



Governance and Audit Committee

Item

8 March 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Communities	Author	Yovone Cook (Equality) and Sonia Carr (Safeguarding) ☎ 282965 / 282978
Title	Equality and Safeguarding - Annual Update Report		
Wards affected	All		

The Committee is asked to review this annual report on Equality and Safeguarding

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out the Council's duties and updates for Equality and Safeguarding and illustrates the steps the Council has taken to meet these mandatory requirements and specific duties.
- 1.2 This report will also provide a focus on the Covid-19 pandemic recovery and the impact on Equality and Safeguarding since November 2020. This year's events have continued to highlight the pre-existing inequalities amongst our communities and the disproportionate impact of Covid on our Diverse Ethnic Communities, making us all reflect on our response and the communities we serve. We have tried to respond quickly and are looking at ways to increase our understanding, but we are ever mindful of the ongoing impacts of both the virus, and the inevitable aftermath that follows.
- 1.3 The Council will continue to create and build a diverse and inclusive workplace where people are supported to reach their potential. One of the councils People Strategy's four themes is to be inclusive, it aims to celebrate diversity by understanding our staff as unique individuals with different experiences and perspectives. The main objectives include:
 - Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace where people are supported to reach their potential
 - Valuing difference and the unique talent of our people
 - Focusing on our people's physical and mental health wellbeing so they can thrive at work
 - Supporting staff to balance their work and life beyond work
 - Assess whether existing policies, practices and procedure are inclusive and sensitive to all protected characteristics. The action plan can be seen in the Appendix.
- 1.4 To enhance the equality and diversity work and to ensure the council continues to comply with its duty under the Equality Act, an independent external audit has been commissioned. As part of the audit, the consultant Gulshan Kayembe has reviewed our existing HR policies and processes including recruitment and learning and development, the profile of our workforce by protected characteristics and how far equality and diversity is embedded in the council from senior management to across the council.

- 1.5 Recommendations will be presented to Senior Management Team and then focus groups will be formed looking at themes that come from the survey and will feed into the development of a new Equality and Diversity framework.
- 1.6 The Council has increased its commitment to online training, including the launch of a new, extensive Safeguarding Training package, which contains new Safeguarding Level 1 and 2 eLearning packages, suicide awareness, Prevent and many other training options.
- 1.7 New Customer Service Standards have been developed for both internal and external customers to enable high levels of customer satisfaction. The Customer service Commitment includes:
 - Make sure everyone has easy, equal access to our services (e.g. – hearing or visual impairment and when languages other than English are used)
 - Ensure our digital services are accessible and compatible across any device
 - Make sure our services are compliant with accessibility software and that we can provide non-digital and/or plain text alternatives
- 1.8 Our Asset Based approach to Community Development, continues to be developed through in-depth collaboration with our communities and partners to bring about positive change. In addition, the new Communities Can Document launched in October with the One Colchester Strategic Partnership aims to support the growth of inclusive, bottom up, community-driven and citizen-led change that lessens the impacts of pre-existing inequalities.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Committee is asked to review the progress made in meeting the Council's legal duties and objectives regarding both Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, and to endorse the approach set out at paragraph 7 below.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 By reviewing the approach in these key areas, the Committee will assist the Council in meeting its legal duties
- 3.2 The following appendices have been included at the end of this report to assist the Committee in its task:
 - Appendix A – National and local developments
 - Appendix B - Key improvements and initiatives

4. Continuation of a Combined Approach

- 4.1 This annual report continues a combined reporting approach to scrutiny in the areas of Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, bringing the following advantages:
 - The two areas of work are mutually supportive and reinforce the importance of Equality and Safeguarding for staff and residents. There has been an increased focus over the last 12 months as a direct result of Covid19.
 - They both involve the principle of proportionality and having “due regard”.
 - Each area helps to support and prevent harm occurring to vulnerable groups.
 - An approach that reviews these two areas together can help to deliver maximum benefit for customers, the most effective management of risk and the most efficient use of resources.

5. National and Local Developments

5.1 There have been changes at Essex County Council, and in terms of national governance. These changes and those made to national guidance can be found in Appendix A

Equality and Diversity (Covid-19 Specific)

5.2 The Faith and Communities Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG), a sub-group of the Essex Strategic Coordination Group, was set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A member of the Community Enabling team sat on this group as well as local faith leaders. The remit of the group was to provide information and advice to faith and community groups and also inform the development of future resilience/recovery/pandemic response work.

Working groups have been set up focusing on Faith and Dementia and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community. The TCG brought together faith and community leaders to work with public services in a way that hadn't been seen before.

The group has now stepped down and work continues through the Essex Faith Covenant. Projects included:

- Security personnel and taxi and private hire vehicle drivers were identified as being at high risk due to both due to their occupation and ethnicity. There was a lack of specific guidance for these groups. The group worked together with operators to produce simple messages for these industries based on government guidance, but also provided information on general wellbeing. Social media assets were also produced and shared on Enjoy Colchester Facebook page.
- Tips giving advice around handwashing, face coverings and looking after health and mental wellbeing were produced for residents of black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Information was put on the website, a leaflet was produced and translated into a number of community languages.
- Important religious events occurred through the pandemic, with the restrictions on place differing for a number of them. Working with media teams across Essex key message were shared to help people mark these occasions safely. The TCG also continued to work with local faith leaders and communities to circulate more specific and detailed government advice in relation to some occasions e.g. the Jewish High Holy Days and Remembrance Sunday

5.3 In response to local consultations that took place with Colchester's Diverse Ethnic Communities and Faith communities to really understand the direct impact of Covid-19. A Community Forum was established hosted by Community360. The forum meets bi-weekly and is attended by local community leaders, a member of CBC's Community Enabling Team. COVID specific achievements of this group include

- Advised extensively on vaccine hesitancy and cultural barriers
- Contributed to the tailoring of vaccine clinics
- Continued myth busting within communities and encouragement to get vaccinated

5.4 The Community Response Team which was mobilised as part of the Council's response to Covid-19, has continued to support communities and provide them with important information, help and support as the pandemic has evolved. The team continues to produce a Community Response Pack which includes translated information on vaccinations and information on the test and trace service. During the winter of 2021/22 the focus changed to support communities to keep well through the winter months and signpost for financial support.

Safeguarding (COVID-19 specific)

- 5.5 During the pandemic, CBC Community Safety Team worked closely with partners to ensure that domestic abuse support services in Colchester remained available for people to access during the coronavirus outbreak. Engaging with Essex Police, Next Chapter, Colchester Borough Homes and Essex Country Council ensured that:
- Domestic abuse reports, response rates and emerging trends were monitored, allowing Police to direct resources appropriately
 - Increased demand in refuge services was anticipated, additional safe accommodation was investigated, and Next Chapter were able to access additional MHCLG funds for increased provision

Attending the Essex Strategic Group (Domestic Abuse Response to Covid-19) meant a co-ordinated response across the County was followed and ECC are now implementing a centralised process for resourcing/procurement of additional accommodation to ensure equal access/cost for all districts/boroughs in Essex.

- 5.6 CBC Comms Team supported social media posts including those from Next Chapter, Women's Aid, Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and the Essex Police Community Policing Team during the pandemic and recovery, to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how to seek help. CBC will continue to support posts/messages whenever possible and have also invited these organisations to highlight any specific messages to convey and any positive/success stories to share.
- 5.7 CBC's website has a Coronavirus section – this was updated with domestic abuse advice under <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/coronavirus/residents/domestic-abuse/>
- 5.8 Safer Colchester Partnership website was also updated to reflect this guidance, with a specific section on Coronavirus and Domestic Abuse. <https://www.safercolchester.co.uk/category/protect/>
- 5.9 The Colchester Borough Homes Rough Sleeper Outreach Team appointed a Specialist Drug and Alcohol officer and a trauma informed counsellor. This has enabled the team to build pathways to treatment and housing for customers. 101 people were accommodated in the 'Everybody In' Protect and Protect Plus Initiatives. Colchester Borough Homes chairs the Colchester Homelessness Action Partnership and the Joint Referral Panel which have continued through the pandemic. 17 rough sleepers remained accommodated at end of March (2021) with pathway plans to move into alternative accommodation.
- 5.10 The Community Safety Team were unable to deliver the physical version of Virtual Crew Project into Colchester Primary Schools (year 6 pupils) in June 2021 as planned due to COVID restrictions. Instead, the Team worked with Tic Box to develop recorded performance of a theatre production, followed by live stream interactive sessions, written specifically for Virtual Crew. Focusing on county lines, drugs, weapons and healthy relationships. 1884 pupils from 49 primary schools participated in the virtual sessions. Plans for Virtual Crew 2022 are currently underway
- 5.11 Essex Youth Services delivered a number of online activities for young people during the COVID restrictions. A schedule was distributed to partners on a weekly basis.
- 5.12 Safeguarding Adult Leads (SAL) Network led by Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) continue to meet virtually on a bi-monthly to discuss partner agencies response to COVID-19 recovery and safeguarding. Particular focus was given to some of the hidden harm issues such as Modern Slavery and Domestic Abuse.

City, District and Borough (CDB) Safeguarding lead meetings, led by Essex Safeguarding Children's Board, were also reinitiated to discuss partner agencies

response to COVID-19 recovery and safeguarding. Particular focus was given to mental health and wellbeing of children affected by lockdown / not able to attend school etc.

- 5.13 Coronavirus Advice page added to the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board website: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/about-esab/coronavirus-advice-page/> to provide latest advice and guidance.
- 5.14 CBC were awarded approximately £234,000 during 2020/2021 from MHCLG and Essex County Council to initiate compliance and enforcement activities to tackle Covid, plus deliver the local Track and Trace service (supporting the Essex and National service). The funding allowed for a Covid Coordinator to be recruited, alongside commissioning Covid Marshals and providing vital supplies of testing kits, Covid signage (to promote social distancing and wearing of face masks), hand sanitiser and face masks, establishing testing centres, responding to Covid breaches and outbreaks, providing support to the most vulnerable whilst isolating; all of which were vital in helping to keep residents and businesses of Colchester safe and forward planning for Covid recovery.

Safeguarding (Business as Usual)

- 5.15 New Domestic Abuse Act [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk) received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Domestic Abuse Act will provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse and strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators (overarching factsheet [Domestic Abuse Act 2021: overarching factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk))

The Community Safety Team, working with Colchester Borough Homes, Essex County Council and MHCLG will consider the main components of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and ensure that the responsibilities on Colchester Borough Council as a Local Authority are supported.

6. Meeting Duties

Overall Arrangements at Colchester Borough Council

- 6.1 Equality and Safeguarding are both integrated into the day-to-day operations of the Council. However, arrangements are also in place to ensure strategic focus and co-ordination. The Assistant Director for Communities provides the strategic lead, with support from the lead Officers for Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding.
- 6.2 The relevant Cabinet Portfolio for Safeguarding is Cllr Beverley Oxford (Communities).

Equality and Diversity

- 6.3 Our diversity training has been refreshed, introduce staff focus groups to explore and identify how we can promote inclusivity, apply data to understand our workforce and put in place an action plan to address areas underrepresented.
- 6.4 The Council has introduced mandatory Equality and Diversity training for all staff and Councillors every 3 years, starting January 2021. Since the launch of the new E and D course, 137 staff have passed the course.
- 6.5 In light of the councils new People Strategy the Diversity Steering Group (DSG) which provided an active forum for 'advancing equality' for both customers and staff is undergoing a review and will be relaunched in 2022.
- 6.6 The Equality Act 2010 imposed a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) upon local authorities including district councils. Under its 'general duty', the Council must "integrate

consideration of the advancement of equality” into its “day-to-day business, and across all functions”. Councillors and staff must have “due regard” to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ and those who do not

6.7 The ‘protected characteristics’ are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but not for all aspects of the duty.

6.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s [Technical Guidance](#) to the PSED remains the best guide to the practical operation of the PSED. In addition, the Council takes due account of the Government’s [Review](#) of the PSED which endorsed the so-called “Brown Principles”. These confirmed that the ‘due regard’ duty must be fulfilled before and at the time that a policy is being considered; it must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind; and that it is non delegable.

6.9 The PSED ‘specific duties’ require us to publish information to demonstrate that we are meeting both the ‘general duty’, and one or more published [equality objectives](#). During the period 2020-21 we have continued to meet both requirements. Information published on the Council website includes:

- [Equality Impact Assessments](#)
- The Council's The Strategic Plan 2020 - 23 and its Year End Performance Report (including its Strategic Plan Action Plan).
- The Council's People Strategy
- The Council’s website pages on [Equality and Diversity](#)
- The Council’s [Equality Information](#) section contains all required information

6.8 The Council remains committed to the use of the Equality Impact Assessment process. Despite not being a legal requirement, these remain a vital framework through which the Council can continue to identify, evaluate, and mitigate against negative impacts upon the ‘protected characteristics. It allows us to make the right judgements based on sound information and data, in an open and transparent way. A new simpler method of producing these is being investigated.

6.10 Accessibility regulations for websites came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018 – stating you must make your website more accessible by making it “perceivable, operable, understandable and robust.” The accessibility regulations build on the existing obligations for people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. CBC’s online team have been working hard to ensure the CBC website meets the accessibility standards as stated in the accessibility regulations. The team have reviewed our website against the new accessibility criteria and made any necessary reasonable adjustments. During 2021

- The accessibility statement on our website has been updated.
- Disproportionate burden assessments have been introduced. A disproportionate burden is when the negative impact (on an organisation) of making a document accessible far outweighs what would be a very small or non-existent benefit to disabled users. The disproportionate burden assessment is a legal requirement

and must be carried out by the service as it will determine whether the document can go up as a PDF or if it needs to be made into a webpage/webpages (accessible).

- The improvements the team are continuing to make to the website mean that its users who have a disability that requires text to be read can do so from their computer.

Safeguarding

- 6.11 In the area of safeguarding, Designated Safeguarding Officers, who have an enhanced level of training to provide expertise and assistance to officers, attend quarterly workshops (currently virtual) led by the Community Safety Team. The workshops review legislative changes, safeguarding referrals, training requirements for all staff and improve processes. In the last year 7 new Designated Safeguarding Officers have come on board and will be receiving their Level 3 Training in February 2022 to enable them to carry out the role effectively. They have also attended J9 Domestic Abuse Training and a Hate Crime Ambassador Workshop and have a Modern Slavery workshop planned for June 2022.
- 6.12 The Council continues to raise safeguarding concerns with Essex County Council via its [Concerns about the welfare of a child \(esccb.co.uk\)](https://www.esccb.co.uk) and the [SETSAF](#) form in regard to an adult. Records of referrals made, and any feedback received, are retained in a secure area of the Council network and are reviewed at quarterly Designated Officer Workshop meetings. Both the online reporting form for child referrals and the SETSAF form for adult referrals have been updated in 2020/2021.
- 6.13 In 2020 (1 January – 31 December), 50 referrals were made to Essex County Council (for 53 individuals) These referrals related to 46 adults (26 females and 20 males), who were referred to Adult Social Care and 7 children (4 females, 2 males and 1 unknown) who were referred to Children and Families Hub.

Of the adults, the main type of recorded (or suspected) abuse was self-neglect at 26 reports, followed by neglect (11), psychological abuse (6), domestic abuse (4), financial abuse (2) with 1 report each for physical and sexual abuse. There were a number of cases (15) where the type of abuse was recorded as 'not determined' due to the referring officer being unsure of the main type of abuse (usually as referral taken via phone rather than in person). Suicidal Ideation was mentioned in 13 cases.

For **2021** (1 January – 30 November) 40 referrals (for 41 individuals) have been made to Essex County Council. These referrals related to 35 adults (21 females and 14 males) who were referred to Adult Social Care and 5 children (1 female and 4 male) were referred to Children and Families Hub.

Of the adults, the main type of recorded (or suspected) abuse was self-neglect at 13 reports, followed by neglect (9), psychological abuse (4), financial abuse (4), domestic abuse (4), physical abuse (1) and organisational abuse (1). Most statistics for the period January – November mirror the same period in 2020.

There were several cases (9) where type of abuse was recorded as 'not determined' due to the referring officer being unsure of the main type of abuse. This statistic has dropped from 13 for the same time period in 2020; we feel this is due to further training being delivered by the Community Safety Team to Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) on how to make a referral/increased awareness of the types of abuse etc.

Suicidal Ideation was mentioned in 3 cases (this has fallen from 11 for the same period in 2020).

Of the children, the types of abuse recorded (or suspected) were neglect (2) and domestic abuse (1), with not determined also recorded for 2 children.

Further training with the Designated Safeguarding Officers to increase awareness of types of abuse is an ongoing process, with 14 attending the J9 Domestic Abuse Workshop in June 2021. Information on types of abuse is also included in the new Level 1 and 2 Safeguarding eLearning training, and in the CBC Safeguarding Policy.

6.14 Over the relevant period (July 2020 to June 2021), Colchester Borough Homes has made a total of 60 referrals, 56 in relation to adults and 4 child referrals (for a total of 5 children). This reflects an 18% decrease overall compared with referrals recorded in 2019-20 and appears to reflect an overall decrease in referrals from all sources into Essex Social Care during the pandemic. The total number of children referred by Colchester Borough Homes has fallen from 19 (2019-20) to 5 (2020-21) which represents a decrease of over 70%. Of the 4 child referrals, 3 related to neglect and 2 were statutory risk of homelessness referrals. In contrast, the number of adult referrals has slightly increased from 54 in 2019-20. Of 56 adult referrals, a total of 80 concerns were raised. (This is because, in many cases, more than one type of abuse was raised as a concern.) Self neglect was raised as a concern in 83% of referrals. Physical abuse was raised in 17% of referrals; material/ financial abuse in 17%; domestic abuse in 7%; psychological/ emotional abuse in 4%; and neglect in 2%. Compared to 2019-20 data, self-neglect has become more dominant as the principal concern highlighted, and the number of referrals raising domestic abuse as a concern has increased.

6.15 The Safeguarding Level 1 eLearning training package was reviewed and updated in throughout 2020 and launched on CBC's new e-learning platform to all staff in May 2021. This eLearning package is a mandatory requirement for all CBC staff and members, and completion is monitored via the HR Team (in consultation with Community Safety Team)

For the period May 2021 (launch of training plan) – November 2021, 512 Passes of Safeguarding Level 1 and 249 Passes of Safeguarding Level 2.

In response to the high suicide rates for Colchester, Suicide Awareness e-learning (via Zero Suicide Alliance) was made mandatory for all staff to complete from May 2021. For the period May 2021– November 2021, 391 Passes of Suicide Level 1 and 193 Passes of Suicide Level 2. 15 Councillors have also completed the Suicide Level 1 training.

The new Safeguarding Training Plan highlighted other optional training including:

- J9 Domestic Abuse Awareness workshops
- Suicide First Aid Training
- County Lines Exploitation

Completion rates of all mandatory safeguarding training are regularly monitored by the HR Team, who liaise with management to ensure reminders are sent to relevant teams to encourage completion. There have been some technical challenges with integrating the new eLearning platform with existing reporting mechanisms which HR and ICT are working together closely to resolve.

6.16 Partnership working is key to meeting the Council's safeguarding duties. The [Safer Colchester Partnership](#) is now led by One Colchester Strategic Board, which consists of Chief Officers representing local statutory partners and non-statutory partners and organisations. It aims to achieve sustainable solutions following the identification of local needs and priorities. It does this by delivering initiatives and engaging with local communities through two Operational groups; these being the Community Safety Delivery Board and the One Colchester Delivery Board.

6.17 Colchester Borough Council engages positively with the relevant 'Stay Safe' group which comes under the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board's governance. This group helps

to put into practice effective partnership working to keep children safe from harm including abuse. The Council also attends local 'MACE 2' (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings which facilitate joint approaches and key information sharing to help protect children from exploitation.

In addition, from 2020, the Council attends the Multi Agency Disruption Panel (formally the Organised Crime Group Disruption Panel) organised by Essex Police, in which disruption strategies and action planning for those individuals at risk of exploitation are discussed.

- 6.18 The Council works closely with both the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) and the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). Support from, and representation on, both the boards for District Councils is by way of Board Membership. Colchester Borough Council Executive Director Pam Donnelly sits on the ESAB and feeds back to the Chief Executives Group. The Council is also represented at the Adult Safeguarding Leads and the City, District and Borough (CDB) leads meetings by the Community Safety and Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 6.19 Between September 2019 and January 2020, CBC completed the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board Safeguarding Audit, where staff from a number of partner agencies within Essex were invited to answer questions about safeguarding adults. Locally, for CBC, a link to the survey was sent out via internal CBC comms, via Managers Network and DSO's which led to 141 people within CBC completing the survey (16%). Several recommendations were made by Essex Safeguarding Adults Board for Local Authorities and CBC are ensuring all of the recommendations are being considered and actioned as part of a Safeguarding review being undertaken by the Community Safety and Safeguarding Team.
- 6.20 In September 2021, CBC completed the Essex Safeguarding Children Board Section 11 (S11) Audit, and we are currently awaiting results. S11 is required as set out in the Children Act 2004 which places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 6.21 Modern slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced criminal exploitation and domestic servitude. To meet its legal duties under Section 43 of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) the Council published on its website its fifth Modern Slavery Transparency Statement (and action plan) in September 2021.

To raise awareness around Modern Slavery supply chain implications, a new e-learning course for Procurement Team and Staff who commission goods/services was launched in May 2021 'Protecting Human Rights in the Supply Chain (Modern Slavery)'. For the period May 2021 – November 2021, 41 Passes of Modern Slavery in the Procurement Process training.

- 6.22 [Sec 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) placed a new duty upon local authorities to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." To assist implementation of the duty in section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, a [Home Office Prevent eLearning](#) training package is available. and was launched to all staff and Members in May 2021 for mandatory completion alongside the Safeguarding Level 1 eLearning. For the period May 2021 – November 2021, 115 Passes of PREVENT training.

This Prevent training package is also mandatory for Colchester Borough Homes staff.

7. Going Forward

Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues experienced by both staff and residents will be heard and discussed at the newly refreshed Diversity Steering Group quarterly meetings.
- 7.2 The Community Enabling Team will continue to work with and support all community groups across the borough, including those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- 7.3 CBC will continue to support National and Local Awareness campaigns to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the borough.
- 7.4 A Community Enabling Officer will continue to attend meetings such as the Essex Equalities Network, Essex Faith Covenant, Faith and Communities Tactical Co-ordination group meetings. A member of the team also attends the Colchester IAG, hosted by Community360
- 7.5 The new Vision, Values and People Strategy shows how we will recruit, retain and develop staff to help support the delivery of our overall strategic priorities. The Inclusive values this strategy are Ambitious, Agile, Valued and Inclusive.
- 7.8 CBC will assess existing policies, practices and procedures to ensure they are inclusive and sensitive to all protected characteristics.
- 7.9 CBC are developing an Asset Based Community Development approach to community enabling which will give us a better understanding of our communities, help to reduce inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of residents. ABCD training will be delivered to CBC staff and members.
- 7.10 CBC will respond to the E and D audit findings and recommendations and address and developmental areas through an action plan and new Equality and Diversity framework.
- 7.11 The Essex Equalities Forum is planning to deliver an inaugural Essex Diversity Awards late 2022. A member of the Community Enabling team is on the working group for this.
- 7.12 A Power App is being developed for all CBC service areas which will make the creation of EqIAs more time efficient. This will be accompanied by a support guide. All EqIA's uploaded onto the website will also align to new accessibility regulations
- 7.12 A new fixed term post focusing on Health Inequalities has been secured within the Community Enabling Team.
- 7.13 Our Financial and Employment Support Team offer a range of free, confidential financial and employment support to all residents in Colchester, including: Assess personal finances and budgeting
Help paying rent arrears, Support paying Council Tax, Accessing wider Benefits, Employment and Job Search, Accessing food, Help paying energy bills, Money and Debt advice. Residents can access this support through the homepage of our website, by telephone or in- person

Safeguarding

- 7.14 The Council will continue to raise awareness for staff (and highlight its procedures) on key issues including Prevent, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, criminal exploitation (including cuckooing) and hate crime. To do this effectively, the Council will increase its commitment to online training, including the launch of a new Safeguarding Level 2 eLearning package (for those frontline staff who may encounter a

vulnerable adult or child at risk), based on the original Observers scheme. This new Level 2 training will form part of a new CBC Safeguarding Training Plan.

- 7.15 CBC Community Safety Team will continue to monitor and update the new Safeguarding Training Plan for all staff, volunteers and members. This training plan sets out structured categories Levels 1, 2, 3 to clarify mandatory and optional training dependent upon staff roles.

Completion rates of all mandatory safeguarding training are regularly monitored by the HR Team, who liaise with management to ensure reminders are sent to relevant teams to encourage completion.

- 7.16 The Level 2 training now available for front line staff, will also be revised for contractors and external partner agencies to utilise. This will be accessible via the Safer Colchester Partnership website.

Colchester Borough Homes will further develop their programme of e-learning including CBH specific 'Safeguarding Awareness' and 'Suicide Awareness' throughout 2021-22

- 7.17 Projects and initiatives to raise awareness in the community of some of the hidden harms will also be delivered or commissioned by the Community Safety Team over the coming year. Projects will include Operation Henderson (in partnership with Essex County Council and Essex Police) to raise awareness of child exploitation with local businesses near train stations, on the train and taxi drivers that are used for county lines. Further hate crime awareness sessions to encourage recruitment of Hate Crime Ambassadors within a community.

The Community Safety Team will also Investigate the feasibility of forming a Colchester Anti-Slavery Partnership, including the outcome of the multi-agency project, to prevent, identify and disrupt this crime and safeguard any potential victims.

- 7.18 CBC will continue to support National and Local Awareness campaigns such as Domestic Abuse Awareness week, Hate Crime Awareness Week, International Anti-Slavery Day, Modern Slavery Action weeks, Online Exploitation Awareness and Safeguarding Adults week.

- 7.19 The Community Safety Team and CBC Licensing are in the process of adapting an online programme of Safeguarding Training for Taxi Drivers Safeguarding training for licensed drivers will be mandatory from Winter 2021.

- 7.20 As Community Safety takes on the operational lead on safeguarding, the Council is in a good position to continue to deepen partnership working with agencies and voluntary organisations, including through the [Safer Colchester Partnership](#) and the wider One Colchester Partnership in order to deliver for residents.

8. Strategic Plan References

- 8.1 The Council's Strategic Plan is a key mechanism through which the Council monitors how it is meeting its equality and safeguarding responsibilities. In particular, the Strategic Plan 2020 - 23 contains the Council's current 'equality objectives' of

'Creating safe, healthy and active communities. The priorities which particularly help supported the Council's Equality Objective are:

- Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people
- Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs
- Supporting the most vulnerable residents through our One Colchester partnership

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Throughout the Covid19 pandemic, the Community Response Team consulted with and supported many underrepresented groups to understand their need and the impacts and

risks they faced. Regular engagement and consultation with these groups made people feel listened to, supported, and more valued.

- 9.2 A Fear of Crime survey was conducted by Community Safety Team in July 2021. This captured data on victims of crime and perception of crime in the Borough (from 114 responses). The plan is to repeat this survey in 2022 and annually, to identify trends and inform action planning: [Fear of Crime Survey 2021](#)

10. Publicity Considerations

- 10.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding has the potential to affect everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. It can play a key role in the daily lives of individuals and communities by helping to safeguard vulnerable groups from harm, as well as tackling prejudice and advancing equality of opportunity.
- 10.2 The [Equality Information](#) section on the Council's website continues to provide updated information as required by legislation and guidance, along with related content of use or interest to customers, staff and councillors.
- 10.3 The Council's website also includes a section dedicated to [Safeguarding children and 'adults with needs for care and support'](#) which contains key information for residents along with links for further information.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 It is important to understand that our obligation to have "due regard" to the three aims of the 'general duty' does not mean that decisions which have a disproportionate impact upon one or more 'protected characteristics' cannot be taken. The Council must nevertheless always seek to remove or reduce negative impacts.
- 11.2 The Council's approach must continue to be proportionate, with key decisions being given due priority. Equality Impact Assessments must remain an integral part of the decision-making process when addressing changes to policies and practices.

12. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 This report is an annual update about Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding, which helps the Council to ensure it meets its duty and protect vulnerable groups.

13. Community Safety and Health and Safety Implications

- 13.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding involves working closely with partners and communities. The [Safer Colchester Partnership](#) plays a vital role in helping the Council to meet its legal duties around safeguarding.
- 13.2 By meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council will help to ensure that employees do not suffer discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This will in turn create a safer working environment, and one which is consistent with the Council's Health and Safety policies.

14. Risk Management Implications

- 14.1 As an employer and provider of public services, the Council could face legal challenges from individuals or groups who have been unlawfully discriminated against, however unintended. Legal cases brought on grounds of discrimination do not have upper financial limits like those brought through employment tribunals. The Council must meet its responsibilities to ensure it does not discriminate, and this will also help to avoid the potential for significant financial claims.
- 14.2 The Council could suffer significant reputational damage should its staff or councillors fail to comply with their Safeguarding responsibilities. This paper details the Council's strategic and operational approach in this area.

Equality and Safeguarding Annual Report Appendix A

Changes to guidance and updates

Equality and Diversity

- There have been changes at Essex County Council, Kevin Bentley is Leader of the Council, Louise McKinlay is cabinet member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance. Beverley Egan is now Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Graham Butland is the Cabinet Member for Devolution, Art, Heritage and Culture and John Spence remains Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (which includes Disabilities).
- There have been a few changes in terms of national Governance; Therese Coffey MP remains Secretary of State for DWP including administration of state benefits and providing support to families and children, disabled people (appointed Sept 2019), Elizabeth Truss MP remains Minister for Women and Equalities (appointed Sept 2019), Gavin Williamson MP remains Secretary of State for Education (including children's social care (appointed July 2019), Sajid Javid MP is now Secretary of State for Health and Social Care including social care policy (appointed June 2021) and Priti Patel MP remains Secretary of State for the Home Department including security and terrorism (appointed July 2019).

Guidance and papers were updated or published covering a number of areas.

- **Health inequalities: place-based approaches to reduce inequalities.** From: Public Health England – Published 29 July 2019. Last updated 3 August 2021. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008132/PBA_final_evaluation_report.pdf
- **Equal Rights Coalition.** From Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Published 30 September 2019 - Last updated 7 July 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/equal-rights-coalition>
Strategic plan 2021-2026. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equal-rights-coalition-strategic-plan-2021-to-2026>
- **Guidance on the gender pay gap data employers must gather.** A task list to help employers gather the required data needed to make gender pay gap calculations. From Government Equalities Office – Published 14 December 2021 - Last updated 23 February 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-gender-pay-gap-data-you-must-gather>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-your-gender-pay-gap-calculations>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-gender-pay-gap-information-employers-must-report>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/who-needs-to-report-their-gender-pay-gap>
- **Guidance on Inclusive communication.** How to produce communications that include, accurately portray, and are accessible to disabled people. From Disability Unit and Cabinet Office – Published 14 August 2014 - Last updated 15 March 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication>
- **Policy paper: National Disability Strategy.** This strategy sets out the actions the government will take to improve the everyday lives of all disabled people. From: Disability Unit, Equality Hub, Department for Work and Pensions, Justin Tomlinson MP, and The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP. Published 28 July 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-disability-strategy>
- **UK Sport outlines new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Published 24 June 2021.** <https://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/news/2021/06/24/new-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy>

- **Policy paper: State of the nation 2021: Social mobility and the pandemic.** Social Mobility Commissioners build on three years of in-depth research and strategic thinking to set out a programme of reform to drive social mobility forward.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2021-social-mobility-and-the-pandemic>
 - **Consultation outcome: Consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace: government response. Updated 21 July 2021.**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace/outcome/consultation-on-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-government-response>
 - **Equalities report 2021**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofqual-equalities-report-2021/equalities-report-2021>.
- Policy paper: Gender Equality Advisory Council Recommendations to G7 Leaders.** Recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 for Leaders of the G7 on how to build back better for women and girls and achieve gender equality. From: Cabinet Office – Published 11 June 2021.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-equality-advisory-council-recommendations-to-g7-leaders>

Safeguarding

- Essex Safeguarding Children’s Board operates in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018’. The implementation of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) in September 2019 led to Essex Safeguarding Children’s Board retaining its name, brand and logo. The seven local safeguarding partners jointly leading the Partnership Arrangements are: Essex County Council, Essex Police and Five Clinical Commissioning Groups. Further information can be found here: [Essex MASA Plan 20-21](#) (second publication June 2020)
- The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult concern form (SET SAF), used to begin the adult safeguarding process, was updated in January 2021 (fax number removed). The latest version can be found here: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/professionals/reporting-concerns/>
- Changes to the Request for Support (RFS) online referral form, used to begin the child safeguarding process, came into effect from August 2020. The latest version of form can be found here: [Concerns about the welfare of a child \(escb.co.uk\)](#)
- National Safeguarding Adults Week took place 16-22 November 2020 – the theme being Financial Abuse. Over the seven days, Essex Safeguarding Adults Board hosted a week of virtual activity where professionals who work with adults could support the campaign through listening to podcasts and booking onto webinars that featured a range of guest speakers from; The Southend, Essex, Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Boards, Essex County Council Trading Standards and Adult Social Care, Essex Police, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Essex Legal Services, The Office of the Public Guardian and The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board who covered topics such as doorstep crime and financial abuse legislation including lasting power of attorney. Further information on the 2020 National Safeguarding Adults Week can be found here: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/about-esab/national-safeguarding-adults-weeek-2020/> . National Safeguarding Adults Week 2021 will take place 15-21 November.

- The Government launched a new online portal in January 2020 to strengthen support to charities handling safeguarding concerns or allegations. To access the portal, please visit <https://safeguarding.culture.gov.uk/>
- The Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Service (ADASS) published Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness - a briefing on positive practice, in March 2020. The briefing can be found here: [Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness Briefing](#)_Colchester Borough Homes lead on the homelessness agenda for CBC.
- Colchester Borough Homes published its first Hoarding Policy in May 2021. Its development reflected the need for a more consistent and systematic approach. The policy recognises the need for specialist support underpinned by effective partnership working. Its development has benefited from the combined operational approach to equality (since hoarding may be underpinned by disability) and safeguarding (since hoarding may reflect mental capacity issues and/or 'self-neglect).
- David Archibald continues his role as Independent Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board. Deborah Stuart-Angus continues her role as Independent Chair
- 'What Works for Children's Social Care' (WWCSC) are funding a new programme that provides supervision to Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in Primary and Secondary Schools (across Essex). Primary school DSL will be provided with one-to-one supervision and Secondary School DSL's will be offered the opportunity to engage in group supervision. The programme offers supervision to DSLs in schools for an initial period of six months and the evaluation of the programme will look at whether there is an impact on the referrals that DSLs make to children's social care. The research element of the programme includes a randomised control group who will not receive supervision.

Equality and Safeguarding Annual Report Appendix B

Key initiatives and provisions

Equality and Diversity

- Colchester Borough Council Covid website designed to support residents throughout the pandemic with additional information for our most at risk communities.
<https://www.colchester.gov.uk/coronavirus/communities/support-for-bame-communities/>
- Colchester Borough Council is a member of the Essex Dementia Alliance. Partnership-working is a big part of the DAA cohort, with regular meetings with the 60+ partners across the Borough. Through 2020, a Pan-Essex DAA group was established to strengthen ties through the Covid pandemic.
- The Council also works in partnership with Community360 in the Lottery-funded Place Based Social Action project to make Colchester a Dementia Friendly Town. Our mutual goal is to improve local service provision through increased awareness. Consultation has been integral in gathering 'lived-experience' from local residents who live with Dementia or care for someone who does; this helps to design a bottom-up approach, offering the most appropriate support where it is identified most.
- To date, over 160 staff members and Councillors of Colchester Borough Council have attended Dementia Friends Awareness Sessions. Training has continued through the 2020 pandemic lockdowns through online channels and further sessions are planned, including provision for community groups and Parish Councils.
- 200 Children's University Summer activity packs were delivered to 5 partners, including Refugee Action Colchester, Essex Integrations and CBH to distribute to disadvantaged families
- CBC were awarded £12000 from ECC's Winter Covid funding to support those community groups offering food, fuel and essential items support. This funding was allocated to
 - Colchester CAP
 - The Boaz Project
 - Refugee Action Colchester
 - HomeStart Colchester
 - Essex Integration
 - North Essex Support Team
 - Colchester Islamic Community Centre
 - Bangladeshi Women's Association
 - Next Chapter
 - The Munch Club
 - Tots 2 Teens
 - ECFWS (Barnardo's)
 - GO4- Café
- Members of the Community Forum have been involved in a number of non-covid related activities including
 - 1 x report on interpretation
 - Information on interpretation at medical appointments sent to CCG lead
 - 1 x member attending One Colchester meetings
 - 2 x members of IAG on Stop and Search panel
 - 3 IAG members interested in Police Professional Standards Panel

- 2 x Women's health information sessions
- In 2021 Colchester Museums
 - Formed a Diversity Advisory Group made up of staff from across the museum service who champion various protected characteristics. An Inclusion Consultant was commissioned to work with the group on a strategy and action plan for the coming year.
 - Museum staff received training on anti-racism and the social model of disability. LGBT awareness and other sessions are to be confirmed
 - Reviewed numerous job descriptions and adverts to make the wording more accessible and flag any points that go against best practice e.g., an interest in museums - often included but isn't something that can be objectively assessed for. They have also created a list of organisations with followers from underrepresented groups, who can help share vacancies on social media .
 - Updated the museum website to include more staff imagery and more information on working for CIMS for prospective applicants: <https://cimuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/aboutus/our-team/>
 - Had about 15 staff across the service trained up as Access Champions. They have conducted audits of our 6 venues and produced a long list of recommendations we're working through, from removing black mats (which can be confusing to those with Dementia) to organising audio description training for staff.
 - Created more detailed access pages for our museum venues e.g. <https://colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/castleaccess/>. We are planning to work on creating Visit England Accessibility Guides over the coming months.
 - Published a free LGBT resource for teachers: <https://colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/learn/teacher-resources/>
- There is also a commitment to deliver more exhibitions and events that focus on previously untold stories e.g., our Hidden Histories programme in Colchester or the Power of Stories exhibition in Ipswich. Furthermore, staff have been involved in a traineeship scheme aimed at people from underrepresented backgrounds and another colleague has been working closely with the Ipswich Jobcentre and other community organisations to bring museum content to families on lower incomes and/or affected by digital poverty
- Members of the Community Enabling and Community Safety Team sat the One Colchester Tackling Racism working group
- During Black History Month a banner was displayed from the Town Hall balcony.
- £35 000 of Section106 monies were made available to Colchester Mosque to complete renovation works and provide disabled access and toilets.
- A member of the Community Enabling Team sits on the Steering Group for the Bangladeshi Women's Association Community Ambition Programme. The programme focuses on the Bangladeshi and Muslim community across North East Essex and will form and expand partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations working in partnership with the Ipswich Bangladeshi Community, linking in with other Diverse Ethnic Community networks within the integrated Care systems to share best practice. The project aims to improve access to health service and information sharing. This needs assessment's aim is to identify the needs of Bangladeshi and the Muslim community which will improve the designing of future service and information

- **Street Tag:** Street Tag turns physical activity into a game by converting walking, running, and cycling into Street Tag points (tags). It is a way to transform streets and parks into a giant virtual playground for local communities.

Getting outdoors and being more active has been proven to make an enormous impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing. Incentivising getting more people outside and moving, works towards the Council's strategic aim to create safe, healthy and active communities throughout the Borough.

Street Tag launched within our most deprived ward of Greenstead on the 29th of March 2021

- There are currently 24 Primary School teams on the schools leader board
- 4 of the schools fall within our most deprived areas.
- St Johns Green, Hazelmere Juniors, Roach vale and St Thomas Mores
- The Care Home leader board launched on the 14th July and currently has 8 Care Homes signed up and using the app.
- St Fillians is currently top of this leader board with 28 of the home's residents collecting points on a weekly basis. This home also falls into the IMD 1-4.
- CBC joint hosted the ONE Colchester Inequalities seminar in the Autumn
- In 2021 Leisure World
 - **Ladies Only Swimming** LW lead public sessions in Fitness Pool - 4 sessions per week.
 - **Ladies Only Swim – 'private hire'**. Weds 1x PCW. Funding via Active Essex, I am told that some funding remains available, however, most users who attend are BAME community members, of which are presently classified as high-risk of Covid transmission. They have suspended sessions until government guidance allows. LW General pool capacities are restricted, however, we are happy to review and prioritise upon their request.
 - **Freedom memberships** – Discounted membership: low income/ government support status including accessibility users.
 - **Phoenix Swimming Club** - long-term private hirers. Adults and juniors with physical/ learning disabilities. Swim teaching covers all user's personal levels/abilities. (Beginners up to Paralympic athletes).
 - 15-30 per session (Hosted Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays)
 - **Market Field School swimming** - learning difficulties, have sessions/lessons hire.10-15 per session 1x per week.
 - **Muslim community (Women/Children)**. private swimming in Leisure Pool - *in partnership with Active Essex and Colchester Citizens*.
 - This group had sessions on the first Wednesday of each month from December 2018 to February 2020 – Continue to hold due to COVID and the end of their funding from Active Essex.
 - **Endeavor**. LW lead session for adults/ children of physical/ mental disability focusing on physical exercise, fun and inclusivity. (including trampolining and sport play). All activities due to transfer to Sport for Confidence session modal Jan'22.
 - **Racketeer Club** – Badminton private hire - players of Asian Indian/ Bangladeshi 40+ strong membership base.
 - **Indoor 'Lawn' Bowl Club** – majority of membership base over 60yrs+.

- **Walking Indoor Football** – ACE – private hire. Physical/ mental disabilities. Temporary not running due to Covid concerns.
- **Cycle Projects** – a pilot scheme, aiming to support promote greater accessibility, women, and areas of deprivation to access, learn / increase confidence in cycling.
 - The project is called Wheels for All.
 - Access to eight accessible cycles.
 - Delivery modal: 2x 2hr sessions once per week.
 - Cycle UK, lead project - funded via LDP.
 - Pilot session delivery: July'21-June'22.
- **Accessible cycling bike access**
 - Disabled cyclists can cycle via closed road circuit with access to high quality accessible cycles.
 - No time/ date restrictions of access. Open to public sessions.
 - Carer access free
- **Active+** Open to all uses (off-peak), pay one price for multiple activities during their visit.
 - Monday to Friday between 9am-3pm to use the Gym, Aqua Springs and classes as discount rate. They also got access to play racket sports like Squash and/or Badminton between 9.30-12pm.
 - Typical demographic 90%> over 50's
 - *Currently suspended due to Covid capacity restrictions.*
- **Sport for Confidence.** providing inclusive sporting opportunities to people who face barriers to participation, including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, dementia, autism, physical impairment or disability, homelessness, and many other complex health needs.
 - Delivery modal covers 2x per week 9am-4pm (7x 1hr sessions)
- **Activa Gym:-**
 - Wheelchair user friendly access/ medical certified equipment - service as normal.
 - Carer access free to support user to exercise/ workout together.
- **Lexden Spring School** – gym usage, fortnightly, on Friday for an hour for to 10 children physical/ mental disabilities using it for their PE lessons.
 - *Currently stop due to covid restrictions.*
- **GP Referral program (LEAP).** Support Service cater for wider range of patient with complex medical conditions:
 - Use of gym/ studio classes such as: Cardiac/ Vascular Rehab, Osteoarthritic, Back Rehabilitation, cancer pre/rehabilitation support programmes including aquatic activity.
- **Aerobic programming: -**
 - FOC carer access available to all accessible users (participants classes together).
 - Low Impact ETM – classes design for those with limited movement or restricted.
 - GP Referral classes – up to 10 scheduled classes per week.

- **Customer service operations:** EqIA review of cashless payment was carried out in 2020/21. User groups were reviewed and low-income households, over 60s and those with physical/ mental disabilities were seen to prefer face to face payments. As a result the decision was to retain face-to-face payment kiosks
- **Leisure World Holiday Camps (Kids Camp):**
 - Children's holiday activity sports club, Covering ages 5-15years.
 - Includes food provision (optional).
 - Open to members of the public.
- **Swim School:**
 - 1000+ school children enrolled on 'ASA learn to swim' program.
- **School curriculum swimming:**
 - Schools use Fitness Pool between (9.30am-2.30pm) weekdays Mon-Fri.
 - Host 37 local Colchester schools.
 - Funded by central government.
 - *Currently suspended until 2021 due to Covid restrictions.*
- **Sigma Trust academy:**
 - Further education provider 16-18years focusing on sport studies.
 - Based at Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park up to 5 days per week.
 - Access to in/outdoor sport facilities including class/meeting room facilities.
- **Essex Cricket academy groups**
 - Up to 20hrs of community use facilitated via ECC.
 - Usage mix league/ nets sessions.
 - Users contain mix of under 18's, Diverse Ethnic Community members.
- **Community Cycling Groups:**
 - Up to 15hrs track usage available peak-time per week to community cycle groups
 - Mix of road cycling, junior and adult activity
 - Inclusive cycle coaching
- **Learn to Ride**
 - Closed road circuit school cycling coaching (1hrs)
 - Accessible to ages 5-11years, coach lead via British Cycling
 - Cycle assets provided by Sport and Leisure service
 - Due to launch Winter 21/22.
- **Changing Places fully accessible toilet facility**
 - Based at Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park.
 - Accessible from facility launch (April 2021).
- **Poor Air Quality** disproportionality affects the elderly, the young and those with existing respiratory conditions. To support improvements in the boroughs air quality, temporary signage has been installed on Brook Street and East Street. The signage aims to increase the number of drivers who 'switch off' their engines whilst stationary, early findings have shown a 9% increase in the number of drivers switching off their engines from 12% (baseline data) to 21%. The signage will be in place until September 2022.

In October 2020, the Council launched a DEFRA funded behaviour change campaign, which aims to encourage residents to switch off their engines when stationary, particularly outside schools. Research by Kings College London found that switching off engines when stationary can cut pollution by up to 30% and the effects are immediate.

The campaign, CAREless Pollution, was developed in partnership with local people. An Advisory Group has been set up to facilitate sharing intelligence and resources. It includes representatives from Breathe Easy Colchester, the Business Improvement District, Colchester Mosque, Clean Air Colchester and EnForm. A 50 strong stakeholder group has also been established to help widen the reach of the campaign by sharing communication and resources amongst their networks. The campaign resources are available at www.colchester.gov.uk/cleanair.

In October 2021, 1 year after the campaign launched, 65% of drivers outside schools reported that they switch off their engine more than they did a year ago (survey conducted with drivers outside schools throughout September 2021). In March 2021 the Council received funding from DEFRA to run the campaign for a further 12 months.

- **In 2017 the Council declared itself a Borough of Sanctuary**

In order to strengthen our commitment to those who face the ordeal of being separated from their families and home this Council pledges to:

- *continue to do all in its power to welcome and assist refugees and all those forced to seek sanctuary in our Borough.*
- *ensure services and resources are accessible, including by signposting, translation, and advocacy.*
- *acknowledge the pledges of institutions, businesses, individuals and families across Colchester.*
- *declare ourselves as a Borough of Sanctuary, following the examples of other local authorities already signed up to the City of Sanctuary principles.*

Since December 2020 the council has welcomed 80 plus asylum seekers through the Home Offices Dispersal Programme. Staff from the Community Enabling Team and Private Sector Housing Team work closely to with Clearsprings Ready Homes, the Government's provider of the accommodation, to ensure the housing is of acceptable standards.

There is also a Home Office Contingency Hotel for Asylum seekers in the borough. Officers have worked closely with other agencies including the Home Office, Public Health, Refugee Action Colchester and Clearsprings Ready Homes to ensure the wellbeing of the residents.

Funding has been provided through Community360 to help support Refugee Action Colchester with the additional workload brought on by the influx of asylum seekers,

Working with Community360, Refugee Action Colchester, Essex Cricket and a local bootcamp provider and number of fitness activities have been provided for the asylum seekers at the hotel to improve their health and wellbeing.

Essex University, CBC, C360 and RA-Colchester have collaborated on a project "*Pilot of a wellbeing-enhancing physical activity intervention for locally accommodated asylum seekers*". The funding has been awarded from Research England's Quality Related Strategic Priorities Fund, which supports engagement with policymakers, policy relevant research and capacity building for policy engagement. The hope is that the project will demonstrate how it might influence policy going forward. Should further funding be sourced after the pilot concluded it is hoped to expand the project to include asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation.

Safeguarding

- 2020 saw the adoption of version 2 of the CBC Suicide Protocol (on responding to threats or ideas of suicide or self-harm) which includes detailed guidance and procedures as well as contact details of dedicated organisations and relevant agencies. In addition to the Protocol, summary guidance documents on how to respond to threats of suicide and procedure to follow were also made available to staff and members via the CBC intranet. This policy has been reviewed and amended to highlight relevant updates in September 2021.
- 2021 saw the formation of the Colchester and Tendring Suicide Prevention Task and Finish Group to investigate, understand and address the significantly high and rising suicide rate in Colchester.
- Action to review Car Park safety in relation to suicide threats has included multi agency meetings, led by Community Safety team, including on-site reviews. This has resulted in practical solutions being implemented to protect vulnerable residents. This review will continue across Council owned car parks.
- Suicide awareness training was delivered to a Members Development session in October 2021. Training on Modern Slavery and Safeguarding are to be delivered in 2022.
- Colchester Borough Homes' Suicide Prevention Protocol was launched in the autumn of 2020. This provides detailed processes and guidance to help us safeguard some of their most vulnerable customers
- 2020 saw the adoption of version 7 of the CBC Safeguarding Policy; a comprehensive guide including information on a number of areas such as roles and responsibilities, recognising and responding to concerns, identifying types of abuse, where to seek help, training, legislation, and many more. In addition to the Policy, summary guidance documents on how to recognise potential abuse, raise concerns and make a referral were also made available to staff and members via the CBC intranet. This policy been reviewed and amended to highlight relevant updates in September 2021.
- Colchester Borough Homes published its first Hoarding Policy in May 2021. Its development reflected the need for a more consistent and systematic approach. The policy recognises the need for specialist support underpinned by effective partnership working. Its development has benefited from the combined operational approach to equality (since hoarding may be underpinned by disability) and safeguarding (since hoarding may reflect mental capacity issues and/or 'self-neglect).
- The Community Safety Team were successful in being awarded, as Lead Local Authority, a bid of over £376,000 from Essex County Council to extend the 'Together We Can' project until April 2022; a project to support a recovery refuge (for women with active substance misuse issues), community resettlement programme (supporting women to establish and maintain safe accommodation) and provide specialist support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse (particularly those in families who have fled domestic abuse or remain in the home after perpetrator has left).
- The Community Safety Team will continue to seek funding opportunities that can support community safety activity across the borough. Bidding opportunities over the past year include funding for initiatives to improve the safety of Women and Girls in Greenstead and the Safety of Women and Girls at Night.
- A successful bid to Violence and Vulnerability Unit to reduce Violent Offending in Greenstead resulted in the implementation of a 'mini-job centre' and associated projects to encourage education and employment of those aged 15-24 years. This will be extended further for 2021-22 and include a new Multi-Agency Centre in Greenstead

aiming to engage the most vulnerable individuals with the aim to safeguard and prevent criminal behaviour.

- Colchester Borough Council remains a key member of the J9 Scheme, designed to provide a place of safety such a shop, library, fire station, restaurant or CBC building for a victim of domestic abuse to visit should they be feeling at risk or in need of help or support. CBC's Designated Safeguarding Officers received J9 training in June 2021, and this training is detailed on the Safeguarding Training Plan as optional for all staff.
- A Hate Crime Ambassador Course was delivered in April 2021 with 11 attendees including Designated Safeguarding Officer's and Covid Marshals.