

The Better Colchester Strategic Plan

2020-2023



**Tackling
the climate
challenge
and leading
sustainability**

**Creating
safe, healthy
and active
communities**

**Delivering
homes for
people who
need them**

**Growing a
fair economy
so everyone
benefits**

**Celebrating
our heritage
and culture**



Colchester Borough Council

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PRIORITIES

2020-2023 GOALS

Respond to the Climate Emergency

- Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030 Environment and sustainability embedded within all Council decision making and the adaptation and recovery from Covid-19
- Air quality across Colchester is improved
- Continue to support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste

Conserve and enhance biodiversity

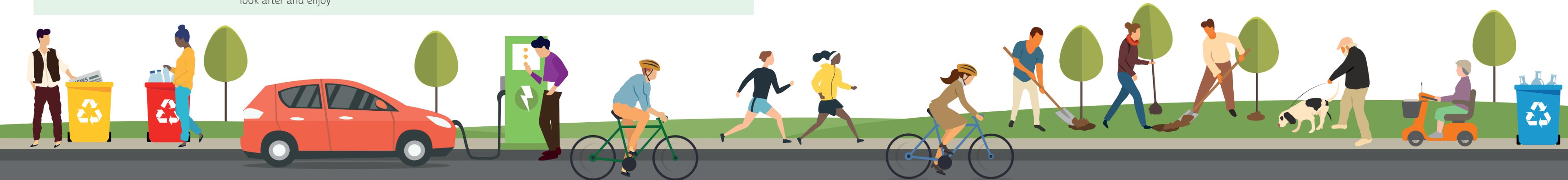
- Minimise the environmental impact of our activities
- Enhance environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through natural seeding and greening
- Discover, nurture and enable the work led by communities that promotes biodiversity
- Plant native species and manage our woodlands, meadows and greenspace whilst sustaining existing habitats
- Work alongside communities to maintain clean, green neighbourhoods and urban spaces that we all look after and enjoy

Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester

- Work with partners to implement strategies and develop measures to reduce traffic in the town centre
- Improve facilities and routes for cyclists and walkers to enable active travel behaviours, healthier lifestyles and reduce car use
- Ensure major regeneration projects put physical activity, cycling and walking at the forefront of development

During 2020/21 we will

- Establish a new Environment and Sustainability Panel to oversee our work to tackle the climate emergency
- Complete the phasing out of Glyphosate herbicide in Council operations
- Embed environment and sustainability impact assessment and prioritisation in all recovery, project and programme management
- Roll out use of eCargo bikes with Council teams, local businesses and partners
- Model the Council's carbon footprint in detail and develop a detailed Carbon Management Plan to 2030
- Implement sustainable changes to waste and recycling collections that support improved staff wellbeing
- Commence construction of the Northern Gateway Heat Network



Creating safe, healthy and active communities

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Build on community strengths and assets

- Take an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach and work alongside communities to build a borough where people are more empowered, self-sufficient, healthy, active, happy and doing what they enjoy
- Encourage belonging, involvement and responsibility in all Colchester's communities and neighbourhoods
- Work with our partners to make volunteering and community involvement as easy as possible
- Maximise developer contributions (such as Section 106) and other funding mechanisms to help fund community infrastructure

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people

- Work alongside Public Health to take steps that mitigate Covid-19 infection risks and control outbreaks across the population
- Support residents to do the things they enjoy doing to stay healthy, happy and physically active
- Enable access and involvement in community green space, countryside sites, sport, and leisure facilities
- Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs
- Supporting the most vulnerable residents through our One Colchester partnership

Provide opportunities for young people

- Provide positive opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interests them, keeps them safe, makes them happy and supports improved mental wellbeing
- Support the creation of strong, safe, and friendly communities that care about each other
- Work with Essex Police, Colchester Borough Homes, Essex Youth Service and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle serious crime
- Work alongside our partners to improve cleanliness and community safety in the town centre
- Upgrade and extend the CCTV network to reach more places

During 2020/21 we will

- Fully support Public Health England's Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plans, specifically deploying Environmental Health Officer resources and working with Community360 to continue Shielding where necessary
- Facilitate ABCD sessions and awareness within communities, system leaders and members to discover and connect the assets that exist and are mobilised within neighbourhoods
- Coproduce investment proposals and deliver interventions that support our vulnerable residents to be more physically active through the Essex Local Delivery Pilot.
- Deliver the new Stanway Community Facility for the benefit of the local community
- Work with partners to support victims of domestic violence
- Work in partnership with Essex County Council to support vulnerable people to live in homes that promote independence and wellbeing



Delivering homes for people who need them

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Increase the number, quality and types of homes

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

Prevent households from experiencing homelessness

- Work with partners to Implement the 2020-23 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan
- Intervene early to prevent homelessness and work in partnership with other organisations to sustain people's accommodation
- Tackle rough sleeping in the borough

Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs

- Create a Development Plan Document for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
- Establish a Delivery Vehicle and investment package for the next phase of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
- Develop the Colchester Northern Gateway as a sustainable place to live, work and play
- Ensure the Council has a good supply of land available for new homes and business
- Create great places to live through the provision of new homes with infrastructure and facilities that support sustainable living and promote health and wellbeing

During 2020/21 we will

- Agree "Phase 2" sites for development by Amphora Homes and undertake feasibility and viability assessments
- Adopt section 1 of the Local Plan
- Deliver the first mixed tenure housing site built by the Council at Creffield Road
- Deliver 100% Council homes at Military Road (8 homes)
- Deliver up to 16 new Council homes on the Council's garage sites
- Initiate delivery of an extra '100 Council Homes' through an investment project
- Accelerate construction to enable recovery from Covid-19



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Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth

- Ensure our borough becomes stronger post Covid-19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience.
- Work with partners to facilitate a high skill, high wage, low carbon workforce
- Develop opportunities to ensure the new economy is greener, sustainable and more resilient
- Work with our partners to enable Colchester town centre to be a more vibrant, resilient and adaptable to future change
- Transform the Northern Gateway as a hub for improved wellbeing, physical activity, jobs, housing and renewable energy
- Address the inequality of access to Gigabit Broadband in communities
- Tackle local skills shortages working with businesses, University of Essex, Colchester Institute and other partners

Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town

- Agree a Town Deal with partners and the Government to attract significant new investment
- Collaborate with the town centre Business Improvement District (BID)
- Continue to regenerate Colchester Town Centre using Council assets, aligned private investment, the Town Deal and Town Investment Plan

Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish

- Ensure our strategy for inclusive economic growth supports the ambitions outlined in the North Essex Growth Strategy, the Local Industrial Strategy and our Town Deal
- Ensure a good supply of employment land and premises to attract new businesses and allow existing firms to expand and thrive
- Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the Climate Emergency
- Maximise the Social Value benefits derived from third party contracts
- Ensure the Council's assets continue to contribute to economic growth and opportunity

During 2020/21 we will

- Develop and agree the Council's Economic Recovery plan
- Agree the Town Deal bid and Town Investment Plan submission with partners
- Deliver the Local Broadband Full Fibre Network project
- Work in partnership to support our Business Improvement District
- Providing enhanced support to businesses through Covid-19 working with business networks to direct appropriate interventions
- Commence "The Walk", and provide the attractive main pedestrian and cycle boulevard through Northern Gateway South
- Complete and open Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park



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Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets

- Work with partners to deliver a collaborative Cultural Vision and Ambitions for the borough
- Agree the key milestones and investment necessary to deliver the strategy
- Continue to provide sustainable grant funding to support Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre and help the sector to adapt and recover from the impact of Covid-19
- Identify further opportunities to improve the cultural offer for residents and visitors

Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year

- Promote Colchester's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support jobs
- Expand the events programme to encourage more visitors and position Colchester as a destination for major events
- Work with partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District to improve the public realm for residents and visitors
- Improve the information available to visitors through the launch of a new improved website

Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage

- Enhance and promote our heritage by better revealing our assets by supporting projects and initiatives to increase public awareness and access to their heritage in daily life
- Continue to deliver a major exhibition at Colchester Castle every two years
- Encourage and support the use of our heritage sites for community events, activities and theatre

During 2020/21 we will

- Develop and agree a new Cultural Strategy in collaboration with partners
- Complete the Mercury Rising project
- Deliver a major exhibition at Colchester Castle
- Launch a new visitor website
- Work to deliver a scheme redevelopment for Vineyard Gate car park to showcase the Town Wall and provide a welcoming arrival point for visitors to the historic town with interpretation and on-site presentation of surviving archaeology and heritage assets
- Seek grant funding and implement schemes to enhance Balcerne Square and St Nicholas Square as new public spaces to showcase the adjacent assets

