



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

16 November 2023

Decisions & Actions

Board Present:

Simon Blaxill (Chair), Simon Mead, Lucy Johnson, Cllr David King.

Board Apologies:

Laura Eardley, Pam Donnelly, Will Quince MP, Alison Jennings, Steve Evison, Cllr Lee Scott, Helen Russell, Alison Andreas, Shona Johnstone, Tracy Rudling.

Others Attending:

Savannah Rate, Phoebe Butcher, Greg Wilkinson, Lindsay Barker, Ellen Clark-Romain, Jonathan Phillips, Amie Hall, Clare Ratcliffe, Louise Denyer, Matthew Brown, Rory Doyle, Richard Kendrew, Alison Fogg, Alan Lindsay, Simon East, Irene Kettle, Simon Thorp.

1. Apologies & Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted from Laura Eardley, Pam Donnelly, Will Quince MP, Alison Jennings, Steve Evison, Cllr Lee Scott, Mark Jarman-Howe, Helen Russell, Alison Andreas, Shona Johnstone, Tracy Rudling.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Digital Skills Hub welcome

The Board and others in attendance were welcomed to the Digital Skills Hub, which was recently relaunched following improvements funded by Town Deal. The Board **noted** that this was the third of sixteen projects to be completed, **thanked** Digital Skills Hub for hosting the meeting and **congratulated** the team on a successfully delivered outcome.

3. Progress Report & Engagement Update

The Board **noted** a Programme Report circulated in advance. The Board also received an update on headlines, progress highlights, delivery/time/cost RAG status, delivery activity, spend, risks, mitigations and milestones. An engagement update was also provided. The Board also **noted** an update regarding closure of the DLUHC second line of defence deep dive review and routine monitoring return scheduled for December 2023, including the importance of ongoing management and potential impact on future funding of issues and risks.

3. Issues, Risks & Mitigations

The Board **noted** progress updates from Project Sponsors, Owners and Project Managers regarding projects where the Board had given direction or received updates at the last meeting.

3.1 St Nicholas Square – resolution of issues and commencement of works. The Board **noted** that on site works were expected to start in January 2024. The Board also **directed** that public communications regarding delivery of the project be carefully managed, with an update to be provided at next meeting.

3.2 Jumbo & Balkerne Gate phase 2 - the Board **noted** that North Essex Heritage (NEH) planned to launch a new Jumbo website in December 2023 along with ticketed tours in November/December 2023. NEH are working closely with Mercury Theatre and work continues positively to develop detailed designs supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Town Deal funding. NEH are currently working towards a full HLF stage 2 application in August 2024 to enable the works on Jumbo required to bring it back into public use as a mixed-use attraction.

3.3 Holy Trinity Church – the Board **noted** all urgent repairs have been completed and news of the HLF stage 1 application is expected by December 2023. If successful, this will enable detailed planning and design work prior to a stage 2 application in 2024 to allow works to be completed to bring the building back to public use as a charity-led community hub.

3.4 Heart of Greenstead (Community Hub and Land Acquisition) - the Board **noted** that this remains the largest single project budget for the Town Deal programme. Whilst recent progress has been good, the Board **directed** that it should receive an update at next meeting to give assurance that community trust in the plans remained strong. The Board also **noted** that architects expected to make a planning application in early 2024 in relation to the multi-use hub (phase 1 of the project), which is a community-led initiative with strong partnership working with the community association, NHS and other organisations. Phase 2 of the project involves wider regeneration including homes, retail and public realm. The Board **noted** that positive progress had been made with a resolution expected soon concerning acquisition of land, and any transition arrangements affecting residents, to enable development to be progressed. The Board **directed** that an update be provided at the next meeting.

3.5 Cost escalation and management – the Board **noted** that cost escalation was being closely monitored and managed. It also **noted** that the forthcoming DLUHC monitoring return would provide a detailed update on risk management across the programme, including near proximity risks of a financial nature. The Board **directed** that an update be provided at the next meeting. It also **noted** that cost escalation had been impacting other locations receiving from Town Deal funding.

4. Levelling Up Programme – the Board **requested** that an update be provided on Levelling Up programme progress (closely linked to Town Deal) at the next meeting.

5. Future meetings – the Board **noted** that there were benefits to meeting in person, including being able to visit completed projects. The Board **agreed** that a balance should be struck between in person, hybrid and online meetings in future. Colbea kindly offered to host the next meeting on a hybrid basis, with Colchester City Council also able to do so alongside projects which are due to complete in 2024.

Next meeting - 29 February 2024 – 1000

30 May 2024 – 1000

22 August 2024 - 1000