

Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel

**Council Chamber, Town Hall
19 May 2009 at 6:00pm**

The Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel deals with the review of service areas and associated budgets, and monitors the financial performance of the Council, and the operational performance of the Council. The panel scrutinises the Council's audit arrangements, including the annual audit letter and audit plans, and Portfolio Holder 'Service' decisions reviewed under the Call in procedure.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda, which is usually published 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.colchester.gov.uk or from Democratic Services.

Have Your Say!

The Council values contributions from members of the public. Under the Council's Have Your Say! policy you can ask questions or express a view to meetings, with the exception of Standards Committee meetings. If you wish to speak at a meeting or wish to find out more, please pick up the leaflet called "Have Your Say" at Council offices and at www.colchester.gov.uk.

Private Sessions

Occasionally meetings will need to discuss issues in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Mobile phones, pagers, cameras, audio recorders

Please ensure that all mobile phones and pagers are turned off before the meeting begins and note that photography or audio recording is not permitted.

Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from West Stockwell Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to Angel Court Council offices, High Street, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call, and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

Facilities

Toilets are located on the second floor of the Town Hall, access via the lift. A vending machine selling hot and cold drinks is located on the ground floor.

Evacuation Procedures

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telephone (01206) 282222 or
textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call
e-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk
www.colchester.gov.uk

Terms of Reference

Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel

- To review all existing service plans and associated budget provisions against options for alternative levels of service provision and the corporate policies of the Council, and make recommendations to the Cabinet
- To have an overview of the Council's internal and external audit arrangements and in particular with regard to the annual audit plan, the audit work programme and progress reports, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet
- To monitor the operational and financial performance of the Council, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to operational performance, financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors
- To scrutinise the Audit Commission's annual audit letter
- To scrutinise progress made on best value action plans
- To scrutinise executive 'service' decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel through the call-in procedure

The panel may a) confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, b) refer the decision back to the decision taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or c) refer the matter to full Council in the event that the Panel considers the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY PANEL
19 May 2009 at 6:00pm**

Members

Chairman : Councillor Sue Lissimore.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Dennis Willetts.
Councillors Kevin Bentley, John Bouckley, Martin Goss,
Dave Harris, Jackie Maclean, Jon Manning, Nigel Offen,
Gerard Oxford and Laura Sykes.

Substitute Members : All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

Agenda - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally brief and items 6 to 9 are standard items for which there may be no business to consider.

Pages

1. Welcome and Announcements

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched to off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

2. Substitutions

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

3. Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

5. Minutes

1 - 7

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2009.

6. Have Your Say!

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

7. Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

(a) To evaluate requests by members of the Panel for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

(b) To evaluate requests by other members of the Council for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

8. Referred items under the Call in Procedure

8 - 13

To consider any Portfolio Holder decisions, taken under the Call in Procedure.

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.

This decision has been called in by Councillor Christopher Arnold, supported by four Councillors. Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services will attend the meeting for this item. Councillor Arnold will present the case.

See the reasons for the call in, the record of the decision taken under delegated power and the report by the Head of Street Services (page).

a) confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately,

b) refer the decision back to the decision taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.

9. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

To consider any Portfolio Holder decisions taken under the special urgency provisions.

10. Exclusion of the public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY PANEL 6 APRIL 2009

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

Substitute Members :- Councillor Pauline Hazell for Councillor John Bouckley
Councillor Christopher Arnold
for Councillor Jackie Maclean
Councillor Chris Hall for Councillor Nigel Offen

73. Have Your Say!

Mrs. Paula Whitney addressed the panel saying that at the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 24 February 2009, during discussions on the item 'Sale of Recyclable Materials', it was suggested that by allowing the public to leave recyclable items for collection in cardboard boxes and plastic shopping bags, something the public was happy to do, it would save on the purchase of plastic sacks for recycling, money that could offset the cuts required in the Parks and Recreation Service.

Mr. Andy Hamilton addressed the panel speaking of what he called the recent public attacks by the Council on the building contractor of the Visual Arts Facility. Mr. Hamilton said the contractor had limited experience in this type of build and it was of no surprise to anyone of the difficulties experienced in the construction of the roof, but now the Council is complaining. The Council had a responsibility to build the arts facility at a minimum cost, but the project had failed and the cost had spiraled to £26,000,000, an obscene amount of taxpayer's money. Mr. Hamilton suggested the Council offer the building to the Arts Council, believing it would be of little benefit to this town.

74. The removal of rose and shrub beds and borders in the borough

The Chairman agreed pursuant to the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to consider the following item at the meeting as a matter of urgency because the matter is in the public interest and the relationship with the Council's contractor.

Have Your Say

Mr. Bob Russell MP addressed the panel saying that in regards to the decision to remove the shrubs and rose borders, the buck stops with the elected members, though he asked was this decision driven by officers or members. Mr. Russell also asked whether the funds from the Highways Agency for this work were as per the original levels. Mr. Russell said that what has happened is regrettable, given what he and other members had done in the past to increase garden borders and green amenity areas in the borough, including a wild flower meadow. Mr. Russell said that though he was led to believe that work had now stopped on the removal of the borders, he was

disappointed at the negative publicity this had caused. Overall, he had received few complaints on this matter, compared to the many he receives concerning the Visual Arts Facility. Mr. Russell concluded by saying he hoped the Council had learnt lessons from this matter, to improve communication and consultation, that it was a duty of members to advise and consult.

Mr. Norman Bailey addressed the panel saying his concern was with that of the Northern Approach Road. Mr. Norman said he had been told the shrubs within these borders caused safety issues with members of the public, that they would be replaced by smaller, safer shrubs. Under the Freedom of Information, he was told there was no record of complaints or accidents concerning these borders and later found out they were to be removed due to cuts in maintenance costs. Mr. Norman said he had received some answers to ten questions he had asked of the Council, that in effect, his democratic rights had been denied. Mr. Norman concluded by saying there was still an issue about whether Essex County Council would fund this work once the Council's money had run out.

Mr. Andy Hamilton addressed the panel saying the 'border slaughter' had been a public relations disaster for the Council, and the lack of information forthcoming and regarding this issue was deliberate, to forestall public discussion. Mr. Hamilton said of the three original borders in Lexden, only one now remains, and although local residents would have liked a say in this matter, they were ignored. Mr. Hamilton concluded by saying that if ward members were saying they did not know what was going on in regards to this matter, he questioned whether they knew what was going on at all.

Councillor Lewis addressed the panel and responded to the previous speaker, though apologising to Mr. Hamilton for addressing the panel with her back to him. Councillor Lewis said that in the Lexden Ward, the ward councillors had received details of the works after Councillors in other affected wards, and had received an apology for this error. Councillor Lewis said when she was given details of the works she was told work would commence on 9 March 2009, though it actually started on the 11 March 2009. Councillor Lewis confirmed she was in contact with officers from this Council and Essex County Council and in regular contact with residents in Hubert Road, Glen Avenue, Colvin Close and Lexden Grove. The Glen Avenue Residents Association will be planting four new trees on their grass verges, once the issue of public liability is resolved. Residents at Colvin Close are in dialogue with Council Officers regarding their shrub borders. Councillor Lewis said to suggest ward councillors had done nothing was a vexatious comment, that we do know what is going on and do support the residents on this matter.

Mr. Quince addressed the panel said he had read a lot of correspondence on this issue, a decision that was a mistake. Mr. Quince said how could a decision be implemented when it had not been subject to local resident's consultation or Council scrutiny. Mr. Quince asked whether the Portfolio Holder felt it was appropriate that ward councillors found out about this work through the press or by the contractors commencing the works. Mr. Quince said the high media coverage had made the Council a laughing stock. Mr. Quince concluded by saying that given the money to be saved was for services that attracted visitors to the town, did she think the removal of these beds was a mistake, and whether or not the removed shrubs and roses could be

donated to local residential homes and the like.

Mr. Jeremy Lucas, Essex County Councillor for Colchester Drury Ward, and Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and the Arts addressed the panel to explain that roses were a part of the Colchester Heritage, and in a region acclaimed for oysters and roses. One of the town's oldest businesses 'Cants', was also one of the Country's oldest rose growers. Mr. Lucas asked whether the Portfolio Holder had considered this when making the decision to remove the rose borders in the borough. Mr. Lucas asked why had ward councillors not been consulted on this decision. Mr. Lucas concluded by saying this decision would save each resident of the borough ten pence per year, was this the proper way for the Council's finances to be conducted?

Mr. Lucas, in response to Councillor Goss said he did not know whether Cants had commented on this matter or whether they would consider sponsoring the planting of rose borders, but felt it was not usual for commercial firms to be embroiled in political debate.

Councillor Lewis addressed the panel to speak about the reduction in grass cuts per year to St Leonards Church Yard, Lexden and the closure of the King George V Playing Field pavilion, Lexden. Councillor Lewis said the number of grass cuts had reduced from fourteen to eight, and she asked whether consideration had been given, prior to this decision being taken, as to the type and style of the church yards that were affected. Councillor Lewis said that once a church yard was closed for burial, the Council had a legal obligation to maintain the yard to a prescribed standard, and was the case with St. Leonard's, eight cuts was not sufficient. Councillor Lewis said the closure of the King George V Playing Field pavilion would be a loss to local residents, that the closure would have a detrimental effect on the amenities available to children in the area and would be tantamount to taking away a vital community building in the Lexden area. Councillor Lewis concluded by saying this was an ill-considered decision.

Councillor Davidson addressed the panel saying he was bitterly disappointed by this decision, a retrograde step that had generated unwanted publicity. Councillor Davidson said there had been a lack of detail in the budget papers, thereby denying members the information on what decisions were to be made. Councillor Davidson concluded by asking what the environmental and visual impact would be of removing these rose and shrub borders.

Councillor Smith addressed the panel saying he did not recall giving any assurances to the percentage of rose and shrub borders to be saved. Councillor Smith said at the recent Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting he said he gave assurances that if any Councillor had concerns about this matter, to contact the Administration. Councillor Smith confirmed at this meeting that all work had been suspended on disputed sites. Councillor Smith said that with regret these assurances had not been met, assurances he made in good faith, and he sincerely apologised for this. Councillor Smith said the costs of removing the borders was greater than the annual savings to accrue, and asked out of which year's budget was the cost of removal coming from.

Councillor Hazell said she had been told that the cost of grubbing out of the beds was taken from the savings that had accrued in the 2008-09 budget.

Parks and Recreation Service – 2009/10 Budget changes

Councillor Theresa Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism and Diversity addressed the panel, saying she loved Colchester Town as much as the previous speakers, and was offended by comments that she was destroying the rose and shrub borders of the town. Councillor Higgins said there was no statutory requirement for the Council to have these borders and the decision to remove them was because of a shift in the budget resources. Councillor Higgins said flower beds were still very important to the environmental and visual impact of the town, both to residents and visitors, but the emphasis of spending on some budget items had meant a cut in other areas. Councillor Higgins said it was a very difficult decision to make, but following further discussions, she could confirm that all remaining rose and shrub borders would not be removed, those as highlighted in orange on the revised appendix C schedule.

Councillor Higgins confirmed to Councillor Lissimore that all the sites highlighted in orange on the revised schedule, plus those sites indicated as 'leave' would not have their rose or shrub borders removed.

Councillor Willetts asked that given that Cabinet members had informally discussed the budget and the implications of the cost cuts, was the Portfolio Holder aware that given this decision would not be disclosed for scrutiny, what the implications of this would be.

Councillor Higgins said she was aware of the overall budget and the cuts that are within the budget, and yes, that this included the removal of the rose and shrub borders as shown in the schedule.

Councillor Higgins responded to Councillor Willetts in regards to the level of consultation undertaken, explaining that some of the stakeholders were consulted, though in regards to the Highway Agency and the need to gain permission on this decision, this was an error as we did not believe it was necessary to consult with the highway Agency. Councillor Higgins confirmed that Cabinet members discussed the proposed budget cuts with officers, and in reference to the rose and shrub borders, these were considered to be in very poor condition and attracting litter. Councillor Higgins believed that all ward councillors whose wards were affected, were consulted, though she apologised for the error in not contacting the Lexden ward members. Councillor Lissimore believed that those ward councillors that were contacted, were told of the cuts, but not consulted on the cuts.

In response to Councillor Willetts, Councillor Higgins said in hindsight, though this was a very difficult decision to make, the consultation and communication process had been wrong.

In response to Councillor Willets, Mr. Bob Penny, Parks and Recreation Manager confirmed that the value of the list of rose and shrub borders, that is the cost of reinstating all the borders and replanting would be £137,000, and the cost of annual maintenance would be £11,000. Councillor Higgins said that in light of the decision to

keep the remaining rose and shrub borders, the overall budget will need to be reviewed to find alternative savings.

Councillor Arnold asked for the decision to close the King George V Playing Field Pavilion, Lexden to be reconsidered, as this facility was in continual use by the residents of Lexden. Councillor Arnold said it was iniquitous that one part of the overall budget cut should be reconsidered and another part was not, a totally unjust situation to be allowed to stand. Councillor Arnold said the Leader of the Council had confirmed to him that the budget information was available to all councillors, therefore this whole issue could have been conducted under proper scrutiny. Councillor Arnold said this decision making process was shrouded in mystery, one that has ultimately lead to the decision being changed, and that will result in a change to the budget. Coupled with a failure to consult or communicate to members what was to be done in advance of the works, and knowing that in this case, borders that have now gone could have been reprieved, the panel had to ensure the Cabinet was requested to review procedures to see this never happened again. Councillor Arnold later emphasised that he had on two occasions requested information requesting the service implications in regards to the budget cuts but the information had not been made available, even though the Leader had confirmed to him that this information should have been made available.

Councillor Smith said the revised schedule (appendix C) was not available at the time of the budget process, and the budget process adopted by the Administration was the same as that of the previous four to five years. Councillor Smith said that in past years opposition members raised issues or concerns with officers in regards to the budget papers.

Councillor Hazell said she was surprised by Bob Russell's comment that he had had little response on this matter, whereas she had received a greater response from this issue than any other issue. Councillor Hazell was extremely grateful for the U-turn on the decision, though given the poor response to her in respect of her enquiries she did believe there had to be a better way of dealing with this kind of issue in the future.

In response to Councillor Bentley, Councillor Higgins said officers were allowed to consult on the decision making process, though following conversations with the Leader, she could confirm the reprieve of those rose and shrub borders that had not been removed. Councillor Higgins also confirmed that any future changes to the budget would be agreed in due course by the Cabinet.

Mr. Penny confirmed to Councillor Bentley that the Mersea Beach Working Group is looking to maintain the bathing platforms at Mersea Island, so that the Council will cease maintenance and installation of the platforms. Councillor Higgins confirmed that in regards to the Marine Patrols Brightlingsea Harbour Commission, though the two man patrols will cease, some patrols will remain. This decision was discussed with the Harbour Commissioner. Mr. Penny also confirmed to Councillor Bentley that contractors had disposed of the shrubs and roses removed from the borders using large machinery.

Councillor Higgins, in response to Councillor Manning said she did with regret agree that the communication process was not properly done.

Councillor Harris commented that in his ward, some of the borders were targeted, but the work was stopped and discussions immediately commenced to determine a solution. Councillor Harris believed the consultation process could have been done better, and as a Council we need to learn and move on.

Councillor Higgins confirmed to Councillor Lissimore that the cost of providing spring bulb planting within the newly created grass areas would be £3,000, to be found from the 2009-10 budget.

Councillor Goss commented that the general hubbub at the meeting was frankly wrong, and asked that the scrutiny panel cleaned up its act to show members of the public that they can act maturely. In response to the chairman, who commented that some people present at the meeting might find some of the words Councillor Goss used offensive, Councillor Goss said that if anyone had found some of his words offensive then he did apologise for this.

Mr. Penny confirmed to Councillor Goss that many of the roses and shrubs that were scheduled to be removed had gone on well beyond their sell by date and this was the reason why many did not flower any more. Ordinarily you would expect to replace roses and shrubs every ten to twelve years, though in regards to these borders, many of the plants were in excess of fifteen years old. Mr. Penny also confirmed to Councillor Goss that the bushes along the Northern Approach Road had, as instructed, been cut back to the tree line of the road. Mr. Penny also accepted that officers had not recognised the impact of this work to Councillors and on members of the public, given that they had received only three to four initial enquiries on this work, one of these under the Freedom of Information Act, and agreed to review the operational policy on major roads such as the Northern Approach Road.

Councillor Arnold commented that the consultation process needed to improve, and without doing it is the Council's reputation that is harmed.

In response to the request for clarity by Mr. Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive of Colchester Borough Council, Councillors Arnold and Willetts clarified what they would ask the panel to agree in regards to a communication plan as part of the process for implementing decisions.

Councillor Dopson, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships addressed the panel and confirmed that she understood the concerns raised by panel members, agreeing that processes matter and that in future these will be done differently with improved procedures. Councillor Dopson felt that a proper structure for engaging with shadow portfolio holders would improve communications.

RESOLVED that the panel;

- i) Considered and noted the report Parks and Recreation Service - 2009/10 Budget Changes.
- ii) Agreed to a further report being presented to the panel at the next convenient meeting, to give details of the revised spending reductions in the Parks and Recreation

budget consequent upon the new information disclosed at this meeting (FIVE voted FOR, SIX ABSTAINED).

iii) Requested that the Portfolio Holder reconsider the closure of King George V Playing Field Pavilion, Lexden, the outcome to be reported to the Panel at the next convenient meeting.

iv) Requested that the Cabinet reconsider the procedures for putting information relating to budget and other financial changes into the public domain to increase transparency and to enable informed public debate and effective scrutiny to take place before decisions are taken (ELEVEN voted FOR).

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

The Council has established Delegation Schemes by which certain decisions may be made by the relevant cabinet member or specific officers.

Such decisions are subject to review under the Call-in Procedure. From the date the decision is published there are five working days during which any five Councillors may sign a request for the decision to be reviewed and deliver it to the Proper Officer. If, at the end of the period, no request has been made, the decision may be implemented. If a valid request has been made, the matter will be referred to either the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel if the Type of Decision is Service, or the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel if the Type of Decision is Strategic/Corporate.

For decisions which are deemed to be Key Decisions, these must be included in the Forward Plan and 14 days must elapse between publication of the Forward Plan and the decision being taken.

In addition, any report (excluding confidential ones) relating to a Key Decision must have been made available to the public at least five clear days prior to the decision being signed.

Part A – To be completed by the appropriate Cabinet Member/Officer

Title of Report

Extension of free bulky special collections

Delegated Power

To procure the specified service in the provision, implementation, maintenance and management of: - refuse collection

Decision Taken

To extend the free special collection service currently provided to St Andrew's and St Anne's to the wards of Berechurch, Harbour and East Donyland. The scheme will be provided to selected parts of these wards.
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Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Forward Plan

N/A

Reasons for the Decision

The existing scheme has available capacity to be extended without the allocation of further resources. The existing scheme is available in selected parts of St Andrew's and St Anne's wards. These wards were selected using the index of multiple deprivation 2000. St Andrews and St Anne's are the two wards with the highest areas of deprivation in the Borough.

The capacity within the existing scheme is sufficient to extend to two more wards. Again using the index of deprivation Berechurch and Harbour are third and fourth highest in the Borough.

It is also recognised that a small part of East Donyland ward, Holt Drive, would fall within the criteria and the area served adjacent to Berechurch ward.

Alternative Options

There is no alternative option other than to retain the existing scheme. Any extension of the scheme beyond that proposed would significantly reduce the number of collections available and lessen the effectiveness of the scheme.

Conflict of Interest

N/A

Type of Decision

Service

Dispensation

N/A

Authorisation

Signature _____ Councillor Tim Young _____

Designation _____ Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services _____

Date _____ 24/4/2009 _____

(NB For Key Decisions five clear days must have elapsed between the report being made available (see date in **Key Decision** box above) and the decision being taken i.e. signed)

Part B – To be completed by the Proper Officer

Call-in Procedure

Date published on The Hub and placed in Members' Room and Customer Service Centre
_____28 April 2009_____

Date by which request for reference must be made to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel if the Type of Decision is Service or the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel if the Type of Decision is Strategic/Corporate

5pm_____6 May 2009_____

Signed _____Diane Harrison_____

Proper Officer

Reference Number

STS-007-08

Implementation

Date decision can be implemented if no request (Call-in) for the decision to be reviewed has been made

After 5pm_____6 May 2009_____

Called-in 16:40 pm 6 May 2009. To be reviewed at Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel, Tuesday 19 May 2009



Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste

Item

23 April 2009

Report of	Head of Street Services	Author	Dave McManus
Title	Extension of free special collections		☎ 282625
Wards affected	Berechurch, Harbour and East Donyland		

This report concerns the extension of the free special collection service to parts of Berechurch, Harbour and East Donyland Wards

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To extend the free special collection service currently provided in St Andrew's and St Anne's to the wards of Berechurch, Harbour and East Donyland. The scheme will be provided to selected parts of these wards.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The existing scheme has available capacity to be extended without the allocation of further resources. The existing scheme is available in selected parts of St Andrew's and St Anne's wards. These wards were selected using the index of multiple deprivation 2000. St Andrews and St Anne's are the two wards with the highest areas of deprivation in the Borough.
- 2.2 The capacity within the existing scheme is sufficient to extend to two more wards. Again using the index of deprivation Berechurch and Harbour are third and fourth highest in the Borough.
- 2.3 It is also recognised that a small part of East Donyland ward, Holt Drive, would fall within the criteria and the area served adjacent to Berechurch ward.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There is no alternative option other than to retain the existing scheme. Any extension of the scheme beyond that proposed would significantly reduce the number of collections available and lessen the effectiveness of the scheme.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In 1988 a special collection scheme using a manned freighter commenced in the ward of St Andrews primarily aimed at reducing the levels of fly tipping in and around the estate of Greenstead. At that time fly tipping was a significant issue and was seriously affecting the environmental quality of the estate and impacting upon the quality of life of the residents.

- 4.2 In 2004 this scheme had outgrown its intended use and had become so popular with residents from St Andrews and surrounding wards that the Health and Safety implications of the site and its visitors forced its closure.
- 4.3 As a result of the schemes closure an alternative scheme was introduced in late 2004.
- 4.4 This new scheme, providing roving refuse freighters proved to be problematic and the advance notification of vehicle times led to fly tipping.
- 4.5 In 2006 the scheme was varied once again and a pre bookable collection scheme introduced. Sixteen collection slots were initially introduced and residents in the affected wards were able to book a collection through the Customer Service Centre. The collections had conditions attached and were only available for waste which could not be reused or recycled.
- 4.6 The number of slots was increased in 2008 to 25 as the time to undertake each collection was not as long as first estimated.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Over the last 12 months the usage of the scheme has been monitored and it is considered that an extension to the scheme is currently possible.
- 5.2 When considering these extensions, areas of relatively high fly tipping and high deprivation were considered. For operational effectiveness the extension was determined to cover two wards only
- 5.3 It is proposed to allocate the 25 available collection slots equally across the four wards involved in the scheme.
- 5.4 It is also proposed to allocate dedicated areas within Berechurch, Harbour and East Donyland wards where the scheme will operate

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 This initiative supports the Strategic Plan aim of being Clean and Green as this will contribute to a reduction on fly tipping.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Ward councillors within the wards concerned have been consulted.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 If agreed the extension of the scheme will be publicised in the areas identified in paragraph 5.4 above. A press release will also be sent to the local media.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications within the operation of the scheme. The existing scheme is funded through existing resources and the extension is within service capacity
- 9.2 In order to manage this scheme changes will be necessary to the electronic management systems within the Customer Service Centre. These changes may carry a

maximum cost of £1k. Savings will be identified within the service budget allocation to accommodate these costs.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 Taking this decision will provide a service to three wards of the Borough who rank the third, fourth and fifth highest in the index of multiple deprivation. The two highest wards in the index are already served by this scheme.
- 10.2 The scheme is particularly beneficial to older people and people with disabilities who have difficulty in disposing of larger items of waste.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 The disposal of bulky waste by householders in areas of high deprivation can be difficult. Fly tipping can often occur in these areas which in turn leads to poor environmental quality.
- 11.2 There is a direct correlation between litter, waste and crime and the prevention of fly tipping will in part improve the fear of crime in these areas.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 Fly tipping of waste materials, including hazardous waste, is a danger to the public and the environment. It is the intention of this scheme to reduce fly tipping therefore reducing the risk of harm.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 The risk in not agreeing to this decision is that fly tipping in these wards will continue or increase
- 13.2 There is also a slight risk that by extending the scheme it will outstrip the slots available which could lead to customers waiting longer for a collection date. This will be monitored over the first six months of operation and reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Background Papers

There are none

