

**MINUTE EXTRACT
SCRUTINY PANEL
8 DECEMBER 2015**

38. Waste Vision

Councillor Lissimore

Councillor Lissimore stated that she was greatly disappointed with the Waste Vision, as presented in the report, as she had been expecting a strategy with a plan of action for waste in the Borough. Councillor Lissimore stated that the vision contained no aims, specifics or outcomes for waste. Councillor Lissimore questioned why the waste consultation had not been included in the report, given that it has already been agreed and paid for by the Borough Council.

The Scrutiny Panel Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder and the Officers to the Scrutiny Panel and questioned the reasoning behind the Waste Vision rather than the previously stated Waste Strategy. Councillor Davies highlighted that a significant amount of work was undertaken by the Task and Finish Group in advance of the Vision and that the Vision does not contain any measurable outcomes. Councillor Davies questioned why the consultation which is ready to be launched was not included within the report as a basis for a strategy; Councillor Davies also added that many of her residents were expecting the consultation in summer and wanted to fill it in.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the Waste Vision comes in advance of the Waste Strategy, and provides the aspirations of the Council. The Vision will be agreed by Cabinet on 27 January and provides the first stage of developing a waste strategy. Councillor Graham also highlighted that the report includes a number of links to research and national legislation which provide the basis of the Waste Vision. With regard to the consultation; it will be launched once the Vision has been approved by Cabinet and then Full Council.

Councillors highlighted the following issues:

- Councillor Pearson – Questioned the process behind the creation of an implementation plan.
- Councillor Young – Questioned the difference between previous Waste Strategies and the current vision; also asked for an update on whether Essex County Council was considering an incinerator for the fuel by product of the Mechanical Biological Plant (MBT).
- Councillor Cope – Queried whether the recycling quality and quantity for paper and recycling could be improved with different waste collection methods.

- Councillor Harrington – How did the information from the Task and Finish Group and the information on Colchester Borough Councils waste performance in comparison to other Local Authorities help to create the Waste Vision?
- Councillor Davies – Queried when the focus group responses to the waste consultation as highlighted by Nick Chilvers would be released to the public?
- Councillor Moore – How will people be informed about when they can respond to the consultation?
- Councillor Hardy – Suggested that the information on the Waste consultation be included in Council Tax letters, and highlighted the need to assist those residents who do not have an internet connection.

The Portfolio Holder, Matthew Young and Chris Dowsing provided the following responses to the issues raised;

- In response to Councillor Pearson, the Portfolio Holder stated that once agreed by the Cabinet, and by Full Council, along with the consultation responses, the implementation plan will then be created.
- The previous strategy was created in 2008; since that strategy the main difference is the significant technological advances that have occurred. This Vision reflects the Cabinets viewpoint on waste management within the Borough. The Joint Essex Waste Committee is also in the process of updating their strategy and Colchester Borough Council has been updating theirs in parallel. With regard to the fuel from the MBT plant, Chris Dowsing stated Essex County Council are currently tendering for a company to use the solid recoverable fuel which is a by-product from the mechanical biological process and they have the obligation of finding a market for the material. This may result in companies in Europe taking the fuel created, as they have a larger MBT infrastructure in place.
- Chris Dowsing stated that the issue with the current recycling collection is that it has less of a value as it is collected with the surrounding plastic bag. After the recyclable material is collected it is then bailed; the cost of removing the plastic bag from the bailed waste is prohibitive. If the material was collected differently there would be more markets in which to sell the recyclable materials, and the number of vehicles required would also reduce. If Colchester Borough Council undertook the separation of the material themselves it would cost a significant amount. Each method of recyclable waste collection has different costs and incomes at different stages. The Portfolio Holder stated that the Vision will help to provide a direction, as it is not possible to isolate different parts of the waste hierarchy.
- In response to Councillor Harrington, the Portfolio Holder stated that the information from the Task and Finish group and comparisons with other Local Authorities provided a good basis for the Vision. Other Local Authorities outsource certain waste collection or only collect certain materials. With regard to the quality of recycling collected is driven by the market, this indicates the price paid. The quantity is based around the

collection rate in the Borough. All of the very high performers operate a specific type of system with the top performer in the country reaching 65%. With regard to local competitors Colchester Borough Council recycling 48% of waste; Rochford District Council is the highest performer in Essex with just over 60%. Colchester Borough Council are currently the fourth lowest in Essex for the amount of waste collected; the prime aim should be to minimize the amount of waste being produced.

- The focus group surveys will be published once all residents have had the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Matthew Young highlighted that there will also be online surveys and a household survey of 1,000 residents.
- The Portfolio Holder stated that they will ensure that everyone is informed of when the consultation is going to be launched and the possible methods of responding.
- Matthew Young stated information on the survey will be included on the waste and recycling calendar that is distributed with Council Tax letters. For those residents who do not have an internet connection there will be systems to help, including assistance at the Library and a contact number. The online consultation makes it significantly easier to collate the responses provided by residents; the 1,000 household surveys being carried out by QA will also be fed into an electronic database.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel commented and considered on the Waste Vision.