

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

16 JUNE 2008

Present :- Councillor Julie Young (Chairman)
Councillors Nick Barlow, Kevin Bentley, Beverly Davies
and Mike Hardy

Also in Attendance :- Dennis Willetts
Tina Dopson

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Review Panel held on 3 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Have Your Say! - The Principle of Zero Waste

Paula Whitney addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), on the the principles of zero waste, which she considered to be the only option to achieve a sustainable environment for all. She referred again to the issues relating to climate change and recycling, the need for the waste capacity and fuel consumption of the Council's refuse vehicles to be investigated, the importance of introducing separated litter bins in the town centre.

Councillor Julie Young (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Kevin Bentley (in respect of his membership of Colchester Chamber of Commerce) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

5. Waste and Recycling Review

The Panel received details of the Colchester Borough Council Waste to Resources Policy together with the Peer Review of the Waste and Recycling Service which had been undertaken in January 2008 by the Improvement and Development Agency.

Tina Dopson, the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships, Matthew Young, Head of Housing and Environmental Policy, Chris Dowsing, Strategic Waste and Sustainability Manager, and Dave McManus, Street Care and Recycling Manager, attended the meeting to assist members in their discussions.

Councillor Willetts attended the meeting and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel concerning the Council's recent change in policy regarding the

mechanical treatment of waste, his preference for a statement to be published explaining the implications of the change to residents. He was of the view that residents should be entitled to make the final decision in relation to any proposal to introduce fortnightly collections of waste.

James Watson, a resident of Attlee Gardens, addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), on the problems associated with being a resident wishing to recycle but not having the facilities to store material within his home.

At the meeting, the Panel received a presentation by Chris Dowsing, which provided details of the Government's Waste Strategy 2007 and the measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gases, improving resource efficiency, protecting public health, protecting ecosystems and safeguarding social amenity. An explanation was also given of the Waste Hierarchy, and its order of preference in terms of Prevention, Minimisation, Reuse, Recycling, Energy Recovery and Disposal.

In terms of Borough performance in 2007/08, dry recycling amounted to 20.6%, an increase of 1,109 tonnes, composting totalled 12.4% and combined recycling had a rate of 33.08%. Total waste and waste to landfill had decreased by 976 tonnes and 1,977 tonnes respectively.

Mr Dowsing explained that the Council's vision for the future of Waste Management was:

- Less waste produced by everyone;
- An active reuse culture;
- Home composting is 'the norm';
- Easy recycling for everyone;
- More recycled and composted waste than sent to landfill;
- High quality collection service;
- High customer satisfaction.

It was explained that the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships had asked for an Options Appraisal to be conducted to gather together suggestions, initiatives and examples of good practice with a view to achieving zero waste. The Panel was invited to contribute to this exercise by suggesting ideas for inclusion in the Appraisal. It was intended that the outcome of the appraisal would be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration in September 2008.

The Panel sought further information in relation to the following issues:

- The recycling practices of small and medium sized businesses;
- The dis-incentives associated with Landfill Tax;
- Recycling practices at local schools;
- The results of the Rubbish Recyclers initiative;
- The measures used to ensure that recycling arrangements continue to be competitive as circumstances change;
- Arrangements to improve recycling facilities for residents living in flats;
- The initial outcome of the clear sack initiative, in terms of increased volumes of paper and plastics and consequential reductions in black sack volumes.

The Panel suggested the following ideas for inclusion in the Options Appraisal:

- A seminar with local retail groups and the Chamber of Commerce with the theme 'Increasing Profit through Waste';
- A scheme whereby businesses can be awarded a 'Green' badge based on their compliance with certain energy efficiency criteria;
- The introduction of recycling litter bins in the town centre;
- Encourage schools to participate in a 'Recycler of the Month' award scheme;
- Encourage local supermarkets to offer half price special offers rather than Buy One Get One Free offers;
- Promote a recipe competition, 'The Colchester Feast', with residents and local restaurants to create a Leftovers Recipe for Colchester.

RESOLVED that –

(i) Matthew Young, Chris Dowsing and Dave McManus be thanked for their very informative discussions with the Panel;

(ii) The suggestions put forward by Panel members be incorporated within the Options Appraisal, as appropriate;

(iii) Consideration be given to the results of the Options Appraisal being submitted to the Policy Review and Development Panel in due course.

6. Work Programme

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Corporate Services seeking the Panel's consideration of various suggested issues from which the Panel could select a number to comprise its work programme for 2008/09.

It was also explained that the next meeting date of the Panel clashed would prove difficult for principle officers' attendance and arrangements had therefore been made to change the date from 18 to 20 August 2008.

RESOLVED that, subject to possible review in the light of further advice on scope and timing, the following areas of work be identified by the Panel as their priorities and they be provisionally timetabled into the work programme as indicated:

Meeting on 20 August 2008 -

- Housing Strategy - final review prior to resubmission to Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel;
- Night-time Economy - briefing paper to include SOS bus and anti-social behaviour issues and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group;
- Historic Town Centre Improvement - briefing paper to include pedestrian improvements and the town centre environment and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group;
- Town Centre Management - briefing paper on future arrangements.

Meeting on 30 September 2008 -

- Secondary Education - Educational Attainment in the Borough with invitation to guest speakers;
- Flexible Working - review of corporate policy;
- Equality and Diversity - review of corporate policy.

Meeting on 3 November 2008 -

- Neighbourhood Working - briefing paper;
- Waste and Recycling Review - result of Options Appraisal

Meeting on 19 January 2009 -

- Secondary Education - Outcome of initial discussions;
- Climate Change / Sustainability Issues

Meeting on 2 March 2008 -

- To be determined