



WE ARE COLCHESTER

BOARD MEETING

17 March 2022

DECISIONS & ACTION POINTS

Present:

Simon Blaxill, Kent Blaxill (Chair)

Adrian Pritchard, Colchester Borough Council (Colchester Borough Council)

Adam Bryan, SELEP

Ashleigh Seymour-Rutherford, COLBEA

Chris Rhodes, Hiscox

Tracy Rudling, Community 360

Cllr Paul Dundas, CBC

Lucy Johnson, University of Essex

Cllr Tom Cunningham, Essex County Council (ECC)

Steve Evison, Essex County Council

Will Quince MP, Conservative Party

Apologies:

Mark Jarman-Howe, NE Essex Alliance

Shona Johnstone, Homes England

Alison Jennings, Homes England

Others attending:

Iain McNab (BEIS), Lindsay Barker (CBC), Mandy Jones (CBC), Matthew Brown (CBC), Clare Ratcliffe (CBC), Amie Hall (ECC), Rob Willis (ECC), Matthew Sterling (CBC), Simon Thorp (CBC).

DECISIONS AND ITEMS NOTED

1. Apologies & declarations of interest. Apologies were noted from Will Quince MP, Mark Jarman-Howe, Shona Johnstone and Alison Jennings.

A declaration of potential interest was also noted from Tracy Rudling, in relation to a proposed service level agreement to support delivery of Town Deal projects in which Community 360 has a direct interest – Holy Trinity Church and Heart of Greenstead.

2. Progress report. The Board noted a Programme Progress Report, together with a report and link to updated draft Summary Documents which had been circulated in advance. Drafts for all 7 business cases encompassing 14 projects have been completed, with due regard for outcomes objectives, issues, risks and mitigations. Special conditions have also been addressed. Assurance has been carried out by Council Section 151 Officers in their statutory roles, concluding that cases are sustainable, viable and represent value for money. Colchester Borough Council's Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet had also met and confirmed their support for submission of summary documents to government. This enables Officers to recommend Board approves submission of summary documents, project adjustments and monitoring and evaluation plan by 24 March as planned. Formally this will be preceded by signatures of Section 151 Officer and Board Chair on all 7 summary documents.

Engagement will continue to be a non-negotiable thread running through the programme and all 14 projects.

The Board noted that drafting of service level agreements with partner organisations Essex County Council, North Essex Heritage and Community 360 was progressing well and in positive spirit. SLAs will be finalised before funding is released to projects.

The Board also noted that the programme was on track to deliver all projects from 2022 to 2026 in line with plans, with some projects taking advantage of advance funding available to progress feasibility and design work. Plans continue to under-promise and over-deliver, including close attention to costs and a focus on ensuring project features are not sacrificed where possible.

The Board reflected on business case development activities from July 2021 to January 2022, internal assurance and Member support in February and March 2022. The Board noted that the milestone of submission of summary documents would be met by 24 March, with an estimate for funding release currently being May 2022. Board noted the intention to expedite rather than delay delivery of projects to mitigate cost issues.

Board also noted that Colchester had done well to reach this point with all 7 business cases and 14 projects being ready for submission, as other towns had found it more difficult to meet the deadline and ensure their projects could be progressed.

3. Ratification of submission. The Board unanimously agreed that summary documents and supporting papers should be submitted to government by 24 March 2022.

4. Colchester Borough Council Chief Executive. The Board recorded its appreciation to Adrian Pritchard, who was attending his final meeting due to forthcoming retirement. The Board noted that Adrian will be succeeded by Pam Donnelly, who will take Adrian's seat at future meetings.

5. Colchester Town Centre master planning. The Board noted an update from Lindsay Barker, Strategic Director of Policy and Place (CBC), in advance of wider publication. Essex County Council and CBC are working together on town centre master planning, looking holistically at challenges, and will be going to market in April 2022. The Board noted that We Are Colchester is a key stakeholder in these plans for the future.

6. Future meetings. The Board noted a provisional future meeting date of 26 May 2022. Additional meetings will also be scheduled.