 September Graham Verrier the Environment Agency's new Area Flood Risk Manager visited Canvey Island. Councillor Ray Howard, Cabinet Member for Waste, Floods and Water Management, Councillor David Blackwell, Leader of Canvey Island Independent Party and Trudie Bragg, Head of Environment accompanied him on his tour of the island.

5. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There is no doubt that the heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding had a significant impact on local residents and businesses although at this stage it is impossible to put a cost on the damage caused. The provision of suitable and well maintained infra structure is essential to minimise the impact on local communities of extreme weather conditions such as was experienced on 24 August.

(b) Legal Implications

The Flood and Waste Management Act 2010 seeks to ensure a joined up approach to flood and water management. The Act requires ECC to fulfil the role of the Lead Local Flood Authority and the various risk management agencies e.g. Highways Authorities, water companies, Environment Agency and District Councils have a duty to co-operate with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

None associated with this report.

Equality Implications

None associated with this report.

6. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

Any recommendations of the Lead Local Flood Authority following the review of this flooding incident and the response of the various agencies will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

Background Papers

None

Report Author: Trudie Bragg, Head of Environment

CABINET

18th September 2013

**Subject: Consultation Regarding Part Night Time Street Lighting
in the Borough of Castle Point**
Cabinet Member: Councillor Riley – Environment and Street Scene

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to:

(1) Consider the proposal set out in the letter (Appendix 1) from Councillor Rodney L Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation, Essex County Council to introduce part night street lighting within the borough; and to

(2) Determine the Council's response to the consultation.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

Environment – Civic Pride and Improving the Council.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council responds to the consultation by:

(1) Identifying areas where it feels street lights should be left on all night;

(2) Expressing its concern about ECC's part street night lighting proposals for urban residential roads and along busy A roads such as the A13 and A127 which run through residential areas; and

(3) Requests that should part night lighting be introduced in Castle Point, that a comprehensive review of the arrangements and the impact on crime levels and "fear of crime" is undertaken after one year of implementation.

4. Background

- 4.1 Essex County Council (ECC) introduced part night lighting in the rural districts of Maldon and Uttlesford in 2007, with street lights being switched off between midnight and 5am. It believes that part night lighting brings with it a number of benefits, including:
- Reducing the burning hours of street lights resulting in significant reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions;
 - Significant reduction in light pollution, 'sky glow', across Essex; and
 - A more responsive service - e.g. lights can be programmed to stay on later on New Year's Eve or other key events during the year.
- 4.2 ECC has recently undergone a programme to modernise its street lights across Essex and is now proposing to extend its part night lighting policy to the rest of Essex.
- 4.3 However, it is proposing that lights in locations meeting the following exception criteria will continue to be lit throughout the night. This amounts to around 30% of streetlights:
- Sites where there are a large number of conflicting traffic movements (e.g. roundabouts) which are on significant routes (generally those lit by columns greater than 6m high).
 - Sites where street lights are installed as a result of accident remedial measures.
 - Town Centre areas where there is one or more of the following features:
 - Publicly maintained CCTV
 - A high proportion of high security premises (eg banks, jewellers); areas of high crime risk;
 - High concentration of people at night such as transport interchanges, nightclubs etc.
 - Main approaches to town centre areas where there is a mix of development between residential and commercial/industrial
 - Sites where the police can demonstrate that there is likely to be an increase in crime if the lights are switched off during part of the night (or that there will be a decrease in crime if the lights are switched back on).
 - Remote footpaths and alleys linking residential streets.
 - Where there is a statutory requirement to provide lighting.
- 4.4 Additionally it is ECC's intention to switch the lights on the A13 and A127 to part night lighting on a trial basis unless they meet one of the criteria above.
- 4.5 It is proposed that part night lighting in Castle Point and the A13 / A127 trial will take effect from 1 December 2013.
- 4.6 Prior to making its final decision ECC is consulting on its proposals. The consultation period ends on 27 September 2013.
- 4.7 This Council is invited to identify areas where street lights should be kept on all night, noting:

- The location of the light(s), including street and settlement name.
- The reason you feel the light(s) meet the exception criteria

4.8 Details of the consultation were included in advance of this report in the Member Brief on 5.9.2013 and Members have been invited to put forward sites for exclusion.

5. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for this Council.

(b) Legal Implications

Despite public concern about increases in crimes rates, pilot part night lighting schemes in Uttlesford and Maldon have shown no evidence to support such a link. Indeed, crime rates in both of those districts have fallen broadly in line with the rest of the county during since 2007. However, Uttlesford and Maldon are rural districts which are quite distinct in nature from Castle Point. It does not necessarily follow that there would not be an increase in crime levels if part street night lighting was introduced in a more urban borough such as Castle Point.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

None associated with this report.

Equality Implications

None associated with this report.

6. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

The Council has until 27 September to respond to the Consultation. Part street lighting in Castle Point and for the A13/A127 trial is scheduled to take effect from 1 December 2013.

Background Papers

None

Report Author: Trudie Bragg, Head of Environment

Dear Members, Essex MPs, Leaders and Chief Executives,

Consultation regarding Part Night Street Lighting in your area

I am writing to you as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation to consult you on proposals to introduce 'part night' street lighting in your area.

The Council has recently undergone a programme to modernise the ECC owned street lights across Essex. We have installed a 'Central Management System' (CMS) that allows the remote controlling of street lights and improved fault monitoring. This means that we are now in a position to turn specific lights off at specific times.

The Council successfully introduced part night lighting in Maldon and Uttlesford Districts in 2007, where lights are switched off between midnight and 5am. Part night lighting brings with it a number of benefits, including:

- Reducing the burning hours of street lights resulting in significant reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions
- Significant reduction in light pollution, 'sky glow', across Essex
- A more responsive service - e.g. lights can be programmed to stay on later on New Year's Eve or other key events during the year

I recognise that some of you will be concerned about the possible effect that this rollout could have on crime levels, the 'fear of crime' and accident rates, and I can assure you that our pilot part night lighting schemes in Uttlesford and Maldon have shown no evidence to support such a link. Indeed, crime rates in both of those districts have fallen broadly in line with the rest of the county during since 2007. In addition, surveys commissioned by the Council show that the percentage of people who feel safe outside after dark has also increased in Maldon and Uttlesford since 2007.

The success of the scheme in these areas has given us the reassurance to expand the scheme across the county.

It is proposed that lights in locations meeting the following exception criteria will continue to be lit through the night. This amounts to around 30% of streetlights:

- Sites where there are a large number of conflicting traffic movements (eg roundabouts) which are on significant routes (generally those lit by columns greater than 6m high).
- Sites where street lights are installed as a result of accident remedial measures.
- Town Centre areas where there is one or more of the following features:

- Publicly maintained CCTV
- A high proportion of high security premises (eg banks, jewellers); areas of high crime risk;
- High concentration of people at night such as transport interchanges, nightclubs etc.
- Main approaches to town centre areas where there is a mix of development between residential and commercial/industrial
- Sites where the police can demonstrate that there is likely to be an increase in crime if the lights are switched off during part of the night (or that there will be a decrease in crime if the lights are switched back on).
- Remote footpaths and alleys linking residential streets.
- Where there is a statutory requirement to provide lighting

Additionally, we are considering the position of the A13 and A127 dual carriageways. On a trial basis we intend to switch the lights on these roads to part night lighting unless they meet one of the above criteria.

Part night lighting was introduced in the Braintree District and the City of Chelmsford on 1 September 2013, and we are planning to introduce part night lighting in the remaining parts of Essex according to the following timetable:

- 1) **1 November 2013:** Basildon and Colchester Boroughs.
- 2) **1 December 2013:** Epping Forest District and Castle Point Borough.
- 3) **1 December 2013:** A13 and A127 trial.
- 4) **1 January 2014:** Rochford and Tendring Districts.
- 5) **1 February 2014:** Brentwood Borough and Harlow District.

Before we make the final decision we are writing to consult you on the proposal. In particular we would welcome any suggestions from you which highlight areas that you think may meet the exception criteria within your area. Your views will then be used to inform the final decision. These plans will be published on the ECC website in advance of the switch over to part night lighting.

If you feel there are areas where street lights should be left on all night please can you email the address below noting:

- The location of the light(s), including street and settlement name.
- The reason you feel the light(s) meet the exception criteria.

Your feedback will then be used to supplement the information our engineers currently hold on the street lights that should be considered exempt from the switch over to part night lighting.

As part of our consultation plan we are contacting Parish, District and Borough Councils and the emergency services, asking them to identify any areas that meet the exception criteria to help inform the final plans for part night lighting across Essex. I am happy to hear your view on the scheme and if you require any additional information please do let me know. Please can you feedback your views to partnightlighting@essexhighways.org. To allow enough time to consider your view please can you provide feedback by **27 September 2013**.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rodney L Bass', with a stylized, wavy line extending from the end.

Rodney L Bass CC
Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation
Essex County Council

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2013-18 – Policy and Scrutiny Review

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

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan for 2012-17 attached, Appendix 1, to this report and recommended to Cabinet by Policy & Scrutiny Wellbeing Committee.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

This strategy is explicitly linked to the Regeneration and Homes and Improving the Council priorities

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet approves the proposed Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan for 2012-2017.

4. Background

- 4.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 each Local Authority is required to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and to formulate and publish a Strategy based on the results of this Review every 5 years. The last Homelessness review was reported to Cabinet on 25 June 2008 and the subsequent Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan for 2008 – 2012 was reported and approved by Cabinet on 16 September 2008.**
- 4.2 During the last 18 months a detailed review of all aspects of Homelessness affecting Castle Point was undertaken and considered in conjunction with the impact of the Localism Act and the Welfare Reforms. This has been a period of significant change and Castle Point is committed to preventing homelessness in a changing economic climate.**

5. Proposals

5.1 The review of the Homelessness Strategy must include plans to:

- Prevent Homelessness
- Ensure that there is sufficient accommodation and support available for people who are or may become homeless
- Ensure there is satisfactory advice, information and assistance for people who are or who may become homeless or who need support to prevent homelessness.

5.2 Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders is a key element to the review process and the Service has been grateful for the co-operation of stakeholders in contributing to this process.

5.3 On 26 February 2013 a presentation was given to the Wellbeing Policy and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to contribute to the review process and also to challenge the methodology of the review. Consideration was given to the consultations that had taken place and the limited responses received from key stakeholders were noted.

5.4 The review had considered the objectives to be considered, the methodology to be utilised, the drivers impacting on the service from both National and Local perspectives and the issues considered to be the priorities for the Castle Point area.

5.6 On 16 July 2013 the Wellbeing Policy and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft document which had resulted from the full review and challenge process together with the proposed Action Plan. It was agreed that the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan should be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report but there are potential implications of implementing the findings of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan in terms of the future provision of temporary accommodation, the impact of welfare reforms on existing and future homeless individuals and families and how this might shape the service in the future. All work developed from the Action Plan will be separately assessed so that relevant financial implications are fully reviewed.

(b) Legal Implications

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 each Local Authority is required to carry out a review of homelessness in their area, every 5 years, and to formulate and publish a Strategy Action Plan based on the results of that review.

The last Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan was reported and approved by Cabinet on 16 September 2008.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

There are no human resources implications as a result of this report.

Equality Implications

This report reflects our proposals in response to the legislative requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review. The Homelessness Act 2002 has been the subject of an Impact Assessment at national level. The content of that Impact Assessment has been taken into account in these proposals and recommendations outlined.

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

There are no IT or Asset Management implications as a result of this report.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

To meet the legal requirements set out above the Review and Strategy Action Plan needs to be approved by Cabinet by September 2013. The review spans the period 2012 – 2017 and the next review will be undertaken in 2016/17.

8. Background Papers

Equality Impact Assessment

Wellbeing Policy and Scrutiny – 26 February 2013, 16 July 2013

Report Author: Wendy Buck, Head of Housing & Communities

Homelessness Review and Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2017

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1. Background

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 each Local Authority is required to carry out a Review of homelessness in their area and to formulate and publish a Strategy based on the results of this Review each 5 years. The last Homelessness Review was reported to Cabinet on 15th June 2008. The subsequent Homelessness Strategy Action Plan for 2008 – 2012 was reported and accepted by Cabinet on 16th September 2008.

This document sets out the process for the Homelessness Review and subsequent Homelessness Strategy which will cover the period 2012 – 2017.

The Homelessness Strategy sits within Castle Point's Housing Strategy 2013-2016, the over-arching housing policy which details our vision of Housing for the Borough.

Castle Point Council is committed to preventing homelessness and embracing the opportunities and challenges arising from the changing economic climate, challenging government initiatives, and the expectations and aspirations of residents of Castle Point.

The country is undergoing a period of radical change. In the last 18 months there have been significant changes in central government agenda. The Localism Bill, the Welfare Reform Bill, and the recently published 'Affordable Homes Programme Framework' (Department for Communities and Local Government & Homes & Communities Agency) highlight significant changes in homelessness legislation, housing allocations, the way in which the welfare state administers benefits, and how affordable housing will be delivered in the future.

2. The Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Local Authorities to take a more comprehensive approach to homelessness, promoting prevention, and taking an overview of future needs.

Under the Act Local Authorities are required to strengthen help to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness, encourage new responses to tackling homelessness, reduce the use of B&B hotels for homeless families with children, sustain the two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping, and ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all.

The Review must therefore include plans to;

- Prevent homelessness.
- Ensure there is sufficient accommodation and support available for people who are or may become homeless.
- Ensure there is satisfactory advice, information and assistance for people who are or who may become homeless or who need support to prevent homelessness.

The Review is required to be robust and meaningful, considering all available evidence, and engaging all appropriate partner organisations and agencies.

Consultation and engagement of key stakeholders is a key element to the Review process. With this in mind we intend that key stakeholders will be fully engaged throughout the Review process and during development and monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

3. Objectives for the Review

There are three key Objectives:

- To assess the needs of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in Castle Point.
- To review the availability of service provision for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- To produce a strategy that focuses on preventing homelessness; ensuring adequate supply of appropriate housing; and ensuring sufficient support for people who are homeless or who may become homeless.

4. The Methodology for the Review

In order to meet these objectives, we have gathered and evaluated information from a range of sources including:

- Data from Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) and CPBC Housing Department and partner agencies
- Results from surveys to landlords, letting agents, service users and service providers
- Focus groups with stakeholders, providers and service users
- National studies on homelessness and housing need among specific client groups
- Recommendations from Serious Case Reviews.

This information was then shared with a wide range of stakeholder and service user groups to ensure that all relevant data and factors have been considered, enabling us to effectively identify:

- Current levels and projected future levels of homelessness across the borough
- The availability of a range of accommodation types for homeless and potentially homeless people
- The availability of support to help find and maintain accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people
- Gaps and overlaps in these areas of service delivery
- Common ground and differences between CPBC and other partner organisations within the TGSE
- Areas of good practice to build upon to improve homelessness prevention
- Areas of good practice in the voluntary sector and opportunities for improved partnership working
- The relative achievements of the service
- Where services are meeting needs and how current services could be changed to better meet clients' needs
- What resources are available to tackle homelessness
- The views of stakeholders and service users
- Priorities for the next five years

5. Historical National, Regional and Local Context and Key Achievements

Local authorities have statutory housing duties towards vulnerable clients under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, including a duty to provide advice and assistance to all people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, which can extend to securing a permanent, settled home.

A significant policy driver has been the Government's concern over the cost and social consequences of homelessness, which has inspired a national policy shift towards early intervention and the prevention of homelessness. There is also a greater focus on a wider range of housing solutions and a raised awareness of the contribution that the private sector can make to meeting housing need.

National Drivers	Regional Drivers	Local Drivers	Local Actions / Achievements
Homelessness Prevention <i>Source: Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives – Jan 2005</i> www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/137818.pdf	Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011	Homelessness Strategy 2007 - 2012	Introduction of homelessness prevention initiatives have contributed towards an incremental decline in acceptances of homelessness. Successful implementation in 2009 of a Mortgage Rescue Scheme to assist owners facing repossession. Establishment in 2009 of an Emergency Crash Pad facility for the temporary accommodation of young people. The facility is able to accommodate 3 young people at a time.
Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003 www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20033326.htm	Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011	Homelessness Strategy 2007 - 2012	Target to eliminate the use of B&B consistently met, except in exceptional cases

Extension of Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003 to include 16/17 years olds from 2010 <i>Source: Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives</i>	Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011	Homelessness Strategy 2007 - 2012	<p>Delivery of services for 16/17 year olds have been consistently improved through development of joint protocols with partners focused on inter-agency working around children and young people.</p> <p>In 2010 we increased awareness amongst young people of the realities of homelessness and a life on benefits through collaborative working with local schools and the Theatre& company to deliver a purpose written play to Year 10 pupils. This awareness campaign was further supported through interactive workshops, classes delivered in partnership with the schools, and through promotion of a dedicated young persons' website.</p>
Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households by 50% by 2010 <i>Source: Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives</i>	Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011	Homelessness Strategy 2007 - 2012	<p>The service has actively improved liaison arrangements with Housing Associations and Private Sector Landlords to encourage prevention of homelessness and encourage and enable sustainable tenancies where possible. As a result this target was successfully achieved.</p>
Reduction in the number of rough sleepers to as close to zero as possible by 2011			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaken as part of the Thames Gateway South Essex partnership count and initiatives to reduce rough sleepers.

Introduction of Choice Based Lettings schemes to all local authorities in England by 2010 Source: Sustainable Communities: Homes For All June 2005 www.communities.gov.uk/d	Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011		In June 2011 we successfully introduced Choice Based lettings.
Case law – R (G) v LB Southwark 2009 Ruling confirmed that local authorities should presume that any lone, homeless child should be provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.			In 2011 we developed closer working relationships with Social Services, enabling a once a week hot desk arrangement to enable both services to liaise on specific cases and working collaboratively on joint assessments for young people.

To emphasise the importance of its national policy, the previous Government introduced the following targets for English Councils:

- To end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children, except in an emergency and even then for a maximum of six weeks
- To end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds except in an emergency for up to 6 weeks by 2010
- To reduce of the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households by 50% by 2010, against a baseline figure as at 31st December 2004

6. Current National Drivers

6.1 Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act obtained Royal Assent in November 2011 and outlines major housing and planning reforms that will present both opportunities and challenges for our borough.

Major changes have been made to homelessness legislation, housing allocations and tenancies. It also marks a shift away from regional planning towards neighbourhood planning, including incentives to promote new development where it is needed locally. The Act became effective from April 2012. Key changes introduced by the government which impact on homelessness include:

Tenancy Strategy

Every local authority is required to produce a tenancy strategy by March 2013. This includes:

- (a) The kinds of tenancies they grant,
- (b) The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- (c) Policy for fixed term tenancies
- (d) The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

Social housing tenure reform

Social landlords are now able to grant flexible tenancies for a fixed length of time. The minimum length of tenancy is two years, (although only below five years if there are exceptional circumstances) and there is no upper limit on the length of tenancy. Councils will continue to be able to offer lifetime tenancies if they wish. The act sets out requirements for a review / appeal of the tenancy period if requested by the tenant.

Social housing allocations reform

Allocation of housing will only be given to eligible persons, with the Local Authority deciding who qualifies. The Secretary of State has the power to prescribe classes of people who are eligible or ineligible. Local authorities must put in place an allocations scheme for determining priorities and procedures to follow. Reasonable priority must be given to certain specified groups of people.

Reform of homelessness legislation

Local authorities can now meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented homes. This option could provide an appropriate solution for people experiencing a homelessness crisis, at the same time as freeing up social homes for people in real need on the waiting list. Previously an applicant could refuse the private rented sector and wait in temporary accommodation for a social home.

Reform of council housing finance

From 1 April 2012, the Council, along with all other stock holding councils, was released from the housing subsidy system. This means that rather than pay negative subsidy to the Government as in previous years the Council is now required to service an allocation of the national housing debt. The debt allocation was a "one-off financial settlement" of £36.451m and was calculated by the Government, based on the debt level the Council could afford to service. The end of the HRA subsidy system means that greater forward planning can be undertaken as financial resources are no longer subject to an annual subsidy figure that is only announced just prior to the start of the financial year. Councils now retain all of the rent that they raise each financial year, meaning the link between local rents and local expenditure on housing services can be more clearly made.

At the end of 2011/12 the Council applied for a portfolio of loans from the Public

Works Loans Board (PWLb) totalling £36.451m which was the assessed level of additional debt supportable by the Council's Housing Revenue Account. These loans will be repayable over various terms, from 10 to 30 years.

National home swap scheme

The Localism Act has implemented a national home swap scheme. This enables people who would like to swap their social home to access details of all other tenants who may be a suitable match. This has the potential to enable social tenants to find a home that better meets their needs and to exercise greater control over their lives.

Regional Strategies

Section 109 of the Localism Act allows for the Secretary of State to revoke Regional Strategies and any policies, including housing targets, which they may contain. The East of England Plan was revoked by the Secretary of State on the 3rd January 2013. As a result, the Council is now responsible for establishing its own target in relation to housing provision.

The National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012, sets out the requirements for Council's when establishing housing targets for their local areas. It expects housing targets to be based on clear evidence that identifies the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period which meets the needs of household and population projections, taking into account both migration and demographic change. It expects the needs of different groups within the community to be considered, including the need for affordable housing, and the need for families with children, older people and people with disabilities.

Having considered the evidence, the National Planning Policy Framework expects Council's to boost significantly the supply of housing by setting housing targets that meet the full need for market and affordable housing and to identify sites for delivering this supply of homes over a 15 year period.

6.2 National Housing Strategy 2011

Published in November 2011, the National Housing Strategy (<http://communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>) sets out a number of objectives and actions. Key objectives include:

- *Increasing supply – more homes, stable growth*
- *Social and affordable Housing Reform*
- *A thriving private rented sector*
- *A strategy for empty homes*
- *Quality of housing experience and support, including*
 - Homelessness

- Tenant empowerment
 - Empowering independence
 - New Deal for older people's housing
- *Quality, sustainability and design*

This strategy must take careful consideration of the objectives and actions in the national strategy in the development of any action planning. Of particular relevance is the following extract:

Quality of Housing Experience and Support

The strategy states:

“We are committed to providing choice and opportunity, and ensuring that a stable home, with appropriate support and protections if necessary, is accessible to vulnerable households, families on low incomes and those looking to meet their aspirations through work.

Key actions include:

- Supporting the most vulnerable households, through our programmes to prevent and tackle homelessness and provide support for troubled families.
- Recognising the contribution made by our service personnel by making it easier for them to access housing
- Putting tenants more in control
- Providing a better deal for older people, with greater choice and support to live independently
- Introducing Universal Credit, welfare reforms and support for low income families.

Further details set out are as follows:

(a) Homelessness

Under the National Housing Strategy a new £20 million Homelessness Transition Fund has been provided to the voluntary sector to help implement No Second Night Out.

Also under the National Housing Strategy, and in conjunction with Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) partners, £10 million is being provided to Crisis in order to support single homeless people, including priority client groups such as recovering drug-users and ex-offenders, to access stable accommodation in the private rented sector.

Exemptions from the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) have legislated for some homeless people and a small number of high risk ex-offenders. This protects these groups from having their Housing Benefit restricted to the published SAR.

A new team has been established to work across government and with local government and other local agencies, focusing on troubled families – and we will continue to develop community budgets as one of the ways of improving how

services are provided to the most troubled families.

6.3 National Economic Situation

The national and international economic situation is weak, and the outlook is uncertain. The coalition government has introduced significant cuts in public expenditure. Furthermore there is no significant economic growth and at the time of writing (June 2012) revenue from income tax fell by 7% indicating a difficult job market.

The focus on troubled families reflects the need to do things differently and to deal with issues in a more cost effective manner. Furthermore, the government is also making significant Welfare reforms. These are detailed below:

6.4 Welfare Reform Act 2012

In 2010 the Government announced changes to the welfare system to make welfare more affordable, bringing the total welfare savings to £18 billion per year by 2014-15. A Welfare Reform Act received royal assent in March 2012 and aims to simplify the welfare benefits system. Key changes that impact on housing are summarized below:

Changes to the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

This threshold has been increased from 25yrs to 35yrs, meaning that single claimants up to the age of 35 will have their LHA based on a room in a shared property rather than a self contained one bedroom property. There will be exceptions for some disabled claimants, certain people who have previously been homeless, and ex-offenders who could pose a risk to the public.

Under Occupation changes to Housing Benefit.

Effective from April 2013, size criteria will apply in the social rented sector (e.g. council and housing association properties) replicating the size criteria that applies to Housing Benefit claimants in the private rented sector under the Local Housing Allowance rules. This means that people living in houses larger than they need (under-occupiers) will have to move to somewhere smaller or make up the difference in rent because their Housing Benefit will be reduced by:

- 14% if you under-occupy by one bedroom
- 25% if you under-occupy by two or more bedrooms

This will only apply to working-age people but it is expected to affect 670,000 social sector tenants. Furthermore LHA rates will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index instead of the market rents in each area. The connection with actual rents will be lost. Any claimant accepted as homeless and placed in temporary

accommodation will not be affected by these changes but this will impact on social sector housing.

Changes to Council Tax Benefit.

Effective from April 2013, Council Tax Benefit is to be replaced by a Local Council Tax Support scheme. Local authorities will set up new schemes to support people in their own areas. The schemes must be delivered within a reduced budget set by Government. There is a requirement that Local Authorities must protect pension age claimants from the reduction. This requirement means that the total cost of the reduction must be met by working-age people who currently receive Council Tax Benefit. In Castle Point this could mean working age households who have previously not had to pay any Council Tax will be required to pay at least 35% of their Council Tax liability. This is expected to lead to increased levels of debt and possible increases in homelessness.

Implementation of the Housing Benefit Cap.

As part of the Welfare Reform Act there will be a cap on the amount of benefits a working-age household can receive, capped at the level of the average earnings of a working family. The HB cap will mean that working age people can't receive more than a set amount in benefits, even if they would otherwise be entitled. The cap will be set at the average net earned income of working households - this is estimated currently to be £350 per week for a single adult with no children and £500 per week for a couple or lone parent. The cap restriction will not apply to households with disabled children or households receiving Working Tax Credits. Temporary Accommodation will not be excluded from the HB Cap and this may result in severe affordability issues for homeless people and/or greater financial burdens for the Local Authority resulting from affordability issues within the Private Rent sector. It is anticipated that the HB Cap will have most significant effect in regional areas where rent levels are highest – notably it is anticipated that there will be an increase in outward London migration. With the close proximity to London, easy access to main commuter routes, and many integral community links to East London, Castle Point could be seen as a prime outward migration alternative for many households. This could have a significant impact on the local private sector rent market, both in terms of average rent levels, and supply and demand.

Implementation of Universal Credit

Pilots for Universal Credit direct payments are underway and it is anticipated that from October 2013, when Universal Credit starts to replace Housing Benefit, payments will no longer be paid direct to landlords but to the claimant as part of their Universal Credit. These changes are likely to lead to significant money management issues potentially leading to a loss of rental payments in both private and social rented sectors.

The issues are likely to be significant for Castle Point Borough Council. Historic analysis of 2009/10 lettings statistics shows that the economic status of households entering general needs social housing varies significantly across the east of England, however Castle Point had the highest total proportion (78%) of social

landlord households in the East of England not in employment. This compares with 46% in Dacorum BC.

The implementation of Universal Credit will require claimants to manage and budget their own finances on a monthly basis. The default claim method will be by on-line application. Both these factors present significant challenges to homeless households.

Social Fund Reform

From April 2013 Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for general living expenses (including rent in advance) will be abolished and replaced by new local provisions to be determined by Upper Tier Local Authorities (i.e. Essex County Council).

Crisis Loan alignment payments and other Crisis Loans paid due to issues with benefit will be replaced by a new national scheme of Short Term Advances. This will be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Budgeting Loans will continue to be available until Universal Credit is fully rolled out and as people migrate across to Universal Credit they will have access to a new system of Budgeting Advances that will replace Budgeting Loans for Universal Credit recipients.

Review of Supported Housing

In 2011 Government consulted with Local Authorities on proposals to change the way in which Housing Benefit helps those living in support accommodation with their rent. There has been little information on how this area of Welfare Reform may develop however recent information indicates that housing costs for those living in supported accommodation will be provided outside of Universal Credit. The responsibility and process for delivery has yet to be agreed however this could have significant impacts if delivery and provisions for supported accommodation are insufficient to meet the needs of homeless people.

Summary

The national context and policy framework produces a number of challenges for a homelessness service. Key issues include Welfare reform which may result in more people with rent arrears and subsequently homeless. Furthermore the national economic situation means there is going to be restrictions in public funding in the future and a greater need to work with the voluntary sector. The ability of Council's to now use the private sector for a permanent solution to homelessness does provide opportunities and requires greater partnership working with the private sector.

7. Regional Policy Drivers and Initiatives

7.1 Thames Gateway South Essex

The Thames Gateway South Essex partnership (TGSE) consists of 6 local authorities on the north bank of the Thames Estuary, including Castle Point. The partnership has been developing a regional housing strategy during 2011, and identified a vision, along with three priority actions. These are derived from a number of challenges, drivers and opportunities. These are set out below:

Vision

“To deliver a sufficient and sustainable supply of quality housing that contributes to a balanced housing and job market.”

Three Priority Actions:

1. New Funding Models / Viability / Evidence Base / Site Development

Enabling the development of high quality and sustainable affordable housing in places where people want to live responding to local need and supporting the economy.

2. Private sector housing / Green Deal / Decent Homes / Empty Homes

Improving the condition and usage of existing housing across all tenures taking into account social and environmental factors that impact on quality of life.

3. Planning for Older People / Extra Care / Adaptations / Under Occupation / Homeless

Enabling people to make informed choices about their housing circumstances and enabling them to meet their own housing needs. Develop links between health, well-being, employment and housing to help prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people.

Summary

The regional approach focuses on the need for greater partnership working and joint working to help deal with homelessness, including health. The development of the Health and Wellbeing panels is significant and it is necessary to work with partners to evolve joint objectives which not only help to deal with homelessness issues, but also deal with related health and welfare issues.

8. Local Policy Drivers

8.1 Housing Strategy

Over 2012, the Council has been developing a Housing Strategy which incorporates a number of issues. There are a number of these that are relevant for homelessness. The context for the strategy notes that although relatively prosperous, there is a sharpening divide in relative wealth between Canvey and the rest of the borough.

Other issues include:

Lack of Affordable Housing

There is an acute lack of affordable housing in the Borough. Private ownership is very high at about 95% of the housing stock. There is a poor track record for affordable housing construction in the Borough and, in addition, the cost of private rented housing is the highest in the TGSE region. There is a risk of overcrowding as people may not be able to afford their own home and remain with their family and perhaps having children of their own.

Need to Develop Housing Profile

The mix of housing provision in Castle Point is weighted towards semi detached and detached properties. This is a difficult environment for first time buyers, and does not meet the needs for all residents and family groups.

The population continues to expand and there is a need for differing types of accommodation including larger family as well as starter home size.

It seems that adequate accommodation is available in surrounding areas enabling opportunities to access a more diverse and, possibly, affordable range of accommodation where appropriate.

Need to review Temporary Housing Provisions

Current temporary housing provisions, including the existing Private Sector Lease scheme, will require careful review from 2013 onwards. The financial impact of Welfare Reform changes such as the Housing Benefit Cap will result in some temporary accommodation becoming unaffordable. Furthermore, proposed changes to the way in which housing costs for temporary accommodation are met under Universal Credit (i.e. management fees met by Discretionary Housing Payments) may lead to increased financial risk and burden on the Local Authority.

Need to bring empty stock back into habitation

In 2011 in total some 1,031 private sector dwellings in the sub region were vacant for 6+ months. This equates to 2.75% of the housing stock. The average for England is 3.13%. Whilst there has been a TGSE initiative to get these properties back into the social housing market it has not been effective.

Need to have up to date information on the stock condition of the private sector

The private sector stock condition survey undertaken in 2006 was limited to 1,000 properties and is now out of date. There is a need to refresh this to take into account meeting Decent Homes standards as well as to help inform energy efficiency knowledge in preparation for the Green Deal.

Reform of homelessness legislation

The Localism Act will let local authorities meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented homes. This option could provide an appropriate solution for people experiencing a homelessness crisis, at the same time as freeing up social homes for people in real need under the Choice Based Lettings scheme. Previously an applicant could refuse the private rented sector and wait in temporary accommodation for a social home.

The Council must take into account the legislation when dealing with and implementing the new requirements. Whilst this reform is welcomed it may be difficult to implement due to the impacts of Welfare Reforms (i.e. increased risk of rent arrears and affordability under the HB Cap leading to unsustainable tenancies).

Need to deal with some residency issues for Caravan Sites

Thorney Bay Caravan Park contains several hundred caravans which are designed for leisure use however a significant number of these are actually used all year round as permanent residential caravans. This situation gives rise to increased risk of fuel poverty, affordable warmth, and health and safety issues for vulnerable people. Furthermore, proposals for the redevelopment of one particular site are progressing. If successful this presents the risk of a large influx of homeless enquiries from current residents causing significant impact on the Housing Options Service. Careful and proactive planning for this risk is imperative.

Impact of immigration

The 2001 and 2011 Census Data set based on country of birth shows a very slight increase in non EU born residents (1.69% to 1.98%) and a slight decrease in EU born residents (1.15% to 1.03%) in Castle Point. The 2011 Census shows that 0.31% of the boroughs population was born in EU accession countries (ie. Lithuania, Romania, Poland etc.).

Immigration is not currently a significant local driver in terms of homeless provision and the Homelessness Legislation clearly provides for the circumstances under which persons from abroad are eligible for temporary accommodation.

Housing Strategy Objectives

As a result of these and other issues, the following objectives have been developed:

- Improve the Value for Money of Council Housing Services

- Develop and Increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough
- Develop Older People's Housing Services in the Borough
- Improve the cost effectiveness of the Homelessness Service
- Implement an effective approach to develop Private Sector Housing

Development of New Local Plan

The Council is currently preparing a New Local Plan, which will aim to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework to boost significantly the supply of housing. However it is likely that environmental constraints and Green Belt designation will prevent the full need for housing being met. This has implications for the affordability of housing in the borough. Initial findings from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Review 2012 indicate that the demand for affordable housing in Castle Point is high (at least 57%). This percentage need for affordable housing is expected to increase if lower levels of total housing provision are achieved. Affordability issues arising from the supply of housing within the borough may therefore act to drive up cases of homelessness amongst local families who are unable to access or maintain payments for homes in Castle Point.

9. Homelessness Service Review Findings

9.1 Customer Usage

The Housing Options service operates from the Main Council Offices in Kiln Road within normal office hours Monday to Friday, with an emergency out of hours telephony service resourced by staff who are available to attend in person if required.

In October 2008 the service started to receive assistance with telephony enquiries through the newly established First Contact team. In January 2010 a web based E-form was introduced, enabling customers to log enquiries with Housing Options via the website and enabling First Contact to capture initial data from phone enquiries at the first point of contact with minimal disruption to Housing Options.

The number of telephone enquiries received through First Contact has gradually increased from an average 82 per month in 2008/9, 92 per month 2009/10, 106 per month 2010/11, to 137 per month 2011/12. The 2011/12 data shows that 53% of enquiries were logged to an E-form and passed to Housing Options to follow up with an interview or more detailed call back, 43% were resolved by First Contact directly providing information to the customer.

Use of the E-form by customers accessing our website has been steady, with 238 completed in 2010/11 and 241 completed in 2011/12.

9.2 Customer Satisfaction

Since April 2011 Customer Satisfaction has been monitored through an on-going customer satisfaction survey. Between April and October 2011 we received a total of 16 survey forms;

94% found the service very easy or easy to access

100% found the advice given helpful

100% felt the Officer explained advice clearly

94% felt the Officer was polite and professional

78% of people given leaflets, found them helpful

87% of people offered a further appointment were happy with the date/time offered

To help inform this review we have also conducted two snap shot surveys focussing on customers who have approached us for Housing Advice in a one month period, and customers who are, or have in the past 6 months, been in Temporary Accommodation.

9.3 The Housing Advice Survey

From a sample of 181 customers 16 surveys were completed and results showed;

- The service is generally accessed by single people or households with children, and for the purpose of homelessness enquiries.
- The service is generally accessed by phone initially (91.7%) and then followed up with an appointment (68.8%)
- Most people arriving without an appointment were seen within less than an hour of arriving (81.8%)
- Most customers rated the building facilities as 'excellent' or 'good' in terms of the Reception, waiting area, and interview room.
- Most customers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service overall (68.8%) and 93.8% said they would use the service again.
- Of those unhappy with the service responses were evenly divided between those who were unhappy because they did not understand the advice given or find it relevant, and those who were unhappy because their expectations of housing solutions had not materialised.
- Only 1 customer surveyed had accessed the service through the on-line Housing Advice e-form and they had waited more than 48 hours to receive a response from Housing Options.

9.4 The Temporary Accommodation survey

From a sample of 68 customers 17 surveys were completed and results showed;

- The biggest group accessing this service are Lone Parents (47.1%)
- The most recent temporary accommodation in which most customers had been placed was Private Sector Leased accommodation (56.3%)
- Most customers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their temporary accommodation in terms of size, cleanliness, distance from public transport, distance from last home, and safety whilst staying there.
- 68.8% of customers were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the support from Housing Options whilst in temporary accommodation.
- Most of those not happy with the level of support felt that the service had not kept in contact with them or had not regularly informed them of progress on their situation.
- The majority of customers (81.3%) were still in temporary accommodation at the time of the survey, with 53.8% having been in temporary accommodation for less than 3 months.

It is important to note that the low number of responses to the Customer Satisfaction, Housing Advice, and Temporary accommodation surveys is not unusual given the transient and chaotic nature of many of the households that use the Housing Options Service.

Key improvement actions required include:

- ***Review procedures to incorporate a minimum level of contact with long term customers.***
- ***Review advice materials to ensure customer expectations are more grounded.***
- ***Review process for e-form enquiries to reduce response times***

9.5 Performance

The Housing Options Service measures its performance against a range of National and Local performance indicators. Most of these focus on actual homelessness rather than prevention measures. In this section 2011/12 data has been calculated using Q3 2011/12 data extrapolated to indicate the likely position for the 2011/12 year.

Number of Homeless Applications & Speed of decisions

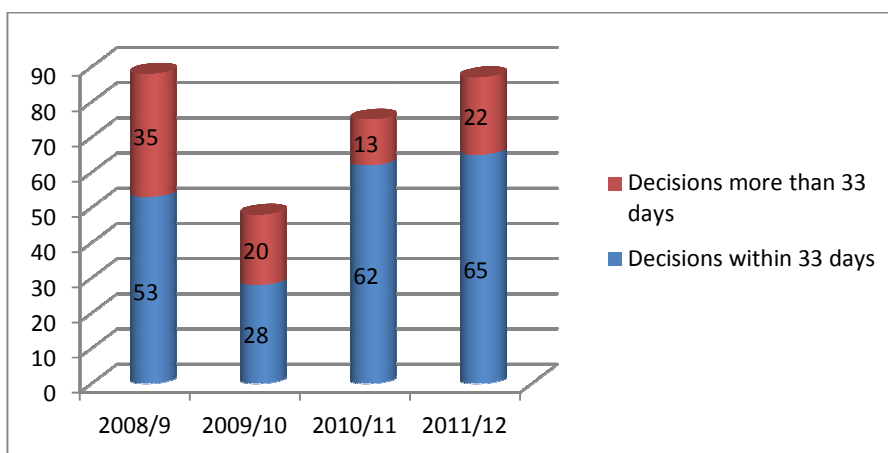


Figure 1: Timely Homeless Decisions

The total number of Homeless Applications dropped sharply in 2009/10 to just 48 from a previous total in 2008/9 of 88. Application levels have gradually risen over the last two years with current levels for 2011/12 reaching 87. With this increase in caseload there is a danger that Applications may not be decided in a timely manner. Local Authorities are required to make decisions on Homeless Applications within 33 days. The graph above shows that despite this increase in caseload the % of decisions made within 33 days has in fact improved, with the service currently deciding 75% of cases in a timely manner, compared to just 60% in 2008/9.

Eligibility & Priority Need

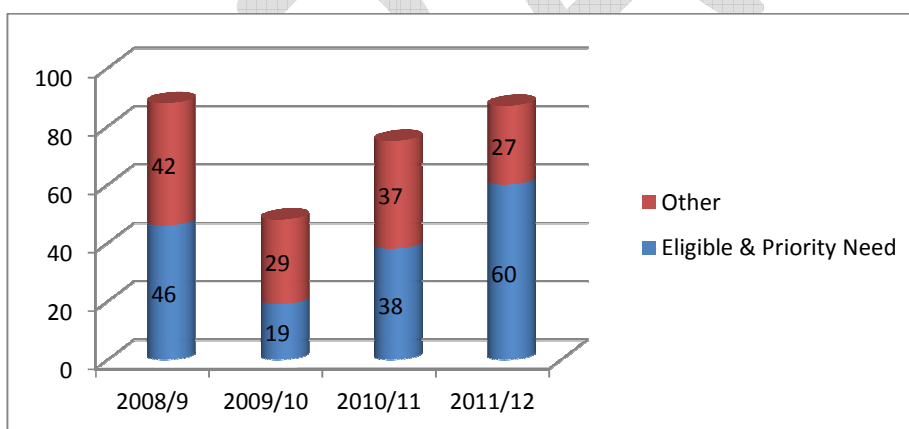


Figure 2: Priority Need Acceptances

Local Authorities are required to determine homelessness applications by giving due regard to certain criteria. The prime criteria is to determine that the applicant is eligible for assistance and is in Priority Need.

The graph above shows that, proportionately, an increasing number of Homeless Applications are being determined as eligible and in Priority Need. From 2009/10 to 2010/11 the number of Homeless applications rose by 60% whilst the no. of eligible/priority need decisions increased by 100%, from 2010/11 to 2011/12 the

number of applications rose by 16% whilst the no. of eligible/priority need decisions increased by 58%. This indicates that the service is not only seeing an increase in the number of Homeless Applications, but is also seeing an increase in the number of applications that are likely to result in an acceptance and, subsequently, a temporary accommodation placement.

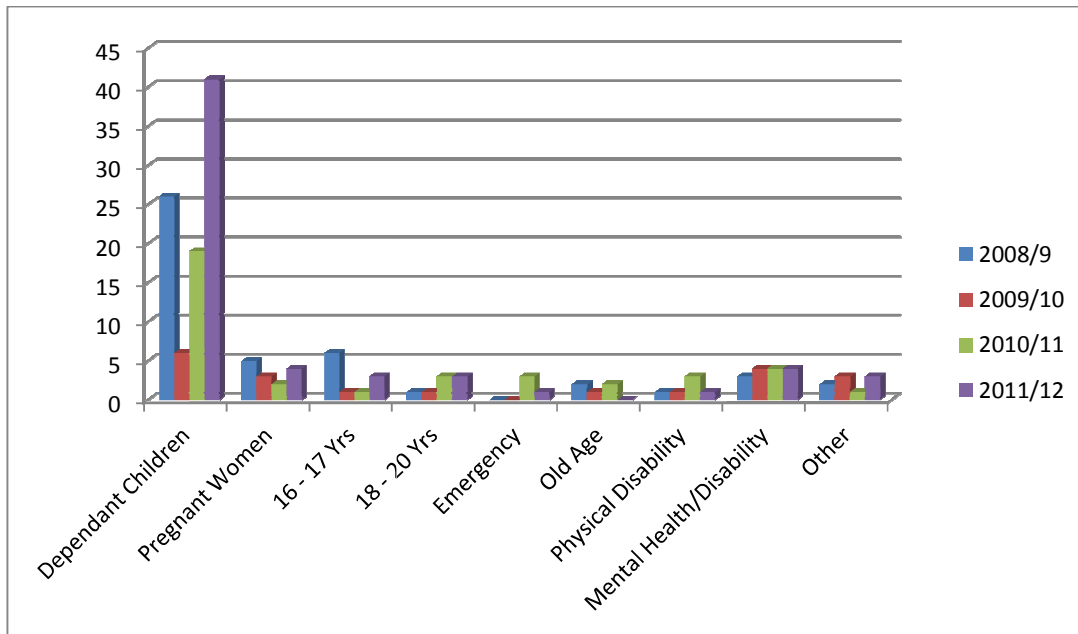


Figure 3: Priority Need Main Categories

The graph above shows the breakdown of Priority Need decisions by main category type. These figures clearly show a drastic increase in the number of Priority Need cases containing dependant children. This category type has more than doubled since 2010/11 and is now at the highest level for the last 4 years, indicating that there has been a large increase in families becoming homeless. Numbers of pregnant women and 16 to 17 year olds cases have also doubled in the past year too, although these remain relatively low by comparison to those with dependant children.

Reasons for homelessness

Each eligible and priority need case is further classified by the main reason for their homelessness. Each case is only classified once.

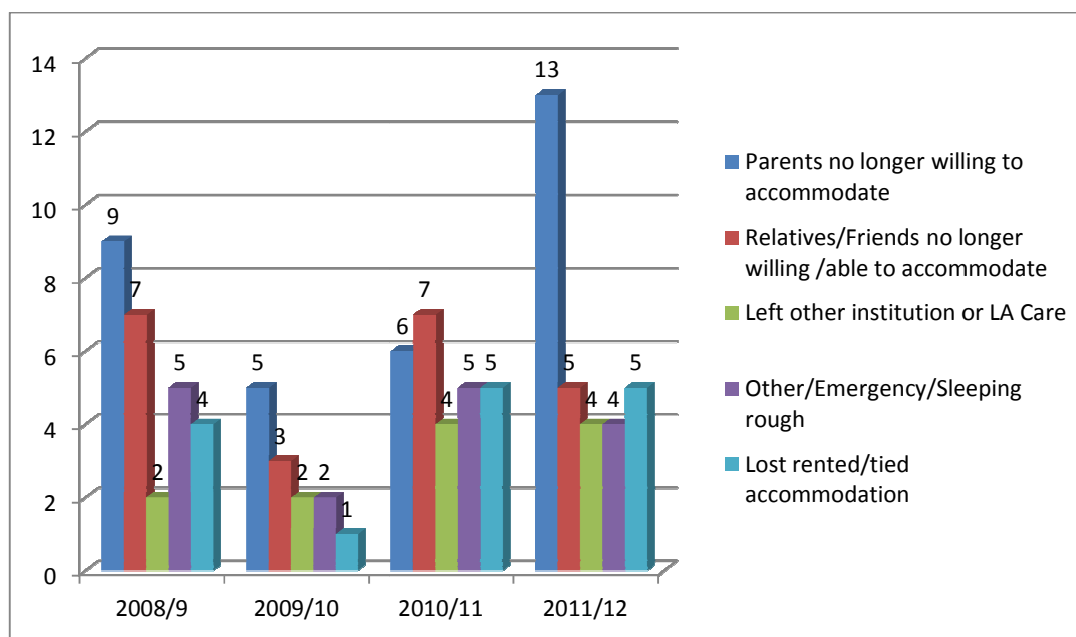


Figure 4: Reasons for Homelessness – loss of current or previous accommodation

The graph above shows the main cause of their loss of accommodation. The most significant increase is in cases where homelessness is caused by parents who are no longer willing to accommodate; this has more than doubled from 6 cases in 2010/11 to 13 cases in 2011/12. Cases of homelessness caused by leaving an institution or Local Authority Care have also doubled over the last two years. Since 2008 there have been no cases of homelessness resulting from the following classifications; requirement to leave National Asylum Support, leaving prison or remand, Leaving HM Forces.

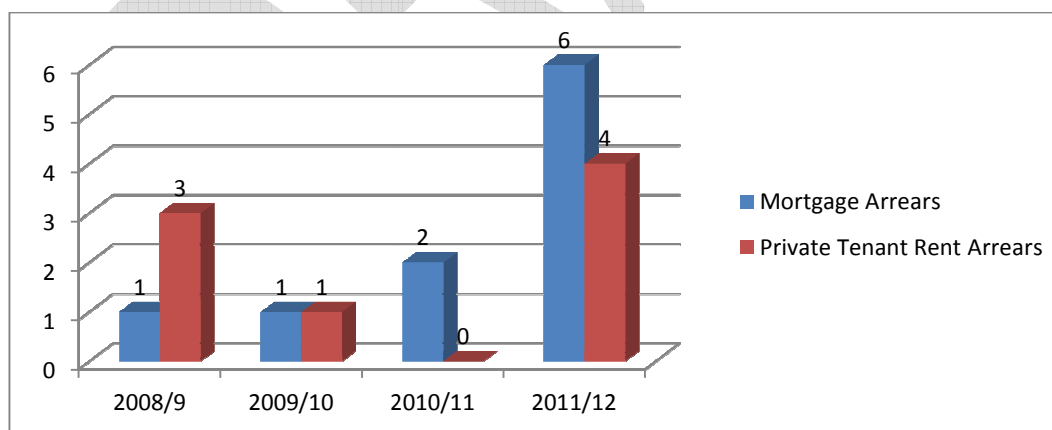


Figure 5: Reasons for Homelessness - Financial

The graph above shows the number of homelessness cases caused by mortgage arrears and private tenant rent arrears. This clearly shows a steady increase in mortgage arrears cases which has inevitably arisen as a result of the recent recession and continued increase in unemployment. Since 2008 there have been no

cases of homelessness resulting from council tenant or registered social landlord rent arrears.

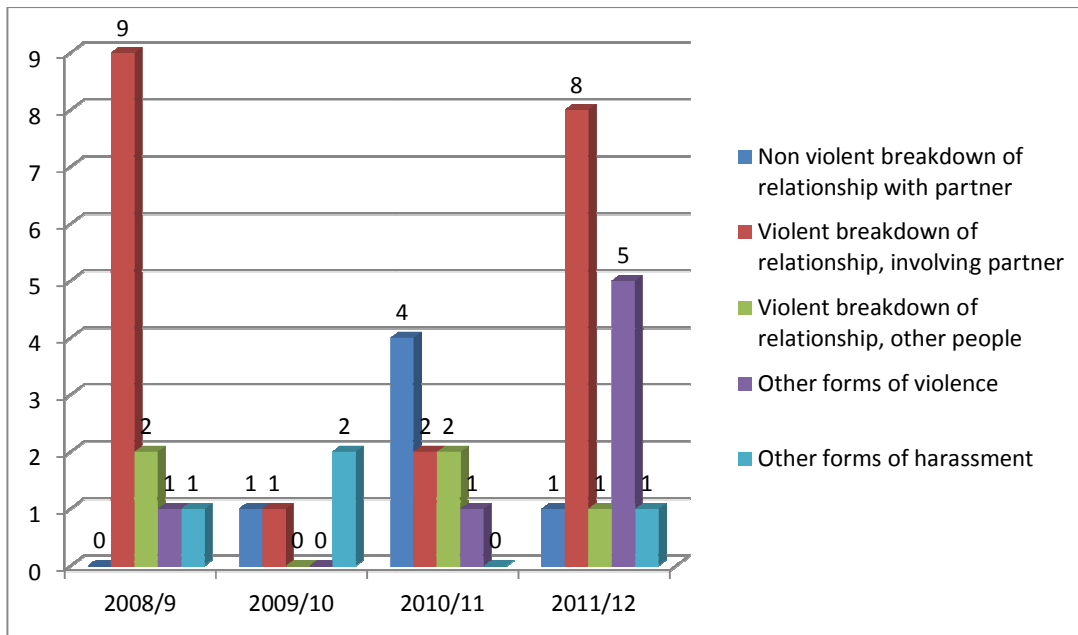


Figure 6: Reasons for Homelessness - Relationships, Violence, Harassment

The graph above shows the number of homelessness cases caused by relationship breakdowns, violence, and harassment. The most significant finding here is the increase in overall levels of homelessness caused by violence - this has almost trebled from 5 cases in 2010/11 to 14 cases in 2011/12. Since 2008 there have been no cases of homelessness resulting from racially motivated violence or harassment.

Homeless Prevention

Unsurprisingly, with a steadily increasing homeless caseload and the increased pressure this places on scarce housing resources, we have also seen an increase in the deployment of prevention methods to resolve the threat of homelessness at source.

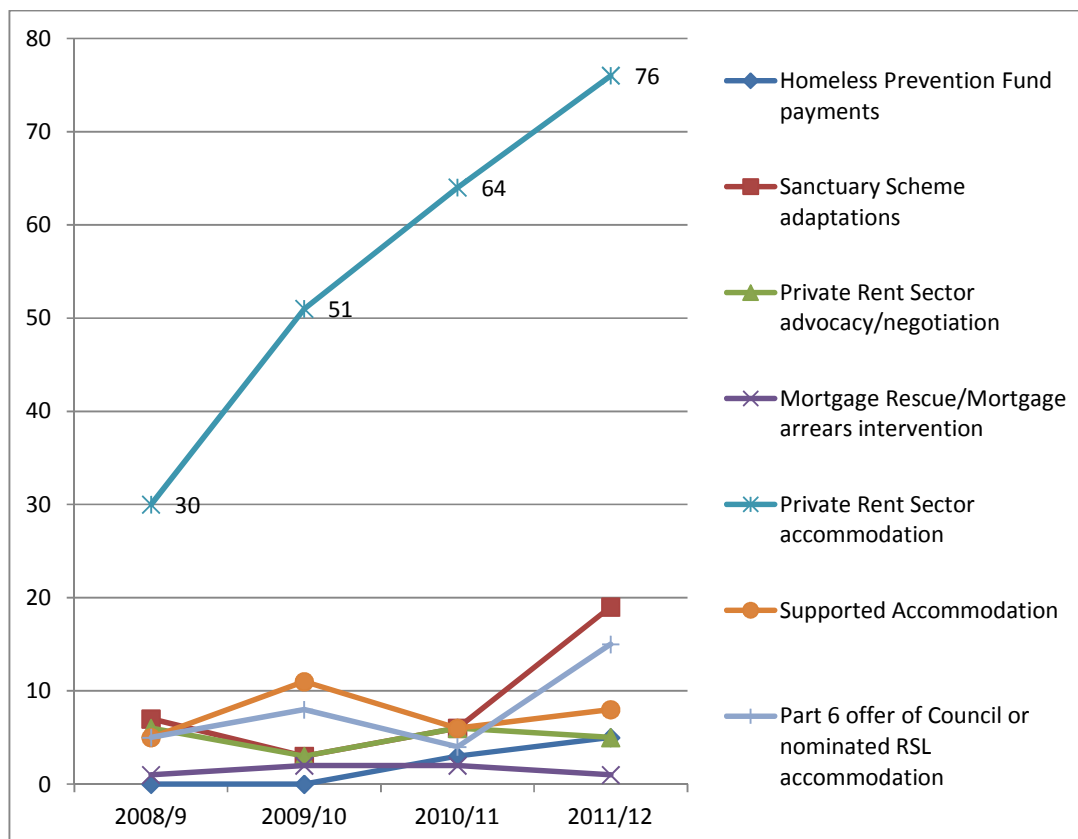


Figure 7: Methods of Homeless Prevention

The overall use of homeless prevention methods has increased year on year, from 54 in 2008/9, 78 in 2009/10, 91 in 2010/11, to 129 in 2011/12. There have been significant increases in the past year in the deployment of Private Rent Sector accommodation, Part 6 offers, and Sanctuary Scheme adaptations to prevent homelessness.

However, there are a number of challenges that make it difficult for people to access the private rented sector and for people to move within the sector, including:

- Tenant being unable to afford rent in advance
- Tenant being unable to afford a deposit
- Tenant being unable to afford to pay for letting agent credit checks and other fees
- Lack of landlords willing to accept tenants on Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance (LHA)
- Snap shot analysis of HB claims in the private rent sector in August 2012 shows that the LHA Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) which applies to Castle Point, Rochford, and Southend has a negative variance from actual rents charged on smaller properties within Castle Point compared with a positive variance on larger properties. Shared rooms and 1 beds show an average variance of between £25.45 and £33.04 p/wk shortfall between LHA rates and actual rent levels, whilst actual rent levels in larger properties are fully met by LHA rates. This variance is believed to be indicative of the abundance of smaller properties in Southend which is

pulling down the LHA rate for these properties which are in scarce supply in Castle Point.

- Increasing numbers of landlords asking for guarantors with a minimum level of income
- Under 18s unable to hold own tenancies
- Single room rent restriction for under 35's
- Reluctance of some agencies to work with landlords to provide support

10. Key Client Needs Issues

There are a number of client groups with differing needs, although it is necessary to take into account the fact that any individual may require support for a range of different needs, and that an individual's needs may change over time.

The needs assessment for each client group has been based upon a number of information sources:

- Feedback from service users via focus groups and questionnaires
- Input from service providers
- Data from CPBC Housing Department and a range of partner agencies.
- National studies on homelessness and housing need among specific client groups

It has not been possible to make use of every information source for every client group. Furthermore, the needs will be further developed as a result of the consultation planned for this review. The following summary is indicative of the information known to date and may change following the analysis of further information:

Single People

Key Findings

- Significant overlaps in the support needs and services used between rough sleepers, ex offenders, drug and alcohol users, mental health service users and dual diagnosis clients.
- A likely hidden need for services for single homeless people.
- Increases in the number of single homeless people with no additional support needs approaching Housing Services.

Rough Sleepers

Key Findings

- There are no significant numbers of rough sleepers in Castle Point

Mental Health Issues

Key Findings:

- Difficulties accessing mental health services for homeless people
- Navigating the accommodation system is “confusing and stressful” for many clients with mental health problems

Drug and Alcohol Support Needs

Key Findings:

- High levels of unmet accommodation need for complex and chaotic clients
- Homelessness is a barrier for many people who could otherwise access drug treatment
- Lack of awareness of housing support and advice services exacerbated drug/alcohol problems and/or jeopardised recovery for some in treatment
- Flexible accommodation options are needed to support clients who require different levels of independence at different stages of their recovery

Offenders and Ex-offenders

Key findings

- Around one third of prisoners have no fixed abode on release and 81% of prisoners do not receive help looking for accommodation
- Prisoners with no identified drug or alcohol needs who are sentenced to less than 12 months are released from prison with no ongoing support from Probation or other services

Ex-Service Personnel

Key Findings:

- Links between homelessness among veterans and the occurrence of major conflicts, indicating a possible increase in homelessness among this client group around 2015.

16-24 year olds

Key Findings

- Lack of specialist accommodation
- The single room rent restriction for under 35's is a significant challenge in supporting young people to move to independent living
- Striking a balance between working and receiving benefits is a significant challenge

Teenage Parents

Key findings:

- Teenage parents and their children are at increased risk of living in poor housing
- Lack of suitable accommodation

Young Offenders

Key Findings

- Stable and suitable housing is a significant factor in reducing the risk of re-offending
- Lack of suitable accommodation

Homeless Families

Key Findings

- Homeless families represent over half of all accepted homelessness cases by the local authority each year
- Lack of suitable accommodation

Domestic Abuse

Key Findings

- A host of difficulties can arise when someone flees one home due to violence, lives temporarily in a Refuge and is then re-housed in more stable accommodation.
- Lack of suitable accommodation

Traveler Community

Key Findings

- There are no significant Traveler communities within Castle Point and limited areas of open space on which Traveler sites could reasonably be established.
- The Traveler community is unlikely to seek secure and fixed accommodation through the homelessness service.

Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BME)

Key Findings:

- CPBC has a comparatively small BME population
- The proportion of BME groups accepted as homeless is in line with the population of BME groups in CPBC's wider population.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Key Findings

- CPBC has very small numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Migrant Workers

Key Findings

- Lack of accurate evidence on numbers of migrant workers in Castle Point and prevalence of homelessness and housing issues among this client group

LGBT (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Trans) Groups

Key Findings

- Lack of data indicating the extent of homelessness among LGBT communities in Castle Point
- Young LGBT people can be at heightened risk of homelessness
- Current recording mechanisms do not capture the true extent of vulnerability within LGBT groups as sexuality is rarely recorded as a support need

Physical Disabilities

Key Findings:

- Lack of suitably adapted accommodation
- Lack of inter-agency partnership working

Learning Disabilities

Key Findings

- The range of accommodation for people with learning disabilities is currently limited, but there are plans to extend this with the development of Beresford Close.
- Under provision of accommodation for people with learning disabilities.
- Lack of inter-agency partnership working

Older People

Key Findings:

- Castle Point has seen population increases in every age group over 55 since 2001, and this trend is set to continue.
- There are no Extra Care schemes currently in development,
- The number of older people with additional support needs such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, is likely to increase over the next 5-10 years.

Repeat Homelessness

Key Findings

- Insufficient support during transitions between accommodation and lack of support once a client has moved to independent living can contribute to repeat homelessness
- Capacity on support services means that clients may not always be able to access support for as long as they need it?

11. Stakeholder Engagement

The Homelessness Review has sought to engage the views of stakeholders at every stage of the process. Stakeholders were invited to comment on the data gathered by:

- Distributing a first draft review summary for comment
- Holding a Multi-agency workshop to gather comments
- Informal discussions with staff teams
- Inviting comments from the CPBC Operational Management Team

Multi Agency Workshop

In November 2012 members of the Benefit Information Network group and Homelessness Group were invited to attend a Multi Agency workshop to comment on the Homelessness Review and draft Action Plan. 33 organisations were invited and those attending included:

Essex County Council Homeless Response Team

Essex County Council Housing Development

Family Mosaic

Community Drug & Alcohol Service

Swan Housing

Essex Youth Offending Team

Canvey island youth Project

NACRO

Issues identified by the group included:

- Poor public perception of homelessness (stigmatised)

- Lack of understanding of the Local Authorities responsibilities with regards to homelessness (both public and within Agencies).
- A lack of understanding amongst young people in particular about the realities of homelessness and how this relates to learnt behaviour
- A lack of supported lodgings for young single people and a growing need for homeless prevention tools to support them (i.e. mediation)
- Risks of violence to people as a result of increasing levels of rent arrears and debt (i.e Loan sharks)
- Scope for more joint and Essex-wide working to tackle issues of homelessness and housing need

Development of Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

Once this Homelessness Review has been ratified a final Homelessness Strategy Action Plan (HSAP) will be developed to address the issues identified from the Review.

The HSAP will set out a range of actions to be implemented between 2013 and 2017 and the next Homelessness Review will be completed during 2017-18.

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2015

AIM 1: Ensure Social Housing Policies complement the prevention of homelessness						
1.1	Review Tenancy Strategy.	Housing Options Team to review the Tenancy Strategy	TSM	March 2014	Needs of homeless people are adequately reflected and met by new strategy.	
1.2	Review Flexible Social Housing Tenancy Policy.	Housing Options Team to review Local Authority Flexible Tenancies Policy	TSM	March 2014	Flexible Tenancy Policy supports the prevention of homelessness.	
1.3	Review Social Housing Allocations Policy in line with Essex wide changes.	Housing Options Team to actively contribute to revisions to the new Allocations Policy.	TSM	Mar 2013	Needs of homeless people are adequately reflected in the new Allocations Policy.	Complete
AIM 2: Improve customer service and accessibility						
2.1	Improving contact arrangements with medium and long term temporary accommodation placements	Review procedures to incorporate a minimum level of contact with long term customers.	HOM	June 2014	Increased customer satisfaction.	

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
2.2	Managing unrealistic customer expectations	Review content of advice materials (hard copy/web based/temporary accommodation pack) to ensure customer expectations are being appropriately managed.	HOM	June 2014	Increased customer satisfaction. Reduced service complaints.	
2.3	Managing unrealistic customer expectations	Review procedures and processes for administration of self service E-forms and timescales for responses.	HOM	Dec 2013	Standard response time for E-forms agreed and publicised. Increased customer satisfaction. Reduced service complaints.	
2.4	Improving customer access to general Housing Options Advice	Refresh Housing Options website information.	HOM	Dec 2013	Web information is more relevant to newly emerging homelessness trends.	
2.5	Ability to maintain and improve performance of the service within current resources.	Undertake review of the service.	CSM	March 2015	Establish an informed view of required resources to inform future development.	

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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AIM 3: Encourage sustainable tenancies

3.1	Implementation of direct payment of Housing Costs leading to increased tenant responsibility	Work with partners and agencies to develop advice, support, and training for tenants focussed on money management, debt, budgeting, lifestyle, and tenancy sustainment issues.	CSM	April 2015	Customers adequately equipped with skills/support to better manage their finances. Reduction in the number of customers homeless as a result of rent arrears. Reduction in levels of repeat homelessness.	
3.2	Impact of Welfare Reform on standard of PRS accommodation	Liaise with Environmental Health and other data sources to establish a view on stock condition within the PRS.	HOM	Mar 2015	An informed view held on level of sub-standard accommodation to determine future actions.	
3.3	Maximising PRS housing opportunities both inside and outside the borough.	Implement procedure for discharging homeless duty in the Private Rent Sector.	HOM	Mar 2014	Robust procedure so that homeless duty can be discharged in the private rent sector with improved likelihood of customers sustaining their tenancies.	

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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AIM 4: Ensure provision of adequate temporary accommodation

4.1	Need to review temporary accommodation profile	<p>Review existing PSL scheme with aim to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • widen profile to increase provision of 1 and 2 bed properties • increase range of providers engaged in the scheme • renegotiate rent levels in line with current market rents • revise lease terms 	HOM	March 2013	<p>PSL stock profile better meets the needs of the service.</p> <p>Risk of maintaining PSL stock with one provider is minimised.</p> <p>Provision of service is competitive and provides value for money.</p>	Ongoing
4.2	Need to review temporary accommodation profile	<p>Conduct annual reviews of Short Term Accommodation Providers List with aim to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure provision is still fit for purpose • renegotiate rent levels in line with current market rents • increase range of providers engaged in the scheme 	CSM	Jan 2014	<p>Short Term Temporary Accommodation profile better meets the needs of the service.</p> <p>Provision of service is competitive and provides value for money.</p>	In progress

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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AIM 5: Preventing homelessness						
5.1	Impact of Welfare Reform on landlords.	Work with the Benefit Service to establish and implement a process for specifically engaging and informing PRS landlords of Welfare Reform changes to prevent the risk of homelessness.	CSM	Sept 2013	Landlords effectively engaged and encouraged to work in liaison with the local authority to prevent homelessness.	
5.2	Impact of Welfare Reform changes on availability of PRS accommodation.	Liaise with Job Centre Plus and DWP on arrangements for escalating alternative payment arrangements for UC in the PRS.	CSM	Feb 2014	Robust arrangements in place for escalating alternative payment arrangements for UC.	
5.3	Impact of Welfare Reforms on tenants and home owners.	Actively participate in meetings and proactively share information and joint working with Job Centre Plus and the Benefit service on affected customers.	HOM	Mar 2013	Accurate and relevant Housing Advice given to affected customers Levels of homelessness resulting from Welfare Reform changes mitigated.	Ongoing
5.4	Impact of Welfare Reforms on Private Rent Sector migration.	Analyse data to identify levels of HB claim migration.	CSM	Sept 2013	Services empowered to plan ahead and minimise impact.	In Progress
5.5	Impact of Welfare Reforms on Private Rent Sector migration.	Contribute to development of regional/national Local Authority guidelines for managing migrating HB Cap claims.	HOM	Mar 2014	Robust regional and national guidelines in place to mitigate impact.	

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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5.6	Impact of HB Cap on PRS tenants.	Provide targeted Housing Advice to affected customers.	HOM	Mar 2013	Affected customers empowered to plan ahead and minimise the impact.	Ongoing
5.7	Maximising housing opportunities both inside and outside the borough to meet increasing demands from introduction of HB Cap and Under-occupancy.	Explore solutions to maximise access to properties for customers – e.g. LetsHelpYou web portal, Rent-a-Room schemes etc.	CSM	Mar 2014	Greater access for customers to affordable housing opportunities.	
5.8	Increasing levels of parental evictions	Review provision of mediation and support services.	CSM	Mar 2014	Robust range of mediation and support services available to reduce levels of parental evictions.	
5.9	Increasing levels of parental evictions	Engage with relevant agencies (CIY, Social Services etc.) to develop a strategy for reducing parental evictions.	HOM	Mar 2014	Joint working strategy in place for tackling parental evictions.	
5.1.0	Increasing levels of homelessness resulting from violence or violent relationship breakdowns	Arrange Domestic Violence/Preventing Violence publicity through joint working with a range of specialist agencies.	HOM	Oct 2014	Reduction in levels of homelessness resulting from violence. Increased public awareness of support agencies.	

No.	Issue	Action	Lead	Target Date	Intended Outcomes	Progress
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5.1.1	Need for service to be regularly reviewed in light of rapid pace of change.	Review progress of Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.	CSM	Mar 2015	Homeless Strategy Action Plan includes meaningful actions for 2016/17 to ensure the service is fit for future demands.	
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KEY:

HOM – Housing Options Manager

CSM – Community Support Manager

TSM – Tenancy Services Manager

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: New Local Plan Progress Report

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

1. Purpose

To advise the Cabinet of the progress that has been made in preparing the New Local Plan, and the current position with the Glebelands case.

2. Links to the Council's Priorities and Objectives

The New Local Plan contributes directly towards the Council's Regeneration and Homes and Environment-Civic Pride priorities. The way in which it is delivered will contribute towards the priority of Improving the Council.

3. Recommendations

- 1. The Cabinet notes the progress with the preparation of a New Local Plan. The Cabinet notes that further Member briefings in political groups are to take place on matters related to the New Local Plan, and that it will receive further reports and background evidence in due course.**
 - 2. The Cabinet also notes the High Court challenge to the Secretary of State's decision in relation to the appeal for Land off Glebelands in Thundersley, and that it will receive a further report on the outcome of this challenge in due course.**
-

4. Background

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made by officers in completing the evidence base for the New Local Plan, and drafting policies.**
- 4.2 Briefings have been arranged and held with Members in their respective Groups concerning the nature of this background evidence as it nears completion. These briefings will continue to be held, as further work on the New Local Plan takes place.**

4.3 At its meeting in July 2013, the Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the appeal for housing on Green Belt at Land off Glebelands in Thundersley. It welcomed the decision of the Secretary of State to refuse planning permission for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

4.4 Since that meeting however, on 5th August 2013 a challenge to the Secretary of State's decision was lodged with the High Court. The Council is named as the second defendant in the proceedings. This matter is likely to take several months to come to a resolution.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Member briefings will continue as the New Local Plan begins to be finalised. Furthermore, the Cabinet will also receive further reports setting out the position with the challenge to the Glebelands decision and its implications for work on the New Local Plan.

5.2 It is likely that it will be necessary to amend the Local Development Scheme (the project timetable for the New Local Plan), to ensure that any issues arising from the background evidence and the Glebelands decision are fully addressed in and by the New Local Plan.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications emerging from this report. The Head of Law has authority to defend the Council's position in any legal proceedings as a result of the Glebelands challenge.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications emerging from this report. Progress with the New Local Plan has been factored into departmental budgets.

8. Equality and Diversity Impacts

8.1 This report does not require a decision that will have an impact on equality or diversity.

9. Timescale for Implementation

9.1 It is not possible to determine the timescales for the outcome of the Glebelands challenge but this could take several months. Meanwhile the Council will make progress with the background evidence and draft New Local Plan

Report Author: Steve Rogers, Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Hadleigh Hall and Surrounding Area

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Challis OBE – Leader
Councillor Smith – Economic Development & Business
Liaison**

1. Purpose of Report

To obtain Cabinet approval to pursue the delivery of new facilities and amenities at John H Burrows Park to replace the now disused Hadleigh Hall and other defunct facilities.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

The proposal links with the Council's Environment – Civic Pride and Regeneration and Homes Priorities.

3. Recommendations

1. That the Cabinet agrees that the proposal made to the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to provide a family restaurant/eaterie together with ancillary features such as new on site changing rooms and public toilets is the most suitable and satisfactory option to be explored by the Council with respect to the future use of Hadleigh Hall and the surrounding area.
2. That a further report be made to the Cabinet with specific design details relating to the site and the provision of the new facilities after a final specification is obtained from a third party commercial operator.
3. That any building on the site be subject to the usual consents and permissions which are required by law and shall accord with the Planning Brief previously agreed by Members.
4. That the Chief Executive does proceed to agree terms and conditions with the other party subject to final approval of any scheme by the Cabinet.

4. Background

The previous tenants of Hadleigh Hall went into receivership in Mid 2011 leaving the premises vacant and in a very poor condition and state of disrepair and subsequently the premises 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.

5. Proposals

Expressions of interest were received from local groups keen to occupy the old building or any new premises provided by the Council and also national companies who were prepared to assist the Council to provide new on site facilities and who were interested in opening a high quality family style restaurant/eaterie on the site which would enhance the location and the use of the parkland area and provide an attractive eating and meeting place for customers.

The local groups, although willing to occupy the existing facilities and use them for specific purposes relating to their own organisational aims, lacked the capacity and vision to deliver the same offer to local residents and visitors to the Borough.

A firm expression of interest, shown by a leading food and beverage operator, was considered by the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to be the best and most attractive delivery device. This operator has expressed an intention to open a new food establishment / hostelry on a 1.15acre site in the area of the existing Hadleigh Hall and to also support the provision of new changing rooms and public toilets and make other improvements at John H Burrows Park.

It is clear that this proposal provides 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 financial security and presents a unique and singular opportunity to the Council to improve the area and remove the disused building including the added bonus of the creation of some new local employment.

This option was also considered by the Castle Point Regeneration Partnership to be the most likely alternative to guarantee an improved sports / leisure provision for John H Burrows Park with the possibility of creating other sporting features such as a trim trail / outdoor gym, all weather table tennis table and basketball hoop along with the consolidation of the existing facilities for cricket, football, tennis and bowls and the continued use and further enhancement of the popular children's playground.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Any financial consideration or other terms is currently subject to final agreement and whilst these negotiations are ongoing the other party has requested that the details remain private as commercially sensitive.

(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 and will strictly comply with any rules relating to the disposal of council owned land.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

Further negotiations will involve professional staff employed by the Council who are presently engaged in the Borough wide regeneration programmes which are being undertaken by the Council.

Equality Implications

Legislation requires the Council to consider how the decisions it makes and service it delivers affects people who share different “protected characteristics”. The Council must have “due regard” for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Protected characteristics includes age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The proposal before the Cabinet is in accordance with the legislation for local government.

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

The recommendations in this report deal with a disused council owned building and support the Council’s published priorities.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

The other party is keen to determine those sites in the United Kingdom which can be added to its new building programme for 2014 and enter a commercial

relationship with the Council and obtain the landowner's consent to allow the proposal to be added to its annual business programme.

It is anticipated that following final approval it would take approx 30-40 weeks to finish any building works and provide the new facilities at the site.

If the Cabinet is unable to provide an indication that the proposal can be supported then the other party will engage in projects situated elsewhere in the United Kingdom and the Council may lose the financial incentives and other benefits arising from the proposal.

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 & 7.10.2013. Item 6(e) Report and Supplementary Report to Cabinet 17.10.2012

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

18th September 2013

Subject: Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/15

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

1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out the proposed Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/15. It takes account of the requirements of the Constitution, the Financial Planning Strategy and statutory requirements for calculating the budget requirement and setting the Council Tax.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

The agreement of the Budget and Policy Framework provides the Council with a robust framework to improve services to residents by directing resources towards the Council's priorities.

3. Recommendation

That the proposed Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/15 is approved.

4. The Budget and Policy Framework

4.1 The Council's business planning framework consists of a number of plans and strategies. These provide the mechanism through which the Council establishes its aims and objectives. Each plan or strategy should identify how the aims and objectives will be achieved and monitored as well as provide the link between Council services and financial plans. A list of the Council's corporate outward and inward facing plans and strategies is shown in Annexe B to this report.

4.2 The Council's budget framework is set out at Annexe A. It is based on the requirements of the Financial Planning Strategy. The key steps in the budget process can be summarised as follows:

- draft Service Action Plans;**
- draft budgets prepared on a no growth basis (current service action plans);**
- identification of growth and efficiency savings (options) linked to Council priorities; corporate and service planning revised to reflect latest community feedback, user feedback, initial issues raised by new**

government initiatives, as well as the development of Improvement Plans and the Asset Management Plan;

- interpretation of government announcements in respect of acceptable council tax rises and provision of funding;
- Service Action Plan challenge meetings with Cabinet members;
- agreement of final Service Action Plans;
- budget and Council Tax setting at Full Council.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Council will publish the Policy and Budget Framework for 2014/15.
- 5.2 The subsequent period up to the February Council meeting will be available for final policy considerations by Members.

6. Corporate Implications

There are no new financial or human resource and equality implications arising from this report.

a. Legal implications

This report is authored by the Head of Resources in her capacity as the Council's Section 151 officer – the officer appointed to have responsibility for the Council's financial administration.

7. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

The Council should approve the proposed Budget and Policy Framework so that it can be available for public consultation in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The approval of the framework also ensures that there are clear accountabilities and timescales in place.

8. Conclusion

Cabinet are requested to approve the proposed Budget and Policy Framework.

Background Papers:

Constitution

Policy Framework and Budget Setting for 2013/14

The Budget Framework for 2014/15

No.	Activity	Date
1.	Produce analysis of needs information and national issues based on latest socio-economic profiling, national legislative framework and any consultation data	October 2013
2.	Priority discussion with Executive and Corporate Management Teams (EMT/CMT)	October 2013
3.	Develop Service Action Plan template and distribute to managers setting out timescale for completion For completion by end November 2013	October 2013
4.	Formation of efficiency savings options linked to Council priorities and identified through Service Action Planning process	November 2013
5.	Draft budget prepared on a “no growth” basis (current service action plans)	October 2013 - January 2014
6.	Consideration of government announcements in respect of acceptable levels of council tax increase and provision of grant funding to the Council	October 2013 - January 2014
7.	Draft Service Action Plans and Directorate plans reviewed and finalised by Departmental Management Team	December 2013
8.	Clarification of priorities, objectives and project work streams with CMT	January 2014
9.	Draft Directorate Plans reviewed by the Head of Performance and Service Support in liaison with respective Heads of Service	January 2014
10.	Budget option appraisal with Cabinet members	November 2013 - January 2014
11.	Service Action Plan challenge by respective Cabinet Member	February 2014
12.	Cabinet makes final recommendations to Council on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate priorities • Treasury Management Strategy Statement • Investment Strategy • Prudential indicators • The robustness of budgets • Adequacy of reserves • The budget (revenue and capital) and Council Tax 	February 2014

Annexe A

	<i>The Cabinet will now make its recommendations on the allocation of financial resources to services</i>	
13.	Cabinet agrees HRA budget and sets rent levels <i>Council to delegate full powers to the Cabinet. HRA budget subject to compliance with legal and prudential guidelines</i>	19 th Feb 2014
14.	Council makes statutory budget calculations and sets Council Tax <i>Council will consider the recommendations from Cabinet and will make final decisions</i>	19 th Feb 2014
15.	Service Action Plans approved by respective Cabinet Member	31 st Mar 2014

POLICY TITLE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	IS THERE AN ACTION PLAN?	STATUTO RY OR LOCAL (S OR L)	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/AUTHOR (NAME/JOB TITLE)	UPDATED HOW OFTEN AND WHEN	LAST UPDATE	NEXT UPDATE DUE (including impact appraisals) Red = due for update this year	WHICH OFFICER or OFFICER GROUP APPROVES?	WHICH MEMBER / PARTNER GROUP APPROVES?	COMPLIANCE MONITORED HOW?
CORPORATE POLICIES - OUTWARD										
Sustainable Community Strategy	Outlines the vision for the community over a specified period.	Yes under Thematic Groups	S	Mel Harris Head of Partnerships & Safer Places	No further policy developments from central government as at August 2013	July 2008	March 2014	EMT	Local Strategic Partnership	Through reports to and monitoring by the Local Strategic Partnership.
Corporate Plan (CP)	Outlines the Council's priorities and objectives. Also shows how the Council is performing against those priority areas and other statutory indicators.	No	L (CP) S (Annual Report)	Craig Watts Head of Performance and Service Support	Annually	Currently in progress	September 2014	EMT	Cabinet / Full Council	Through National Indicators Service and Performance Management Plans, also through highlight reporting to the programme board.
Local Development Scheme (part of Local Development Framework (LDF))	Enables interested parties to find out about the Council's Planning Policies. Sets out a timetable and key milestones for the preparation of documents for the LDF. Shows how the preparation of the LDF will be resourced.	No	S	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	As required	January 2012	September 2013	EMT	Cabinet	The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the production of an Annual Monitoring Report, setting out how we are performing in delivering the programme set out in the Local Development Scheme.
Local Plan 1998	Sets out the policies for achieving a balance between appropriate development opportunities and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.	No	S	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	Certain policies to be retained from Sept 2007 until Core Strategy of LDF in place	November 1998	The list of saved policies will be reviewed once the New Local Plan is in place	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision must indicate compliance with the Local Plan.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Enables local communities to know how and when they will be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents and how they will be consulted on planning applications.	No	S	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 yearly or earlier if necessary	Jan 2006	February 2014 following consultation on draft in autumn 2013	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision must indicate compliance with the SCI. Each policy document must indicate compliance with the SCI.
New Local Plan (part of the Local Development Framework)	Sets out a strategic policy to direct the pattern of development within Castle Point over the period 2014 – 2029, and the development management policies required to ensure that planning decisions secure this pattern of development.	Yes	S	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	Currently being prepared in accordance with timetable in Local Development Scheme	March 2020 assuming adoption in March 2015	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the New Local Plan once adopted.
Canvey Town Centre Master plan SPD (part of Local Development Framework)	Sets out a plan for the regeneration of Canvey Town Centre that seeks to improve sustainability on Canvey Island generally by providing local residents with a high quality town centre that meets their shopping, leisure and community needs and provides new jobs and homes.	Yes	N	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	January 2010	March 2015 following adoption of New Local Plan	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the Canvey Town Centre Master plan once adopted.
Hadleigh Town Centre Master plan SPD (part of Local Development Framework)	Sets out a plan for the regeneration of Hadleigh Town Centre that seeks to improve sustainability of Hadleigh generally by providing local residents with a high quality town centre that meets their shopping, leisure and community needs and provides new jobs and homes.	Yes	N	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	June 2011	March 2015 following adoption of New Local Plan	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the Hadleigh Town Centre Master plan once adopted.
Developer Contributions SPD (part of the Local Development Framework)	Sets out requirements for the provision of Section 106 Contributions towards affordable housing and other infrastructure requirements related directly to the impacts of development, as part of planning applications.	No	N	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	October 2008	March 2015 following adoption of Community Infrastructure Levy	EMT	Cabinet	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the Developer Contributions SPD.
Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule	Sets out a financial charge applicable to new development proposals in order to pay for local infrastructure improvements. The charge may be varied depending on the class of development. The levy may not be applied to certain developments e.g. Affordable Housing and applications made by Charitable organisations.	No	S	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	3 years or earlier if necessary (market influences will require more regular review)	Currently being prepared in accordance with timetable in Local Development Scheme	March 2018 assuming adoption in March 2015	EMT	Full Council	Each relevant planning decision will trigger a requirement for a CIL payment to be made at the commencement of development.
Essex Vehicle Parking Standards SPD (part of Local Development Framework)	Sets out requirements for the provision of parking for new development proposals.	No	N	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	July 2010	March 2015 following adoption of New Local Plan	EMT	Cabinet	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the Essex Vehicle Parking Standards SPD.

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Residential Design Standards SPD (part of Local Development Framework)	Sets out design requirements for residential development proposals.	No	N	Steve Rogers Head of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	5 years or earlier if necessary	Consultation complete due to be reported to Cabinet in November 2012 for adoption	March 2015 following adoption of New Local Plan	EMT	Cabinet	Each relevant planning decision must have regard to the Residential Design Standards SPD once adopted.
Sub Regional Housing Strategy	Developed, monitored and implemented by LAs and RSLs in the TGSE sub region to ensure delivery of 3 key priorities that are consistent with the regional and national housing agenda: managing future growth, meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, investing in the housing stock. Aims to do this by strong partnership working between the LAs and RSLs in the sub-region and a range of other public, private and voluntary sector agencies.	Yes	L	Wendy Buck Head of Housing and Communities	3 to 5 yearly cycle 2012 strategy issued as interim due to changing requirements from Localism Act.	April 2012	April 2015	TGSE Housing Group	TGSE Member Group	Action plan monitored on a quarterly basis at the TGSE Housing Group meetings.
Leisure Strategy	Overarching document detailing the needs of the community and how sport and leisure provision can assist in meeting these needs.	Yes	L	Trudie Bragg Head of Environment Community Services Manager	5 yearly	April 2008	April 2013 Work in currently in progress	EMT	Cabinet	New leisure and recreation strategy will incorporate provision of all recreational facilities, playgrounds and leisure facilities provided by the Council. Strategy being developed with support from Sport England. Action plan will be monitored through service planning process/monitoring, reports to Cabinet.
Community Safety Partnership Plan	Achieving a sustainable reduction in crime within the Borough both by tackling crime and by identifying and addressing its causes. Ensuring crime and disorder does not have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. Tackling specific crime and disorder problems and problem areas.	Yes	S	Mel Harris Head of Partnerships & Safer Places	New legislation requires annual reviews Action Plans - Annually	April 2013	April 2014	EMT Through the Castle Point & Rochford Community Safety Partnership (CSP)	Council/Joint LSP Executive	Progress monitored by a number of partners in the CSP. Any hot spots identified result in setting up multi agency groups tasked with problem resolution.

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CORPORATE POLICIES – BUILDING BLOCKS										
Constitution	Describes how the Council does business includes: Procedural rules for access to information; budget and policy framework; overview and scrutiny; financial; officer employment and contracts. Protocols for Planning and the Monitoring Officer. Codes of conduct for Planning matters; Staff and Members.	No	S	Andrew Smith Strategic Director (Corporate Services) & Monitoring Officer	In accordance with the requirements shown in the Council's Constitution and at the request of the Chief Executive.	May 2013	May 2014	Chief Executive / Monitoring Officer	Council	The documents forming the Council's Constitution together set out the key procedures used to conduct the Council's business. As such they form the basis for all internal control processes.
Contract Procedural Rules – see also Constitution	Describes how the Council does business on matters relating to the placing and letting of contracts.	No	S	Fiona Wilson Head of Law	As Constitution. Detailed Procedural Rules bi annually	May 2013	May 2014	CMT	Cabinet	The documents forming the Council's Constitution together set out the key procedures used to conduct the Council's business. As such they form the basis for all internal control processes.
Financial Procedure Rules and Detailed Financial Regulations – see also Constitution	Describes how the Council does business on financial matters.	No	S – Procedure Rules L – Detailed Regulations	Chris Mills Head of Resources	As Constitution Detailed Regulations annually	Update in progress	Sept 2013	CMT	Council Detailed Regulations Delegated	The documents forming the Council's Constitution together set out the key procedures used to conduct the Council's business. As such they form the basis for all internal control processes.
Budget and Policy Framework – see also Constitution	Describes the procedures and principles used by the Council to establish and/or vary a budget and policy framework. To incorporate Financial and Capital Strategy from Feb 2012.	Yes	S	Chris Mills Head of Resources	Annually	Feb 2013	Feb 2014	EMT	Cabinet Council	The documents forming the Council's Constitution together set out the key procedures used to conduct the Council's business. As such they form the basis for all internal control processes.
Equality Strategy including Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes	Describes the way in which the Council deals with equality and diversity in its corporate activities and the delivery of services.	Yes	S	Wendy Buck Head of Housing & Communities	3 Years	July 2010	July 2013 Currently under review	EMT	Cabinet	Operational Management Team & Service Management Teams.
Risk Management (RM) Policy and Strategy	Sets out how the Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">maintain robust risk management arrangements that make a positive contribution towards the achievement of its corporate priorities and objectives and maximise the opportunities to achieve its visionProactively manages key external and internal risks, promoting the principles of effective risk management throughout the organisation.	Yes	L	Linda Everard Head of Internal Audit	Annually in March	March 2010	March 2012	EMT	Audit Committee - challenge Then Cabinet approves	Through quarterly reporting against the RM framework to EMT and Audit Committee. Actions in risk registers monitored quarterly through service plan reporting and updates on the corporate risk register to CMT
Whistleblowing Policy	Sets out the Council's arrangements whereby any serious concerns that employees, workers or contractors have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of Officers or Members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy	Yes	L	Karen Shorter Corporate Fraud Investigations Manager / Linda Everard Head of Internal Audit	Annually in March	March 2013	Mar 2015	EMT	Audit Committee - challenge Then Cabinet approves	Through quarterly reporting against the F&C framework to EMT and Audit Committee.
Fraud and Corruption Policy, Strategy & Prosecution Policy	Sets out the Council's approach to ensuring it as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">appropriate arrangements in place to manage the risk of fraud and corruption well in advance of any occurrence that are in line with relevant good practice guidanceCost effective arrangements in place to identify and investigate any such concerns when they arise.	Yes	L	Karen Shorter Corporate Fraud Investigations Manager / Linda Everard Head of Internal Audit	Annually in March	March 2013	Mar 2015	EMT	Audit Committee - challenge Then Cabinet approves	Through quarterly reporting against the F&C framework to EMT and Audit Committee.
Anti Money Laundering Policy	Sets out the action the Council will take to mitigate the risk that money could be laundered through its systems	Yes	L	Karen Shorter Corporate Fraud Investigations Manager / Linda Everard Head of	Annually in March	March 2013	Mar 2015	EMT	Audit Committee - challenge Then Cabinet approves	Through quarterly reporting against the F&C framework to EMT and Audit Committee.

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				Internal Audit						
Procurement Strategy	Defines the Council's policy objectives, the strategy to deliver these and supporting principles. Procurement is defined as the acquisition of goods, services and construction projects from third parties.	Yes	L	Chris Mills Head of Resources	Bi-annually	April 2012	April 2014	CMT	Cabinet	Through setting and monitoring performance targets and by measuring performance against Action Plan milestones.
VFM Strategy	How we will achieve VFM by: Making improvements across the board, but targeting those who rely on our services the most. Embracing diversity and equality principles in all our actions. Being a customer focussed organisation. Sustaining improvements and planning to meet the needs of our future users.	Yes	L	Chris Mills Head of Resources	3 yearly	Sept 2011	Oct 2014	CMT	Cabinet	Through monitoring performance against Action Plan targets.
Data Quality Strategy	How we ensure that the decisions we take are based on reliable, accurate and timely information and that the data we publish to monitor our performance reflects accurately what is actually happening "on the ground". Key operational aspects incorporated into 'How it Works' Guidance.	No	L	Craig Watts Head of performance and service support	periodically	March 2009	November 2013	EMT	Cabinet	Internal Audit test the quality of data used for performance indicators. Weaknesses are reported to EMT.
RIPA Policy Statement	To reduce the risk of breaching human rights and to assist staff involved in interception and surveillance activity in complying with the requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000.	No	S	Fiona Wilson Head of Law	Annually	May 2013	May 2014	CMT	Cabinet	Review of warrants – action plan implemented following RIPA Inspection in July 2010 and report received & recommendations followed.
Disposal of Council Owned Land	Sets the policies, principles and procedures to be followed when considering whether Council owned land should be disposed of or retained for service provision.	No	L	Fiona Wilson Head of Law	Annually as part of the Asset Management Plan	June 2013	June 2014	CMT	Cabinet	Through OMT and review of files by Legal prior to sale.
Health & Safety Policy Statement and Strategy	This is a declaration of the Council's intent to establish a safe and healthy working environment for all of its undertakings.	Yes	S	Jim Hillier Health & Safety Manager	Annually	March 2013	March 2014	EMT	CMT Audit Committee - challenge	Health and Safety Consultation process, Health and Safety Executive inspections, Internal and external audit. Reviewed by Health and Safety Manager/Head of Audit.
Health and Safety Consultation	Outlines process for consultation with staff on health and safety issues	Yes	S	Jim Hillier Health & Safety Manager	Annually	March 2013	March 2014	EMT	CMT Audit Committee - challenge	Health and Safety Consultation process, Health and Safety Executive inspections, Internal and external audit. Reviewed by Health and Safety Manager/Head of Audit.
Partnership Strategy	Outlines the process for monitoring partnerships undertaken by the Council	No	L	Mel Harris Head of Partnerships and Safer Places	Periodically	March 2009	March 2014	EMT	LSP Executive	By monitoring progress against targets in Service Plan.
Treasury Management and Investment Strategies	Covers the management of the Council's cash flows, its banking, borrowing and investment activities; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.	Yes	S	Chris Mills Head of Resources	Annually	Feb 2013	Feb 2014	EMT	Cabinet Council	Regular monitoring by Financial Services Manager. Reports to Cabinet regarding compliance with Prudential Indicators. Report to Council on performance for preceding year.
Information and Communication Strategy (ICT)	This ensures that the IT systems and infrastructures support the business objectives. It covers the planning of new systems, their procurement, and the management and control of implemented systems. It sets out the organisation and management structures, and where responsibilities lie.	No	L	Barrie Delf IT Services Manager	4 yearly (or earlier if major change)	March 2009	December 2013	CMT		Monitoring of contract with outsourced provider. Post Implementation Reviews. Change Control Notice procedure.
Asset Management Plan	Describes how the Council maintains its assets (land and buildings) in a condition that is fit for the purpose of delivering services to the community and how it will respond to any changes in the way assets need to be used to provide services.	Yes	L	Jarl Jansen Facilities & Asset Manager	Annually by end of March each year. Possible move to bi-annual refresh	March 2013	March 2014	EMT	Cabinet	Progress in action plan implementation monitored by; EMT, Cabinet and OMT. Significant changes will be reported to Cabinet.
Business Continuity Plan	Generic guidance on how the Council will deal with a major corporate incident which restricts the normal day-to-day running of its business.	Yes	S	Jarl Jansen Facilities & Asset Manager	Bi -annual refresh with interim updates for major changes.	Jan 2012	March 2014	EMT	Cabinet	Incidents and plan implementation/development monitored by the Strategic Director (Civil Contingencies Co-ordinator)

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Emergency Plan	Generic guidance on the roles and responsibilities, processes and procedures for dealing with an emergency that may affect the Borough of Castle Point.	No	S	Jarl Jansen Facilities & Asset Manager	Bi-annual refresh with interim updates for major changes.	November 2012	November 2014	EMT	Cabinet	Incidents and plan implementation/development monitored by the Strategic Director (Civil Contingencies Co-ordinator)
Corporate Debt Management Policy	Establishes policies on the billing, collection and recovery of monies due to the Council.	No	L	Wendy Buck Head of Housing and Communities	5 Years	January 2009	Process & requirement under review	CMT	Cabinet	Procedures built into computer systems. Reviews of cases e.g. on write off. Normal day-to-day staff management.
Enforcement Policy	To secure effective compliance with legislation while minimising the burden to the Council, to citizens and to businesses. Sets framework for departmental enforcement policies.	No	L	Wendy Buck Head of Housing and Communities	5 Years	January 2009	Process & requirement under review	CMT	Cabinet	Through Operational Management Team
HR Strategy	Establishes workforce planning to ensure adequate staff resources and succession planning. Aims to attract and retain high calibre candidates for employment. Train and develop staff to maximise their potential Offer equality of opportunity to all staff and recognise the benefits of diversity.	Yes – within Workforce Plan	L	Barbara Cree HR Manager	Annually	March 2013	March 2014	EMT	Cabinet	Through the workforce plan.
Project Management Strategy	Defines the Council's Project Management objectives and the principles used in the delivery of the Council's projects. Key operational aspects to be incorporated into 'How it Works' Guidance.	No	L	Craig Watts Head of performance and service support	Periodically	Jan 2010	March 2014	CMT	Cabinet	Through EMT
Communication Strategy	Shows how the Council will work closely with other organisations in the borough to achieve a free flow of appropriate information between the Council and its stakeholders, including staff, councillors, residents, businesses, partners and other service users. An appendix to the Customer First Strategy	Yes	L	Ann Horgan Head of Governance	3 years	June 2012	Jun 2015	CMT	Cabinet	Reports on progress to CMT, undertaking surveys and media monitoring exercises.
Customer First Strategy	How the Council aims to serve customers better and reach and serve more people in more ways in more accessible forms, locations and at more convenient times.	Yes	L	Wendy Buck Head of Housing and Communities	5 years	July 2012	2017	CMT	EMT	Through Service Management Teams and Operational Management Team
Consultation Strategy	How the Council aims to carry out effective and comprehensive consultation to enable stakeholders to communicate their views/ opinions on local issues, influencing council decision-making where appropriate.	No	L	Mel Harris Head of Partnerships & Safer Places	In place	Feb 2010	Feb 2015	EMT	Cabinet	Consultation Group formed in each Department.
Complaints Policy	Sets a clear framework so that complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively to ensure that customers have confidence in the way that complaints will be handled. An appendix to the Customer First Strategy	No	L	Ann Horgan Head of Governance	3 yearly	January 2013	January 2015	CMT	Executive Management Team Cabinet	Referrals from Councillors, MPs and the Local Ombudsman. Review by Head of Governance of cases that reach Stage III.

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Financial Update

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

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents the latest position in relation to the General Fund financial forecast for the period 2013/15 and contains the forecast itself at appendix 1.

This report is intended to:

- Provide Cabinet with the latest information on the future predicted cost of the Council's current spending plans.
- Inform Cabinet of performance in respect of the Council's current budget.
- Update Cabinet on developments of a financial nature, which may impact on the Council's financial forecast.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

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

3. Recommendations:

1. That Cabinet note the report.
 2. That Cabinet note the increase in the recommended minimum level of general fund reserves to £2.3m as determined by the Head of Resources and set out in section 8.
-

4. Background & basis of the financial forecast

- 4.1 The Financial Planning Strategy is incorporated within the Policy Framework and Budget Setting report which is approved by Council in February each year. The strategy requires the submission of a financial forecast, enabling the Cabinet to monitor latest estimates of future spending and resources and take appropriate action to ensure that the Council's financial targets are met.
- 4.2 A full five year financial forecast is maintained by the Head of Resources for planning purposes, but due to the uncertainty around future government funding, only years up to and including 2014/15 are reported to Cabinet at the current

time. Once this uncertainty diminishes, reporting of the full five year forecast to Cabinet will resume.

4.3 The forecast shown at appendix 1 is based on the budgets approved by Special Council on 20th February 2013, updated for subsequent necessary changes, reported to Cabinet in earlier Financial Update Reports (July 2013) and/or identified within section 5 of this report. The forecast shows:

- Line 7 – A balanced budget for the current financial year meaning that the Council is not reliant on the identification of savings or use of general reserves to support ongoing expenditure.
- Line 3 – That for years 2014/15 (and beyond) there is a need to identify cashable efficiency savings in order to balance the budget and maintain reserves at the minimum level recommended by the Head of Resources (£2m – see section 8 below).
- Line 28 – A Council Tax increase of **1.96%** for 2013/14 and an assumption of a **2%** increase for 2014/15. **2%** is adopted throughout the financial forecast and reflects the cap on council tax increases imposed by Government.
- Line 17 – General Reserves forecast at around **£3.2m** at the end of 2013/14.

4.4 Detailed estimates have been produced for the years shown, based on the level of external funding allocated to the Council. The Council's financial plan beyond that reported here assumes further reductions in external funding.

5. Changes to approved budgets

5.1 There are no new items to report under this section of the report.

6. Revenue/Capital Budgets “on-watch”

6.1 The following table highlights revenue or capital budgets, HRA or general fund, which are identified by the Head of Resources as “on-watch”. This term refers to expenditure and income budgets where there is reason to believe that performance may not meet expectations and where the impact on the Council's overall financial plan is likely to be material.

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

Description	Predicted year end budget variance £	Background and action being taken
Other Car Parks - Fees & Charges	55k	The financial plan currently assumes implementation of a new charging structure from summer 2013. A delay in implementation may result in the need to delay aspects of the car park refurbishment programme. The variance assumes an implementation delay of 6 months until Jan 2014.

7. Key Financial Developments

Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 & 2015/16 – Technical Consultation

- 7.1 Following the spending review 2013, this consultation seeks views on a range of detailed and technical issues concerning the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlements. The deadline for response is 2nd October 2013. Broadly the proposals contained within the consultation, if adopted, may result in a further reduction in Revenue Support Grant of up to **£400k** for 2015/16 (on-going) and a reduction in funds received through the New Homes Bonus scheme of up to **£200k** for 2015/16 ongoing.
- 7.2 Implications arising from the outcome of the consultation will be reflected in the Council's financial forecast as part of the 2014/15 budget setting process.

Business Rates Pooling

- 7.3 Authorities across Essex, supported by LGFutures, are collaborating on a piece of work which is intended to identify a scheme which will result in significant funds being retained locally, rather than being lost to the central (government) pool. A number of configurations for pool membership may be viable.
- 7.4 This work is being overseen by the Essex Strategic Leaders & Finance Officers Group (ESLF) and was the subject of a report to Cabinet in July 2013.
- 7.5 Once determined, pooling proposals must be submitted to DCLG by 31st October 2013.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme LCTSS

- 7.6 Subject to a separate report on this agenda relating to the proposed scheme for 2014/15.

Council Tax Technical Changes

- 7.7 Subject to a separate report to the October meeting of Cabinet. Potential to revise a number of existing Council Tax discounts for implementation from 1st April 2014.

Efficiency work programme 2013/14

- 7.8 The Council has a target to identify ongoing financial efficiencies to the value of **£1m**, in order to close the budget gap predicted for 2014/15 and contribute to balancing the budget in years 2015/16 and beyond.
- 7.9 A programme of work is already in place to support delivery of the target and is progressing well.

8. Financial Risk Factors

- 8.1 The budget report presented to the Cabinet meeting on 20th February and Special Council on the same night indicated some risk areas that the Cabinet

should be mindful of until the position and risk relating to each has been clarified. These are shown in the table below together with three new risks where the financial and/or operational impact on the authority is not yet known.

Description	Explanation
Insurance Related Risks	<p>Provision has been made within 2012/13 out-turn and the 2013/14 budget for the residual liability under a Scheme of Arrangement (SoA) entered into in 1994 following the demise of the Municipal Mutual Insurance Company.</p> <p>The Council has been notified that the SoA has been triggered but has not yet been requested to make payment.</p> <p>Other potential liabilities arising from insurance claims which may arise.</p>
Equal Pay Review	A full job evaluation exercise has not been carried out. No equal pay claims have been received by the Council.
<p>Potential for incurrence of legal costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning appeals & Associated costs - Property searches litigation 	<p>The Council anticipates an increase in the number of planning applications submitted. There is potential for a proportion of these applications not to be approved which may result in planning appeals and the incurrence of associated legal costs and expenses.</p> <p>Based on planning applications likely to come forward, the Council's financial exposure is potentially £1.3m. Provision has not been made within the financial forecast for these costs.</p> <p>The recommended level of minimum reserves has been adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>The outcome of litigation in relation to property searches – subject to strict confidentiality.</p>
Local Council Tax Support Scheme	<p>This is the first year of the locally determined, replacement scheme for Council Tax Benefits, which sees all financial risk (arising from changes in caseload) falling to the Borough Council and its precepting organisations (excluding the Town Council).</p> <p>As a result of the introduction of the scheme, a significant number of residents are required to pay a council tax bill, in whole or in part, for the first time.</p>
Welfare Reforms	Anticipated to result in a change in demand for some council services.
Universal Credit	Centralisation of the administration and payment of benefit from 2014 to the DWP. The Borough Council is required to support the process of implementation and work in partnership with the DWP when the new arrangement is in place. Precise detail regarding the Council's involvement is

	<p>unknown.</p> <p>The Council has also seen a reduction in Benefits Administration Grant from Central Government – implying an expectation that the Council will reduce its resources.</p>
New Homes Bonus	<p>SR13 announced that £400m from the New Homes Bonus will be pooled within Local Enterprise Partnership areas to support strategic housing and economic development priorities. The Government plans to consult on the mechanism for requiring pooling which is intended to take effect from 2015/16.</p> <p>At the current time this Council, along with many others, uses funding from this source to support General Fund services. A requirement to pool may therefore mean a reduction in funding allocated direct to the Council.</p>

- 8.2 Based on the information above, the minimum level of general fund reserves to be maintained by the Council, as recommended by the s151 Officer, is revised from to **£1.1m** to **£2.3m**.

9. **Annual Statement of Accounts 2012/13**

The audit of the closure process for the last financial year has largely been completed and our External Auditors report is awaited. There were no issues of significance identified during the audit.

10. **Corporate Implications**

a) **Legal implications**

This report is presented by me in my role as “section 151 officer” – the officer appointed to have responsibility for the Council’s financial administration. It is my duty to ensure that the Council is regularly informed and updated on these matters.

b) **Human Resources and equality implications**

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

c) **Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

Risk factors inherent in the forecast are set out above.

Report Author: Chris Mills, Head of Resources

Background Papers:

- Policy Framework & Budget Setting 2013/14, incorporating the Financial Planning Strategy.
- Budget monitoring statements for the period April to July 2013.
- Government spending round 2013 (HM Treasury).
- Financial Update to Cabinet 17th July 2013.
- Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 & 2015/16 consultation.

Medium term financial forecast		2013/14	2014/15	Notes
Ref		£'000s	£'000s	
	Current policies and service plans			
1	Detailed estimates	14,400	12,335	Draft budgets supported by detailed workings
2	Budgets rolled forward from previous financial year	1,448		
3	Savings and/or additional revenue income/grant funding to be identified		(513)	Required in order to deliver a balanced budget and maintain reserves at the minimum level recommended
4	Changes to base since budget set in Feb 2013	(49)	(259)	
5	Total net expenditure	15,799	11,563	
6	Contribution to/(from) Earmarked reserves	(3,296)	(1)	Includes application of reserves against backlog maintenance and movement between years as well as Waterside Farm refurbishment project
7	Contribution to/(from) General reserves	180	0	A balanced budget was set for 2013/14. See also line 3
8	Net Budget before funding	12,683	11,562	
9	Collection Fund adjustment	(58)		
10	Capital and other grants and contributions	(1,562)	(1,116)	
11	New Homes Bonus (NHB)	(533)	(533)	
12	Council Tax support grant 2011/12 & 2012/13	(184)	(184)	Funding in respect of Council Tax freeze for 2011/12 (4 years)
13	Formula Grant & Retained Business Rates	(3,775)	(3,027)	
14	Council Tax Requirement	6,571	6,702	As notified for 2013/14 & 2014/15. Further reductions anticipated ongoing.
	Reserves	£'000s	£'000s	
15	General Reserves at start of year	3,021	3,201	
16	Contribution (to)/from General Fund	180	0	
17	General Reserves at year end	3,201	3,201	Minimum year end balance for General Reserves is £2.3m
18	Earmarked reserves at start of year	4,246	24	
19	Contribution (to)/from General Fund	(3,296)	(1)	The identification of savings and/or additional revenue income will be necessary in order to deliver a balanced budget and maintain reserves at or above the minimum recommended level, in years 2014/15 and beyond
20	Leaders priority fund	(14)		
21	VAT - partial exemption	(425)		
22	Grants received	(85)		
23	Priority initiatives fund	(346)		General Reserves will be applied in years where the budget is not balanced
24	Local Development Scheme/Local Plan	(56)		
25	Earmarked reserves at year end	24	23	
	Council Tax			
26	Permitted yield	6,571	6,702	
27	Tax at band D	234.09	238.77	Based on an increase of 1.96% in 2013/14 and target increases of approximately 2% in future years. The tax at band D does not include the amount charged by Canvey Island Town Council
28	Increase	1.96%	2.00%	

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15 - Update

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

1. Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet in relation to the preparation of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

- **Sound and strategic financial management - Improving the Council**

3. Recommendation

- 1. That the contents of the report are noted.**

4. Background Information

4.1 The former Council Tax Benefits scheme was replaced by a discretionary, Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) from 1st April 2013, following the announcement by Government in the 2010 spending review that support for Council Tax would be localised. At the same time, the level of funding provided by government was reduced nationally by an average of **10%** which translated locally to a reduction of **15%**.

4.2 In December 2012, Council approved the local scheme for Castle Point. The scheme was designed to be cost neutral and based largely on an Essex wide framework developed over the course of the preceding year by Essex Benefit and Finance Officers working together.

5. Development of local scheme for 2014/15

5.1 It is necessary for the Council to approve future year's schemes before 31st January each year, even if no changes have been made.

5.2 With this in mind, the Council is currently consulting with residents and other interested parties, on a range of possible changes to the existing scheme, some of which are based on experience gained during the first year of operation and some of which may be necessary for the Council to consider should there be any further reduction in government funding.

5.3 Options included within the consultation include:

- Whether the minimum % of the Council Tax bill which all Working Age Tax Payers are currently required to pay should be increased from 30%.
- Whether the level of support should be reduced further such that anyone of working age that lives in a property with a Council Tax Band of D, E, F, G, or H, will have their support calculated as if their property was in band C.
- Whether a minimum award value per week should be introduced such that any households otherwise entitled to less than that minimum award per week would no longer be eligible for support.
- Whether people who can't work due to sickness or disability should be protected from these proposed changes to the scheme.
- Whether people who can't work because they provide care for a sick or disabled relative should be protected from some or all of the above changes to the scheme.

5.4 Annexe A sets out the key aspects of the current scheme, as approved by Council in December 2012.

6. **Consultation**

6.1 Before final approval of the scheme, councils are required to consult with:

- Major precepting authorities (County, Police, Fire)
- The public
- Relevant stakeholder groups e.g. CAB, voluntary bodies

6.2 ECC finance officers have attended pan-Essex benefit managers meetings and other related meetings. Despite being invited, the Police and Fire authorities have not attended any of the meetings but they have received the minutes and documents from each and are therefore considered engaged in consultation.

6.3 The legal requirement for consultation has been reduced to a minimum period of 6 weeks. The consultation period for Castle Point Borough Council will therefore span 6 weeks from Friday 30th August 2013 until Thursday 10th October 2013.

6.4 At the end of this period responses will be collated and considered before recommendations for the final Scheme are presented to Cabinet on 20 November 2013 and Full Council on 11 December 2013.

- 6.5 A brief summary of the current scheme and proposed changes for 2014/15 will be published on the CPBC website together with links to the on-line survey (hosted and developed by ECC). Alternative formats of the survey will be available on request and a supply of paper copies will be made available at each of the four local libraries.
- 6.6 A direct mail shot to all benefit claimants will not be undertaken this year although an information flyer will be included with all Council Tax bills and letters posted out during the consultation period.
- 6.7 In addition the survey will be publicised via Twitter feeds and a Press Release will be issued to the local press.
- 6.8 Partners from the Benefit Information Network and Local Strategic Partnership groups will be invited and encouraged to take part in the survey and publicize it to their customers.

7. Implications for claimants and the Council

- 7.1 Any further reduction in the scheme will have a material impact on claimants and the Council will seek to avoid this as far as possible. The requirement to pay a bill which previously had been offset, either partially or completely by benefit, may lead to collection difficulties and eventually result in court action and/or increased bad debts for the Council and pre-cepting organisations.
- 7.2 A reduction in Council Tax discount may further compound any existing financial and/or welfare difficulties which may in turn result in other negative outcomes including threat of homelessness.
- 7.3 Combined impact of changes to Council Tax funding and welfare reforms will increase demand for certain services at district and county level as well as the third sector.

8. Corporate Implications

a. Financial Implications

The reduced tax yield arising directly from the council tax support scheme discount is compensated for by a government grant. With the exception of the Town Council, each pre-cepting organisation receives their equivalent grant directly. The offset is not precise but the Council has designed the current local scheme to ensure that as far as possible, and based on existing caseload data, it is cost neutral. There is no proposal to change this objective.

From 2014/15 the amount of grant allocated to each respective organisation is not identifiable within their overall grant funding allocation. It therefore falls to individual local authorities to determine the level of government grant that they wish to allocate to the local scheme. For 2014/15 most organisations have assumed a continuation of funding for the scheme, at the level allocated for 2013/14.

Financial implications over and above the target cost of the scheme, positive or negative, would be shared with the major pre-cepting organisations.

There is also an impact on the Town Council's tax base and yield. They too receive a grant but early estimates indicated that the amount allocated by government would not be sufficient to bridge their budget gap. The Head of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Policy Resources and Performance Cllr Stanley, agreed that as a gesture of goodwill, the Borough Council would make good the funding shortfall for the Town Council, for the first year of the new scheme. The cost of the arrangement to the Borough Council was approximately **£11k** in 2013/14.

The total cost of the Council Tax discounts scheme for 2013/14 is **£6.5m**, of which approximately **£1m** falls to the Borough Council.

b. Legal Implications

The Local Government Finance Bill made provision for local authorities to implement a council tax reduction scheme and placed responsibility on the billing authority.

c. Human resources/equality/human rights

Resourcing Implications

Once Universal Credit is introduced in October 2013 staff and customers will be working with 4 benefit schemes, compared to the 2 previously in operation. This will not only make the benefits system more complex for customers to understand and staff to administer but will potentially add extra burdens to customer service staff as enquiries increase. It is therefore desirable to keep changes to the scheme for year two, to a minimal.

Equality Impact Assessments

Impact assessments have been undertaken at a high level by DCLG/DWP and are published on their websites.

Stage 1 & 2 Equality Impact Assessment were undertaken as part of the original scheme design and will be revisited as part of the process for 2014/15.

Exceptional hardship policy

The scheme includes a small sum to cover exceptional hardship cases in line with a policy approved by Council in December 2012.

The creation of an Exceptional Hardship Fund meets the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 by recognising the importance of protecting the most vulnerable members in our communities and the impact of the changes imposed by the removal of Council Tax Benefit.

The Policy provides short term help in cases of extreme financial hardship - it is not intended to support a lifestyle or lifestyle choice but to provide financial assistance where applicants are suffering 'hardship beyond that which would normally be suffered'.

Applicants are required to undertake specific actions to improve their long term financial situation, such as taking up assistance to enable them to manage their finances more effectively, minimising Council Tax liability by ensuring all discounts, exemptions, and reductions are correctly claimed, maximising their income by taking up other welfare benefits to which they are correctly entitled, and reducing non-essential expenditure.

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

The local scheme needs to be finalised and consulted upon by the end of January 2014. The revised scheme must be operational from 1st April 2014.

Key milestones from this point going forward are as follows:

Milestone	Timeframe	Purpose
Cabinet Report	18.09.2013	Update
Formal Public/Stakeholder Consultation	August 13 – Oct 13	Pre-cepting organisations & Residents
Report to Cabinet	13.11.2013	Final scheme for consideration
Grant Published	Dec 13 – Feb 14	
Report to Council	11.12.2013	Final scheme for approval
Final Scheme in place	31.01.2014	Adoption and implementation
Schemes in operation	01.04.2014	Operation

A Castle Point specific risk register has been compiled and is reviewed on a monthly basis.

Appendix A – Key Aspects of Current Scheme

Report Author:

Chris Mills – Head of Resources

Edwina Mosuro – Community Support Manager

Key Aspects of Current Scheme

The following aspects of the scheme for Castle Point are consistent with principles adopted Essex wide:

- 1 The final scheme is intended to be cost neutral meaning that the cost to the Council and each pre-cepting authority will not exceed the funding notified by central government.
- 2 As directed by central government, all pensioners are treated as protected, meaning that the financial impact of changes will fall on working age households.
- 3 The local support scheme will be means tested for 2013/14, using many of the principles of the current Council Tax Benefit scheme which will enable protection for working age vulnerable groups and specific protection for households with children and/or disabilities.
- 4 The local scheme will incentivise work by disregarding £25 per week of earned income.
- 5 Child benefit will not be disregarded in the calculation of Local Council Tax Support.
- 6 Claims for Local Council Tax Support will not be back dated.
- 7 The local scheme will, as far as possible, allow for expected growth in demand and will make the new scheme easy to claim and administer.
- 8 The current Second Adult Rebate scheme will not be included in the scheme for working age claimants. Second Adult rebate is benefit which may be awarded where a single Council Tax payer has an adult friend or relative who lives with them but that second adult has a low income.
- 9 The savings limit will be reduced from £16,000 to £6,000, meaning that claimants with capital to a value exceeding £6,000 will not be entitled to Local Council Tax Support.
- 10 Non-Dependant deductions will not be included in the scheme for working age claimants. Non Dependant deductions are currently made from council tax benefit where the claimant has another adult, who is not their partner, living in their household.
- 11 In conjunction with the Council's 'Local War Pensioner' scheme incomes received in respect of War Pensions for disablement or bereavement will continue to be fully disregarded when calculating support (see section 8 below).
- 12 Support will be capped, by restriction to Council Tax band D and with a restriction to 70% of liability meaning that all working age Council Tax Payers will be required to pay a minimum of 30% of their weekly council tax bill. (percentages and band are specific to CPBC local scheme).

- 13 There will be minor changes to the treatment of 'changes in circumstances' to remove the requirement to calculate and award 'underlying entitlement' when overpayments occur, either due to a failure to report a change in circumstance or fraud.

The full policy detailing the scheme for working age claimants is some 140 pages in length and very technical. It has not been reproduced as part of this report.

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Corporate Performance Scorecard Quarter 1 2013/14

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dick - Responding to Challenge

1. Purpose of Report

To set out the cumulative performance figures for the Corporate Performance Scorecard for quarter 1, 1st April 2013 to 30th June 2013.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

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

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees the inclusion of two further indicators set out in section 4.1 of the report for future monitoring and considers any performance issues set out in section 5 of this report and directs officers accordingly.

4. Background

4.1 The indicators for the corporate performance scorecard for 2013/14 were discussed and approved by Cabinet in July. During the discussion it was also considered that it would be appropriate for an additional indicator to assess the effectiveness of grass verge cutting, and it is proposed to include two additional indicators in future scorecard reports as follows:

- Number of Rectification Notices served in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting;**
- Number of Rectification Notices served in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting rectified within 72 hours**

4.2 The two indicators above as well as two further indicators relating to flytipping and street cleanliness agreed by cabinet in July cannot be reported for this first quarter period. This is due to the mobilisation of the new contract with Pinnacle and associated introduction of a new performance management regime with the new indicators set as part of the contract. However, the mobilisation period was

completed at the end of August and monitoring of these indicators will be reported to Cabinet effective from the 1st September.

- 4.3 The targets for Crime and Anti-Social behaviour have also been recently reviewed in light of the Police and Crime Commissioner's revised targets for crime and anti-social behaviour figures across Essex. The new target is to not exceed last year's figure or where possible reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, but there is no specific figure for reduction. This amendment has been incorporated into the performance summary.

5. Report

5.1 Summary of performance

- 5.1.1 The performance summary in Appendix 1 sets out the performance achieved by the Council against the measures in the scorecard. Performance is set out against the new proposed priorities in the draft corporate plan as follows:

Public Health and Wellbeing

The Council has continued to work well with the Police and other agencies to reduce crime across the Borough. Work has been successful in reducing crime although there has been small increase in antisocial behaviour. The number of incidents of crime recorded for the first quarter represents a decrease of 138 incidents (15.63%) when compared to the same period in the previous year, a significant reduction. Incidents of anti-social behaviour increased slightly to by 34 incidents (6.9%) when compared to the previous year. The Community Safety Partnership will continue to work to monitor crime and anti-social incidents and target hotspot areas.

Food hygiene standards across the Borough as measured by the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme continues to perform well as 375 of the 409 establishments registered (92%) scored at least 3 points which indicates broad compliance with food hygiene law.

Environment

Household waste recycled is currently exceeding target and the annual target of 30% waste is expected to be met. The Green Waste (garden and food waste) collection rate at the end of quarter 1 at 28% is less than targeted. However, the amount of waste collected is affected by seasonal factors and this year saw a cold spring which affects seasonal growth and composting.

Over half (57%) of the household waste collected continues to be recycled or composted rather than being sent to landfill.

Transforming our Community

Tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance at 73% satisfaction is below the target of 80%. Whilst the repair service will address individual concerns as they arise, further examination of trends and corrective action is being reviewed.

The contractor performance for voids completion did not achieve target. Several voids were just over the deadline date and further work has already been undertaken to improve working procedures. Performance is therefore expected to improve.

The percentage of planning applications processed within target times is significantly of target. A review of the service is currently in progress and actions have been taken to reduce the backlog of cases by re-directing resources and obtaining temporary support. Performance in the future is expected to improve and will be closely monitored.

Efficient and Effective Customer Services

The Council's First Contact team has again been very successful in limiting the number of calls that they have to transfer to the back office to be dealt with; just 1,504 of the 21,887 calls received transferred.

5.1.2 Further commentary on performance is set out in the table in Appendix 1. .

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

Good performance on some indicators can lead to reduced costs (e.g. higher recycling leads to a reduction in payments for sending waste to landfill)

b. Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications at this stage.

c. Human resources and equality

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




d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

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

7. Background Papers:

None

Report Author: Craig Watts ext. 2419 crwatts@castlepoint.gov.uk

Key	
	More than relative 10% below
	Less than relative 10% below
	On or above target



Appendix 1


Corporate Scorecard 2013/14 (Public Health & Wellbeing)

Quarter 1: 1st April 2013 to 30th June 2013



Note: All performance values are cumulative (i.e. from 1st April to end of June/September/December/March) unless otherwise stated

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 Value	Target	Status	Comments
PHW1 Number of incidents of overall crime Service Manager: Head of Partnerships & Safer Places	745	Q1 Target 883 or less Annual Target 3,311 or less		The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has recently set its action plans for the year, which have been reviewed in light of the Police and Crime Commissioner's revised targets for crime and anti-social behaviour figures across Essex. The new target is to not exceed last year's figure or where possible reduce levels of crime, but there is no specific figure for reduction. This performance indicator is, at this stage of the year, comfortably on target.
PHW2 Number of incidents of Antisocial Behaviour Service Manager: Head of Partnerships & Safer Places	526	Q1 Target 492 or less Annual Target 1,882 or less		The target set by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for reducing the number of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has also been revised in light of the Police and Crime Commissioner's requirement to not exceed last year's figure or where possible reduce levels of crime. The number of recorded cases of anti-social behaviour at the end of quarter 1 saw a slight increase when compared with the same period in 2012/13.



PI Code & Short Name	Q1 Value	Target	Status	Comments
PHW3: Percentage of inspected food premises that are awarded a score of at least 3 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Service Manager: Environmental Health Operational Manager	91.7%	Annual Target 90%		<p>Of the 409 premises registered on the scheme, 375 have been awarded a score of at least 3 which indicates broad compliance with food hygiene law.</p> <p>The remaining 24 premises which do not meet this standard are categorized in terms of risk and would normally be subject to active intervention to ensure compliance with regulatory standards.</p>

Corporate Scorecard 2013/14 (Environment)

Quarter 1: 1st April 2013 to 30th June 2013



Note: All performance values are cumulative (i.e. from 1st April to end of June/September/December/March) unless otherwise stated

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 Value	Target	Status	Comments
ENV 3 Percentage of Household Waste Recycled Service Manager: Operational Services Manager	28.9%	Q1 Target 28% Annual Target 30%		<p>The recycling rate at the end of quarter 1 2013/14 was 28.913% of all household waste collected.</p> <p>The 2013/14 annual target for household waste recycling is 30% which on the basis of performance so far this year (and projected performance based on previous years) is likely to be met.</p> <p>The Council has set itself a combined target for recycling and composting (including food waste) of 56%.</p>
ENV 4 % of Household Waste Composted (including food waste) Service Manager: Operational Services Manager	28.2%	Q1 Target 32% Annual Target 26%		<p>The Green Waste (garden and food waste) collection rate at the end of quarter 1 2013/14 28.2% was composted. The amount of waste collected is affected by seasonal factors and this year saw a cold spring which affects seasonal growth and composting.</p> <p>It is nevertheless envisaged that the combined target for recycling and composting will still be met.</p>

Corporate Scorecard 2013/14 (Transforming our Community)

Quarter 1: 1st April 2013 to 30th June 2013



Note: All performance values are cumulative (i.e. from 1st April to end of June/September/December/March) unless otherwise stated


PI Code & Short Name	Q1 Value	Target	Status	Comments
TC1 Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance. Service Manager: Tenancy Services Manager	73%	80%		This reflects reactive repairs only, & encompasses a variety of types of repairs (ie all trades, as well as including emergency, urgent & routine repairs). The Housing service is examining the detail of the issues to elicit any opportunities to improve. The survey also found that 94% of tenants believed they were dealt with professionally by Castle Point Borough Council staff.
TC2: Percentage of Voids completed within target time. Service Manager: Tenancy Services Manager	79.2%	95%		Some issues arose in the first quarter with the contractor's performance. There were 24 voids in total & 19 were returned within the expected time frame or earlier. Of the remaining 5, one was a day late, two were 2 days late and two were 3 days late. Performance is monitored monthly & issues were identified that have aided improvement, such as clarification of procedures when additional work is required to complete the void. Performance is expected to improve.

TC3: Percentage of planning applications processed within target time limits for major, minor and other applications Service Manager: Development Control Manager	0%	Major 70%		<p>The Development Control Service was dealing with a considerable backlog of work during this period, created by the need to service a significant planning inquiry in later part of 2012, and the need to re-appoint staff to vacant posts.</p> <p>Action has been taken to reduce the backlog and improve performance by re-assessing process and procedures, by temporarily redirecting resources from planning policy and by engaging temporary support.</p>
	21.9%	Minor 65%		
	21.5%	Other 80%		

Corporate Scorecard 2013/14 (Efficient & Effective Customer Services)



Note: All performance values are cumulative (i.e. from 1st April to end of June/September/December/March) unless otherwise stated

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 Value	Target	Status	Comments
Percentage of calls taken from customers by First Contact that are dealt with without the need to transfer to the back office Service Manager: Community Support Manager	93%	Annual Target 92%		In the first quarter, 21887 calls were received across the two First Contact teams with just 1504 transferred to the back office.

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Councillor and Community Meetings

Cabinet Member: Councillor Isaacs – Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities

1. Purpose of Report

To brief Cabinet on the findings made following a review of the arrangements for Councillor meetings with the community.

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

The report links to the Council priority of Improving the Council.

3. Recommendation

To approve the arrangements for a trial of the Councillor meetings with the Community.

4. Background

For many years the Councillor meetings with the community have taken the form of Neighbourhood forums or meetings or latterly Community Liaison Group meetings. Efforts to revise the format to encourage greater interest and public participation have not been effective. It has proved difficult to attract and retain public interest.

At the Annual meeting this year it was agreed to review the arrangements for community engagement.

The Cabinet Member has met over the summer with colleagues from each neighbourhood area to review the arrangements.

Members recognised that current arrangements needed to change and be more flexible.

Members felt there was merit in a more informal format in the style of 'meet your councillors drop in sessions'. A Number of wards are already operating

such sessions or councillor surgeries (Hadleigh and Canvey Members) with St Georges Ward Councillors to start in October.

Members also suggested that there should be more flexibility both with regard to venue and timing. It was suggested that the Regeneration Shop in the Knightswick Centre could be used during busy periods as a drop in venue.

Although Members acknowledged there were occasions where formal community meetings are appropriate for example where the meeting is being used as a method of consulting with residents. In these cases Members were of the view that it would be appropriate for the meeting to be structured with a formal agenda and a Chairman appointed to manage the business at the meeting. It was also felt that there would need to be two meetings held on Canvey on these occasions.

Generally Members felt that greater efforts should be made to promote the meetings both with partner organisations and the community. Members indicated that Councillors should undertake leaflet drops.

5. Proposals

Having reflected on Members views the following proposals are put forward for consideration:

- It is proposed that the Autumn round should be run on trial basis
- The meetings are to adopt a flexible approach with Councillors taking ownership of the meetings consequently:
 - The format of the meeting to be an informal drop in -‘Meet your Councillor’ session facilitated by one of the Ward Members who will be nominated by colleagues to act as a Master of Ceremonies or Key Member Facilitator – greeting residents and directing them to colleague Ward Councillors .
 - Residents will have the opportunity to chat informally with Ward Councillors
 - Ward Councillors will take up any matters raised by residents after the meeting with the appropriate Head of Service or partner organisation.
 - Should a common theme emerge ;the Master of Ceremonies could facilitate a discussion
- Partner organisations such as the Police; Essex County Council highways will be informed of the dates of the meetings so that they have the opportunity to attend.
- Other than to arrange the venues and promote the meetings it is not proposed that officers will be in attendance at these informal sessions.
- Timing of meetings and venues can also be flexible. So for example the Regeneration shop at Canvey could be used at busy times such as a Saturday morning.
- For the future where more formal briefings or consultation on Council activities are required the meetings will also be used as a formal consultative meeting.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications.

(b) Legal Implications

There are none.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

There are none.

Equality Implications

Legislation requires the Council to consider how the decisions it makes and service it delivers affects people who share different “protected characteristics”. The Council must have “due regard” for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Protected characteristics includes age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The proposal before the Cabinet is in accordance with the legislation for local government.

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

There are none

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

The following dates are proposed for the meetings:

Saturday 28th Canvey Ward Meeting (Regeneration Shop Canvey)

Monday 30th September Hadleigh Ward Meeting

Monday 7th October 2013 Benfleet Ward Meeting

Wednesday 9th October 2013 Thundersley Ward Meeting

8. Background Papers

Minute 8 Annual Council 15.5.2013

Report Author: Ann Horgan Head of Civic Governance

CABINET

18th September 2013

Subject: Update on Safer Communities Initiatives

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

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 from the previous month 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 Community Safety Partnership.

5. Progress and activities

- 5.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has awarded the first round of funding from his New Initiative fund. Bids were invited from across the county and the fund was very much over subscribed. In Castle Point the Association of Voluntary Services Befriending Scheme was successful and was awarded £6653 to provide additional skills for volunteers around safer homes. Bids to the second round of funding are currently being considered by the PCC office.
- 5.2 The CSP was awarded £13,000 from the PCC's office for initiatives around local priorities. These priorities are:
- **Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**
(Identifying and supporting repeat and vulnerable victims, improving perceptions and facilitating local problem solving to facilitate issues).
 - **Reducing Domestic Abuse**
(With a clear emphasis on reducing the number of repeat victims, reducing the number of sexual offences, delivering healthy relationships and personal safety awareness and reducing alcohol related disorder).
 - **Reducing Serious Acquisitive Crime**
(With a clear emphasis on burglary dwellings and theft from motor vehicles and emerging trends).
 - **Reducing Acquisitive Crime**
(With a clear emphasis on shoplifting and burglary other and emerging trends)
 - **Community Engagement**
 - **Reducing Reoffending**
- 5.3 Bids have been invited from local groups, application forms to be returned to the CSP, and the deadline has been extended to September 18th.
- 5.4 The latest Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter is currently being circulated to members of the scheme across the Borough. This includes information for elderly residents regarding Halloween. The CSP will be working with the police to try and ensure the autumn ASB spikes around Halloween and Bonfire night are managed as well as possible.
- 5.5 Figures for the three months of May, June and July 2013 show all reported crime has reduced by 92 incidents compared to 848 recorded in same period last year. Figures for reported ASB show a slight rise for the same three month period – 613 incidents in May, June and July 2013, compared to 552 in the same period last year. However the full rolling year figure August 2012 to July 2013 shows a reduction of 240 reported incidents of ASB compared to the previous year total of 2189.

6. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

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

b. Legal implications

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

c. Human resources and equality implications

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

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

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