

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION (THE DECISIONS LIST)

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Leader of the Council's Items - A.1 - Highlight Priority Actions 2024/25 towards Corporate Plan Themes - Monitoring Report at the Three Quarterly Point

Decision:

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted together with the approval of the highlighted realignment of particular milestones for particular highlight priority actions, as set out in the Leader of the Council's report (A.1).

Reasons for Decision:

Having considered, as part of the project management by Cabinet, the position in respect of the major projects which were the subject of the adopted highlight priorities of Cabinet for 2024/25.

Alternative Options Considered:

The option of not reporting the Quarter 3 position was discounted as it would be contrary to the Council's performance monitoring arrangements for highlight priorities and otherwise would be contrary to the openness commitments in the Corporate Plan.

Conflicts of Interest Declared (and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Keith Simmons, Head of Democratic Services and Elections & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Assets and Community Safety Portfolio Holder - A.2 - Essex Procurement Partnership Update & Procurement Strategy

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- (a) agrees to enter into a Collaboration Agreement for the delivery of joint procurement services for a three-year period on substantially the same terms as set out in Appendix A of the Portfolio Holder's report (A.2) with:
 - Braintree District Council
 - Castle Point Borough Council
 - Epping Forest District Council
 - Essex County Council
- (b) authorises the Director for Governance, being responsible for the Council's corporate procurement function, to sign the final Collaboration Agreement on behalf of the Council;
- (c) agrees that Essex County Council should be the Accountable Body under the Collaboration Agreement acting as Lead Party, which includes responsibility for the day-to-day management of the service and its financial administration and managing seconded staff;
- (d) notes that the Collaboration Agreement provides for annual contributions from the Council, which can be met from within existing budgets, although subject to review as part of the annual budget setting cycle to respond to changes such as inflationary increases;
- (e) notes that further secondment or employment of staff to Essex County Council to support Essex Procurement Partnership, is fully and jointly funded by its Member Authorities;
- (f) supports exploration of additional resource to support the legal support to the Essex Procurement Partnership, in particular for procurement and contract legal advice;
- (g) endorses the continuous improvement approach as identified seeking views on the existing partnership and joint working through an internal questionnaire to feed into the arrangement for the next three years;
- (h) approves the Procurement Strategy for recommendation onto Full Council for adoption as required by the Council's Policy Framework; and.
- (i) instructs Officers to regularly update the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Community Safety, as being responsible for procurement on the content and quality of the Council's

Contract Register and Procurement Project Pipeline ensuring it is kept up to date, enabling Council projects and business as usual can be delivered through the approved Essex Procurement Partnership Prioritisation Approach.

Reasons for Decision:

Having recognised that a number of benefits would be achieved to EPP members, so benefiting Essex residents which included:-

- Increased resilience – through more resource, EPP was able to better flex to the peaks and troughs of each Authority and enabled effective delivery of projects in Districts improving the services residents received.
- Procurement Expertise – By operating across multiple authorities, staff were able to specialise in categories of spend, with more procurement activity in those categories. The result of this should be more informed procurements which in turn would deliver better value for money for the District's residents.
- Category Spend management and strategic oversight for consolidation opportunities – Ensuring the Council could have regard to the importance of achieving value for money, as this was always the overarching priority in public procurement. Government guidance (e.g. Managing Public Money and Best Value statutory guidance) set out how to use public money responsibly.
- Savings Opportunities & Increased Market Influence – Through a common forward plan of procurements required, and working as a team, the Member Authorities would be able to better identify collaborative procurement opportunities. This gave the opportunity to combine spend, creating economies of scale and so delivering contractual savings. Additional benefits would be achieved through efficiency in the resource model, with collaborative procurements enabling fewer tender processes to be undertaken. Over time, as the team developed, savings in the staff model would be enabled so reducing the overall cost of the team to member authorities.
- Reduced Duplication – Working together to have one common approach to procuring and social value would both create efficiencies for the procurement team and reduce the administrative burden to those bidding for procurements. Small to Medium Enterprises and Voluntary Sector Organisations who tended to have limited resources to bid, should be particularly advantaged by this approach.
- Staff Retention and Improved Practice – By collaborating together, efficiencies would be created to enable the delivery of professional procurement practice. The common approach to assessing Social Value was an example of this. Other examples included work to understand the market from which the Authorities were sourcing, introducing an industry recognised category management approach to drive better value for money in Districts and Boroughs.
- Governance – ensuring the Member Authorities had appropriate and proportionate controls, systems and standards to manage procurement risk and to comply with legal requirements.

It was also felt that the adoption of the EPP Procurement Strategy for the Council to deliver in line with and publication on the Council's web page set a clear direction of the next three years, in line with the requirements of the Act and the National Procurement Policy Statement.

Alternative Options Considered:

- (1) Not agree the Collaboration Agreement, with the Council undertaking resourcing and delivering procurement independently.

- Benefits – Control over resource available.
 - Disbenefits – The efficiencies and benefits set out above will not be able to be delivered without additional investment. Procurement will remain reactive, and resource will need to be invested to prepare for the changes from the Procurement Act 2023. Recruitment and retention remain a concern and capacity to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan and Priorities will be put at risk.
- (2) Carry on with the existing Service Level Agreement with Essex County Council – this is not the direction of pooled resources or government's policy on local authorities working closer together through Local Government Reorganisation.

The Council should remain at the heart of partnerships as they emerge and evolve.

- (3) Not agree the EPP Procurement Strategy, with the Council either creating its own Procurement Strategy or deciding not to implement one.

Disbenefits – Resource to create and deliver against the Procurement Strategy and if the Council failed to do so, we could be acting on old policies and strategies which are not consistent with new legislation and the NPPS. The Council would be failing in its responsibilities to deliver value for money and would not have the direction required to improve the professionalism of the service and meet the changing legislative demands of procurement.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Lisa Hastings, Director (Governance) & Monitoring Officer

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio Holder - A.3 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund Transition Year 2025/26

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (a) following the review of the External Funding High Level Framework Grants Checklist, as attached in Appendix A to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.3), accepts £563,028 from UK Shared Prosperity Fund;
- (b) approves the allocation of: £40,000 to commission business support; £26,500 to the continuation of the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) Officer role; £19,506 to the continuation of the Council's Town Centre Manager Role; £15,000 for Extend the Season Events Grants; and £25,000 for the Widening Participation Sports Grants scheme, as set out in Appendix B to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.3);
- (c) allocates the remainder of the UKSPF funding via an open call for projects in quarter one 2025/6 under the themes set out in the Portfolio Holder's report;
- (d) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism to approve the criteria for assessment of grants under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund;
- (e) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism to approve the award of grants to organisations under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- (f) authorises the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism, to sign the grant agreement and memorandum of understanding for the funding, when they are received from Government.

Reasons for Decision:

Having noted that work at this stage was being prepared so that the Team could move as efficiently as possible when the payment schedule, memorandum of understanding, grant determination letter, and the funding itself was received in the new financial year and that with this in mind, it was proposed that a launch event take place in mid-March alongside promotion of the opportunity for businesses and community groups to apply to the open call for funding and being aware that, without approval at this stage, this preparation time would be lost, reducing the time available for any projects to deliver.

Alternative Options Considered:

It was considered to not launch the open call and project approval until the new financial year; however, this reduced time would have had an impact on the time available for tangible

delivery. Any underspent money would not be carried forward but rather paid back to Government if unspent by 31 March 2026.

The projects recommended in Appendix B to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.3) had been selected from UKSPF 2022-2025 based on the success of their work, their impact, and the enthusiasm with which they had been taken up by the community, and the value for money they represented.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Lee Heley, Corporate Director (Place and Economy) & Deputy Chief Executive

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	No

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio Holder - A.4 - Orwell Place Car Park and Event Space, Dovercourt: Post Project Review

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) notes this post project review of Orwell Place and endorses the learning points as set out in Appendix A of the Portfolio Holder's report (A.4), to inform future capital projects;
- b) requests the Leader of the Council to ensure that key messages from the aforementioned Appendix A, are clearly documented within the Council's Annual Governance Statement, as expected by the Best Value Duty Statutory Guidance; and
- c) invites the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider including the outcome of this review on their work programmes to provide additional scrutiny of the performance and lessons learnt.

Reasons for Decision:

Having been updated with regards to the success of the Orwell Place capital project which had supported economic development, enhanced community services, and ultimately contributed to the long-term regeneration of Dovercourt High Street and having been informed of the lessons learnt for the delivery of a major construction project and to ensure those were documented and considered for future projects.

Alternative Options Considered:

To not complete a Post Project Review. However, it was important that lessons were learnt and shared so that the Council could enhance its ability to deliver projects in the future. This methodology provided the opportunity to put processes in place to further reduce the risks with regards to the issues noted in the Portfolio Holder's report (A.4).

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Lee Heley, Corporate Director (Place and Economy) & Deputy Chief Executive

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder - A.5 - Consideration and Adoption Of The Housing Asset Management Plan and the Asbestos Management Policy (Housing Stock)

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) adopts the Housing Asset Management Plan and the Asbestos Management Policy for its housing stock and authorises their direct and immediate implementation, subject to call in; and
- (b) authorises the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery) to make future updates or amendments to the Policies, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing.

Reasons for Decision:

In order to set in place clear plans and policies to inform future maintenance and management activities and such policy framework to evidence compliance with regulatory standards.

Alternative Options Considered:

Not setting in place policies in these areas – not proposed.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Damian Williams, Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder - A.7 - Health & Wellbeing Draft Strategy for Tendingring

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) approves the Health and Wellbeing Draft Strategy for public consultation;
- (b) agrees that Officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, initiate a minimum eight-week consultation process and seek stakeholder comment on the Health and Wellbeing Draft Strategy; and
- (c) agrees that following that consultation the final Health and Wellbeing Strategy be presented to Cabinet for its approval and adoption.

Reasons for Decision:

In order to progress the Council towards the adoption of a strategic approach towards Health & Wellbeing, to support local people and local communities to live healthier, independent and fulfilled lives.

Alternative Options Considered:

To work without an approved Health & Wellbeing Strategy. This would limit the ability to share stated objectives with partners, and lead to a potential lack of direction for the Council's work on health & wellbeing. Without an adopted Strategy, and delivery plan, funding opportunities would be minimised.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

None

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

John Fox, Head of Health & Community

Date:	Decision Maker:	Subject to Call-in*
21 February 2025	Cabinet	Yes

SUBJECT OF DECISION:

Cabinet Members' Items - Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder - A.8 - Tendring Careline: Decision on the Future of the Service

Decision:

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- a) notes the content of the Portfolio Holder’s report (A.8), including the updated financial information relating to alternative options for the future of Tendring Careline, updated information on numbers of service-users and staff, the latest position in relation to third-party contracts and the consideration of third-party proposals for taking on all or part of the Careline service;
- b) notes also the latest position in respect of proposals for local government reorganisation across Essex, including the likely replacement of County and District Councils with unitary authorities, and the potential practical implications for services such as Careline in the future;
- c) in light of the information noted as per resolutions a) and b), supports the proposal from Colchester City Council and its Helpline Service (provided through its arms-length company Amphora), based on the outcome of the evaluation set out within the Portfolio Holder’s report (A.8);
- d) agrees to the creation of a combined and expanded telecare, response and lifting service for North East Essex that aligns with the aims and objectives of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance for an integrated health-system approach; and agrees heads of terms on the following principle conditions:
 - i) it is achieved through the automatic transfer of all remaining Tendring Careline service-users to the service provided by Colchester Helpline on their existing terms of conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council following that transfer;
 - ii) that Colchester Helpline undertakes to guarantee service coverage to residents across all parts of the Tendring District so as to ensure that no part of the District is left without access for residents to a paid-for telecare, response and lifting service;
 - iii) that Colchester Helpline’s existing average response times are maintained and where possible improved upon in providing coverage to residents in all parts of Tendring – with measures put in place, as necessary, for one or more outposts in locations providing accessibility for all parts of Tendring – and at no ongoing cost or liability to Tendring District Council; and
 - iv) that Tendring Careline’s existing staff will transfer to employment within the

expanded Colchester Helpline, respecting existing terms and conditions and with no ongoing financial liability to Tendring District Council resulting from that transfer.

- e) agrees in principle that the Council's Out-of-Hours, CCTV services and monitoring for the Council's own sheltered housing schemes will also transfer to Colchester Helpline under an outsourcing arrangement within the same timescales for achieving the proposal under resolution d), which will be considered as part of the associated negotiation and subject to separate decision(s) as necessary;
- f) that the transfer be facilitated, as early and as smoothly as possible within the 2025/26 financial year;
- g) agrees that, from the date of this decision, any new prospective Careline customers are to be signposted to Colchester Helpline as the Council's preferred alternative trusted provider, in light of the proposal under d) above;
- h) agrees an extension to the exemption of Procurement Procedure Rules to allow the use of the company Careium for the ongoing provision of casual call-handling support over the period of transition, as required, to ensure continuity of service to remaining service-users during times of staff shortage;
- i) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in consultation with the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance; the Director for Planning and Community; the Monitoring Officer; the Section 151 Officer; and the Head of People, to progress and deliver the following:
 - 1) the preparation of a detailed transition plan in collaboration with Colchester City Council and Colchester Helpline, including the associated legal agreement and specific tasks and timescales for the achievement of the proposals under resolutions d) and e), having regard to the broad Indicative Transition Plan outlined within this report;
 - 2) the termination of any remaining third-party customer and supplier contracts with Tendring Careline;
 - 3) the entering into contracts with one or more suitable third-party providers of telecare, response and/or lifting services to call upon additional staffing resource during the period of transition to ensure continuity of service to remaining service-users and to provide additional resources as required;
 - 4) the agreement with Colchester Helpline for the use of accommodation at Barnes House, on a short-term lease and on commercial terms, for use as a temporary outpost for the provision of the expanded North East Essex service while a permanent location is sought;
 - 5) the agreement to any financial contribution towards the upgrading of all existing Tendring Careline service users to digital equipment either before or after the transfer to Colchester Helpline – utilising a proportion of the agreed implementation budget; and
 - 6) the utilisation of the remainder of the implementation budget, as appropriate, for purposes relating to the achievement of the proposals under resolutions d) and e).

- j) confirms that all efforts will be put in place to work constructively with Helpline to support service users through a smooth and timely transfer to the expanded North East Essex service and that for any service users that wish to 'opt out' of an automatic transfer, support will be provided in signposting them to other alternative providers;
- k) confirms that the Council will continue to support affected staff through the transition to the expanded North East Essex Helpline service; and
- l) agrees that the costs associated with these resolutions is met from within existing budgets, including the one-off implementation budget amount of £0.746m, and that the use of these budgets is delegated to the Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance and the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships.

Reasons for Decision:

Having duly considered all of the information provided within the Portfolio Holder's report including the reasons that lay behind the Portfolio Holder's recommendations to Cabinet

Alternative Options Considered:

As previously presented in reports to Cabinet in July 2024 and November 2024, five alternative options for the future of the Careline service have been under consideration with the Cabinet's preference for Option 2 (withdrawal from the market) explained and supported within each of those reports. The different options are revisited as part of this February 2025 report with updated financial assumptions that take into account the Council's decision in October 2024 to terminate the YourStride contract. All options, with the exception of preferred Option 2 still show a budgetary shortfall (albeit a substantially reduced one) that would require ongoing public subsidy.

The Council could choose to continue running Careline with the current number of staff and focus only on serving Tendring residents and accept the need for ongoing subsidy. This would however have to be with the intention that the subsidy could be reduced over time through increasing the customer base and continuing with efforts to improve efficiency. However with a smaller and less resilient team, concerns about recruitment and retention of staff within in an increasingly competitive market are all the more acute and by the time the service is able to increase its customer base to a level that might achieve a degree of profitability, it is highly likely that local government reorganisation will be taking place – and there would be little sense Colchester and Tendring offering separate, but almost identical services that would need to merge by default.

Therefore, as a variation on the Cabinet's preferred Option 2, this report considers further opportunities to transfer all or part of Careline to one or more alternative trusted providers within a defined transition period – following the consideration of proposals put forward by a number of third-party providers who, as part of last year's consultation exercise, expressed an interest. Of the three proposals considered through this report, it is recommended that Colchester's Helpline service is best placed for such a long-term solution and a managed transfer (for the advantages set out above), but with the other providers still having a potentially important role in supporting the Council, through temporary contracts, through the transition period.

For the Out-of-Hours, CCTV and Sheltered Housing monitoring services, there are various

options for their long-term future that could include retention in-house, outsourcing to a private call-centre or a hybrid approach. It is recommended however that outsourcing to Colchester Helpline as part of the arrangement to transfer Careline service-users and staff provides the most logical option and will support the viability and efficiency of a combined service in the context of future local government reorganisation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared
(and Dispensations Granted by the Monitoring Officer)**

The Leader of the Conservative Group (Councillor Paul Honeywood) declared an Interest insofar as a close family member was a customer of Careline.

Consultation with Ward Member:

N/A

Contact Officer:

Gary Guiver, Director (Planning & Communities)

* The call-in procedure will not apply to a decision where the Chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee's agreement has been obtained that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interest, (Rule 16 (h) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules) or any decision made where such decision is to be referred to the Council or one of the overview and scrutiny committees for their consideration.