

## **FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **19 MAY 2009**

*Present :-* Councillor Sue Lissimore (Chairman)  
Councillors Martin Goss, Dave Harris,  
Jon Manning, Nigel Offen, Gerard Oxford,  
Laura Sykes and Dennis Willetts

*Substitute Members :-* Councillor Sonia Lewis  
for Councillor Kevin Bentley  
Councillor Peter Chillingworth  
for Councillor John Bouckley  
Councillor Pauline Hazell  
for Councillor Jackie Maclean

#### **78. Minutes**

The minute of the meeting of the 6 April 2009 was confirmed as a correct record.

#### **79. Referred items under the Call in Procedure**

##### **Have Your Say**

Councillor Smith addressed the panel saying he believed the decision taken was in line with the Cabinet Strategy. In respect of the background to this service, he said it started with the closure of the Greenstead Amenity Site leading to the introduction of the free freighter service scheme operating in St Andrew's and St Anne's wards. Councillor Smith said he would welcome clarification on the exact areas in which this service would operate.

Councillor Smith believed the 'super output areas' as mentioned by Councillor Arnold in his reasons for the call in, was the right criteria for determining where the service should be extended to, and St Anne's was a good example of where under this criteria St Anne's would receive an extended service, whereas under the current arrangements it would not. Councillor Smith concluded by suggesting the Portfolio Holder should give careful consideration to the merits of using 'super output areas' as well as just deprived wards, for the means of determining extended areas of collection.

##### **Extension of free bulky special collections**

The service decision, reference STS-007-08, Extension of free special collections, taken by the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services on 24

April 2009 was called in by Councillor Arnold, supported by four Councillors. Councillor Arnold and Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services both attended the meeting for this item.

Councillor Arnold presented the case for the call in. Councillor Arnold thanked Councillor Smith for his comments and reiterated the reasons for the call in as stated on the Request for Call in Form.

The principle of providing the special collection service within those areas of greatest need is not challenged, indeed it is strongly supported. However, the decision called-in relies on the outdated concept of “deprived wards” to identify these needy areas within Colchester. It also relies on data from the year 2000, whereas the latest survey dates from 2007. The Government’s preferred definition, long ago accepted by the Council, uses “super output areas”, a table of which based on the 2007 data was published on the Council’s own website on 30 March 2009. This identifies five super output areas (in three wards) which have greater need than all those in Berechurch and some within St. Andrew’s and St. Anne’s.

The decision also proposes to extend the services to Holt Drive in East Donyland on the basis that there is recognition that this area “would fall within the criteria”. However, this is unsupported by evidence presented within the report and neither the criteria nor those recognising the need in Holt Drive are identified. Holt Drive is within a super output area ranking 29 out of 104. There was 21 super output areas, in eight wards, not currently receiving the service are identified as having greater need.

The service should be provided to those areas that have the greatest need on the nationally-recognised scale regardless of the ward in which they for the time being are located.

Councillor Arnold concluded by saying he believed the areas to which this service should be extended should be a judgement made by those officers in Community Services, not those in Street Services, and the service should not be extended ward by ward, but by ‘super output area’ thereby providing a service to those who can least afford to pay for it.

Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services responded to Councillor Arnold. Councillor Young gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the reasons behind the decision taken.

The decision was not just based on deprivation indices alone, but with three factors been considered, with flytipping hotspots, deprived small areas and the freighter routeing all looked at in detail. From the records of the Street Care team, this is where the most reports of fly tipping are reported of larger goods that cannot be put out either with the recycling or refuse collections.

Councillor Young said that by using the Mosaic data, the Council could plan where it can best direct or focus services, and these are also the areas where residents are least likely to have access to a car. The original areas were chosen using the 2000 Deprivation indices, but officers then compared this to the 2007 indices using the advice and knowledge of the Customer Insight Team. This should have been mentioned in the report for which Councillor Young apologised to members.

The information shows that St. Andrew's has most deprived small areas ('super output areas') in the top forty percent deprived nationally. This is followed by Berechurch, Newtown and then Harbour. There are then a number of wards with two areas one of which is St. Anne's. Councillor Young explained that when this data is mapped against the fly tipping data it can be seen that Newtown does not receive that many fly tipping reports. The issues here tend to be around litter and residual waste bags put out too early, or in the wrong place. On this basis they were not recommended by officers for inclusion in the scheme.

Councillor Young showed a slide illustrating the current route of the freighter in the St. Andrew's and St. Anne's wards, and the proposed route, adding those areas identified within deprivation indices and fly tipping report data.

Councillor Young showed photographs of recent fly tipping incidents in the areas the freighter service was to be extended into. In regards to the inclusion of Holt Drive being included in the scheme, Councillor Young said he was persuaded by officers that because of the number of fly tipping incidents experienced here as well as its geographical location close to the Monkwick estate in Berechurch this would be a good use of the limited service that operates.

In response to Councillor Hazell who suggested the route appeared to have been produced via a Routemaster, and asked how could we not be sure the abandoned trailer shown in his presentation was an abandoned trailer, Councillor Young said of the three factors used to determine the extended areas of collection, the routeing was of least importance, that a greater weighting was given to small deprived areas and fly tipping hotspots. Councillor Young later explained that the abandoned trailer had been reported by local residents and had been there for some time.

In response to Councillor Lissimore, Councillor Young said that in respect of Shrub End estate, there was believed to be less demand for this service within this area, and the close proximity to the Shrub End Amenity Site was a consideration.

Councillor Chillingworth questioned the wisdom of using spare resources

within this service for the collection of flytipping items, when the new data on super output areas provided us with the opportunity to extend this service to other more needy super output areas.

Councillor Young believed it was a reasonable assumption to make that flytipping is done by people local to the area, citing Greenstead Estate as an example, that following the introduction of the free freighter service the estate saw a decrease in flytipping.

Councillor Harris expressed support for the decision that would extend the service to the Harbour and Berechurch Wards, and was amazed that the decision had been called in. Councillor Harris said areas within these wards had been continually monitored and information given by the public acted on, but still the flytipping keeps reoccurring, blighting many green and urban areas. Councillor Harris said the service would reduce flytipping and urged councillors to support the decision to extend the service.

Councillor Offen said having heard the comments from the speakers so far, he remained unconvinced that differentiating between deprived wards and super output areas was an argument to oppose the decision that had been taken.

Councillor Arnold reaffirmed his request to not to use a ward based system, but one where the areas where the service was extended to were those areas where the service was most needed. Councillor Arnold said the service was never intended to tackle flytipping and that it was wrong to make a connection between flytipping and the residents in that area, reiterating that enforcement powers should be used to tackle flytipping.

Councillor Lewis questioned the wisdom of including flytipping within this service, saying that when there had been instances of flytipping in the Spring Lane and Collingwood Road areas of her ward, these had been dealt with speedily and efficiently by officers within Street Services. Councillor Young said the service only had finite resources and the purpose of the change was not to open out the collection of flytipping to all areas, but only to those hotspot and problem areas, saying he believed the extension of the collection service would actually stop potential flytipping in that area.

Councillor Goss requested information in regards to car ownership ( a measure of deprivation) by ward and the number of flytipping collections by ward (Councillor Goss later asked that this information differentiated between private and public land), and asked for an explanation to the weighting given to each of the three factors for determining the new areas to be given this service. Councillor Young confirmed the information requested by Councillor Goss could be made available. In regards to weighting, Councillor Young said deprived small areas and fly tipping hotspots were the primary factors for

determining to what areas the service could be extended and with this information the routing of the freighter was determined within the resources available.

Councillor Manning said that given the freighter had to travel through the Shrub End Ward, an area of deprivation, to go to the Amenity Site, it made no sense that this area should not form one of the twenty five stops. Councillor Hazell asked how it could be known what the demand for this service in the Shrub End Ward would be, given it is not available to residents in the area?

Councillor Young said the service would remain under constant review, but at this time it was the professional judgement of officers, supported by statistics, that the recommended route was the best way to extend the service. Councillor Young said it was the best way to help those who are deprived and residents affected by flytipping, and the best use of current resources.

Mr. Dave McManus, Street Care and Recycling Manager addressed the panel, and in response to Councillor Goss, explained the take up of the current service ward by ward, and confirmed that since the introduction of the scheme there had been a reduction in flytipping.

Councillor Offen said he believed common sense had been applied to the decision and there would be an opportunity to review and change the service as appropriate.

Councillor Lewis said that she would like the Portfolio Holder to consider a system of meantesting for the free freighter service. Councillor Lewis also thanked Councillor Young, Arnold and panel members for a very meaningful and excellent debate.

Councillor G Oxford said that should any review recognise spare capacity within the provision of the summer freighter service would the Portfolio Holder consider Chinook, High Woods as one of the stops.

Councillor Young confirmed to Councillor Hazell that whilst he would rather a twelve monthly review of the service, that a review within 2009-10 could be undertaken.

Councillor Arnold and Councillor Young were invited to give closing remarks following the discussions.

Councillor Willetts proposed that the panel refer the decision back to the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services for further consideration, asking him to extend the special collection scheme not on a ward basis, but to those super output areas having the greatest need regardless of ward.

Councillor Manning seconded the proposal.

*RESOLVED* that the panel;

- i) Referred the decision back to the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services for further consideration, asking him to extend the special collection scheme not on a ward basis, but to those super output areas having the greatest need regardless of ward (SEVEN voted FOR, FOUR voted AGAINST).
- ii) Agreed to further review of the Free Freighter Service in 2009-10.
- iii) Requested information in regards to car ownership by ward, the number of flytipping collections by ward with this information split by collections on private and public land.