



We are Colchester



Colchester
City Council

We Are Colchester Board Meeting

17 August 2023

Decisions & Actions

Board Present:

Simon Blaxill (Chair), Lucy Johnson, Tracy Rudling, Alison Jennings, Cllr David King, Simon Mead, Cllr Holly Whitbread (for Cllr Tom Cunningham)

Board Apologies:

Pam Donnelly, Steve Evison, Laura Eardley, Shona Johnstone, Alison Andreas, Cllr Tom Cunningham, Will Quince MP, Mark Jarman-Howe, Adam Bryan.

Others Attending:

Matt Sterling, Matthew Brown, Savannah Rate, Louise Denyer, Amie Hall, Alan Lindsay, Daniel Barton, Michelle Tarbun, Iain McNab, Gregory Wilkinson, Cezara Cosma, Simon Thorp.

1. Apologies & Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted from Pam Donnelly, Steve Evison, Laura Eardley, Shona Johnstone, Alison Andreas, Cllr Tom Cunningham, Will Quince MP, Mark Jarman-Howe, Adam Bryan.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Progress Report & Engagement Update

The Board **noted** a Programme Report circulated in advance. The Board also received a progress update outlining project highlights, programme and umbrella theme RAG statuses, delivery / time / cost RAG headlines including the recent DLUHC monitoring return and second line of defence deep dive review, 2023-24 project delivery timeline and milestone overview and an engagement update. The Board sought and received assurance that project risks and issues continued to be managed, particularly regarding St Nicholas Square, with a focus on ensuring time and cost commitments were met, alongside the general requirement to award contracts in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

3. Levelling Up and City Centre Masterplan Update

The Board **noted** an update on the City Centre Masterplan consultation and proposals are being considered for St Botolphs and Vineyard under the Levelling Up Programme. The Board also **noted** that Shopfront Grants are being awarded by the Business Improvement District (BID) alongside their existing programme.

4. Issues, Risks & Mitigations

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

St Nicholas Square – resolution of issues and commencement of works. The Board **noted** that final technical approval from ECC Highways was still awaited following escalation of issues to Essex County Council executive director level. Consequently, the RAG status of this project is currently Red (unresolved escalated time and cost issues). Cllr Whitbread assured the Board that this would be communicated to Cllr Cunningham.

Jumbo & Balkerne Gate phase 2 - the Board **noted** that North Essex Heritage had been successful in securing a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) development grant of £250,000 to enable further progress of the project, and an inception meeting had taken place. Synergies with Balkerne Gate phase 2 project are now being further explored.

Holy Trinity Church – the Board **noted** that a bid to NLHF bid had been submitted and Community360 were now engaged in discussions regarding future tenancy. Out of scope additional works to the tower are subject to additional funding investigations.

Heart of Greenstead (Community Hub and Land Acquisition) - the Board **noted** the appointment of architects and ongoing work to resolve land assembly issues whilst focusing on progressing the community hub.

Programme-wide cost monitoring and mitigation – the Board **noted** that all projects continued to be rigorously managed, including reforecasting costs to inform any value engineering needed where appropriate. The Board also **noted** that the Digital Working Hub Queen Street and Kerbless Street projects were currently subject to a review which may result in redistribution of budget, in consultation with DLUHC. Any financial impact will be mitigated by wider funding under the Levelling Up Programme for the construction of kerbless streets.

5. Project Spotlight – Digital Skills Hub

The Board **noted** with thanks an update regarding Digital Skills Hub, which is expected to be completed in August 2023. The project involves redevelopment of the current gym building at ACL Colchester to create a digital skills hub and community space. The gym building is adjacent to the main ACL centre and includes, IT Suite, large hall area, toilets, reception area and kitchen. The facility will support training, development, provide digital access and provide space for community activities. The Board also **noted** that a social enterprise had been engaged in addition to original scope and within budget to develop exterior garden facilities at the centre. The Board welcomed the opportunity for a future meeting to take place at the centre to celebrate its refurbishment with Town Deal funding. Links between University of Essex outreach programme and Adult Community Learning will also be explored.

6. Decisions

No decisions from the Board were sought at this meeting.

7. Future meetings

Thursday 16 November 2023 – in person, time to be confirmed.

29 February 2024 – 1000

30 May 2024 – 1000

22 August 2024 - 1000