

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA499466107

Submitted: 22 March 2023 07:50 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Funding to Support Development of Colchester Masterplan Delivery Vehicle

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: The purpose of the decision is to gain approval for the draw-down of £200,000 from the Ambition Reserve to support the development and delivery of the Colchester City Centre Masterplan. The Plan is the accumulation of work from CCC, ECC and consultants We Made That to create a strong coherent vision and narrative for Colchester City Centre that ensures all current (Levelling Up Fund, Rapid Transit System, Town Deal) and future interventions are joined up to create a city centre fit for the future.

There has been a large amount of community engagement that took place over summer 2022 that informs the plan, and it is expected that a consultation draft will go out in May/June 2023 for consultation.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The ambitions of the Colchester Masterplan align well with the commitments in the Everyone's Essex strategy particularly under the commitment of strong, inclusive and sustainable economy. The aspirations in the plan if actualised would create a city centre that is safe, accessible with a diverse economy and rich heritage. This would help drive up job density, increase footfall to support local businesses and encourage further private investment into the city.

It will support the growing economy through the delivery of new homes, business, skills and training space creating new jobs available to more residents. Much of the investment will be focussed to the south and east of the city centre which sees some of the highest levels of deprivation in Essex with an LSOA in Greenstead ward being identified as one of the 10% most deprived places in England (IMD, 2019). It is also a priority area as set out in the Essex White Paper on Levelling Up.

Additionally, the plan actively responds to the Climate Emergency through ambitions to improve sustainable public transport and walking and cycling links into the city centre. Any developments will also be required to meet certain net zero requirements.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Christopher Whitbread (Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: Many of the interventions included in the masterplan are being progressed thanks to the successful bids to Government (Levelling Up Fund and Town Deal etc.). These must follow specific Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks that have been provided by Government. Returns are often required 6-monthly/annually.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: No

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Net zero, Transport and built environment, Green communities

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Place based working, Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Safety, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: Colchester

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Several of the projects where building assets are included will incorporate accessibility and DDA compliant requirements, taking in necessity for disabled parking bays etc. where appropriate. Also, several projects involve the prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists so making pavements and road crossings safer and more attractive with the added benefit of improved health and wellbeing outcomes by encouraging walking and cycling.

Additionally, improved public realm will provide more spaces to rest and an improved environment has been shown to have a positive impact on people's mental health. Additionally, safer public realm with improved natural surveillance and crime reduction measures has been considered to ensure people feel safer walking through the city in the evening especially women who can feel particularly vulnerable. It is therefore anticipated that there will be a positive impact on the feeling of safety in these areas, particularly for women.

Proposed plans may impact the Colchester Chinese Association building close to one of the development sites. This is a vital community asset and mitigations will be sought to ensure that the specific use of the building is preserved. In this area St Botolph's Church will also see improvements with better access and an enhanced setting with lighting to help showcase the historical building. Also, opening the area out more with new public realm to make it attractive and welcoming.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts: In Colchester early engagement with Colchester Chinese Association whose community building may be impacted by the work has been ensured with any potential response being determined by the needs of said community group.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Harlow

Nature of impact: None

Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: None

Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: In developing the Maserplan over 2000 people have been engaged during the process (incl. council members, young people (10-18yrs), businesses, strategic stakeholders, networks and organisations) through:

- 2 Public events

- 8 Themed co-design workshops (business, accessibility and active travel, heritage, health and wellbeing, community/residents and creative and digital)
- 1847 Online survey responses

Summary headlines from the work include:

- Results from the public survey show that one of the most important issues to respondents (65.8%) was addressing the issue of there being a high proportion of low paid jobs in the city centre. More higher paying jobs in the city centre with good transport links will give more opportunities for working families and young people to get more sustainable employment. Colchester has a very low unemployment rate at 3%, but this likely hides some in-work poverty: around 15% of claimants are employed. Many residents in Greenstead, St Anne's & St John's, Berechurch and Old Heath & The Hythe are employed in what are often considered more lower-paid sectors – Care, leisure, sales and customer services. Over half of working residents in Greenstead are employed in these types of roles (Census, 2021).
- Respondents said most important was Colchester's heritage in improving the city's image and making it a well-known tourist destination (70%). The ability to navigate the city centre easily and safely while showcasing and enhancing the green space and heritage will make more people want to visit and will improve the residents that live in the areas pride of place and wellbeing.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children

Nature of impact: None

Veterans

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: According to Census 2021 data Greenstead, Berechurch and Old Heath and The Hythe wards, just on the outskirts of the city centre, have the highest number of people unemployed due to long-term sickness or disability. Also, Colchester residents have the 3rd lowest Gross Disposable Income in Essex (£20,570). As mentioned above following the results of the public survey key outcomes of the Masterplan will be to increase the availability of higher paid within easy access of the areas of deprivation mentioned.

Projects included in the Masterplan such as Town Deal interventions are already looking to help address these challenges but more could be achieved as other elements of the Masterplan are further developed with partners.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in urban or over-populated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Colchester City Centre is well serviced by public transport and is home to 28% of Colchester's jobs. It is a key site for retail, leisure, education, training, jobs and services and catchment for these spans across the immediate urban area to the more rural, isolated and coastal areas within Tendring etc.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: None

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: N/A

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to the built environment / energy?: Yes

Do you know what products, materials, and qualified built environment professionals you will be using?

Are you maximising the opportunity to source materials locally and maximise use of sustainable materials such as wood?: N/A

Are you using a qualified architect / design team / consultant with the experience and capability to design and secure planning permission to deliver to the highest carbon zero building standards?: N/A

Are you clear that the builder, sub-contractor is qualified and capable of delivering climate resilient buildings (noting risks including subsidence, flooding, overheating), to the highest net zero carbon build quality?: N/A

Is your proposed development / building using the best practice guidance and advice on design quality, climate change and health?

Are you using the design quality and advice provided by the Essex Design Guide?: N/A

Are you using the Climate Change guidance and advice provide by the Essex Design Guide?: N/A

Are you providing a policy compliant development which accords with the District Local Plan policies?:
N/A

Are using the Health and Wellbeing guidance provided by the Essex Design Guide?: N/A

Have you provided a costed net zero option for consideration?: N/A

Is your proposed development / building as efficient as possible?

Is the Energy performance Certificate (EPC) rating of the achieving and EPC A+ or net zero carbon

standard?: N/A

Have opportunities to reduce energy use through the use of smart digital systems been considered?: N/A

Does your development by design avoid the need for air conditioning?: N/A

Does your new development have water efficiency measures in place?: N/A

Do you know where your energy is coming from and how much of it comes from renewable sources?

Are you maximising opportunities to use onsite renewable energy (e.g. roof top solar panels) to deliver this service?: N/A

Are you maximising opportunities to use onsite renewable energy (e.g. roof top solar panels) to deliver this service?: N/A

Is your new or extended development using a renewable heat source e.g. district heating or a form of heat pump?: N/A

Is your development resilient to climate risks including flooding, overheating and subsidence?

Is your site at risk of coastal erosion? Is there a plan in place to protect the coastline: if the coastline is being allowed to erode, this may impact the lifetime of your site.: N/A

Have you reviewed environment agency to ascertain your flood risk? Do you need to put in place mitigation such as sustainable drainage?: N/A

Water is scarce and needs to be absorbed into the land wherever possible. Are you prioritising nature based flood risk mitigations such as sustainable drainage, water butts, planting and ponds which protect against water scarcity?: N/A

Are you using external planting, green walls and green roofs to insulate the building and provide shading to cut risks of overheating?: N/A

Is your development supporting active travel and minimising pollution?

Does your site allow connection to key public transport and active travel routes?: Yes

Are you using Green Infrastructure to interrupt the pathway of carborne pollutants to the public e.g. use of hedges, shrubs and trees?: Yes

Have you provided space for secure cycle parking, showering, cycle and walking pathways on site etc?: Yes

Does the building have adequate space for recycling and waste separation?: N/A

Does your decision / policy involve designing service provision and procurement to minimise freight and staff travel and enable use of active and public transport options?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to waste?: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Positive

Extent of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Public survey found that 56.5% of respondents think that it is very important to take effective action against the impacts of climate change. The Masterplan is an overarching strategic document that includes, 'actively respond to the Climate Emergency' as a key strategic objective within its vision.

Public realm improvements including planters, Street Furniture, Improved pedestrian experience, cycling infrastructure (cycle parking), specific cycle and walking routes. Consideration of all of the above is being taken into account through feasibility work etc. with an aspiration for buildings being built/renovated to be low carbon. However, much of the detail on this is yet to be decided.

Particularly in busy built-up urban areas such as Colchester, interventions are targeted at reducing traffic congestion and poor air quality that can severely impact people's health and wellbeing. Travel in Colchester is car dominated, with over 60% of residents using it as their primary method of travel. If everyone in Colchester who travelled to work by car (pre-Covid-19) used a different form of transport two times a week (e.g. P&R), this would remove nearly 150,000 car journeys each week. Children, older people and those with heart and respiratory conditions tend to be disproportionately affected by poor air quality. Compounded if they live in areas of high deprivation.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts:

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 22/03/2023

Name of person completing the ECIA: Amie Hall

Email address of person completing the ECIA: amie.hall2@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Economy, Investment and Public Health

Your service area: Sustainable Growth

Your team: Localities Team

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: andrew.burgess@essex.gov.uk