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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 **TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 2019 at 7.30 p.m.**, and all Members of the Council, listed below, are hereby summoned to attend to transact the undermentioned business.

Councillors, C.G. Riley, (The Worshipful the Mayor), Mrs P. Haunts, (Deputy Mayor), A.J. Acott, J. Anderson, D.A. Blackwell, Mrs.J.A Blissett, B. Campagna, S. Cole, D.T. Cross, J.M.Cutler, W.J.C. Dick, Ms.N.B.Drogman, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, M.J Fuller, P.C. Greig, S.Hart, N.R. Harvey, G.I. Isaacs, W. Johnson, C.A. MacLean, P.J. May, C.E. Mumford, B.A. Palmer, J.A. Payne, Mrs. J. Payne, Mrs C.J Sach, W.K.Sharp, A.G. Sheldon, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, A. Taylor, D.J.Thomas, Mrs J Thornton M.A Tucker, P.E.Varker, A.C.Walter, Mrs L. Wass, G.St.J. Withers and B.S. Wood.

**Chief Executive**

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## **AGENDA**

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### **PART I**

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

**1. Apologies for absence**

**2. Members' Interests**

**3. Minutes**

To receive the following:

- Minutes of the meeting of the Ordinary Council held on 30th July 2019.

**4. New Castle Point Local Plan**

In order to assist the conduct of business at this meeting. This item will be brought forward for consideration. A report is attached.

**5. Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor will report at the meeting.

- 6. Questions from members of the public of which Notice has been received**  
There are none.
- 7. Questions from Members of the Council of which Notice has been received**  
There are none.
- 8. To deal with any business from the last Council Meeting**  
There is none.
- 9. Any explanations for urgent decisions taken by Cabinet**  
There are none.
- 10. Consideration of recommendations from Cabinet:**  
Council is requested to consider recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 18th September 2019 on which reports are attached:  
  
(a) Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh)  
  
(b) Empty Homes Premium & Second Homes – Council Tax
- 11. Any References from the Scrutiny/Policy and Scrutiny or Regulatory Committees**  
There are none.
- 12. Review of Members Allowances**  
A report is attached.
- 13. Changes to Committee Appointments**  
As a result of Councillor Cole's decision to leave the Conservative Group and stand as an Independent Member. Council will be asked to formally confirm his membership of the Place and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the Review committee. Council will also be asked to approve appointments to the Audit Committee.
- 14. Report from the Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member**  
The Leader is to report at the meeting.
- 15. Notices of Motion**  
These are attached, as both notices have financial implications the Motions will be deferred without debate for a report to Cabinet Council Procedure Rule 13 applies.
- 16. Petitions submitted by Members of the Council of which Notice has been given.**



## ORDINARY COUNCIL MINUTES

**30TH JULY 2019**

MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Castle Point held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley on 30th July 2019.

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors, C.G. Riley,(The Worshipful the Mayor), Mrs P. Haunts,(Deputy Mayor), A.J. Acott, J. Anderson, Mrs.J.A Blissett, B. Campagna, S. Cole, D.T. Cross, J.M.Cutler, W.J.C. Dick, Ms.N.B.Drogman, M.J Fuller, S.Hart, G.I. Isaacs, W. Johnson, C.A. MacLean, C.E. Mumford, B.A. Palmer, J.A.Payne, Mrs. J. Payne, A.G. Sheldon, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, D.J.Thomas, M.A Tucker, P.E.Varker, A.C.Walter, G.St.J. Withers and B.S. Wood.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.A. Blackwell, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, P.C. Greig, N.R Harvey, P.J. May, Mrs C.J Sach, W.K.Sharp, A. Taylor, Mrs J Thornton and Mrs L. Wass.

### **17. IN MEMORIAM: MAYOR AND FORMER COUNCILLOR MRS WENDY GOODWIN**

At the beginning of the meeting all present stood in silence in memory of Mayor and former Councillor Mrs Wendy Goodwin. Mrs Goodwin was first elected to the Council in 1987 representing the St. Mary's Ward until 1995 returning to the Council to represent Boyce Ward in 1999 until standing down from the Council in May this year. A member of the Cabinet between 2008 until 2014, Mrs Goodwin held the office of Mayor for the year 2004 to 2005. During her year of office she raised funds for the Sir Bernard Braine Memorial Clock on Vic House Corner roundabout.

During the formal tribute the Leader put forward a proposal which was agreed by Council that the housing development taking place at Hatley Gardens, Benfleet be named in Mrs Goodwin's memory 'Wendy Goodwin Court'.

**Resolved** unanimously.

### **18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **19. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council held on 27th March 2019, the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 15th May 2019 and the Minutes of the

Special Council held on 17th July 2019 were taken as read and approved as a correct record. The Mayor signed the Minutes.

## **20. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor:

- Was pleased to announce his three chosen charities for this year were the Little Haven's Hospice, Trustlinks and Yellow Door Canvey Youth Project. Arrangements were underway for three events a Golf Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> September to raise funds for Trustlinks and a Charity Dinner for Little Haven's on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Yellow Door Canvey Youth Project was to start the proceedings with a Skate Jam at Waterside Farm an all-day event on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August. The Mayor requested support for these and other events on which he would keep all informed.
- Was enjoying his first few months in office as Mayor. It was a very busy time with a great number of events during the summer - garden parties, school fetes and concerts, schools swimming galas. The Mayor was extremely impressed by the valuable work being undertaken by community groups across the Borough and the enthusiasm of our schools.
- Was delighted that the Deputy Mayor was able to attend on his behalf the very successful Armed Forces Day event held on Canvey Island on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June.
- Thanked the organisers of the Canvey Carnival for a very enjoyable time on 6<sup>th</sup> July.
- Very much enjoyed the successful Castle Point Show held on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The best yet it was a very happy family day and was enjoyed by everyone. The Mayor thanked all involved in this very successful day.

## **21. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED**

Mr Moeller, a local resident had given notice under Council Procedure Rule 8.3 of the following question to the Leader of the Council:

As you know I have been affected by a poor planning decision, seconded by you, my Ward Councillor (Boyce Ward Benfleet) and proposed by Councillor Bill Sharp (St James Ward Hadleigh).

In one of the published reports into Councillor Sharp's activities on the Development Control Committee the author recommended further investigation into Councillor Sharp's actions on that Committee, implemented by your predecessor.

Could you now give the Borough and myself an update on those proceedings and also please could you give an update on what action is being taken on the Planning Improvement Peer Challenge Report carried out in April this year?

The Leader replied as follows:

In response to Mr Moeller's question asking what action I am going to be taking.

First he mentions a poor planning decision taken in January 2016 over 3½ years ago. This planning judgement was taken by the whole Development Control Committee who delivered a majority decision and not the one or two individuals picked up in his question.

Investigations were requested by the Opposition Leader Cllr Blackwell into Cllr Sharp's actions and were subsequently held in August of 2017. These inquiries and investigations cleared Mr Sharp of any misconduct. So in answer to the question I believe that you are innocent until proved guilty so I will take no action on the above question.

Mr Moeller also has asked for an update on the recommendations in the Peer Review. We will be reviewing and implementing the Cabinet's decision on those recommendations post the Local Plan process as most of these recommendations within the report are related to that very process.

Cllr Sharp has given his apologies this evening but has phoned me today when he's read the report. He said he is not affected by the continued harassment by Mr Moeller but he feels it's about time it stopped. Any further actions he said will result in a full report being sent to Cllr Sharp's lawyer. Thank you Mr Mayor.

**22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF WHICH NOTICE HAD BEEN RECEIVED**

There were none

**23. TO DEAL WITH ANY BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

There was none.

**24. ANY EXPLANATIONS FOR URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET**

There were none.

**25. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET:**

There were none.

**26. ANY REFERENCES FROM THE SCRUTINY, POLICY & SCRUTINY OR REGULATORY COMMITTEES**

There were none.

**27. FINANCIAL RESULTS AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2018/19**

The Council considered a report containing the financial out-turn results and audited Statement of Accounts for approval by Council.

An amendment was circulated to the Statement of Accounts detailing one non – adjusting event to report the Council decision to approve the purchase of the Knightswick Shopping Centre, Canvey Island.

The Statement of Accounts must be prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and proper accounting requirements, as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, and the associated Guidance notes for Practitioners.

The accounts had been available for public inspection, the Council's External Auditors Ernst and Young undertook their audit of the Statement of Accounts in June and July 2019. The final audited accounts would be published on the Council's website following approval.

In order to ensure that the accounts were subject to robust scrutiny additional guidance had been produced. Annexe A contained a summary of the 2018/19 financial results for the Council's three main funds: the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme. Annexe B contained supporting information for the benefit of Members including explanations of changes to the format of the financial statements and an analysis of figures and disclosures presented in the accounts. A summary of the Accounts was also before the Council. A separate report to Audit Committee in July 2019 had summarised the Council's Treasury Management activity for 2018/19 and was also to be reported to Cabinet in September 2019.

The Deputy Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Finance, Policy and Resources presented the accounts highlighting the financial results, the Council's spending and income; the External Auditor 's report on which there were no matters to report ,the sections dealing with cash flow, reserves and assets .

The Deputy Leader commended the Statement of Accounts to the Council as being robust demonstrating sound budgeting and good budgetary control. He thanked Ian Stapleton and the Financial Services Officers for completing so efficiently the Accounts process as required within the tight statutory timescales

The Council examined the accounts. The Deputy Leader responded to questions on the accounts and advised that Member sessions were to be scheduled in the Autumn to increase the opportunity for all Councillors to be involved in the budget setting process. The Council concurred with the view that the overall financial results for 2018/19 generally indicated sound budgeting and good budgetary control. Councillors acknowledged and thanked the Strategic Director (Resources) and officers for their work.

**Resolved:**

That following scrutiny:

1. The financial results for 2018/19 and explanations of budget variances and significant items are noted.
2. To approve the audited Statement of Accounts  
(Note: The Mayor signed the Accounts.)

**28. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL/CABINET MEMBER**

The Leader of the Council was pleased to report that since the Special Meeting of the Council earlier in month contracts for the purchase of the Knightswick Shopping Centre had been exchanged. Completion was to take place by 31.10.2019. The Leader had extended an invitation the Leader of the Canvey Island Independent Group to take part in Working Groups to take advantage of the opportunities to regenerate the Canvey Town Centre and other projects going forward on Canvey Island.

Mindful that it was some time since the Members' Allowances Scheme had been reviewed the Leader asked the Chief Executive to report to the next Council meeting on the formal arrangements required to undertake an independent review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

**29. NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were none.

**30. PETITIONS**

There were none.

**Mayor**

**ORDINARY COUNCIL**

**22nd October 2019**

**Subject: Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh)**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Council approval for the proposed draft Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh).

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

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

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Council considers and adopts the Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh) in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That Council notes the 2019/20 annual objectives detailed in Chapter 10 of the refreshed corporate plan and that these will form the basis of the 2020/21 annual objectives to bring corporate planning and financial planning cycles back into alignment.
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**4. Background**

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is an important document for the Council. It sets out the strategic direction for the organisation as well as how the Council will achieve its aims and priorities through appropriate action planning.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan for 2018-21 was informed by Policy and Scrutiny sessions during 2017 and in early 2018. It was also subject to public consultation and was circulated to partner organisations.
- 4.4 At the meeting of Cabinet on 17 July 2019, the refreshed corporate plan was referred to a special meeting of Scrutiny and all Policy and Scrutiny Committees which took place on 20 August 2019. Several changes were proposed to the annual objectives in Chapter 10; these changes were considered and agreed by Cabinet on 18 September 2019.
- 4.5 The refreshed Corporate Plan is presented to Council for formal adoption.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 The Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh) is attached as Appendix 1 and sets out the medium-term priorities for the Council which are:

Environment  
Housing and Regeneration  
Health and Community Safety  
Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council

- 5.2 These priorities are based on an analysis of needs and issues for the borough as well as consultation results which are set out in Chapter 3 of the corporate plan. The plan also considers partner priorities and recent legislation which impacts on the direction the Council needs to take. The plan details both medium term priorities and annual objectives with a range of targets and actions.

### *Annual objectives 2019/20*

- 5.3 Chapter 10 of the Corporate Plan sets out the annual objectives which are designed to ensure that the Council can achieve these medium-term corporate priorities. The objectives are refreshed each year; this is the first refresh, relating to the 2019/20 financial year.
- 5.4 A number of the annual objectives continue to be appropriate for the current financial year and so remain in the refreshed corporate plan. These include:

#### *Overarching Objective*

- To work with local authorities and partners to prepare a long-term strategy for the development of, and investment in, South Essex including a coherent approach to economic development, transportation, housing, town centre regeneration and planning policy. To adjust the Council's corporate plan in alignment with the strategy developed.

#### *Priority: Environment*

- Ensure that the Borough's Parks, Public Open Spaces, Seafront & Foreshore, Ancient Woodlands, Walks and Leisure facilities are well maintained, accessible and publicised to increase usage and satisfaction rates

#### *Priority: Housing & Regeneration*

- Engage with the public and private sector to promote and obtain the development of good quality housing in the borough including affordable housing, market housing and social housing
- To improve the public realm of our town centres and deliver effective master planning for key sites
- Agreement of the Local Plan and successful examination of the plan leading to its approval

*Priority: Health & Community Safety*

- Develop partnership arrangements to create greater opportunities for more effective joint working, including healthy living and community safety
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of the Licensing Service and Community Safety work

*Priority: Commercial & Democratically Accountable Council*

- Ensure the organisation has the right capacity and resources in place for effective customer focussed services whilst ensuring a balanced budget for 2020/21 and future years
- Ensure the Council is fit for purpose by meeting national and local requirements to agreed timescales and to optimum performance standards

- 5.5 There are also some new objectives, derived from a review of service plans, which have been included for 2019/20:

*Priority: Environment*

- Re-develop The Paddocks community hall to ensure the provision of a modern and efficient facility that is valued by the local community
- Engage with and influence the development of the new Resources and Waste Strategy for England

*Priority: Housing & Regeneration*

- Develop and implement a strategic approach to dealing with homelessness

*Priority: Commercial & Democratically Accountable Council*

- Implement initiatives to reduce costs of delivery whilst maintaining excellent customer services

- 5.6 The refresh also includes: the latest results of the Essex Place Survey for 2018 in Chapter 3.1; an Annual Report updated for 2018/19 in Annexe 1; and an updated Financial Report in Annexe 2. These were not the focus of the scrutiny meeting referenced in section 4.4 of this covering report.

*Re-aligning corporate planning and financial planning*

- 5.7 Council will note that this refresh is presented for consideration and adoption at a meeting halfway through the current financial year. Clearly it is right and appropriate for Council to adopt this refreshed corporate plan. However, in order that the corporate planning and financial planning are better aligned, and to reflect that many of these objectives span more than one financial year, it is proposed that the 2019/20 annual objectives will also form the basis of the 2020/21 annual objectives.
- 5.8 There may be the need to make some minor changes to these objectives as the latest service plans develop over the Autumn of 2019. Therefore, these annual objectives (including any changes) will be presented as an appendix to

the Policy Framework and Budget Setting 2020/21 report to Special Council in February 2020.

- 5.9 In future years, it is proposed that development of the corporate plan follows broadly the same route as the corporate plan 2018-21. That is, development through the Policy and Scrutiny committees and subject to consultation with the public and partners before adoption by Council. However, development will be brought forward to the last year of the current plan so that it is ready for adoption in February 2021. In the intervening years, the annual objectives will be developed over the Autumn as new service plans emerge. These annual objectives will be presented for adoption by Council in February of each year as part of the Policy Framework and Budget Setting process.
- 5.10 Scrutiny's role in these intervening years will be to scrutinise the delivery of the corporate plan through review of the annual report, which is included as an annexe to the corporate plan.

## **6. 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.

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

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

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the Corporate Plan 2018-21 which showed potential for a positive impact on the following groups of people:

- Development and agreement of Local Plan: Positive impact on various groups with development of new sustainable housing, development of community infrastructure etc.
- Development and acquisition of social housing: Positive impact on elderly population (new sheltered housing) Disabled people (new housing that is fully accessible), pregnancy and maternity (new housing).
- Continue to support the Community Safety Partnership in meeting its strategic priorities of reducing anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, acquisitive crime and re-offending: Positive impact for younger people.
- Reducing the fear of crime: Positive impact for elderly people.
- Construction or acquisition of 25 new units for homeless people: To help meet needs of vulnerable groups.

Full details are shown in the Equality Impact Assessment background paper which has been updated for this 2019 refresh.

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

This is set out in the Corporate Plan.

## **8. Background Papers**

Report to Cabinet on 17 July 2019 - *Corporate Plan Refresh 2019/20*

Report to Scrutiny and all Policy and Scrutiny Committees on 20 August 2019  
- *Corporate Plan Refresh 2019/20*

Report to Cabinet on 18 September 2019 - *Matters referred from Scrutiny and all Policy and Scrutiny Committees – Response to Referral by Cabinet of Corporate Plan 2018-21 (2019 Refresh)*

Equality Impact Assessment – screening and full assessment 2019 update

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# Corporate Plan 2018 – 2021

(2019 Refresh)



castlepoint

benfleet | canvey | hadleigh | thundersley

# Castle Point Borough Council Corporate Plan

2018 – 2021

(2019 Refresh)

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## Foreword

Welcome to our new corporate plan, which has been carefully developed through a joint policy and scrutiny committee during 2017.

In developing this plan, we have consulted our community and recognise that some of the key issues that are important to our residents include a high-quality environment, with accessible open spaces and good quality parks, play areas, footpaths and highways. Town centre improvements remain an issue, particularly for Canvey and Hadleigh and there is a need to meet the demand for housing in a sustainable way that includes market housing as well as affordable housing. We also realise there are further challenges facing the borough, and these are set out in more detail within this plan.

The Council recognises that the ongoing impact of austerity means that we continue to face acute challenges with the need to find efficiencies and cost savings in a climate where good public services for our community must continue to be our priority. The Council has a good track record of making savings whilst maintaining services and important achievements over the last year include the successful implementation of our green wheelie bin garden recycling service, and the further construction of new council homes, with two new bungalows at Lawns Court. We have also recently extended our leisure facilities at Runnymede, Benfleet to include a new gym facility which will provide access to state-of-the-art equipment for our residents at very competitive prices. This new facility also helps to provide greater opportunities for exercise and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Whilst the Council's local plan did not progress as expected, we are working hard to complete its development and have set an ambitious target to submit a sound local plan to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by March 2019.

We are also working closely with partners as part of a wider South Essex 2050 strategic partnership, which will see all Council's in the South Essex area working closely to achieve a strategic planning framework that will complement the development of our Local Plan.

Our priorities are set out in more detail in this document and we are committed to working closely with our community to achieve our vision of 'A community where everyone can prosper, be safe and live in a high-quality environment'

Councillor Norman Smith  
Leader of the Council  
July 2018

David Marchant  
Chief Executive  
July 2018

## Our Medium-Term Priorities and Targets

This plan details how we have identified four medium term priorities, which include:

- **Environment**
- **Housing and Regeneration**
- **Health and Community Safety**
- **A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

A brief overview of the targets for each priority is set out below:

### **Priority: Environment**

#### **Our Targets:**

**Percentage of households using the chargeable wheelie bin garden waste recycling service - 10% by March 2018, 20% by March 2019 and 30% by March 2020**

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

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

**At least 80% satisfaction with parks and open spaces (March 2021)**

*Rationale: To improve 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 2021)**

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

### **Priority: Housing and Regeneration**

#### **Our Targets:**

**Construction of homes in accordance with the local housing target, as set out in the national guidance and the new local plan.**

**Construction or acquisition of a total of 40 new affordable or social rented homes by the Housing Service by March 2021. (Baseline March 2014).**

**Construction or acquisition of 25 new units for homeless people by March 2021 (Baseline March 2015).**

*Rationale: There is an acute shortage of affordable housing in the borough and temporary accommodation for homeless people. New homes are urgently needed.*

**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 2021).**

*Rationale: 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.*

### **Priority: Health and Community Safety**

**Our Targets:**

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

**Promote and communicate neighbourhood watch and other schemes to help develop community resilience and reduce the fear of crime.**

**Reduce the proportion of people who feel unsafe after dark to 35% (March 2021)**

*Rationale: 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:**

- **Promoting the new dry side facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre and the Waterside Leisure Centre with the aim of having and retaining 3000 signed up leisure memberships by March 2019.**
- **Publishing and promote comprehensive information on our parks, open spaces, seafront and woodland walks (by March 2019)**
- **Undertaking activities to promote the use of parks, open spaces, seafront and woodland walks including working with voluntary groups to promote guided walks etc. (Programme in place by March 2020, to be measured by number of participants)**

- **Assist community and voluntary groups to fulfil their aspiration to further develop the Gunny recreational space with play and other facilities by March 2020**

*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.*

## **Priority: A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

### **Our Targets:**

**Delivery of a balanced budget in current and future years. (Ongoing).**

**The development and adoption of a set of commercial principles which express what commercialism means specifically to this authority**

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

**Re-develop the approach to Community Engagement with a review and implementation of a new approach to Neighbourhood Meetings and partnership with the Town Council and partner organisations including the County Council and Highways Authority, Health Services, and the Police.**

*Rationale: There is a perception that residents are not sufficiently involved in decision making and that the borough and county council do not provide value for money and that resident views are not listened to. There is a need to address this situation with a refresh of the approach to community engagement.*

To clarify how we identified the priorities above, this plan further details the pressures faced by the Council and area, the results of public consultation as well as the impact of recent legislation.

## 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
	South East Essex 2050 Partnership Community Strategy	Corporate Plan
Localism Act Energy Act Equality Act 2010 National Planning Policy Framework Health and Social Care Act	Local Enterprise Partnership Community Strategy	Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Delivery plans Corporate Plan Local Plan (in development)
Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) / Welfare Reform Act		Other cross cutting strategies and plans
Homelessness Reduction Act		
Government Budget Setting National Waste Strategy		Medium term financial forecast Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
National Housing Strategy Homeless Reduction Act		Housing Strategy

### 1.1 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:

<b>Equality:</b>	Fair treatment for all
<b>Respect:</b>	Respect each other
<b>Integrity:</b>	Integrity in all of the work we do
<b>Caring:</b>	Listening and acting on staff, Councillor and customer needs
<b>Innovation:</b>	Seeking new, improved and sustainable ways of working
<b>Teamwork:</b>	Valuing everyone's contribution
<b>Accountability:</b>	We will be open and accountable to our residents, customers, partners, Councillors and staff.

## 1.2 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.

### 1.3 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 Profile of Castle Point

Welcome to Castle Point – a small Borough covering just 17.3 square miles, and an estimated population of 89,700. We are located in South Essex at the heart of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region, between Basildon and Southend.

Just over 55% of Castle Point's land is designated as Green Belt. As a result, most of the Borough's population live within one of four towns Benfleet (22%), Canvey Island (43%), Hadleigh (14%), and Thundersley (21%).

The borough benefits from good links to London such as the Fenchurch Street railway line, the dual carriageways of the A13 and the A127, which link within half an hour to the M25 motorway. Castle Point as an area has a long history but is essentially modern in character, there are a few older buildings still remaining although major re-development took place mainly between the two world wars. Whilst there has been major residential re-development in the area there still remain large areas of public open space and woodland.

The Borough has a number of challenges:

- **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 generally low skilled. There is a high dependence on public sector work 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** - Two major hazardous installations (Calor and Oikos) located on Canvey Island, as well as the risk of tidal and fluvial flooding, create public safety concerns for residents, despite the management of those risks.
- **Ageing Population** - The population of the Borough is ageing. The proportion of people over the age of 65 is above average and a 19% increase is expected between 2015 and 2025. By 2030 a total of 30% of the population is projected to be 65 or over. This has implications for accommodation provision and healthcare services in particular. For example, figures for the percentage of people with diabetes and for people with dementia will be higher as elderly people may be more susceptible to these illnesses.

- **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. Between 2015 and 2025, the 5-10 and 11-15 year old age groups will be the biggest growing age groups for children: an increase of 432 and 420 respectively. School places and services will need to be available to support these changes. There is currently a perception that young people do not have enough to occupy them, resulting in crime and anti-social behaviour. This issue needs to be addressed to achieve greater community cohesion.
- **Impact of the Recession** - Economic activity and employment rates are volatile and the percentage of people claiming out of work benefits is 6.7% of the population although this is below the national average of 8.4% (as at November 2016).
- **Skills and Qualifications** - Castle Point has significantly lower numbers of people qualified at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4 or above when compared to the national average. Just 17.5% of the population has qualifications at NVQ level 4 or above compared to the average for Great Britain of 38.2%. Pupil attainment in GCSE's is also below average. The percentage of pupils obtaining 5 A-C's in 2015 was 52.2% compared to the average for Essex of 57.6%.
- **Health** – For a variety of health statistics, Castle Point is around the average or better. However, the key issues relate to lifestyle factors including obesity, poor eating habits and below average physical activity. Castle Point has the highest smoking rate in the county (26.9% of the population) and is above the national average for obesity at 64.6% of the population. Castle Point also has the second highest rate of diabetes at 7.3% significantly above the national average at 6.4%.
- **Community Safety** – Whilst crime is generally average or below, the fear of crime is significantly high and is a cause for concern amongst our residents. In June 2017 the total number of crimes over a twelve month period per thousand residents was 50.03, below the Essex average of 69.01 and slightly below the average for similar districts which was 51.79. However, fear of crime is substantially higher. In 2016 the proportion of people who felt unsafe after dark was 39%, the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in Essex.
- **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. A Haredi Jewish population has recently relocated to Canvey Island. The community has purchased an old senior school site and established a synagogue, community centre and school. Plans for the near future include a significant increase in the number of families buying properties and moving to the Island.

## 2.1 Key Facts

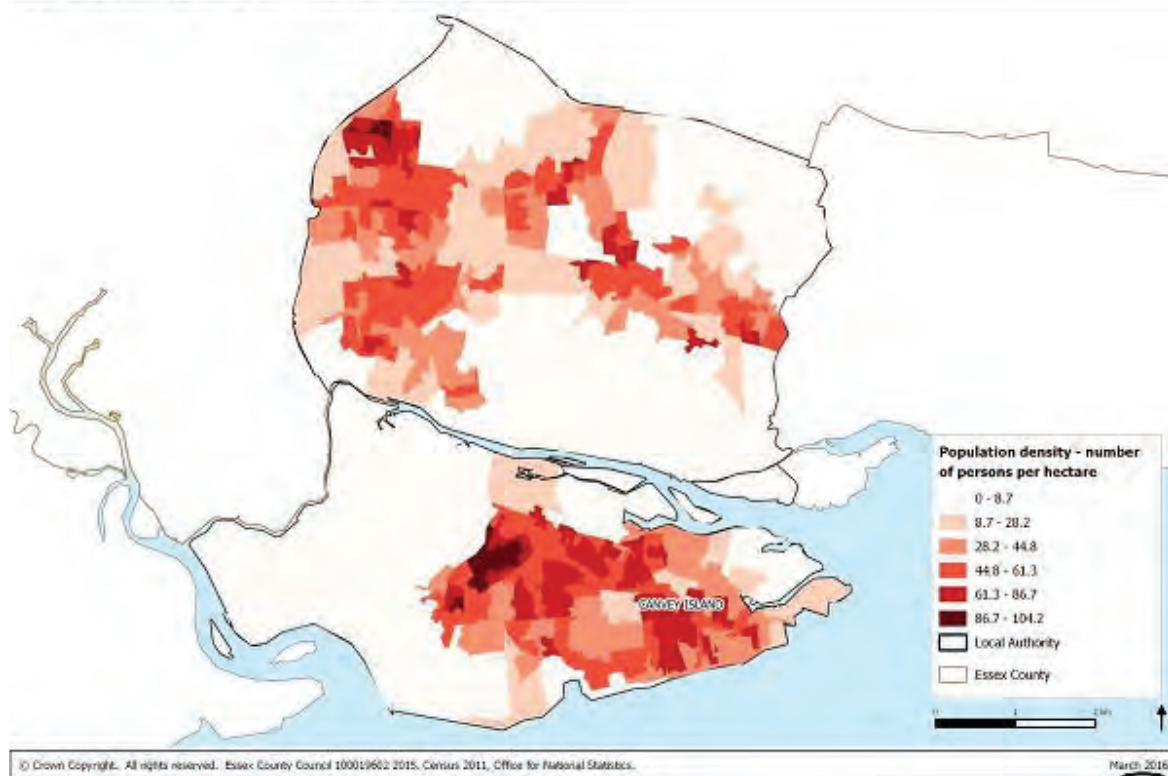
Area: 45.08 km<sup>2</sup> (17.41 square miles)  
Rural Land Area: 60%  
Population: 88,900(2014 Estimate)  
Population Density: 1,921.2/km<sup>2</sup> (4,976 / square mile)  
Households: 36,730 (2015)  
Workforce: 46,900 (2015)  
Unemployment: 1% receiving out of works benefits (January 2018)  
A total of 3.2% of the working population are not working  
The national average is 4.5% for all non-working people

Ethnicity: White 96%  
Asian 1.5%  
Black 1.1%

## 2.2 Population Density

Castle Point has a population density of 19.21 persons per hectare, the second highest district in the county and considerably above the 4.0 average for the whole of Essex. The population density map below shows the highest rates of population are in the centre/south east of Canvey Island and within the towns of Benfleet and Hadleigh, although there are also expanses of low population density. Just 51% of the Castle Point district is classified as green space, the lowest proportion in the county (the Essex highest figure is 93% in Uttlesford): green spaces are important for wellbeing, community cohesion and for wildlife.

**Population Density in Castle Point, 2011**



## 2.3 Housing

A total of 82.9% of households in Castle Point are people that own their own homes (either with a mortgage or outright), more than nationally (64.2%) and the whole of Essex (72.0%). There is a very low proportion of social tenants (5.4%), who may be impacted by low stock levels, and low proportion of private tenants (11.8%).

Castle Point Council is the second lowest stockholding Council in the Country with just over 1,500 homes. This results in a shortage of affordable housing for which there is an acute demand.

Lack of affordable housing remains a significant issue in Castle Point, for example 57.4% (November 2017) of households cannot afford a flat based on a mortgage at 3.0 times their income. This is more acute for first time buyers as illustrated in the table below:

### 3 times income

Castle Point District (B)	
Percent of households priced out of market	
FTB households - Flats	64.03%
FTB households - Terraced houses	82.25%
FTB households - Semi-detached houses	89.51%
FTB households - Detached houses	89.51%
Owner occupier - Flats	57.41%
Owner occupier - Terraced houses	74.35%
Owner occupier - Semi-detached houses	82.25%
Owner occupier - Detached houses	85.23%

House prices are increasing and for example lower quartile prices in Castle Point were £163,000 in February 2013 increasing to £244,000 in November 2017, a percentage increase of 49.7% in under five years. 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.

## 2.4 Energy Usage and Pollution

Climate change is a significant issue for the UK and the Council has arrangements in place to measure and monitor green-house gas emissions such as Carbon Dioxide. Comparison of emissions was undertaken in 2014 for all district councils and is set out in the table below:

Local Authority CO <sub>2</sub> emissions estimates (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> ) 2014				
Local Authority	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Total
Basildon	262,700	285,200	290,900	838,800
Braintree	243,200	252,500	352,200	847,900
Brentwood	95,700	150,100	209,500	455,300
Castle Point	<b>58,000</b>	<b>158,200</b>	<b>107,000</b>	<b>323,200</b>
Chelmsford	280,700	296,400	379,600	956,700
Colchester	263,800	293,200	347,400	904,400
Epping Forest	187,500	252,100	189,100	628,700
Harlow	145,100	125,600	79,900	350,600
Maldon	98,900	117,800	83,900	300,600
Rochford	70,200	149,600	103,400	323,200
Southend	184,100	307,600	154,100	645,800
Tendring	184,300	249,400	240,300	674,000
Thurrock	381,100	239,200	311,400	931,700
Uttlesford	187,000	163,200	239,700	589,900
<b>Essex Total</b>	<b>2,642,300</b>	<b>2,493,400</b>	<b>2,622,800</b>	<b>7,758,500</b>

Unsurprisingly, authorities with higher populations, transport and industry have higher emission estimates. This includes Chelmsford, Thurrock and Colchester. The lowest areas are Maldon, Castle Point and Rochford.

With the introduction of Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding from 2012, the Council has participated in the Essex Energy Partnership and monitored the number of measures installed. In 2016 Castle Point had the second highest number of ECO measures per 1,000 households at 64.4 compared to an Essex average of 48.2. The average for the Eastern region is 48.5 and the all England average is 72.4.

Fuel poverty in Castle Point is below the Essex average. Fuel poverty is defined by the government as a household that has:

- required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

The percentage of households in Castle Point considered to meet this definition in 2014 was 6.4%. The lowest was Rochford at 6.2% and the highest was Uttlesford at 9.7%. The Essex average is 7.5%.

The Council's housing service has also undertaken work to improve energy efficiency within Council housing stock. Since September 2016 we have been working in partnership with Aaron Services to help maximise ECO funding and undertake a variety of boiler installations. The carbon savings for the jobs completed by Aran so far is 562.65mt – the equivalent of 94 double decker buses.

We will continue to monitor CO2 emissions and will work to undertake further improvements to energy efficiency, for example by continuing to install modern 'A' class boilers to our Council homes.

## Chapter 3: Consulting with our Communities

### 3.1 Essex Place Survey 2018 (Updated)

This is undertaken by Essex County Council each year and includes a number of questions that are relevant to the understanding of Essex and individual district council's understanding of the place.

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

In 2018 an Essex Wide place survey found that satisfaction with the area as a place to live was the third lowest at 74% for Castle Point. The Essex average for satisfaction was 80%. This comparatively low satisfaction level may be related to the population density of the borough with urban areas typically scoring lower than rural areas.

#### 3.1.2 Community Cohesion / Local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

The same survey found that Castle Point residents were less likely than other districts in Essex to agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (71% agreed). The lowest was 67% and the highest 81% with average for Essex of 75%. Castle Point does not have an ethnically diverse population but does have communities with a strong sense of locality.

#### 3.1.3 Satisfaction with Public Services

The Essex Survey also found the following results in 2018:

	Local tips/ Household Waste Recycling Centres		Libraries		Parks and open spaces	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Basilston	82%	18%	73%	6%	70%	18%
Braintree	77%	17%	79%	5%	78%	8%
Brentwood	80%	11%	75%	6%	87%	7%
Castle Point	67%	24%	70%	2%	70%	12%
Chelmsford	76%	14%	81%	4%	88%	3%
Colchester	68%	13%	69%	7%	79%	10%
Epping Forest	67%	12%	74%	8%	70%	10%
Harlow	78%	9%	50%	11%	73%	12%
Maldon	69%	14%	70%	6%	82%	7%
Rochford	68%	12%	78%	6%	78%	10%
Tendring	71%	10%	60%	9%	71%	12%
Uddesford	77%	11%	72%	9%	75%	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Since the last survey in 2016, satisfaction with parks and open spaces has improved from 71% to 78% or bottom in Essex to 5<sup>th</sup> equal.

### 3.1.4 Accessibility of Services

In terms of accessibility of services, Castle Point performance is consistent as illustrated by the following table which shows the proportion of residents who find it easy to access public services. Castle Point is at or above average in three service areas and just below average for accessibility of Adult Community Learning.

	Local tips/ Household Waste Recycling Centres	Libraries	Parks and open spaces	Adult community learning
Basildon	73%	92%	85%	61%
Braintree	75%	89%	90%	60%
Brentwood	82%	88%	92%	71%
Castle Point	74%	87%	91%	58%
Chelmsford	77%	92%	93%	67%
Colchester	63%	79%	86%	56%
Epping Forest	58%	89%	88%	49%
Harlow	69%	86%	85%	54%
Maldon	78%	87%	93%	60%
Rochford	62%	89%	91%	54%
Tendring	74%	84%	86%	58%
Uttlesford	75%	83%	84%	55%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>59%</b>

### 3.1.5 Satisfaction with Local Roads and Transport

The results are illustrated in the table on the following page:

	Pavements and footpaths	Cycle routes and facilities	Safety on roads	Traffic levels and congestion	Street lighting	The condition of the roads	Local bus services	Local transport information	Highway services overall
Basildon	28%	23%	43%	30%	34%	8%	51%	41%	25%
Braintree	48%	32%	34%	23%	45%	19%	37%	28%	28%
Brentwood	37%	15%	43%	26%	43%	18%	37%	34%	27%
Castle Point	28%	30%	37%	10%	38%	10%	52%	38%	17%
Chelmsford	38%	37%	47%	14%	48%	23%	52%	42%	31%
Colchester	38%	33%	32%	11%	40%	10%	50%	35%	16%
Epping Forest	32%	23%	34%	23%	40%	15%	34%	33%	23%
Harlow	31%	56%	34%	16%	40%	8%	40%	42%	23%
Malden	47%	20%	41%	26%	41%	24%	37%	32%	24%
Hochford	36%	18%	42%	11%	33%	19%	50%	38%	25%
Tendring	32%	22%	35%	30%	43%	12%	44%	22%	20%
Uttlesford	41%	20%	33%	25%	42%	5%	28%	28%	17%
TOTAL	36%	29%	39%	20%	41%	15%	45%	35%	23%

Castle Point was the lowest in 2 of the 9 measures and second lowest for Highways services overall illustrating significant resident concerns with the general condition of the highways, traffic congestion and pavements and footpaths. This is again related to the compact nature of the borough with its high-density resident population.

### 3.1.6 Views on the Council

The **perception of value for money provided by Castle Point** was low when compared to other Essex Districts, with 22% of respondents agreeing that the Council provides value for money, the lowest in Essex alongside Colchester.

**Satisfaction with how the Council runs things** was higher at 36% although below the Essex average of 39% with the lowest score at 32% and the highest at 49%

In respect of **influencing decisions in the local area**, only 15% of respondents believed they could influence decisions in Castle Point. The joint lowest on the county and below the Essex average of 20%.

Residents in Castle Point do not feel well **informed about local public services**; just 34% indicated they are well informed, the lowest in Essex.

### 3.1.7 Fear of Crime

Fear of Crime is high in Castle Point. A total of 62% of respondents were worried about their home being broken into. This is the second highest in Essex. A further 58% were worried about crime in general, again the second highest in Essex.

The proportion of residents who feel safe after dark and during the day is comparatively low at 42% and 82% respectively, both third lowest in Essex.

However, the proportion of residents who feel unsafe is less significantly different to other parts of Essex.

	After dark		During the day	
	Safe	Unsafe	Safe	Unsafe
Basildon	36%	50%	77%	13%
Braintree	53%	31%	88%	4%
Brentwood	57%	26%	93%	3%
Castle Point	42%	38%	82%	8%
Chelmsford	52%	26%	90%	4%
Colchester	47%	36%	87%	5%
Epping Forest	50%	29%	87%	5%
Harlow	33%	47%	80%	10%
Maldon	63%	21%	91%	4%
Rochford	50%	32%	90%	4%
Tendring	44%	37%	82%	8%
Uttlesford	63%	21%	90%	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>6%</b>

### 3.2 Public Consultation undertaken by Castle Point Borough Council

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 2017 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 350 responses, and the results are consistent with previous consultations as summarised below:

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

Rank	Service
1	Waste collection, recycling and composting service
2	Tackling Crime and anti-social behaviour
3	Streets & public areas clean of litter and refuse
4	Controlling & removing dog fouling in public
5	Environmental Health Services

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

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>
1	Events like the Castle Point Show and Fireworks Fiesta
2	Land Charge services
3	Processing applications for housing benefit
4	Processing a planning application
5	Graffiti removal and flyposting

In general, all service areas received significant scores for importance, with even the lowest getting an average of 6 out of 10. Environmental services (including Refuse Collection, Street Scene and Environmental Health) and Crime Reduction continue to be seen as key services for residents. Partnership working to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour also feature strongly. The areas which receive least importance tend to be the statutory services which are not used by significant numbers of the population as well as community events. However, it should be noted that events tend to generate high customer satisfaction by those that attend.

When asked what the priorities for improvement were, environment featured strongly, as did Town Centre improvements and reducing empty homes in the borough:

**Table 3 – Priority Areas for Improvement**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Importance</b>
<b>Look to further improve our environment as a place to live, work and play.</b>	8.9
<b>Work with partners to ensure adequate drainage and flood defences throughout the borough.</b>	8.8
<b>Helping our town centres to thrive.</b>	8.3
<b>Work to reduce the number of empty homes in the borough.</b>	8.2
<b>Develop opportunities for residents to set out their views on Council services and the services of other public organisations such as highways and the police.</b>	8.1
<b>Work more closely with the business community to help develop opportunities for businesses in the borough.</b>	7.8

<b>Improve the health of our community through joint working with partners and providing activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>Work with volunteers and community groups to improve 'hotspots' for example with community litter picks.</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Build more new Council homes and work to ensure housing owned by the Council is of good quality.</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Improve the way the Council communicates with its community such as through the internet.</b>	<b>6.5</b>

### 3.3 Service Satisfaction

A service satisfaction survey was also undertaken in in the summer of 2017 for a range of services. The maximum theoretical score is 10 and the results are as follows:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Satisfaction Score</b>
<b>Waste collection, recycling and composting service</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Overall satisfaction with council services</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Maintaining Parks and Recreation Grounds</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Providing playground facilities for young children</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Sports and leisure facilities and activities</b>	<b>6.8</b>
<b>Environmental Health Services</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>Grass verge cutting</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Building Control Services - checking building works</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Streets &amp; public areas clean of litter and refuse</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Graffiti removal and flyposting</b>	<b>6.1</b>

<b>Events</b>	5.9
<b>Land charges - providing searches for house moves</b>	5.8
<b>Processing a planning application</b>	5.7
<b>Maintaining public toilets</b>	5.7
<b>Controlling &amp; removing dog fouling in public</b>	5.5
<b>Tackling Crime and anti-social behaviour</b>	5.5
<b>Providing and managing housing for council tenants</b>	5.4
<b>Processing applications for housing benefit</b>	5.4
<b>Working with partners to improve your town centre</b>	5.3
<b>Helping homeless people find a home to live in</b>	5.1

To some extent, the results for satisfaction replicate the results for the importance of services, although there are some exceptions. Environmental services (including Refuse Collection, Parks and Playgrounds as well as Sport and Leisure facilities and activities). However, overall satisfaction with Council services is the second highest. The service areas with the lower satisfaction levels tend to be the statutory services of which there will be limited use by a number of respondents. However, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is also relatively low and this may also be linked to resident perceptions of crime and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

### 3.4 Further Views

Respondents set out a range of further views. Whilst these tend to underpin the views above there are a number of further detailed issues including concerns regarding public toilets, street scene and highway issues as well as dog fouling and community safety. These issues are also apparent in the place survey analysis.

## **Chapter 4: The Impact of Legislation and National Priorities**

The national government has produced a range of legislation over recent years, which impact on the business of local authorities and in some areas provide for new roles and responsibilities. These include:

### **4.1 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Act sets out the following:

- An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.
- Clarification of the action an authority should take when someone applies for assistance having been served with a valid section 21 notice of intention to seek possession from an assured shorthold tenancy.
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants.
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### **4.2 Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017**

The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 is intended to strengthen neighbourhood planning by ensuring that planning decision-makers take account of well-advanced neighbourhood development plans by giving these plans full legal effect at an earlier stage.

### **4.3 Housing and Planning Act 2016**

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 contains provisions on new homes (including starter homes), landlords and property agents, abandoned premises, social housing (including extending the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, sale of local authority assets, 'pay-to-stay', and secure tenancies), planning, compulsory purchase and public land (duty to dispose).

### **4.4 Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016**

The Welfare Reform and Work Act takes forward government commitments to introduce a duty to report to Parliament on progress made towards achieving full employment and the three million apprenticeships target in England. The Act also ensures reports on the effect of certain support for troubled families and provision for social mobility, the benefit cap, social security and tax credits, loans for mortgage interest, and social housing rents.

## **4.5 Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016**

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 provides the legal framework for the implementation of devolution deals with combined authorities and other areas. It is an enabling piece of legislation, with further details for different areas to be set out in regulations that will be put before Parliament.

## **4.6 Deregulation Act 2015**

The Deregulation Act 2015 (the Act) provides for the removal or reduction of burdens on businesses, civil society, individuals, public sector bodies and the taxpayer. These include measures relating to general and specific areas of business, companies and insolvency, the use of land, housing, transport, communications, the environment, education and training, entertainment and alcohol, public authorities and the administration of justice.

## **4.7 Infrastructure Act 2015**

The Act covers transport, housing, regeneration, infrastructure and energy. A number of the provisions in the legislation are of importance to, and will affect, local government. These include: the creation of strategic highways companies to replace strategic highways authorities; government investment in cycling and walking; the discharge of certain types of planning conditions; the transfer of publicly held land; the local land charges service; and shale gas extraction.

## **4.8 Earlier Legislation and Guidance**

Earlier legislation which continues to have an impact on Local Authorities includes:

### **4.8.1 Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act obtained Royal Assent in November 2011 and outlines major housing and planning reforms. Major changes were made to homelessness legislation, housing allocations and tenancies. It also marks a shift away from regional planning towards neighbourhood planning, including incentives to promote new development where it is needed locally.

### **4.8.2 National Housing Strategy 2011**

Published in November 2011, the National Housing Strategy set out a number of objectives and actions. Key objectives include:

- Increasing Supply: More Homes, Stable Growth
- Social and Affordable Housing Reform
- A Thriving Private Rented Sector
- A Strategy for Empty Homes

Quality of Housing Experience and Support, including

- Homelessness
- Tenant Empowerment
- Empowering Independence
- New Deal for Older People's Housing
- Quality, Sustainability and Design

#### 4.8.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in April 2012. Broadly, the NPPF provides a set of national planning objectives which are simultaneously designed to support growth, protect the environment and ensure decisions are made at a local level. The principle of “**sustainable development**” is at the heart of the NPPF and it is a concept that permeates the objectives set out in it. It is composed of three key components: economic, environmental and social well-being. The NPPF makes it clear that each component should be given equal weight when the concept of sustainability is considered. The achievement of this objective is structured around the requirement of the planning system that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

#### 4.8.4 Welfare Reform Act 2012

In 2010 the Government announced changes to the welfare system and aims to simplify the benefits system through the implementation of **Universal Credit**. Key changes that impact on housing are summarised below:

**Changes to the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA).** These have been increased from 25 to 35.

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

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

- 14% cut in Housing Benefit if you under-occupy by one bedroom
- 25% cut in Housing Benefit if you under-occupy by two or more bedrooms

**Changes to Council tax benefit.** Effective since April 2013: Council Tax Benefit was replaced by localised support for Council Tax. Local authorities set up new schemes to support people in their own areas within a 10% reduced budget. This will only affect people of working-age who currently receive Council Tax Benefit.

**Implementation of a Benefit Cap.** As part of the Welfare Reform Act there is a cap on the amount of benefits a working-age household can receive, which is currently set to £20k per annum.

**Universal Credit** is to be implemented in Castle Point in July 2018. As part of the new arrangements, the payment of housing benefit will no longer be paid direct to the landlord but to the claimant as part of the universal credit. These changes are likely to lead to significant affordability issues and will result in a loss of rental payments for both the private and social sectors.

The implementation of welfare reforms has and will have significant impact on Council services. For example, following the introduction of the benefit cap, rent arrears are increasing significantly for those households affected.

#### **4.8.5 Consultation on a White Paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market**

In addition, the Government has consulted on a White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'. The emphasis of the Paper was on four areas:

1. Local Planning Authorities planning for the right homes in the right places
2. Building homes faster
3. Diversifying the housing market
4. Helping people right now to invest in affordable homes

Consultation includes a new approach to assessing objectively assessed need' ("OAN") for homes to be implemented by April 2018 and will encourage local authorities to plan for new homes on that basis. Requiring authorities to have an up to date Local Plan. The government is also proposing a new rolling 3-year housing delivery test with a first assessment period from April 2014 – March 2017. It is proposed to use an area's local plan where it is up to date (less than 5 years old) to establish the appropriate baseline for assessing delivery. Where there is not an up to date plan, published household projections for the years leading up to and including April 2017 – March 2019 will be used.

#### **4.9 Austerity**

The impact of Austerity on local authorities has ranged from reductions in central government funding to increased demand for those services which are provided to our residents at times of need. For example, as the impact of austerity takes effect on our residents, demand for welfare support and other services such as housing and homelessness support has increased. Often these services are costly to deliver and authorities have a statutory and moral responsibility to respond.

At the same time, councils have been required to absorb financial pressures transferred from central government and other partner organisations as they too respond to the impact of Austerity on their own organisations.

In a context of rising costs and reducing or constrained income, Austerity has proved to be one of the greatest challenges faced by local authorities in recent years and has

fundamentally changed the way local services are funded, as demonstrated by the following table.

	2007/08		2017/18		2021/22	
	£000s	%	£000s	%	£000s	%
<b>Local Council Tax</b>	6,723	53%	7,560	71%	8,235	82%
<b>Central Government</b>	6,067	47%	3,088	29%	1,832	18%

In 2007/08 local services were funded broadly 50/50 between Local Council Tax and Central Government Grant. By 2017/18 this has shifted to 70/30, with 70% being represented by Council Tax. The comparison with 2021/22 projects a continuation of this trend into the future.

The Council Tax referendum rules which restrict the amount by which councils may increase council to 2%, mean that councils need to look elsewhere to bridge the funding gap and indicate that financial self-sufficiency is the only solution.

The methods by which financial self-sufficiency may be achieved fall broadly within the theme of commercialism and, the programme of work which is forming under this theme, as expected, includes a focus on raising additional revenue, but also includes increasing financial awareness, adopting smarter ways of working in order to reduce operating costs and making better use of all council operated resources.

Work streams which are currently in progress include:

1. Principles of being a Commercial Council. The expression “Commercialisation” has many interpretations and encompasses a range of behaviours which may or may not be applicable to this organisation. The purpose of establishing a set of Commercial Principles is to express how the term will be applied specifically by this Council.
2. Understanding the Cost of Discretionary Functions. Work is in progress to establish the net cost to the Council of its discretionary services / activities on an individual service basis. This work will clearly set out the level at which specific discretionary services are currently subsidised by the general council tax payer.
3. Review of Chargeable Services. This is similar to the work involved in relation to discretionary services. Going forward it is desirable for charges for services to be set at a level which at least covers their direct costs. Ultimately chargeable services should recover full cost.
4. Undertake a “gap analysis” – what the council needs to do in order to fully comply with its own commercial principles.
5. Consideration of adoption of trading accounts for specific chargeable functions to aid performance measurement.

## Chapter 5: Our Partner Priorities

We work closely with a range of partners and share joint ambitions. This includes:

### 5.1 Local Enterprise Partnership

The partnership consists of the upper tier and unitary authorities of Essex, Kent and East Sussex.

The partnership developed a strategic economic plan in 2014 which included the following ambitions:

- Enable the creation of 200,000 sustainable private sector jobs over the decade to 2021, an increase of 11.4% since 2011;
- Complete 100,000 new homes by 2021, which will entail, over the seven years, increasing the annual rate of completions by over 50% by comparison with recent years;
- Lever investment totalling £10 billion, to accelerate growth, jobs and homebuilding.

The plan was successful in attracting a total of £591m to deliver 78,000 jobs, 29,000 homes and attract a further £960 million extra investment into the South East.

In addition, successful bids by SELEP means that by 2020 it will have invested £161m from the EU's European Structural and Investment Funds, including £71.6m in skills, education and lifelong learning, and improving access to employment for young people and enhancing social inclusion.

A new Strategic Economic Plan is currently being developed and is due to be published in 2018. This will:

- a) Articulate a clear, compelling vision, strategy and action plan for our economy
- b) Identify opportunities to collaborate to generate sustainable economic growth
- c) Articulate the risks of overlooking the South East economy and address the stereotypes and misunderstandings, perceptions about London and the greater South East
- d) Put forward a collective case for investment and a model for delivery
- e) Take into account federated areas and fit with the formed partnerships

### 5.2 South East Essex 2050

The South Essex 2050 initiative consists of the Authorities of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock and Essex County Council. Work began in the summer of 2017 to jointly develop a place vision for the collective area which will guide long term spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities and explore the scope for greater strategic collaboration across the South Essex growth corridor.

### 5.3 The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

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 re-developed its ambitions and priorities to the following:

**Community Development:** *strengthening local communities and ensuring inequalities in quality of life are reduced*

**Community Safety:** *achieving a community where people feel safe to lead their lives*

**Employment Skills & Business:** *opportunities for everyone to learn, making Castle Point a prosperous place with a well skilled workforce. Achieving a sustainable, prosperous economy in a Borough where people can afford to live*

**Health & Wellbeing:** *ensuring everyone has access to the health and care services they need and that all services work towards a healthier community*

**Safe & Thriving Children:** *securing better outcomes for children, young people and their families*

## Chapter 6: Developing our Priorities

The Borough faces a variety of challenges and opportunities that arise from its unique identity. This includes a range of environmental and social factors as well as the results of resident feedback. 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 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:

### 6.1 Things we need to do in partnership with others:

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

- Regenerates our Town Centres
- Helps create more local employment;
- Increases the level and quality of housing, both affordable and at market values.

Town Centres and the use of land for business is important for the overall economy of the borough, and we will work with partners to secure sustainable long-term opportunities to develop opportunities for business growth and regenerate our town centres to provide attractive shopping and leisure facilities where possible.

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

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

We need to regenerate town centres and improve the quality and quantity of housing whilst promoting our 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

We need to work with the community and our partners to help articulate and resolve concerns such as:

- The density of development and the need to enhance access to open space
- Helping to find solutions to Environment and Highway Issues
- Helping to resolve concerns regarding community safety
- Helping to residents express their concerns and act with partners to resolve them on a regular basis.

## **6.2 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
- Maintaining satisfaction with our street scene services
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the Borough through the effective management of our parks, woodland, open spaces, beaches and foreshore
- Delivering high quality refuse and recycling collection services for residents and local businesses
- Utilising our enforcement powers and targeting known hot spots for enviro – 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 and which fits with the strategic objectives of our 2050 partnership and 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.
- Building more Council homes in appropriate brownfield locations
- Work with the public and private sectors to develop housing that is of good quality and to help meet demand by reducing the number of empty homes
- Considering the needs of our residents in the design and delivery of services.

We need to develop wellbeing in the Borough by:

- Encouraging healthy lifestyles with a range of leisure activities and by encouraging more people to undertake regular exercise either by using our leisure facilities or by utilising the natural attractions in the area to walk, cycle and run.
- Promote our parks, open spaces and beaches and foreshore as areas in which the whole community can enjoy leisure pastimes.
- Improving the quality of housing, both Council and privately owned
- Working to support more vulnerable residents for example by facilitating the access to greater social activities of sheltered housing for elderly people that may live nearby.
- 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 7: Our Vision for the Borough

The Council is working hard with partners to improve the Borough 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. We share our vision with our Local Strategic Partnership which is:

**‘A community where everyone can prosper, be safe and live in a high quality environment’**

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.

## Chapter 8: Our Medium-Term Priorities and Targets

We want 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:

- **Environment**
- **Housing and Regeneration**
- **Health and Community Safety**
- **A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

### 8.1 Priority: 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. Whilst we have some fabulous, well maintained recreational areas, satisfaction with our Parks and Open Spaces is low when compared to other authorities. We want to better promote the facilities we maintain and to improve and maximise any positive impacts on the environmental quality of the Borough by encouraging a reduction in waste production and increased participation in our recycling and composting services. We will continue to promote our new chargeable garden waste wheeled bin scheme and undertake a campaign to promote our parks and open spaces to encourage a more diverse usage of these areas and to increase satisfaction. We will also work closely with the community to help enable community projects to improve our Environment and to enable the further development of parks, beaches and foreshore, open spaces, playgrounds

and community facilities. We will work closely with the community to reduce litter and to help alleviate flooding concerns and to prevent dykes being blocked. We will also liaise with Essex County Council to help improve our highways and footpaths.

**Our Targets:**

- **Increase the percentage of households using the chargeable wheelie bin garden waste recycling service from 10% (March 2018) to 30% by March 2020**
- **Maintain high satisfaction (over 90%) with the refuse collection service**

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

- **At least 80% satisfaction with parks and open spaces (March 2021)**

*Rationale: To improve 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 2021)**

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

## **8.2 Priority: Housing and Regeneration**

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 work with the private and public sectors to improve the supply of good quality housing and we will maximise the use of our assets and work with partners to further develop affordable housing to help meet the needs in the borough. We will work with our partners to deliver a strategic and local planning framework that provides for the needs of our community now and in the future.

**Our Targets:**

- **Construction of homes in accordance with the local housing target, as set out in the national guidance and the new local plan.**
- **Construction or acquisition of a total of 40 new affordable or social rented homes by the Housing Service by March 2021. (Baseline March 2014).**
- **Construction or acquisition of 25 new units for homeless people by March 2021 (Baseline March 2015).**

*Rationale: There is an acute shortage of affordable housing in the borough and temporary accommodation for homeless people. New homes are urgently needed.*

- **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 2021)**

*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.*

### **8.3 Priority: Health and Community Safety**

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 offer 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:**

- **Continue to support the Community Safety Partnership in meeting its strategic priorities of reducing anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, acquisitive crime and re-offending.**
- **Promote and communicate neighbourhood watch and other schemes to help develop community resilience and reduce the fear of crime.**
- **Reduce the proportion of people who feel unsafe after dark to 35% (March 2021)**

*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:**
  - 1. Promoting the new dry side facilities at Runnymede Leisure Centre and the Waterside Leisure Centre with the aim of having and retaining 3000 signed up leisure memberships by March 2019.**
  - 2. Publishing and promote comprehensive information on our parks, open spaces, seafront and woodland walks (by March 2019)**
  - 3. Undertaking activities to promote the use of parks, open spaces, seafront and woodland walks including working with voluntary groups to promote guided walks etc. (Programme in place by March 2020, to be measured by number of participants)**
  - 4. Assist community and voluntary groups to fulfil their aspiration to further develop the Gunny recreational space with play and other facilities by March 2020**

*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.*

#### **8.4 Priority: A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

Reductions in public funding and increasing demand for good quality customer focused services mean that Council services must be as lean as possible. Restrictions on council tax also mean that councils need to consider new ways of bridging the funding gap and strive towards financial self-sufficiency.

The methods by which financial self-sufficiency may be achieved fall broadly within the theme of commercialism and the programme of work which is forming under this theme, as expected, includes a focus on raising additional revenue but also includes increasing financial awareness, utilising technology and adopting smarter ways of working in order to reduce operating costs, and making better use of all council operated resources. We will continue to review services and explore working practices to maximise efficiency and we will seek to provide services in the most cost effective way, working with partners in the private, public and with the wider community to secure the best value for money service provision. We will work with our communities to provide greater accountability on the services we provide.

##### **Our Targets:**

- **Delivery of a balanced budget in current and future years. (Ongoing).**
- **The development and adoption of a set of commercial principles which express what commercialism means specifically to this authority and which will include:**

1. **Reputation & Behaviour:** Operate at the highest standard of efficiency and effectiveness and encourage confidence and trust as a service provider
2. **Promote the Borough & the Council:** Actively promote our Borough and the services the Council provides
3. **Deliver services in the most appropriate ways:** Consider new and more effective ways of service delivery
4. **Procure goods & services in the best way:** Purchase only goods and services that are essential
5. **Maximise return on our existing assets:** Use the assets we have in the most effective way
6. **Maximise income from fees and charges:** Ensure we obtain the maximum income we can for the services we deliver
7. **Maximise council tax & business rates revenue:** Ensure services are paid for fairly
8. **Review Asset Management programme annually**

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

- **Re-develop the approach to Community Engagement with a review and implementation of a new approach to Neighbourhood Meetings and partnership with the Town Council and partner organisations including the County Council and Highways Authority, Health Services, and the Police.**

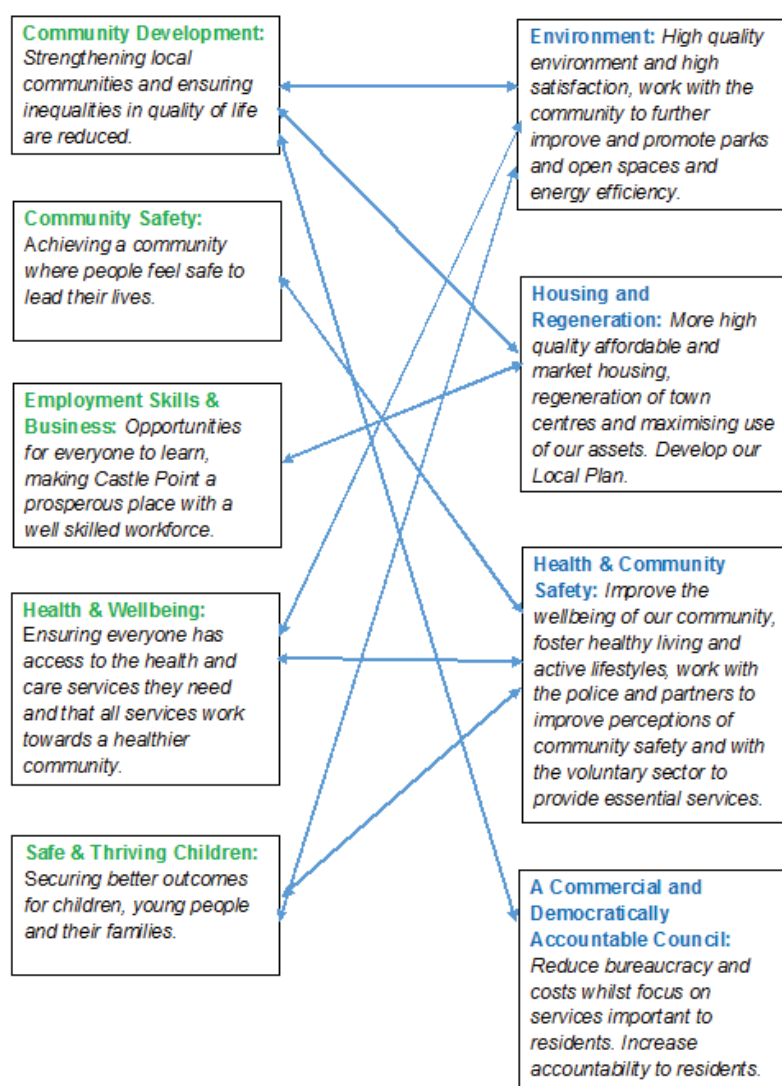
*Rationale: There is a perception that residents are not sufficiently involved in decision making and that the borough and county council do not provide value for money and that resident views are not listened to. There is a need to address this situation with a refresh of the approach to community engagement.*

## Chapter 9: How our Priorities link with our Community Strategy Ambitions

Our priorities are designed to help complement the ambitions of our local strategic partnership as illustrated in the diagram below:

### Community Strategy Ambitions

### Corporate Plan Priorities



## **Chapter 10: Our Annual Objectives for 2019/20 (Updated)**

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 priorities.

### **10.1 Overarching Objective**

**1. To work with local authorities and partners to prepare a long-term strategy for the development of, and investment in, South Essex including a coherent approach to economic development, transportation, housing, town centre regeneration and planning policy. To adjust the Council's corporate plan in alignment with the strategy developed.**

#### **Activities to include:**

- Providing leadership and technical advice and evidence base for the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)
- Participate in and influence Project Delivery Board and sub-groups
- Manage public consultations and decisions on the regulatory stages of the JSP

#### **Performance Measures:**

- i. Progress of the Joint Strategic Plan against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme

**Responsibility: Chief Executive and Head of Place & Policy**

### **10.2 Service Planning Objectives**

#### **Environment**

**2. Ensure that the Borough's Parks, Public Open Spaces, Seafront & Foreshore, Ancient Woodlands, Walks and Leisure facilities are well maintained, accessible and publicised to increase usage and satisfaction rates.**

#### **Activities to include:**

- Parks and open spaces: new playground at Swans Green; resurfacing works at Woodside Park and John H Burrows recreation ground; and picnic tables at South Benfleet and Beveland recreation grounds
- Seafront and foreshore: Public toilet improvements at Thorney Bay, Labworth and Lubbins; and painting seawall (see also objective 6 for further seafront and foreshore improvements)
- Leisure centres: install LED lights and motion sensors; and provide pool cover (both at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre)

**Performance measures:**

- i. Number of signed up leisure memberships (Runnymede and Waterside Farm Leisure Centre)
- ii. Leisure Satisfaction – Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- iii. Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces

**Responsibility: Head of Environment****3. Re-develop The Paddocks community hall to ensure the provision of a modern and efficient facility that is valued by the local community.****Activities to include:**

- Consultation with stakeholders
- [Appointment of a Paddocks Working Group](#)
- Develop a business case to determine financial viability
- Establish an operational service plan for the facility including aspects of resources, marketing and promotion

**Performance measures:**

- i. Re-development of The Paddocks carried out to timescales and budget

**Responsibility: Head of Environment****4. Engage with and influence the development of the new Resources and Waste Strategy for England****Activities to include:**

- Respond to the range of consultations about the Strategy, where appropriate to do so, working closely with colleagues across the Essex Waste Partnership
- Ensure that the impact of any changes on waste collection and disposal are fully understood and that any new burdens on local authorities are adequately funded

**Performance measures:**

- i. Percentage of household waste recycled
- ii. Percentage of household waste composted
- iii. Public satisfaction with refuse and recycling collections

**Responsibility: Head of Environment**

## **Housing and Regeneration**

**5. Engage with the public and private sector to promote and obtain the development of good quality housing in the borough including affordable housing, market housing and social housing.**

**Activities to include:**

- Develop a Housing Strategy
- Develop House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at Hatley Gardens
- Develop four homes in Church Close
- Develop two homes in Windsor Gardens
- Implement a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) for managing the repairs service, cleaning and caretaking
- Develop an action plan to meet targets for the number of new homes as set out in the Housing Delivery Test (HDT)

**Performance Measures:**

- i. Number of new homes constructed or acquired by Castle Point Council
- ii. Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance
- iii. Average void property turnaround times

**Responsibility: Head of Housing & Communities and Head of Place & Policy**

**6. To improve the public realm of our town centres and deliver effective master planning for key sites.**

**Activities to include:**

- Demolition of the Crown Public House
- Prepare and agree to a revised planning framework for the Hadleigh Island Gateway site, with Essex Homes and partners
- Deliver improvements utilising £350,000 of S106 contributions
- Deliver a new pavilion at Thorney Bay utilising a £1.52 million Coastal Communities Grant
- To bring forward a long-term investment plan for Canvey seafront and Town Centre

**Responsibility: Head of Place & Policy and Head of Environment**

## **7. Agreement of the Local Plan and successful examination of the plan leading to its approval**

### **Activities to include:**

- Take Local Plan through Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation stages and submit Local Plan for examination

### **Performance Measures:**

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

**Responsibility: Head of Place & Policy**

## **8. Develop and implement a strategic approach to dealing with homelessness**

### **Activities to include:**

- Review homelessness service
- Produce Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 for approval

### **Performance Measures:**

- i. Percentage of homeless applications accepted where homelessness is either prevented or relieved

**Responsibility: Head of Housing & Communities**

## **Health and Community Safety**

## **9. Develop partnership arrangements to create greater opportunities for more effective joint working, including healthy living and community safety.**

### **Activities to include:**

- Jointly fund an Occupational Therapist and Handyman scheme to reduce time spent in hospital whilst necessary home adaptations are undertaken
- Develop working arrangements with the public health officer to enhance co-ordinated work between health and Council services
- Continue with leisure initiatives that encourage people to be more active

**Responsibility: Head of Licensing & Safer Communities and Head of Environment**

## **10. Continue to improve the effectiveness of the Licensing Service and Community Safety work.**

### **Activities to include:**

- Implement the agreed recommendations from the audit of Licensing
- Build on the existing relationships across the Community Safety Partnership

**Responsibility: Head of Licensing & Safer Communities**

## **A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

## **11. Ensure ~~a sustainable~~ the organisation ~~with~~ has the right capacity and resources in place for effective customer focussed services whilst ensuring a balanced budget for 2020/21 and future years.**

### **Activities to include:**

- Develop a commercial strategy
- Apply the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, identifying future years funding requirements
- Continue to develop and implement departmental service plans to meet the expected demand for Council services
- Negotiate retention of current council tax shareback agreement with precepting authorities
- Establish a solution for strategic and operational estate management
- Implement the ICT roadmap of projects

### **Performance Measures:**

- i. Balanced budget at commencement of each new financial year
- ii. Minimum level of reserves exceeded

**Responsibility: Strategic Director (Resources)**

## **12. Implement initiatives to reduce costs of delivery whilst maintaining excellent customer services.**

### **Activities to include:**

- Promote increased usage of the "Open Portal" to interact with the Council and access services
- Deliver the Customer Relationship Management and internet project
- Minimise the impact of Universal Credit on rent collection and impact on arrears and enforcement
- Progress the digitisation of Land Charges data
- Redesign the website to encourage more online interaction with the Council
- Continue to promote electronic responses to the annual canvass to update the electoral register

## **Performance Measures**

- i. Take up of e-billing services for Council Tax and Business Rates
- ii. Percentage of calls taken from customers by First Contact that are dealt with without the need to transfer to the back office

**Responsibility: Head of Housing & Communities; Revenues & Benefits Transformation Manager; Head of Governance; and Strategic Director (Resources)**

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

### **Activities to include:**

- Proactive monitoring of the street cleansing contract
- Improvements to ensure that Development Control continues to be an effective service
- Ongoing compliance with fire regulations across council-owned housing stock
- Ongoing compliance with Data Protection and Equality legislation
- Update the Statement of Community Involvement

### **Performance Measures:**

- i. Percentage of streets inspected which are deemed to be unsatisfactory using code of practice for litter and refuse methodology
- ii. Percentage of fly tips removed within one working day
- iii. Number of default notices served in relation to grass cutting
- iv. Number of service requests received in relation to grass cutting
- v. Public satisfaction with Council's efforts to keep public land clear of litter and refuse
- vi. Percentage of planning applications processed within target time limits

**Responsibility: Head of Environment; Planning Transformation Manager; Head of Place & Policy; Head of Housing & Communities; and Head of Law**

## **Annexe 1: Annual Report 2018/19 (Updated)**

Our achievements are set out under our corporate priorities and objectives as follows:

### **Environment**

#### **1. Develop and implement a marketing and promotion campaign in partnership with local businesses to celebrate and promote increased usage of the Borough's Parks, Open Spaces, Ancient Woodlands, Walks and Leisure facilities**

Improvements to the Council's leisure facilities have been well received and at the end of 2018/19 there were 2869 members, up from 2750 members at the same time in the previous year.

Satisfaction with Leisure Services is measured by a Net Promoter Score (NPS). Waterside Farm scored exceptionally high at 70 with Runnymede scoring 53 at the end of 2018/19. Both scores are comfortably above the East of England benchmark score for leisure centres of 43 and the Waterside score places it in the top 20 in the Country out of 1000 sites in the country.

### **Housing and Regeneration**

#### **2. Engage with the Public and Private Sector to promote and obtain the development of good quality housing in the borough including affordable and market housing**

Good progress has been made developing a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at Hatley Gardens for nine homeless households. Planning permission was obtained and enabling works were successfully procured. Construction started in May 2019 and is set to finish in January 2020.

For Council-owned housing, tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance continues to be strong with 97.1% overall satisfaction.

#### **3. To work with local authorities and partners in South Essex to clarify a strategy for the development of the region including a coherent and holistic approach to economic development, transportation, housing, town centre regeneration and planning policy. To adjust the Council's corporate plan in alignment with the strategy developed**

The original timetable was for the publication of the first stage of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan in January 2019. Despite this slipping to late Autumn 2019, engagement across the partnership has been positive and this work continues to receive strong support from the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA).

#### **4. To improve the public realm with effective master planning at key sites in place**

Focus in 2018/19 was on the former Crown public house in Hadleigh. Further to public consultation, Cabinet gave approval in March 2019 for it to be demolished.

The other area of focus was the Canvey Seafront. Again, further to public consultation, Cabinet gave approval to the revised approach to regeneration of this area.

Both areas will continue to be the focus of improvements in 2019/20.

#### **5. Develop and agree a robust Local Plan**

The Local Plan was considered by Council on 28 November 2018 and the Council decided not to proceed to the Regulation 19 Consultation by the end of January 2019 as set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). Therefore, this objective has not been met.

Consideration is being given to how the Plan can be progressed and discussions are taking place with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

#### **6. Complete review of the Housing Service to ensure the service has the right capacity and systems to provide a comprehensive and cost-effective service**

The Housing Service has successfully implemented the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, this was confirmed by internal audit in April 2019. A Member briefing on the Act was held in July 2018.

A review into the approach to Housing Property Management Services was completed in May 2019 and a five-year service level agreement with South Essex Homes is expected to be established in June 2019.

### **Health & Community Safety**

#### **7. Develop partnership arrangements with the Health Sector to create greater opportunities for more effective joint working and to promote healthy living activities in the borough**

The joint Castle Point & Rochford Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been refreshed to align with the Essex Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Our three agreed priorities for the two localities are:

- Reducing levels of overweight and obesity;
- Improving mental health and wellbeing;
- Supporting people to lead independent lives to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

Work in this area will continue in 2019/20.

## **8. Continue to improve the effectiveness of Licensing and Safer Communities**

The planned service review of Licensing and Safer Communities took place in 2018/19. Implementation of findings from this review together with further development of partnerships arrangements will be a focus for 2019/20.

## **A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

### **9. Ensure a sustainable organisation with the right capacity and resources in place whilst ensuring a balanced budget for 2018/19 and future years.**

A key piece of work under this objective was to develop a business case for the future of The Paddocks and associated land. Re-development of The Paddocks is a new objective for 2019/20

Development and promotion of “Open Portal” has encouraged members of the public and businesses to interact with the Council and access services online. Over 6,800 residents have signed up for e-billing services for Council Tax and 200 businesses in the borough have signed up for e-billing services for Business Rates.

The Council’s approach to commercialisation has been developed over the year with a set of principles agreed in June 2018 with further strategy development in 2019/20.

### **10. Further develop the governance arrangements of the Council.**

Scrutiny was effective during the year with the following highlights:

- Scrutiny Committee continued a review of street scene and waste collection to improve understanding of the service
- Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee examined a petition seeking to engage private self-financing company to enforce laws on littering etc. and made recommendations to Cabinet
- Scrutiny Committee acting together with Health and Well-being examined and reviewed the Food and Health and Safety Statutory Service plans and improved understanding of the service
- All Councillors had the opportunity to engage in briefing sessions to understand the development of the New Local Plan

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

A lot of work was undertaken to ensure that the Council has the right organisational development and succession planning in place, so that following staff changes the Council has the people with the skills and experience to continue to deliver high-quality services to residents and businesses.

Contract management continues to be effective with pro-active monitoring and rectification of any performance issues. The performance for street cleanliness met target and was an improvement on performance from the previous year; just 9.6% of streets were deemed unsatisfactory compared with 14.6% in 2017/18. Fly tipping

and grass verge cutting indicators also demonstrate strong performance over the year.

A focus on performance in processing planning applications has seen 100% of all planning applications determined on time in the last quarter of 2018/19. This ongoing improvement to the planning service is further demonstrated by the Council's comparative performance which is measured nationally on a two-year rolling average. For minor applications, performance levels placed the Council 318<sup>th</sup> of 339 local authorities in March 2016, improving to 147<sup>th</sup> position in March 2017. Latest performance places the Council 14<sup>th</sup>, or in the top 5% nationally. For major applications, performance placed the Council 232<sup>nd</sup> in March 2017, latest performance places the Council 49<sup>th</sup>.

A key focus for 2018/19 has been the preparation to upgrade the Council network to Windows 10. Rollout of Windows 10 as well as implementation of a new telephony system (using Skype for Business) are key projects for 2019/20.

## Annexe 2: Financial Report (Updated)

1. The Corporate Plan provides the links between the aspirations of the community and individual service plans. These plans demonstrate how each service will be delivered and how that service links to one or more of the Council's key priorities. Each year service plans are produced and used to drive budget planning, to ensure that the future allocation of resources is based on the Council's four key priorities. As already described within this Corporate plan, the four key priorities are shown as: -

- **Environment:**
- **Housing and Regeneration**
- **Health and Community Safety**
- **A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council**

2. The method of calculating revenue spending plans has been broadly in-line with that set out in the Council's Financial Planning and Capital Strategy as described in section 1 of the annual Policy Framework and Budget Setting Report.

3. The forecast presented within that report and included here covers the period of the current parliament and corresponding multi-year financial settlement up to 2019/20, plus future years up to 2021/22. A new funding mechanism is anticipated to be in place from 2020/21 but it is not known how this may impact on the Council. In addition, the New Homes Bonus (NHB) was previously a material source of funding for this authority, utilised to support ongoing revenue spending plans. However, changes to the scheme announced as part of the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement, coupled with the relatively low new property yield within the borough, has meant that Castle Point and many other authorities in a similar position will not qualify for any new NHB funding from 2018/19, although will continue to receive historic payments.

4. The key steps in the process of producing the base budget for 2019/20 were: -

- A review of 2018/19 estimates against actual income and expenditure for 2017/18 and 2018/19 year to date, to arrive at a core no-growth base budget for revised 2018/19, estimate 2019/20 and 2020/21 to 2021/22 (both provisional), driven by current service plans. This includes where applicable, increases for inflation of costs relating to pay, employer's pension fund contributions, contracts, rates, utilities and insurances. Controllable service costs have been carried forward at existing levels except in the case of inescapable increase.
- Service providers were then required to review their services to identify options for reductions in net expenditure (without reducing service levels).
- Income from fees and charges has been reviewed and recalculated taking account of latest trends, proposed price increases and the impact of the current economic climate.
- Provision has been made for costs or savings expected to arise from known and proposed changes in legislation.

## **Efficiency work programme and savings identified**

5. The efficiency work programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19, supported by the Council's Commercial Council strategy has identified general cost reductions and efficiency savings relating to the current and future financial years, and these have been incorporated into the Medium term financial forecast at table 4.1 below.

## **Funding of priority projects**

6. Table 9.1 below sets out some of the priority projects that the Council continues to fund during the period of the forecast. These have been reflected in the financial forecast.

## **Cost pressures and other increases**

7. Cost pressures and essential service increases identified during the budget process are summarised in table 9.2 below and these are also reflected in the financial forecast.

## **Revenue spending plans**

8. The resultant proposed net summary revenue spending plan for the General Fund is shown in the financial forecast at table 4.1 below.

## Revenue Spending Plans - Tables

<b>Table 4.1 Medium term financial forecast</b>					
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Notes
<b>Line</b>	<b>Current policies and service plans</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Total net expenditure / estimated exp. for future</b>	<b>11,088</b>	<b>10,406</b>	<b>13,026</b>	<b>10,496</b>
					Fluctuations year to year are predominantly caused by phasing of maintenance spend and other expenditure "offset" by earmarked reserves
	<b>Funding sources</b>				
2	Council Tax	7,628	7,944	8,183	8,428
3	Baseline Funding Level - Redistributed Business Rates	1,864	1,717	2,283	2,340
					Provisional announcement December 2018
4	Business Rates - Levy on retained income	(238)	(251)	0	0
5	New Homes Bonus	691	569	218	13
6	Capital grants and other grants and contributions	1,343	1,436	0	0
7	Net Collection Fund(s) surplus / (deficit)	5	(68)	0	0
8	Transfer (to) / from General reserve	952	(4)	0	0
9	Transfer (to) / from Earmarked reserves	(1,157)	(937)	1,418	(1,393)
					Legacy payment and affordable homes premium
					Net movement on earmarked reserves, including application of NNDR Equalisation Reserve - used to offset specific business rates related transactions and variances
<b>10</b>	<b>Total funding sources</b>	<b>11,088</b>	<b>10,406</b>	<b>12,102</b>	<b>9,388</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Budget / Funding Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(924)</b>	<b>(1,108)</b>
	<b>General Reserve</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
12	Balance at start of year	5,672	4,400	3,204	1,080
13	Contribution (to) / from General Fund (line 8 & 11)	(952)	4	(924)	(1,108)
14	Potential planning appeals & associated legal costs	(320)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(400)
<b>15</b>	<b>Balance / (deficit) at end of year</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>3,204</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>(428)</b>
					Minimum recommended balance for General Reserves is <b>£2.9m</b>
					Likely cost to the Council in the absence of an up to date local plan
	<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
16	Balance at start of year	7,710	8,378	7,394	5,431
17	Contribution (to) / from General Fund (line 8)	1,157	937	(1,418)	1,393
18	Other expected usage of earmarked reserves - not allocated in the detailed budget	(489)	(1,921)	(545)	(1,005)
<b>19</b>	<b>Balance at end of year</b>	<b>8,378</b>	<b>7,394</b>	<b>5,431</b>	<b>5,819</b>
					The precise timing of the use of earmarked reserves is, due to their nature, generally unknown.
					Earmarked reserves are reviewed annually to ensure sufficiency and where need has diminished funds will be returned to General Reserve
	<b>Council Tax</b>				
20	Tax at band D	250.56	258.03	263.16	268.38
<b>21</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>2.96%</b>	<b>2.98%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>1.98%</b>
					Target increases within Council Tax referendum limits. The tax at band D does not include the amount charged by Canvey Island Town Council.

**Table 9.1 Funding of priority projects & other discretionary expenditure included in line 1 of the Financial Forecast**

Ref.	Description of priority project or discretionary item	2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	Total £000's
	<b>All services, Central &amp; Corporate areas</b>				
1	Production of one issue of external newsletter "Viewpoint" per year	8	8	8	24
2	Funding of discretionary portion of business rates relief to charities and other bodies - percentage of overall relief cost applicable to this Council	40	47	47	134
	<b>Housing &amp; Communities</b>				
3	Funding for local and voluntary organisations	118	121	121	360
4	Contribution to Community Transport Scheme operated by Wyvern, providing transport for elderly and disabled residents of the Borough	10	10	10	30
5	Community events such as the Fireworks Fiesta, Castle Point Show and Easter & Summer activities (net direct cost excluding recharges)	11	10	10	31
6	Running costs of CCTV installed at various public locations around the Borough, including car parks, the Dutch Cottage, the seafront and specific residential areas	22	22	22	66
	<b>Environment</b>				
7	Festive lighting / decorations across the Borough	14	14	14	42
8	Black refuse sacks provided free to residents	24	24	25	73
9	Dog fouling bags provided free to residents	7	7	7	21
10	Public Conveniences across the Borough (net direct cost excluding recharges and capital charges)	42	39	40	121
	<b>Total funding of priority projects and discretionary items</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>902</b>

**Table 9.2 Cost pressures & budget increases (Growth) identified and included in line 1 of the Financial Forecast**

Ref.	Description of cost pressure/budget increase item	2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	Total £000's
	<b>All services, Central &amp; Corporate areas</b>				
1	Estimated cost of conversion to National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales from 2019/20	0	20	20	40
2	Utilities (primarily gas and electricity) - increase in costs across all Council operated buildings	26	40	44	110
3	Bad debts - increase in provision	57	0	0	57
	<b>Environment</b>				
4	Recycling contract - estimated increase in costs	197	277	277	751
5	Trade waste payments to ECC - increase in charge payable per tonne	0	7	7	14
6	Recycling staff and agency - additional costs incurred (2018/19 only)	74	0	0	74
7	Green waste bin rental scheme - reductions in forecast levels of participation	10	62	(4)	68
8	Pinnacle contract - adjustments to match Council Tax increase percentages and National Living Wage changes	5	32	36	73
9	Car parks - increased transaction processing charges	11	3	4	18
10	Parks and open spaces - reduction in income, primarily football clubs use of pitches	10	8	8	26
11	Canvey Island seafront/foreshore - reduction in rental income	39	42	45	126
12	Cost of Legal proceedings relating to an encroachment onto recreation ground (2018/19)	10	0	0	10
13	Purchase of IDOX software to support GDPR in Environmental Health & Planning Departments	10	0	0	10

**Table 9.2 Cost pressures & budget increases (Growth) identified and included in line 1 of the Financial Forecast**

Ref.	Description of cost pressure/budget increase item	2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	Total £000's
14	Leisure Centres - budget adjustments included in 19 September 2018 Financial Update Report to Cabinet - • Increased utilities budget • Increased business rates budget • Decrease in membership income	13 11 39	13 11 54	13 11 55	39 33 148
15	Leisure Centres - subsequent additional decrease in predicted membership income	64	142	144	350
	<b>Governance, Law, Planning and Regeneration</b>				
16	The Crown - ongoing cost of business rates, until such time as a decision re future of the property is acted on (2018/19 previously budgeted for)	0	14	14	28
17	Elections - increased ongoing cost	20	25	25	70
18	Members training - increase in costs to support delivery of duties	7	8	0	15
19	South Essex Joint Strategic Planning (Association of South Essex Local Authorities - ASELA) - Increase in contribution (included in 19 September 2018 Financial Update Report to Cabinet)	40	40	40	120
20	Establishment of a new earmarked reserve for Joint Strategic Plan costs	200	0	0	200
	<b>Housing &amp; Communities</b>				
21	Costs recovered - reduction in income (2018/19 only) (included in 21 November 2018 Financial Update Report to Cabinet)	80	0	0	80
22	Housing department staffing - cost of previously approved restructure	43	45	46	134
23	Card processing - estimated increase in transaction costs	22	8	8	38
24	Land Charges - decrease in income due to use of agents for information requests (2018/19 only)	29	0	0	29
25	Housing Benefits - variation in net expenditure and subsidy income based on latest forecast position	(5)	110	110	215
	<b>Total cost pressures &amp; budget increases (growth)</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>2,876</b>

### **Annexe 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**

**22nd October 2019**

**Subject: Empty Homes Premium & Second Homes – Council Tax**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Stanley – Finance, Policy and Resources**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is consider recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 on the level of Council Tax Premium to be applied to long-term empty properties, with effect from 1 April 2020.

The report also takes the opportunity to remove the 10% second home discount from 1 April 2020.

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

**A Commercial & Democratically Accountable Council**

**3. Recommendations**

**That Council approves the following recommendations:**

- 1. A Council Tax Empty Homes Premium of 100% is implemented from 1 April 2020 in respect of properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years.**
  - 2. A Council Tax Empty Homes Premium of 200% is implemented from 1 April 2020 in respect of properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for five years or more.**
  - 3. From April 2021 increase the Empty Homes Premium for those properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for ten years or more to 300%**
  - 4. The removal of the 10% second home discount so that Council Tax will be payable in full on these properties from 1 April 2020.**
- 

**4. Background**

Since 2013 Councils have been able to use their discretion to charge an additional 50% Council Tax Premium to long term empty properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years. New legislation was introduced increasing the Premium from April 2019, with further incremental changes once properties have been empty for 5 and 10 years. This report proposes implementing the Premium in line with the new legislation.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

The Government introduced the changes as part of a number of measures to improve the housing market. By increasing Council Tax charges on long-standing empty properties it will incentivise owners to bring them back into use.

The majority of Councils within Essex have implemented the Council Tax Premium on long term empty properties, and this recommendation will bring the Council in tandem with them.

There is a lack of available housing within the Borough and long term empty properties could be put to better use in easing the pressure on housing stock. Applying a Premium to long term empty properties should encourage owners to bring them into occupation as well as reducing the number of properties which fall into disrepair.

Additional income will also be raised which will benefit the Council and its precepting partners. It should be noted however that the additional income may diminish over time as the increased charges encourage changes in behaviour, thereby bringing homes back into use more quickly.

There are however certain exemptions to this Premium being applied. These include premises owned by members of the armed forces; annexes; and, properties that are genuinely on the market for sale or let.

At the time of production of this report there were:

- **89** properties currently unoccupied and unfurnished for over two years
- **27** properties currently unoccupied and unfurnished for over five years
- **13** properties currently unoccupied and unfurnished for over ten years

Second homes are properties which are not the 'sole or main residence' of any individual for Council Tax purposes. This may include a 'holiday home'; or a property which the owner does regularly occupy, but another property is defined as their 'sole or main residence'. These properties do not attract the Premium as they are not 'substantially unfurnished'.

There are currently **35** second home properties attracting a 10% discount.

The removal of the 10% discount will further align the Council with the approach now taken by other authorities in Essex.

A mandatory discount of 50% remains in place for unoccupied caravans; empty caravan pitches; empty boat moorings; and job related accommodation.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Financial implications**

The implementation of a Council Tax Empty Homes Premium and removal of the 10% second home discount will increase the taxbase, which will benefit both the

Council and the other precepting authorities in the normal proportions. See however the risk factors below.

There is a risk that some owners will struggle financially to pay additional amounts of Council Tax as a result of the Premium. Billing authorities do, however, have discretion to reduce or remit Council Tax in exceptional circumstances which would provide a safety net for individual cases not subject to any statutory exemptions.

**b. Legal implications**

The administration and collection of Council Tax is a statutory function. The level of Premium available to local authorities is set down in primary legislation and provision was made in the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax Empty Dwellings Order 2018 for Premiums to increase in prescribed circumstances to the maximum levels outlined in this report.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 which came into effect in April 2013 removed several Council Tax empty property exemptions and replaced them with locally determined discounts. That Act also enabled local authorities to remove the minimum 10% discount for second homes.

**c. Human resources and equality implications**

None as a result of this report. No adverse impacts identified. These proposals could, in fact, have a positive impact by bringing more properties back into use.

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

To implement the Premium of 100% with effect from April 2020. The Premium of 200% to be also introduced from that date on properties that have been empty for five years or more with the remaining recommendation to take effect from April 2021. Owners to be contacted to enable them to consider their position.

There is a risk of owners avoiding the Premium on long term empty properties by just moving furniture into the property and claiming they are occupied (which will pay 100% Council Tax).

**7. Background Papers:**

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/25/enacted>

The Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings (England) Regulations 2012:

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2964/pdfs/uksi\\_20122964\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2964/pdfs/uksi_20122964_en.pdf)

Council Tax: Empty properties – House of Commons Briefing Paper:

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02857/SN02857.pdf>

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

**ORDINARY COUNCIL**

**22nd October 2019**

**Subject: Members' Allowances**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**This report is presented to Council following the Leader's request at the last Council meeting that the scheme of allowances be reviewed.**

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

**The report is linked to the Council priority a Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council.**

**3. Recommendation**

**If Members wish to review their Scheme of Allowances, Members are asked to approve the convening of an Independent Remuneration Panel and to request the Panel to conduct a review and make recommendations on the Scheme of Allowances for consideration by Council.**

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**4. Background**

- 4.1 The current scheme of Members allowances was approved by Council following a review in July 2008. The review conducted by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel was put in place on the introduction of new political management arrangements - Leader and Cabinet form of Executive.
- 4.2 At the Special Council meeting held on 22.2.2011 to set the Council's budget and Council Tax, recognising the difficulty situation facing local government and the need for financial restraint, among other matters Council approved a 10% reduction on all Members Allowances (except for the Mayoral allowances and travel allowances). This reduction achieved savings of around £112,500 over the period from April 2011 to September 2015.
- 4.3 In September 2015 Council agreed to reinstate the full payment of Member allowances.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 At the meeting of the Council in July 2019 the Leader of the Council requested that a report be made to this meeting on arrangements be made to review the Scheme of Members Allowances mindful that it was some time since the scheme had been formally reviewed and under the current scheme the Basic Allowance received by all Members is the lowest in Essex
- 5.2 If Members wish to review the Scheme of Allowances it will be necessary to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations and report to a future meeting of the Council. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is required to consist of three members.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

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

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is required to consist of three members, and they are each entitled to an allowance for performing the review, at a total cost for all three of around £1,000.

Any increase in allowance as a result of the work of the (IRP) will represent additional unbudgeted expenditure for which a growth item will need to be included in the budget for 2020/21 and future years.

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

Any changes to the Scheme of Allowances can only be made having regard to recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

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

Administrative support will be provided by Civic Governance Officers.

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

There are none.

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

It is proposed to complete the review so that any recommendations can be incorporated into the budget for 2020/21.

## **8. Background Papers**

Scheme of Members Allowances

**Report Author:** Ann Horgan Head of Civic Governance

**ORDINARY COUNCIL**

**22nd October 2019**

**Subject: Notices of Motion**

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**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 Island Independent Party calls upon Castle Point Borough Council to follow Basildon Council and pay for our street lights to stay on all night in the interests of community safety.’*

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor May

**2. Councillor Blackwell has given notice of the following:**

*‘Canvey Island Independent Party calls upon Castle Point Borough Council to embark on a tree planting campaign throughout the Borough to help offset global warming.’*

The Motion is to be seconded by Councillor Anderson.

**As both Motions have financial implications the Motions will be deferred without debate for a report to Cabinet Council Procedure Rule 13 applies. The Motions will not be dealt with at this meeting.**