



ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 23RD JULY 2014

Book 2 - 2014/2015

Council Enquiries – Ann Horgan, Ext. 2413

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

A **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** of the Borough of Castle Point will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley, on **WEDNESDAY, 23RD JULY, 2014 at 7.30 p.m.**, and all Members of the Council, listed below, are hereby summoned to attend to transact the undermentioned business.

Councillors Mrs J.E.E.Govier (The Worshipful the Mayor), A.G.Sheldon, ,(Deputy Mayor), J. Anderson, L.J. Barrett, A.J.Bayley, D.A. Blackwell, P.M. Burch B.Campagna, S.Cole ,D.T. Cross, W.J.C. Dick, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, Mrs W. Goodwin, P.C. Greig, S.Hart , N.R. Harvey, R.C. Howard, J. Hudson,R.Hurrell, G.I. Isaacs, Mrs.J.King, N.E.Ladzrie,, P.J. May, B.A.Palmer, J.A.Payne, Mrs.J.Payne, A. Partridge, C.G. Riley, W.K.Sharp, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, M.J.A. Tucker, P.E.Varker, A.C.Walter, Mrs L. Wass, Mrs G. Watson N. Watson and B.S.Wood.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

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

Before commencing the business of the meeting, prayers will be offered by the Chaplain.

1. Apologies for absence

2. Members' Interests

3. Minutes

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Ordinary Council held on 26th March 2014 and the Annual Meeting held on 4th June 2014.

4. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor will report at the meeting.

- 5. Questions from members of the public of which Notice has been received**
None have been received.
- 6. Any explanations for urgent decisions taken by Cabinet**
There are none.
- 7. Any references from the Policy and Scrutiny Committees/Regulatory Committees**
There are none.
- 8. Consideration of recommendations from Cabinet: Draft New Local Plan Task & Finish Group**
At the Cabinet meeting on 18.6.2014, Cabinet agreed to refer both the nominations and appointment of the Chairman of the Group to this Council meeting .Council is asked to consider the attached report.
- 9. Local Council Tax Support Scheme Options and Consultation Arrangements**
Council is asked to consider the attached report.
- 10. Corporate Plan**
Council is asked to consider the attached report.
- 11. Report from the Leader of the Council**
The Leader is to report at the meeting.
- 12. Notices of Motion**
See attached report.
- 13. Petitions submitted by Members of the Council of which Notice has been given**
There are none.



ANNUAL COUNCIL MINUTES

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Castle Point held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley on 4th June 2014.

PRESENT: Mrs A.M Iles (Retiring Mayor), Councillors Mrs J.E.E.Govier (The Worshipful the Mayor), A.G.Sheldon,(Deputy Mayor), A. Acott, J. Anderson, L.J.Barrett, A.J.Bayley, D.A. Blackwell, P.M. Burch B.Campagna, S.Cole ,D.T. Cross, W.J.C. Dick, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, Mrs W. Goodwin, P.C. Greig, S.Hart, R.C.Howard, J.Hudson,R.Hurrell, Mrs.J.King, N.E.Ladzrie, P.J.May, B.A.Palmer, Mrs.J.Payne, A. Partridge, C.G. Riley, W.K.Sharp, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, M.J.A. Tucker, P.E.Varker, A.C.Walter, Mrs L. Wass, Mrs G. Watson and N. Watson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N.R. Harvey, G.I. Isaacs and B.S.Wood

1. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest

2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed to the Chamber the five newly elected Councillors: Councillors Bayley, Hudson, Wood, Hurrell, Varker, Acott and Palmer.

3. PERSONAL STATEMENT BY COUNCILLOR NEVILLE WATSON

With the permission of the Mayor, Cllr Neville Watson made a personal statement apologising for his behaviour at the last Council meeting held on 26th March 2014 in particular for offensive language which was picked up on the live webcast of the meeting.

4. ELECTION OF NEW MAYOR

Moved by Councillor Mrs Goodwin seconded by Councillor Walter and -

Resolved – That unless she resigns or becomes disqualified, Councillor Mrs Jackie Govier be elected Mayor to continue in office until her successor becomes entitled to act as Mayor.

Councillor Mrs Govier made her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and left the Chamber to robe and assume the Chain of Office. On returning to the Chamber

the Mayor thanked the Council for her appointment and in dedicating her year of office to the community requested Councillors to co-operate and behave with decorum at Council meetings.

5. VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Moved by Councillor Sharp who paid tribute to the Mayor. The vote was seconded by Councillor Blackwell and Councillor May.

Resolved – That a vote of thanks be accorded to former Councillor Mrs Maryse Iles on her retirement from the office of Mayor.

The Retiring Mayor Mrs. Iles responded on her term of office during the past year.

The Mayor presented Mrs. Iles with her 'Past Mayor's Badge'.

6. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Moved by Councillor Partridge seconded by Councillor Dick and –

Resolved - That unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, Councillor Andrew Sheldon be elected Deputy Mayor to continue in office until his successor becomes entitled to act as Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Sheldon made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked the Council for his appointment.

7. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Moved by Councillor Stanley seconded by Councillor Dick –

Resolved - That unless he resigns, is no longer a Councillor, or is removed from office by resolution of the Council or otherwise becomes disqualified, Councillor Colin Riley be appointed Leader of the Council in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 for the Council year.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Council for his appointment.

8. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Bill Sharp was appointed Deputy to the Leader of the Council having been duly nominated by the Leader of the Council Councillor Riley and seconded by Councillor Smith. Councillor Sharp thanked the Council for his appointment.

9. BOROUGH ELECTIONS – REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

The Council received the following report from the Returning Officer on the result of the Borough Council Elections held on 22nd May 2014:-

(a) Result

The number of votes for each candidate was as follows:-

Appleton Ward	
ADAIR, Elliott Andrew	361
BAYLEY, Alan John	856
MUMFORD, Charles Edward	728

Turnout – 37.2%

Boyce Ward	
BAILLIE, Robert Steven	823
SMITH, Norman George	927
WRIGHT, Anthony Nicholas	261

Turnout – 39%

Cedar Hall Ward	
HUDSON, Alan John	897
MACLEAN, Colin Alan	610
THORNE, Bernard Arthur	310

Turnout – 39.8%

St George's Ward	
COOKE, Joseph Patrick	417
FREEMAN, Pamela Diedre	525
WOOD, Brian Sidney	710

Turnout – 36.8%

St James' Ward	
DIXON, Michael Harry Maurice	790
ISAACS, Ian Godfrey	886
MEHDI, Dina	340

Turnout – 38.7%

St Mary's Ward	
AUBREY, Michael Ivan	726
SHELDON, Andrew Graham	771
WILSON, Brian	418

Turnout – 39%

St Peter's Ward	
CHALLIS, Pamela Anne	680
EMBERSON, William Frederick	331
HURRELL, Ronald	830

Turnout – 36.4%

Victoria Ward	
VARKER, Paul Edward	799
WARREN, Neal Edward	754
WEST, Frederick George	254

Turnout – 40.3%

Canvey Island Central	
MAY, Peter James	964
PAYNE, John	192
SAVILL, Raymond George	324

Turnout – 30.2%

Canvey Island East	
ACOTT, Alan James	1006
HAUNTS, Patricia	318
MCARTHUR-CURTIS, Margaret Edith	182

Turnout – 31.6%

Canvey Island North	
BELFORD, Margaret Kathleen	325
HARVEY, Nigel Robert	1067
REILLY, Matthew James	283

Turnout – 32.7%

Canvey Island South	
CURHAM, Michael Kevin	168
LAMBERT, Denise Jessie	458
PALMER, Barry Alan	1035

Turnout – 33.7%

Canvey Island West	
BLISSETT, Jeanette Ann	509
DEAL, William Albert	124
KING, Jane Elizabeth	636

Turnout – 33.9%

Canvey Island Winter Gardens	
CARRINGTON, Jeanette Cecilia	283
CURTIS, Katie Elizabeth	181
GREIG, Peter Charles	835

Turnout – 26.9%

Overall turnout - 35.5%

(b) Postal Voting: The number of postal voters on the register was 9,317 and papers to this number were despatched. Up to the close of the poll 7,213 (77.4%) had been returned and the number of votes recorded in (a) above included the postal votes which were found to be in order.

(c) Return of Expenses: These returns are required from candidates and election agents within 35 days of the election.

(d) Declaration: Declarations of Acceptance of Office have been made as required by statute.

(e) Commentary on the conduct of the elections: The poll for the Borough Elections was taken together with the European Parliamentary Elections.

Official polling cards were delivered to all registered to all electors between 10th and 24th April in an A5 format and the content as prescribed in election rules. In response to delivery issues experienced on previous occasions, the poll cards at this year's elections were hand delivered by members of staff employed as delivery agents, to ensure that residents received their cards in a timely fashion and before key deadlines e.g. the closing date for applications for postal votes.

In terms of polling stations, no new locations were used this year to provide some stability for electors and the following the review in 2011 and the Returning Officer was pleased to report that these arrangements continued to work well.

As section (b) of this report stated, just over 9,000 postal votes were issued and this represents an increase in the number issued at the last Borough Elections in 2012. The preparation of the postal ballot paper packs was outsourced to a mailing house and these arrangements were both efficient and effective. Accuracy in preparation was exceptional and elections staff had confidence that this went well. The delivery by Royal Mail both in respect of the initial mailing of the postal vote packs and the re-issued packs where postal votes had either been spoilt or packs had not been received by electors went smoothly this year. The receipting of the postal votes was, as in previous years, undertaken in house. These arrangements worked well with candidate's representatives able to attend to oversee the process if they wished.

Finally, the verification and counting of the votes was carefully planned by the Returning Officer's Elections Team and delivered timely declarations for each of the fourteen Wards. This was achieved by the use of a fresh team of staff and by placing some emphasis on accuracy through the verification process and the counting of the votes between candidates. The Returning Officer's Elections Team also took account of feedback from previous year's elections and focused again this year particularly on the verification of the votes to make this process faster whilst maintaining accuracy.

In conclusion, the Returning Officer was pleased to report that the measures implemented by his Elections Team worked successfully and contributed to the

delivery of timely and robust election results which should have the confidence of the Council, political parties, candidates and the electorate of the Borough.

Resolved – to note the report.

10. POLITICAL PROPORTIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES ETC

The Council considered a report which reviewed the allocation of seats to the Political Groups on the Council. Details of the allocations were set out in the report. As a result of the Borough Elections this year the allocation of seats to the political groups had changed.

Notice had been received of the forming of a new political group on the Council the UKIP Group whose membership comprised:

Cllr Alan Bayley - Leader
Cllr Paul Varker – Deputy Leader
Cllr John Hudson
Cllr Ronald Hurrell
Cllr Brian Wood

The allocation of memberships on the Committees had to be on the basis of the political proportions of the Council.

Throughout the calculations on proportions, the figures had therefore been based on the proportions of the groups to the membership of the Council as it was at present as the result of the vacant seat in the Canvey East Ward , i.e. 40 as shown in the following table.

Party	Seats	Proportions for allocation purposes
Conservative	20	50% (50%)
Canvey Island Independent	15	38% (37.5%)
UKIP	5	12% (12.5%)

In the remainder of this item relating to the appointment of Committees etc, the above political proportions had been applied and the allocations rounded to ensure compliance with the political balance requirement.

Details of the Groups' wishes concerning the appointments had been circulated in an informal memorandum.

The appointments were to be made based on the Council Structure approved at the Annual Meeting last year on 15.5.2012 for the conduct of council business under the Localism Act 2011.

Moved by Councillor Riley and duly seconded, and –

Resolved:

1. To make the appointments as set out in the following resolutions.
2. To appoint the following Committees and that the membership and the appointment of the Chairmen be as follows:

Scrutiny Committee

Conservative:

Councillors: Cross, E. Egan, Mrs Goodwin, Ladzrie

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Blackwell, Tucker, N. Watson

UKIP: Councillor Bayley

Chairman: Councillor Blackwell

Policy & Scrutiny Committees

Environment

Conservative:

Councillors: Burch, Mrs Goodwin, Hart, Partridge, Mrs Wass

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Anderson, Cole, Mrs Payne, Palmer

UKIP: Councillor Hurrell

Chairman: Councillor Burch

Wellbeing

Conservative:

Councillors: E. Egan, Mrs. Govier, *Partridge, Walter, Mrs. Wass

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Acott, Campagna, Harvey, Mrs Payne

UKIP: Councillor Hudson

Chairman: *Councillor Partridge.

Place & Communities

Conservative:

Councillors: Burch, Mrs. Goodwin, Hart*, Sheldon, Walter

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Campagna, Greig, May, Mrs G. Watson

UKIP: Councillor Varker

Chairman: Councillor Hart*

Audit

Conservative:

Councillors: Cross, Partridge, Mrs Wass

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Barrett, N.Watson

Chairman: Councillor Cross

3. To appoint the following Regulatory and Standing Committees and that the membership and the appointment of the Chairman be as follows:

Review

Conservative:

Councillors: Mrs. Egan, Dick, Mrs.Govier, Walter

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Blackwell, Mrs G. Watson, S. Cole

UKIP: Councillor Hurrell

Chairman: Councillor Walter.

Development Control

Conservative:

Councillors: Burch, Cross, Hart, Ladzrie, Smith, Mrs Wass.

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Anderson, Barrett, Blackwell, Mrs King, N. Watson.

UKIP: Councillors Varker, Wood.

Chairman: Councillor Ladzrie

Vice Chairman: Councillor Smith

Licensing

Conservative:

Councillors: Burch, Cross, E. Egan, Sheldon, Smith, Stanley, Walters, Mrs Wass

Canvey Independent:

Councillors: Acott, Blackwell, Greig, May, Palmer, Tucker

UKIP: Councillor Bayley

Chairman: Councillor E.Egan

Note: UKIP nominations were confirmed after the meeting by the Leader of the Group and the Leader of the Conservative Group confirmed the changes marked with an *.

11. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL REGARDING APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET

The Leader presented a report to Council which set out details of his appointment of Members to the Cabinet and outlined their responsibilities.

In making these appointments the Leader announced that he intended to ask the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Safer Communities to introduce new arrangements for Community Forum meetings with two meetings a year to take place in each of the five county divisions.

The Leader indicated that an update on the local plan consultation would be made. The Leader expressed the desire to work with the other political group leaders. The Leader acknowledged that the Council was facing challenging times.

Resolved – to note the report and the following appointments:

Councillor Riley	Chairman - Leader of the Council
Councillor Sharp	Responding to Challenge
Councillor Stanley	Resources and Performance
Councillor Skipp	Environment &Leisure
Councillor Mrs Egan	Homes and Customer Engagement
Councillor Dick	Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Howard	Canvey Island, Floods and Water Management

Councillor Isaacs

Neighbourhoods and Safer
Communities

Councillor Smith

Waste & Business Liaison

12. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Moved by Councillor Riley and duly seconded, and –

Resolved - That the following Members be appointed representatives on outside bodies

Name of Body	Councillor
Age Concern	Cllr Mrs J.E.E Govier
Air Training Corps (Canvey Squadron)	Cllr J. Anderson
Air Training Corps (Thundersley Squadron)	Cllr G.I. Isaacs
Arts Ministry	Cllr Hudson
British Red Cross Society (Essex Branch)	Cllr Mrs J.E.E Govier
Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services	Cllr Mrs W. Goodwin Cllr Hurrell
Castle Point Citizens' Advice Bureau	Cllr G.I. Isaacs
Castle Point Home Safety & Health Promotion Committee	Cllr Mrs L. Wass Cllr Mrs J.E.E. Govier Cllr Wood Cllr B.C. Campagna
Castle Point Sports Club for the Disabled (Executive Committee)	Cllr P.J. May
Carers Choice (Castle Point Branch) Management Committee	Cllr Mrs W. Goodwin
Jubilee Training and Welfare Centre Trust	Cllr R.C. Howard
Local Government Association	Leader of the Council
London Southend Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr A. Partridge
Castle Point Local Action Group	Cllr Mrs G. Watson

Veolia North Thames Trust	Cllr R.C. Howard
Relate South Essex	Cllr Mrs J.E.E. Govier
Groundwork Trust	Cllr C.G. Riley
Royal National Lifeboat Institution (Canvey Island Branch)	Cllr N. Harvey
South Essex Partnership	Leader of the Council
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	Cllr Mrs W. Goodwin
Domestic Violence Panel	Cllr Mrs W. Goodwin
Wyvern Community Transport	Cllr S.E. Hart
Essex Police & Crime Panel	Cllr G.I. Isaacs
Essex County Council Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee	Cllr W. Dick

13. DAY AND HOUR OF MEETINGS

Resolved – to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the Council year 2014/2015.

14. DECLARATION OF VACANCY IN OFFICE SECTION 86 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Council was asked to declare vacant forthwith the office of Ward Councillor for the Canvey East Ward as Gail Barton had failed to attend any meeting of the Council for a period of six consecutive months. Her last attendance being the Special Council meeting held on 20th November 2013 and having no reason approved by the Council for such absence before expiry of the period, Gail Barton had ceased to be a member of the Council under Section 85 Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved – to declare vacant forthwith the office of Ward Councillor for the Canvey East Ward.

Mayor

ORDINARY COUNCIL

23rd July 2014

Subject: Draft New Local Plan – Task & Finish Group

1. Purpose of Report

At the Cabinet meeting on 18.6.2014, Cabinet agreed to refer both the nominations and appointment of the Chairman of the Group to Full Council.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

The Draft New Local Plan is directly linked to the Council's Regeneration & Homes priority – more local employment and the creation of business opportunities.

3. Recommendations

That the Council agrees to

- 1. The nominations of 10 (ten) Members of the Council to the Draft New Local Plan Task & Finish Group.**
- 2. The appointment of a Chairman of the Draft New Local Plan Task & Finish Group.**
- 3. To approve the Terms of Reference of the Task & Finish Group**
- 4. To note the draft programme of the Task and Finish Group**

4. Background

4.1 At its meeting on 15th January 2014, Council agreed to publish a Draft New Local Plan for public consultation. That consultation took place from 24th January 2014 until 28th March 2014.

4.2 Council also agreed to appoint a Task and Finish Group to review the response to consultation on the Draft New Local Plan. It was agreed that membership should reflect the political balance of the Council and should be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Business Liaison.

4.3 In order to reflect the political balance of the Council, the Task and Finish Group should comprise 10 (ten) Members of the Council, with the following composition;

Conservative	5
Canvey Island Independent	4
UKIP	1

4.4 The Leaders of the Political Groups on the Council were invited to nominate members of their Groups to serve on the Task & Finish Group.

4.5 At the Cabinet meeting on 18th June 2014, the Chairman, the Leader of the Council announced the nominations for membership received from the Leaders of the respective Political Groups on the Council.

4.6 Cabinet agreed the nominations of 10 (ten) Members of the Council to the Draft New Local Plan Task & Finish Group to comprise (5 Conservative Group members Cllrs Dick, Hart, Ladzrie, Sheldon & Smith; 4 Canvey Island Independent Group members Cllrs Anderson, Blackwell, Tucker & N.Watson; 1UKIP member Cllr Varker)

4.7 Cabinet also agreed also to refer both the nominations and appointment of the Chairman of the Group to the meeting of Council on 23rd July 2014 for final approval.

4.8 Following the meeting attention was drawn to the nomination of Cllr Hart to serve on the Task & Finish Group. For the reasons rehearsed under the legal implications of this report Cllr Hart is not eligible to serve on the Task & Finish Group.

4.9 A further meeting has been arranged to take place with Cllr Hart to discuss this appointment and his disclosable pecuniary interest arising from his home address adjoining a housing site at land East of Rayleigh Road as a consequence of the provisions contained in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Discloseable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. Council will be updated on the outcome of that meeting.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group have been prepared and are attached to the report.
- 5.2 A draft Programme of Work for the Task and Finish Group has been prepared and is also attached.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications.

(b) Legal Implications

The Task & Finish Group will be a formally constituted meeting of the Council and so should observe the political balance of the Council and its requirements concerning interests.

As a consequence Members who have disclosable pecuniary interests are unable to be a member of or take part in the deliberations of the Task and Finish Group on the New Local Plan.

The following Members have previously made declarations at meetings of the Council in relation to the draft New Local Plan and been prohibited from taking part in the Council business related to the New Local Plan as a consequence of the provisions contained in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Discloseable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Councillor Barrett declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as his home address was adjacent to a housing site in the Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Hart declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as his home address was adjacent to a housing site in the Draft Local Plan.

(Cllr Hart has been advised of a separate recordable interest under paragraph 10.2 of the Code as the founder supporter of the Save Our Green Belt Group which would lead a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts to reasonably believe to be so significant as that it is likely to prejudice his judgment.)

Councillor Howard declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as his home address was adjacent to a housing site in the Draft Local Plan and a member of his family owned land forming part of a housing site in the Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Mrs King declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as she undertook equestrian activities including stabling and grazing of horses on land adjacent to an employment site in the Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Riley declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as his home address was adjacent to a housing site in the Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Sharp has received advice of a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation in relation to his known connections with a number of landowners/site developers in relation to six sites identified for housing.

Councillor Mrs. Wass declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest under the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the New Local Plan – Draft for Consultation as her home address was adjacent to a housing site in the Draft Local Plan.

Councillors are reminded that it is a criminal offence under Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011 to fail to comply with an obligation to make a disclosure or to participate in any discussion or vote in contravention of this part of the Act which is punishable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding £5000 and or disqualification from being a Councillor for a period of up to 5 years.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

Human Resources

The Task and Finish Group will be supported by the Head of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and/or his appointed officer(s) together with the Head of Governance and/or her appointed officer(s).

Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken as part of the work undertaken on the draft Local Plan

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

It is proposed to web cast the meetings of the Task & Finish Group.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

A draft programme is attached. Councillors are referred to the legal implications which rehearse the personal risks for Councillors.

If the Council fails to appoint a properly constituted Task and Finish Group the Council could face a legal challenge of its decision on the New Local Plan.

8. Background Papers

Report item 6(b) Cabinet 18.6.2014
Minute 39 Ordinary Council 15.1.2014

Report Author:

Ann Horgan – Head of Governance

Draft New Local Plan
Consultation Responses Task & Finish Group
Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Draft New Local Plan was issued for consultation from 24th January to 31st March 2014.

Responses to that consultation need to be considered by the Council to determine whether changes, if any, are required to the Draft New Local Plan.

Council has agreed that a Consultation Responses Task & Finish Group shall be established for this purpose.

2. Consultation Responses Task & Finish Group - Composition

The Chairman of the Task & Finish Group shall be appointed by Council.

It will comprise 10 Members of the Council selected to reflect the political balance of the Council.

No Member of the Council having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with respect to the New Local Plan shall participate in the Task & Finish Group or take part in any deliberations.

The Head of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and/or his appointed officer(s) will attend to provide technical and expert advice.

The Head of Governance and/or her appointed officer(s) will prepare the agenda for all meetings and take minutes of any relevant discussions.

The Head of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Head of Governance will prepare a written report of the Task & Finish Group's deliberations and final recommendations to Council on completion of the work of the Group

The Task and Finish Group is a properly constituted Sub-committee of the Council and normal Council Procedure Rules will apply.

3. Consultation Responses Task & Finish Group – Role

The Task & Finish Group will be provided with an agenda prepared for each meeting.

In reviewing the consultation responses it shall be guided by the vision and objectives in the Draft New Local Plan and all relevant policies contained in the Plan.

In reviewing the consultation responses it shall be also guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (and in particular the tests of soundness for a local plan) together with the national Planning Practice Guidance.

Its remit will be to ensure that appropriate consideration has been given to all the consultation responses to the Draft New Local Plan as received from all consultees.

It shall report the outcome of its considerations together with any recommendations for changes to the Draft New Local Plan which may be appropriate and supported with evidence to Council, which shall then decide on the Council's final response to the consultation.

It will not be necessary for the Task & Finish Group to reach a unanimous view, since differing views can be reported for final analysis by Council.

4. The Consultation Responses Task & Finish Group – other matters

The Task & Finish Group shall meet in the Council Offices at a time agreed with the Chairman.

The meetings of the Task & Finish Group and any agenda and minutes shall be made publicly available, and the Access to Information Rules shall apply. It is intended to web cast all meetings of the Task and Finish Group to enable residents to view the proceedings and to record all comments and discussions.

REVISED DRAFT PROGRAMME NEW LOCAL PLAN TASK & FINISH GROUP

COUNCIL	23.7.2014	Confirmation of Appointment of the Group
Task & Finish Group	30.7.2014	Outline programme and hand over consultation responses to allow Members to consider over recess.
Task & Finish Group 2nd & 4th Thursday	1.9.2014	Chapter 2-5 LP Reponses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (2) • Policy Context (3) • Spatial Portrait (4) • Key Drivers of Change(5)
	30.9.2014	Chapters LP Reponses 6,7,8& 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for the Future (6) • Objectives of the New Local Plan (7) • The presumption in favour of sustainable development(8) • Monitoring and Review (21)
	8.10.2014	Chapters LP Reponses 9,10&12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a strong competitive economy(9) • Ensuring the vitality of town centres (10) • Supporting high quality communication infrastructure(12)
	29.10.2014	Chapter 11 LP Reponses – Transport & CIL
	5.11.2014	Chapters LP Reponses 14.15,&19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring a good design (14) • Promoting healthy communities (15) • Conserving & enhancing the historic environment (19)
	26.11.2014	Chapters LP Reponses 17&18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the challenge

		of climate change ,flooding and coastal change.(17) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving & enhancing the natural environment (18)
	8.12.2014	LP Reponses 13,16& 20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (13) • Protecting Green Belt Land (16) • Traveller Sites (20)
	14.1.2015	Chapter13 LP Reponses Housing sites 1to18
	26.1.2015	As above
	9.2.2015	As above
	25 .2.2015 or 4.3.2015	As above

ORDINARY COUNCIL

23rd July 2014

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16 – Options and Consultation Arrangements

Cabinet Member: Councillor Stanley – Resources and Performance

1. Purpose of Report

To present Council with options to be consulted upon in relation to the 2015/16 Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

To highlight to Council, the financial implications associated with the scheme.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

Sound and strategic financial management - Improving the Council

3. Recommendations

1. That Members note the financial implications included in section 8, and the scheme models at Appendix B, and approve the elements set out in paragraph 5.5 for consultation.

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.
- 4.3 Appendix A sets out the key aspects of the current scheme, as approved by Council in December 2012 for 2013/14. The scheme did not change for 2014/15.

5. Development of local scheme for 2015/16

- 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 Appendix B contains details of a range of proposed scheme models which are deliverable using current software and working within the existing Essex framework. The options provide an indication of the value of cost reductions which may be achievable. Please also refer to the financial implications section of this report.
- 5.3 Appendix B also contains summary information residency rules which have been introduced by 11 Authorities nationwide to date.
- 5.4 Regard has been given to the ability to pay and the collectability of the resultant Council Tax liability.
- 5.5 Based on these proposals the following questions are suggested for inclusion in the consultation:
- a) Working age residents can currently receive support with up to 70% of their Council Tax liability. Should this % be reduced so that they receive less support and are required to pay more themselves? Yes/No.
 - b) If you answered 'Yes' to question 'a', how much should the % of support be reduced to? 68%, 65%, 63%, 60%.
 - c) Support is currently calculated on Band D for any working age residents who live in a property of Council Tax Band E, F, G, or H. Should this be reduced so that those living in a property with a Band of D, E, F, G, or H, would have their support calculated on Council Tax Band C? Yes/No.
 - d) The length of time someone has resided in the borough is not currently a factor in entitlement for support. Should the scheme include a residency rule so that people who have not been resident in the borough for a certain period of time are not entitled to support? Yes/No.
 - e) If you answered 'Yes' to question 'd', how long should a person be resident to qualify for support? 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, 7 years.
 - f) Should people who can't work due to sickness or disability be protected from all of these proposed changes to the scheme? Yes/No.
 - g) Should people who can't work because they provide care for a sick or disabled relative be protected from all of these proposed changes to the scheme? Yes/No.

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 Essex Police and Fire authorities have not attended all of these meetings but they have received minutes and documents from each and are therefore considered engaged in consultation.
- 6.3 The legal requirement for consultation is a minimum period of at least 6 weeks. It is proposed that the consultation period for Castle Point Borough Council will therefore span 6 weeks from Friday 5th September 2014 until Thursday 16th October 2014.
- 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 19th November 2014 and Full Council on 10th December 2014.
- 6.5 A brief summary of the current scheme and changes under consultation for 2014/15 will be published on the CPBC website. Links to the on-line survey (hosted and developed by ECC) will be provided and a supply of paper copies will be made available at each of the four local libraries. Alternative formats of the survey will be made available on request.
- 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 publicized via Twitter feeds, the 'Latest News' box on the Council web site, and via a Press Release 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.
- 6.9 The outcomes from consultation will be reported to Cabinet in November.

7. Implications for claimants and the Council

- 7.1 Any further reduction in the scheme will have a detrimental impact on claimants and further increase difficulties with collection, court action, and bad debts for the Council and pre-cepting organisations. Most households are already required to pay a bill which had previously been offset, either partially or completely by benefit. Collection of Council Tax in 2015/16 will be even more difficult as many Support customers will still be paying off previous years debts through deductions from benefit.
- 7.2 A further reduction in Council Tax discount is likely to compound existing financial and/or welfare difficulties which may in turn result in other negative outcomes including the threat of homelessness and strain on Discretionary Housing Payments.

8. Corporate Implications

a. Financial Implications

8.1 General financial statement

The Medium Term Financial Forecast presented to Council in February 2014, indicates a significant funding gap in each financial year from 2015/16, which the Council must address in order to maintain existing service levels.

The Council is already effectively committed beyond its means in future years i.e. spending funds it does not have, and will need to identify reductions to existing services.

The position with regard to Council reserves is also serious. Whilst at the current time reserves appear healthy, there are very real and significant financial risks which may or may not materialise in future years, particularly around planning appeals and associated legal costs. These risks, coupled with the projected budget gap, will result in a complete depletion of general reserves within the next four financial years.

A programme of work is currently underway which it is hoped will contribute towards closing the funding gap. However, until each financial year is balanced, the Council should not enter into new and ongoing financial commitments.

8.2 Specific financial implications

The reduced tax yield arising directly from the council tax support scheme discount is largely compensated for by government grant, in the form of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and redistributed Business Rates. The precise element which is allocated to the local scheme is not separately identifiable within either funding stream.

In 2014/15 the level of RSG funding provided to the Council was significantly reduced. Usually a reduction in funding would result in a reduction in related expenditure but in the case of the local council tax support scheme the Council chose to maintain the budget at the same level adopted for 2013/14 (no reduction to the scheme). The Council is therefore arguably already subsidising the local scheme.

From 2015/16 there is a further significant reduction in RSG. It is therefore appropriate for the Council to re-confirm the amount of funding which it wishes to allocate to the local scheme. If reductions to RSG continue it is likely that it will be unsustainable for the Council to maintain the scheme at the same level indefinitely. This consideration was set out within the budget report to Council in February 2014 and the subsequent financial update report to Cabinet in June 2014.

All authorities, including the three precepting organisations (Police, Fire and the County Council) are faced with this same dilemma. It is understood that very few authorities are planning to reduce their scheme budget for 2014/15.

Funding Reductions from 2015/16

The following table sets out the amount of funding currently allocated to the scheme by Castle Point Borough Council and each precepting authority for 2014/15, alongside the potential allocation if overall reductions were applied for 2015/16.

	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's
Castle Point	1,031	862
Essex County Council	4,666	3,901
Police and Crime Commissioner	577	482
Essex Fire Authority	285	238
Total	6,559	5,483

The overall reduction in funding under this methodology is **£1.076m**. Simplistically, and assuming it would be feasible to contain a scheme within this budget, it would mean that **£169k** of grant which Castle Point has currently forecast on-going as being allocated to the local scheme, could be re-allocated to other general fund services, reducing the overall forecast budget gap.

The following table shows the potential financial reduction in overall scheme cost, which would be necessary in order to deliver a cost neutral scheme, based on actual scheme costs for 2013/14 scheme.

	£000's
2013/14 scheme outturn	5,798
Potential council tax increase @ 2%	116
Contingency @ 1.5%	89
Total potential cost for 2015/16	6,003
Total funding allocation/value of scheme for 2015/16	5,483
Reduction in scheme required	520
Representing % of cost	8.7%

If the Council were to aim for a reduction in scheme expenditure to match funding, it would need to set a scheme budget at around £5.4m.

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.

b. Human resources/equality/human rights

Resourcing Implications

The timescale for Universal Credit roll out in Essex is currently uncertain. Regardless of the potential complexity that Universal Credit may add at some point in the future, any changes to the local scheme will make the system more complex for customers to understand and for staff to administer, increasing the risk of error. It will also potentially add extra burdens to customer service staff as enquiries increase. It is therefore desirable to keep changes to the scheme for year three, to a minimum.

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 Assessments were undertaken as part of the original scheme design and will need to be revisited to inform any proposed changes to the 2015/16 scheme.

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.

9. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

The local scheme needs to be finalised and consulted upon by the end of January 2015. The revised scheme must be operational from 1st April 2015.

Key milestones from this point going forward are as follows:

Milestone	Timeframe	Purpose
Cabinet Report	23.7.2014	Approval of options for consultation & confirmation of level of funding
Formal Public/Stakeholder Consultation	Sept – Oct 2014	Pre-cepting organisations & Residents
Report to Cabinet	19.11.2014	Final scheme for consideration
Grant Published	Dec 2014	
Report to Council	10.12.2014	Final scheme for approval
Final Scheme in place	31.01.2015	Adoption and implementation
Schemes in operation	01.04.2015	Operation

Risks are recorded on the Corporate Risk Register and are reviewed on a monthly basis.

Appendix A – Key Aspects of Current Scheme

Appendix B – Details of Proposed Scheme Models & Savings

Report Author:

Chris Mills – Head of Resources

Edwina Mosuro – Community Support Manager

Key Aspects of 2014/15 Scheme

- 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 only.
- 3 The local scheme is means tested, using many of the principles of the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, which enables protection for working age vulnerable groups and specific protection for households with children and/or disabilities.
- 4 The scheme incentivises work by disregarding £25 per week of earned income.
- 5 Child Benefit is counted in full as income when calculating entitlement.
- 6 Claims for Local Council Tax Support cannot be back dated.
- 7 As far as possible the scheme allows for expected growth in demand and is easy to claim and administer.
- 8 Second Adult Rebate is not part of the scheme for working age claimants. Second Adult Rebate was available under Council Tax Benefit where a single Council Tax payer had an adult friend or relative on a low income living with them.
- 9 The savings limit is £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 are not included in the scheme for working age claimants. Non Dependant deductions were made under Council Tax Benefit where the claimant had another adult, who was not their partner, living in their household.
- 11 In conjunction with the Council's 'Local War Pensioner' scheme, income received in respect of War Pensions for disablement or bereavement are fully disregarded when calculating support.
- 12 Support is capped at Council Tax band D and at 70% of Council Tax liability for working age claimants. This means that all working age Council Tax Payers are required to pay a minimum of 30% of their weekly council tax bill. (% and band are specific to CPBC local scheme).
- 13 There is no entitlement to 'underlying entitlement' when an overpayment occurs.

Proposed Scheme Models & Savings

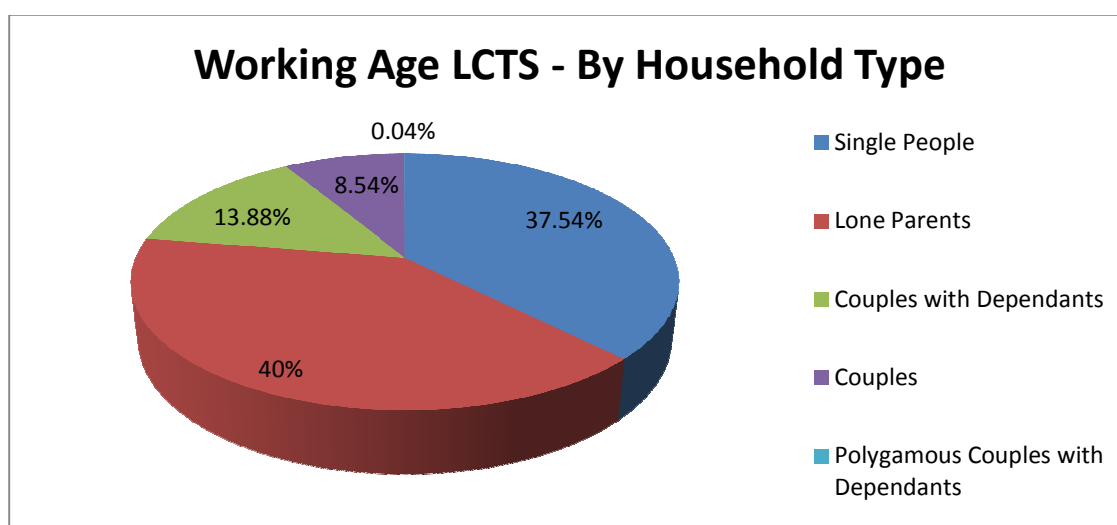
The following Options have been modeled for 2015/16:

- **Option 1** - No Change to 2014/15 Scheme (*Estimated Savings: £0*)
- **Option 2** – 2014/15 Scheme with support capped at 68% instead of 70% (*Estimated Savings: £59K*)
- **Option 3** – 2014/15 Scheme with support capped at 65% instead of 70% and capped at Band C instead of Band D (*Estimated Savings £174K*)
- **Option 4** – 2014/15 Scheme with support capped at 60% instead of 70% and capped at Band C instead of Band D (*Estimated Savings: £305K*)

The following table illustrates the minimum financial impact that each Option would have on households receiving maximum support, using 2014/15 Council Tax charges for residents of Canvey Island Parish Council:

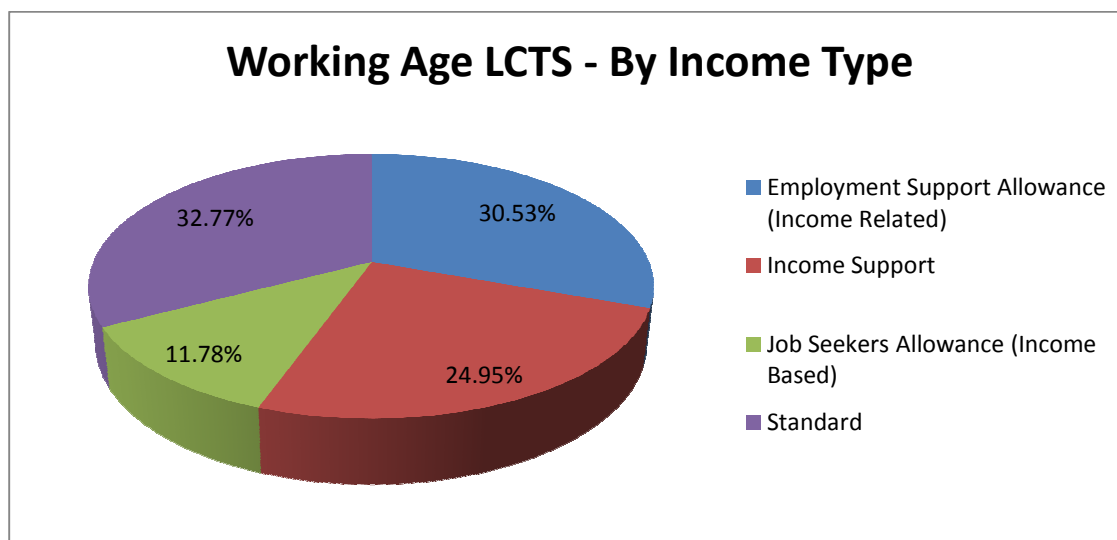
Band	2014/15 CT Liability	Currently Paying (Option 1)	Extra to Pay (Option 2)	Extra to Pay (Option 3)	Extra To Pay (Option 4)
Band A	1034.76	310.43	20.69	51.74	103.47
Band B	1207.22	362.17	24.14	60.36	120.72
Band C	1379.68	413.90	27.60	68.99	137.97
Band D	1552.14	465.64	31.04	189.71	258.69
Band E	1897.06	810.56	31.04	189.71	258.69
Band F	2241.98	1155.48	31.04	189.71	258.69
Band G	2586.90	1500.40	31.04	189.71	258.69
Band H	3104.28	2107.78	31.04	189.71	258.69

The following chart shows the current working age Local Council Tax Support caseload broken down by household type:



APPENDIX B

The following chart shows current working age Local Council Tax Support caseload broken down by income type:

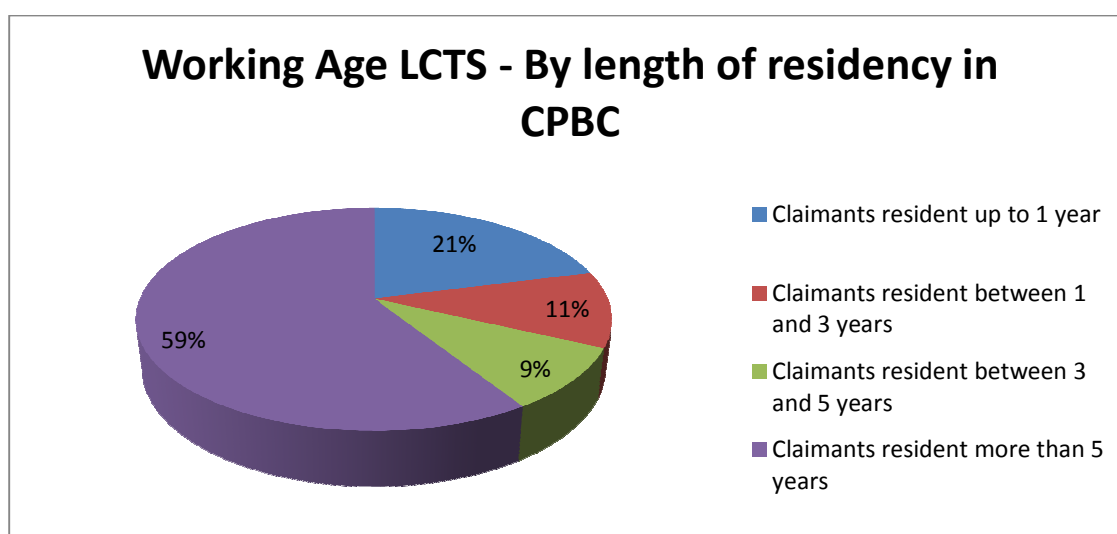


Residency Rule

Whilst not extensively adopted, a few Authorities have chosen to introduce residency rules to their Local Support Schemes. A 5 year residency rule was introduced by Tendring District Council in 2013/14, and a 7 year residency rule was introduced by Basildon District Council in 2014/15.

This type of rule effectively ensures that Local Council Tax Support is only available to those working age claimants who have resided continuously in the Authority for a minimum period immediately prior to applying for Support.

Analysis of all new working age Local Council Tax Support claims made during Q1 2014/15 has produced the following snap shot of residency data which indicates that the majority of new claims are made by people who have been resident in the borough for more than 5 years:



APPENDIX B

Although implemented by other Authorities it is too early to gage the full impact that this type of policy may have on collection rates, claim administration, claimant migration, and local employment.

It is unknown whether the cost of Council Tax and/or entitlement to Local Council Tax Support are, on their own, significant factors in determining where people choose to live – although it is generally considered more likely that such decisions are determined by family, support networks, employment, and cost and availability of housing (whether rented or private).

Careful consideration needs to be given as to how such a rule would interact with other statutory policies and legislative duties i.e. Housing Allocation Policy and legislation, Duty to prevent homelessness and Homelessness legislation, Equality Duty etc.

Details of Tendring's Residency Policy can be found here:

http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Council_Tax/TDC%20LCTS%20%20Residency%20Policy.pdf

ORDINARY COUNCIL

23rd July 2014

Subject: Corporate Plan

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Council approval for the proposed Corporate Plan.

2. Links to Council's priorities and objectives

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

3. Recommendations

That Council considers and adopts the Corporate Plan set out in Appendix 1.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is an important document for the Council. It sets out the strategic direction for the organisation as well as how the Council will achieve its aims and priorities through appropriate action planning.
- 4.2 The Council adopted a five year Corporate Plan back in 2007, and has refreshed the plan annually with a process that includes full Council consideration in June of each year. The plan came to the end of its useful life in 2012 and has been subject to further development during 2013 following a Cabinet decision to re-develop a new Corporate Plan.
- 4.3 Consequently a draft Corporate Plan has been subject to detailed consideration by councillors through the Policy and Scrutiny process during the spring and summer of 2013. This concluded with a final consideration of the plan on the 8th October by the Place and Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee. At that meeting the Group agreed that the plan should now be forwarded for consideration by Cabinet and Full Council. Cabinet endorsed the draft Corporate Plan in January 2014.

5. Report

Consultation used to help inform the development of the Plan

- 5.1 During the summer of 2013 a consultation process was undertaken, and views were sought from councillors, the public, partners and staff. A public questionnaire was distributed and promoted and made available either electronically through the Council's website and paper versions were distributed to members of the public who were once members of the Citizen's Panel or who had expressed an interest in being consulted on issues for the Council. Paper copies were also made available at Council offices and by some Council partners in receptions areas. In addition a lunchtime learning session was held with staff and followed up by a workshop.
- 5.2 The Place and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee considered the detail of the plan and the consultation programme. During this time the plan was subject to a number of revisions. The detailed results of the consultation were considered by the Committee on the 8th October and these are summarised in Chapter 5 of the plan attached as Appendix 1.

Key Themes

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

Issues of Importance / to be improved

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

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

Impact on the Development of the Corporate Plan

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

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

6. Implementation

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

7. Corporate Implications

a. Financial implications

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

b. Legal implications

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

c. Human resources and equality

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

d. Timescale for implementation and risk factors

This is set out in the Corporate Plan.

8. Background Papers:

Corporate Plan 2014/17

Castle Point Borough Council
Corporate Business Plan
2014 – 2017

‘Turning
Opportunity
into Reality’

V4

June 2014

Foreword and Annual Report for 2013/14

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

The Council faces some serious challenges and difficult decisions. It is essential for our country's economy that the national debt is reduced. Local government is playing a big part as central government funding for this Council fell by 43% between 2010/11 to 2014/15 and will continue to decrease.

The Council has risen to the challenge and secured real outcomes for the community whilst making savings. For example, the £5.4m refurbishment of Waterside Farm Leisure Centre has been hugely successful and described by the local media as: “.. world-class facility set to inspire a new generation of sporting stars.”

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

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

Over the last few years the Council has also successfully undertaken regeneration of its own facilities, and examples include:

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

We have also worked hard to continue to provide good quality services. For example

- Waste recycling which has seen the proportion of waste recycled at over 50%, compared to the average for England in 2012/13 of 43.2%.

- The work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has seen a slight increase in reported crime with 1.2% increase between 2012/13 and 2013/14 due to an increase in domestic burglary incidents there has been a similar small increase (3.2%) in anti-social behaviour. However, overall crime has decreased over the medium term. For example there were 4,381 crimes recorded for the financial year 2009/10. The number of incidents of crime in the Borough was 3,351 for the 2013/14 year. Anti-social behaviour also demonstrates a positive trend with 1,961 incidents over the 2013/14 year, 1,297 fewer incidents than the 2010/11 year.

We have also secured very substantial savings, which include:

- £96k for part year savings in 2012/13 on retender of the Council's ICT contract. Full year savings of £358k from 2013/14;
- £234k part year saving in 2013/14 on retender of the Council's Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing contract. Full year saving of £338k from 2014/15;
- £64k in 2012/13 following the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement partnership; and
- £31k income in 2012/13 from renting out vacant space at the main Council Offices and associated buildings in Kiln Road, Benfleet, increasing to £36k per annum from 2013/14.

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

- Funding from Veolia for the Refurbishment of Waterside Farm totalling £430k
- Essex County Council (ECC) funding for Kitchen and Garden Waste Recycling scheme - £504k of start-up capital funding in 2011/12, and 25 years of ongoing revenue funding in excess of £500k per annum.
- £3.3m of regeneration scheme funding over the 5 years to 2011/12, from various bodies including Homes and Communities Agency, East of England Development Agency and Essex County Council.

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

We continue to face a very challenging future. For example, although we have managed to secure savings of £1m for the financial year 2014/15, there still remains some significant savings to be found in future years.

To ensure the Council continues to remain viable we will progress our efficiency programme and develop working practices and use information communication technology to be as efficient and effective as possible. We will also continue to explore new ways of providing services in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sector. We aim to evolve as one of the most cost effective district councils in the country and will be developing our programme for Change 'Operation Darwin'.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to develop a stronger, leaner Council that will continue to deliver the high performing public services the people of Castle Point deserve. We will work closely with Councillors, our community, our staff and our partners to achieve this.

Councillor Colin Riley

Leader of the Council

David Marchant

Chief Executive

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Chapter 1: The Strategic Framework

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

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

Our Values

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

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

Equality: fair treatment for all

Respect: respect each other

Integrity: integrity in all of the work we do

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

Innovation: seeking new, improved and sustainable ways of working

Teamwork: valuing everyone's contribution

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

Safeguarding Policy Statement

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

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

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

The Castle Point 'Golden Thread'

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



Chapter 2:

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

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

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

2.1 Things we need to do in partnership with others:

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

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

Lack of affordable housing remains a significant issue in Castle Point, for example 44.86% (November 2012) of first time buyers cannot afford a flat or maisonette based on a mortgage at 3.0 times their income. House prices are now increasing and for example lower quartile prices in Castle Point were £163,000 in February 2013 increasing to £175,000 in February 2014, a percentage increase of 7.4% in one year. Affordable Housing is a generic term and includes rented social housing provided by a local authority or housing association, as well as schemes such as shared ownership and rent to buy (known as intermediate housing) to help people get on the property ladder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We need to maintain and improve the local Environment by:

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

We need to help transform our community by:

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

We need to develop wellbeing in the Borough by:

- Developing and enhancing our leisure/ recreational facilities and community halls and by encouraging a more diverse usage of our facilities
- Improving the quality of housing, both Council and privately owned
- Providing support to voluntary groups to help people deal with debt issues and to provide a greater range of services to older people
- Ensuring that businesses operating in the Borough do so in a safe manner and comply with all relevant legal requirements.

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

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

Chapter 3: Our Vision for the Borough

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

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

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

3.1 Local Enterprise Partnership

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

OBJECTIVE 1: Secure the growth of the Thames Gateway

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote investment in our coastal communities

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen our rural economy

OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations

3.2 Essex Partnership Board

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

This partnership focuses on six themes. These are:

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

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

3.3 Thames Gateway South Essex

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

3.4 The Local Strategic Partnership

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

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

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

During 2014 the partnership will be re-developing its ambitions and priorities

Chapter 4: National Framework and Legislation

4.1 National Performance Management Framework

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

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

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

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

The coalition government has also reduced the amount of Council tax benefit paid to each local authority by 10%. Councils have some freedom in the criteria to be used to apply this to residents by devising their own local council tax scheme, but there are restrictions to the criteria. For example, the elderly and vulnerable are protected. Castle Point Council adopted its own local council tax scheme for 2014/15 in January 2014.

4.2 Austerity

One of the greatest challenges faced by all local authorities is the need to find substantial savings. In 2010, the coalition government announced a four year austerity programme which began in April 2011. This had a significant impact on Castle Point Borough Council with a cut in the revenue support grant received of 17% over a two year period. A further reduction in revenue support grant was made

for two further financial years 2013/14 and 2015/16 and the Council agreed a budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast in February 2013 which aims to secure additional savings of £1m by the end of March 2016.

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

4.3 Localism Act 2011

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

Chapter 5: Consulting with our Communities

5.1 Public Consultation

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

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

Table 1 – Top 5 Most Important Services

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

Table 2 – Top 5 Least Important Services

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

It is clear from the results that the most important services relate to Environment, including Refuse Collection and Recycling and Street Scene. Community Safety is also an important service, as is Council Tax collection. Conversely the least important services relate to Events and Neighbourhood Meetings. Some statutory services such as Land Charges and Benefit payments also feature. When asked what the priorities for improvement were, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as well as having a well run council featured strongly:

Table 3 – Priority Areas for Improvement

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

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

5.2 Service Satisfaction

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 Place Survey

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

Satisfaction with the Area as a Place to Live

Across the twelve districts, residents living in Maldon (91.2%), Chelmsford (87.9%), Uttlesford (87.7%) and Rochford (86.4%) are more likely to be satisfied with levels of overall satisfaction significantly higher than the county average (80.7%). There are

lower levels of satisfaction in Harlow (69.1%), Basildon (74.5%), Castle Point (76%) and Colchester (77.2%) than elsewhere.

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

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

Satisfaction with Local Council

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

Neighbourhood Belonging

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

Feeling Safe

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

5.4 Consultation for the Local Plan

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

The leaflet invited all residents and businesses to attend a neighbourhood meeting, a

coffee morning and/or the business forum. Officers also attended the Youth Conference and two Age Concern lunches, meeting a number of local residents falling within the younger and older age categories.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The questions above differ for the questionnaire used to help develop the Corporate Plan because the Corporate Plan is more focussed on services provided by the Council. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that a significant element of the written feedback received for the Corporate Plan refers to Road and Pavement maintenance, and in the consultation used for the Local Plan, this appears as the top

issue that needs improvement. Street Scene is also a significant area for improvement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.5 Core Business Considerations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 6:

Our Vision and Medium Term Aims and Targets

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

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

Aim: Public Health and Wellbeing

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

Our Targets:

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

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

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

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

Increase the proportion of people participating in physical activity by:

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

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

Aim: Environment

The environment is consistently a high priority for residents, who want to see well maintained parks and open spaces, and streets that are clean and free from litter, refuse, graffiti and fly posters. We want to improve and maximise any positive impacts on the environmental quality of the Borough with high quality parks and open spaces and by encouraging a reduction in waste production and participation in our recycling services as well as promoting energy efficiency. We will continue to promote our services and facilities and to ensure that outsourced services or facilities maintained by voluntary groups are delivered to the required contract standard or in accordance with the approved management plans.

Our Targets:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aim: Transforming our Community

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

Our Targets:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aim: Efficient and Effective Customer Focused Services

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

Our Targets

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

Organisational transformational programme 'Operation Darwin' to transform the Council by March 2017 by using new technology and working practices to:

- **Utilise new technology to transform working practices and procedures**
- **Develop customer interface and communication channels to maintain high customer satisfaction with all Council services.**

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

Objectives

How we develop, agree and monitor our objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 7:

Our Annual Objectives for 2014/15

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

Aim: Public Health and Wellbeing

Annual Objectives:

1. **Improve the Health & Wellbeing of Castle Point residents through:**
 - (a) **The provision of value for money Leisure and Recreation Services that increases the percentage of adults aged 16 or over participating in sport at least once a week.**
 - (b) **Pro-active inspections for food safety and infectious diseases**

Outcomes to be measured by:

- Number of visits to Council operated leisure facilities.
- Monthly Leisure membership levels
- The percentage of adults aged 16 or over participating in sport at least once a week.
- Development of a Leisure and Recreation Strategy
- Percentage of inspected food premises that are awarded a score of at least 3 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

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

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

Outcomes to be measured by:

- Implementation of appropriate safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Work with the community safety partnership to continue to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Number of empty homes brought back into use.
- Work with the health sector to enhance Leisure and Housing Service capacity to help provide services which will improve general health and wellbeing of residents.
- Effectively manage the implementation of welfare reforms.

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

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

Outcomes to be measured by:

- Refurbishment of Amelia Blackwell House and Gowan Court so that all residents have their own bathing facilities by March 2016.
- Pilot two garage sites for development with planning permission by March 2015
- Develop the Sheltered Housing Service and allow elderly non-resident people to participate in the social activities of Sheltered Housing Schemes (to be subject to project planning).
- Develop and implement over-arching Housing Strategy with associated Private Sector Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy

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

Aim: Environment

Annual Objectives:

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

Outcome to be measured by:

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

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

Aim: Transforming our Community

Annual Objectives:

5. Progress development of the Local Plan for the Borough

Outcome to be measured by:

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

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

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

Outcome to be measured by:

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

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

Aim: Efficient and Effective Customer Focussed services.

Objectives:

7. Develop 'Operation Darwin' organisational change programme to transform the Council by March 2017 by using new technology and working practices to:

- **Utilise new technology to transform working practices and procedures**
- **Develop customer interface and communication channels to improve opportunities for self-service as well as maintain high customer satisfaction with all Council services**
- **Undertake service reviews to improve Value for Money**
- **Undertake effective procurements to secure greater Value for Money**
- **Review of Charging policy to ensure consistency and Value for Money from services provided by the Council**

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

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

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

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

Rationale: Council services undertake a range of core services which are important to customers and residents and need to be maintained.

Addendum

1. A Short Profile of Castle Point

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

Just over 60% of Castle Point's land area is designated as Green Belt, and there are a number of important wildlife areas in the Borough including a special protection area and six sites of specific scientific interest. As a result, most of the Borough's population of 88,011 people live within one of four towns:

Benfleet 22%
Canvey Island 43%
Hadleigh 14%
Thundersley 21%

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

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

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

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

Town Centres in need of vitality - Due to the high level of out-commuting from Castle Point, the local town centres lose a substantial proportion of the residential spend to other centres, particularly Basildon, Southend, Lakeside and Bluewater because people are more willing and used to travelling for what they need and want. As a result, the town centres in Castle Point are in need of regeneration in order to make them more attractive to existing residents and as business and housing locations in

order to enhance their vitality. Regeneration is necessary to address the significant under investment in public space that has occurred within town centres in Castle Point.

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

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

Young People - Young people (under 20 years) will continue to make up over 20% of the population and it is important that their educational and social needs in particular are met. The under 15 age group is expected to decrease by 6% over the next 5 years. There is currently a perception that young people do not have enough to do, resulting in crime and anti-social behaviour. This issue needs to be addressed in order to achieve greater community cohesion.

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

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

Key Facts:

Area 45.08 km² (17.41 square miles)

Rural Land Area 60%

Population 88,011(2011 Census)

Population Density 1,921.2/km² (4,976 / square mile)

Households 36,730

Workforce 44,300

Unemployment: 1.8% receiving Jobseekers allowance (May 2014). A total of 6.1% of the working population are not working. The national average is 7.5% for all non working people and 2.6% for those receiving Job Seekers allowance (May 2014).

Ethnicity:

White 96%

Asian 1.5%
Black 1.1%

2. Medium Term Financial Forecast

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

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

Revenue Spending Plans

No	General Fund Net Service Expenditure	2012/13 ACTUAL	2013/14 REVISED	2014/15 ESTIMATE	2015/16 ESTIMATE	2016/17 ESTIMATE
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	Central and corporate services					
1	Strategic directors	0	0	0	0	0
2	Chief Executive / Performance and Service Support	0	0	0	0	0
3	Internal audit	0	0	0	0	0
4	Civic Governance and Democratic Representation	1,250	1,187	1,243	1,298	1,340
5	Legal services	0	0	0	0	0
6	Other corporate costs	1,147	1,032	1,707	1,464	1,521
	Net total - Central and corporate services	2,397	2,219	2,950	2,762	2,861
	Communities and Housing					
1	Homelessness and Housing advice	438	423	403	410	422
2	Strategic housing and Housing management	10	10	11	11	11
3	Revenues and Benefits	1,163	1,432	1,410	1,535	1,667
4	Local land charges	2	26	25	29	34
5	Concessionary travel	1	1	1	1	1
	Net total - Communities and Housing	1,614	1,892	1,850	1,986	2,135
	Environment					
1	Environmental health	674	925	907	795	817
2	Street scene and operational services	1,253	1,185	1,253	1,199	1,227
3	Refuse & recycling	961	1,201	1,232	1,339	1,469
4	Parks & open spaces	1,155	919	728	737	752
5	Leisure centres, golf course and community centres	1,832	1,587	1,758	1,879	1,946
6	Public conveniences	128	141	134	134	139
7	Parking	(363)	(238)	(428)	(422)	(416)
	Net total - Environment	5,640	5,720	5,584	5,661	5,934
	Regeneration and Neighbourhoods					
1	Development control	516	570	511	536	574
2	Building control	201	236	218	221	231
3	Regeneration	269	290	260	264	166
4	Partnerships, community engagement and community safety	316	387	320	324	331
5	Licensing and public transport schemes	71	120	101	52	117
	Net total - Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	1,373	1,603	1,410	1,397	1,419
	Resources					
1	Financial services	0	0	0	0	0
2	Information technology	0	0	0	0	0
3	Facilities and asset management	69	77	79	81	84
4	Human resources	0	0	0	0	0
	Net total - Resources	69	77	79	81	84

3. Corporate and Service Action Planning

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

ORDINARY COUNCIL

23rd July 2014

Subject: Notices of Motion

1. Purpose of Report

To present to Council Notices of Motion received for consideration at this meeting.

1. Councillor Blackwell has given notice of the following:

‘Canvey Independent Party calls upon this administration to help local businesses at the Furtherwick Road Shopping Centre by abolishing the Oak Road car park charges.’

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Mrs Janice Payne.

This Motion will be adjourned without debate to the next Council meeting to enable Cabinet to consider whether it wishes to report on the matter. Council Procedure Rule 13 Motions on Expenditure applies.

2. Councillor Anderson has given notice of the following:

‘We, the Canvey Island Independent Party Councillors would propose that this Council put back into working order the running track behind Waterside Farm, for the benefit of all residents and running clubs, in Castle Point. This would enable the Council to make good its promise to put in place facilities to help our residents keep fit in order to raise the health and Wellbeing in the Borough

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Neville Watson.

This Motion will be adjourned without debate to the next Council meeting to enable Cabinet to consider whether it wishes to report on the matter. Council Procedure Rule 13 Motions on Expenditure applies.

3. Councillor Neville Watson has given notice of the following

Regarding the New Tidal Pool on Canvey Sea Fronts Concorde Beach in South Ward.

'We the Canvey Independent Party call upon Castle Point Borough Council to complete the long overdue works to make the new Tidal Pool safe.

The previous concreting of the pool bed has already been identified as unsafe and Cabinet has already agreed the funds needed to rectify it, 18 months on why has nothing been done.

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Campagna.

4. Councillor Mrs. Grace Watson has given notice of the following:

'We the Canvey Independent Party call upon Castle Point Borough Council to write to Essex County Council and bring the case for Castle Point to have its Street lights turned back on after 12am thus taking away our residents fear and actual crime'

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Neville Watson.

5. Councillor Neville Watson has given notice of the following:

'We the Canvey Independent Party request to have it explained to us why there is a delay, in the setting up of the Task and Finish Group tasked to evaluate the consultation responses emanating from the Draft New Local Plan.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the monitoring officer's judgement should be supported by this Chamber with regard to the suitability of those members on this committee '

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Mrs. Grace Watson.

6. Councillor Hart has given notice of the following:

'That the Constitution of Castle Point Borough Council be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny of Castle Point Borough Council for it to be scrutinised by the Councillors of that Committee.

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Martin Tucker