

# POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

## 16 SEPTEMBER 2013

*Present :-* Councillor Julie Young (Chairman)  
Councillor John Elliott (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors Mark Cable, Nigel Chapman, Barrie Cook,  
Mark Cory, Colin Mudie and Lesley Scott-Boutell

### 11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 5 August 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 12. Invited Guests

The Chairman welcomed two guests who had been invited to the meeting in order to broaden the Panel's discussion on Demand Management and Behaviour Change:

- Elspeth Kirkman, from the Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights team
- Carol Adams, from the Department for Work and Pensions

### 13. Demand Management and Behaviour Change

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Customer Services inviting the Panel to consider the behaviour change 'framework' and programme being developed by the Council and to make relevant recommendations to Cabinet.

Mandy Jones, Research and Engagement Manager, explained the context of huge financial challenges for Councils in the years ahead with an estimated £14.4 billion shortfall in funding by 2019/20 combined with forecast increases in demand from customers brought about by the recession and demographic changes. She then gave details of work at a national level on influencing behaviour through demand management which suggested that local authorities would need to employ behaviour change approaches if they were to meet this funding shortfall.

'Demand management' involved managing the demand customers have for Council services. This could be about reducing contact with customers (for instance, by encouraging recycling or promoting self-serve) or, by stimulating demand in the use of services that generate income (in leisure services, for example). 'Behaviour change' is part of demand management and involves using intelligent ways to change or influence customer behaviours. In addition, behaviour change can also be about encouraging and supporting customers to make better choices for themselves and their communities (for instance, by encouraging clean streets or healthy living, or enabling greater community involvement).

Mandy also provided a summary of demand management and behaviour change, outlining Colchester's involvement to date, specifically in terms of:

- Why we need to manage customer demand;
- What we mean by 'demand management' and 'behaviour change';
- Using 'customer insight';
- Behaviour change and psychology;
- Measurement;
- Developing behaviour change projects;
- Organisational issues: Barriers and shifts needed;
- What we are doing to progress demand management and behaviour change.

In response to questions, Mandy explained that a significant amount of work had been undertaken over the last five years by the Council's Customer Insight Team and it was important that this work continued to receive support in the future. In order to help to engage Councillors in the principles, Mandy had undertaken a recent Development Session for Councillors and was very willing to do more of them. The Customer Insight Team worked with other teams and utilized a project management tool to determine the types of interventions which would work best.

The Chairman invited each of the guests in turn to address the Panel on the issues from their perspective.

Elspeth Kirkman explained that the team of 14 that she worked in had been set up specifically by the Prime Minister after he had read about low cost effective interventions which tapped into what motivates human behaviour. She outlined in a visual presentation some of the theory behind 'behaviour change' together with some results from the practical application of 'behavioural insight' to projects across the public sector. Elspeth confirmed that the Cabinet Office Team annually reviewed their achievements. Currently there was more demand for work than resource to meet it and those projects with social benefits were the ones which were selected for delivery. Moving forward the Team was being formed into a Company and their support would be provided only on a chargeable basis. In response to questions, Elspeth explained that evidence relating to the longevity of behavioral 'nudges' did not yet exist but was something that was beginning to be addressed. Recent work had involved linking in changes to people's habits in order to find sustainable solutions and incentives.

Carol Adams had been working with the Cabinet Office on a behaviour change project to help people back to work and presented some of the findings. The project had been initiated in Loughton, involving around 1800 claimants and had then been rolled out across Essex. In Colchester there were around 3600 claimants and the staff had been provided with coaching to explain behaviour change concepts and the reasons behind them. Much of the work was in the context of the Universal Credit regime which would be digital by default and the work had concentrated on building relationships with claimants and getting them to make commitments to finding work. The work, although not necessarily including all the measures adopted in Essex, was due to be rolled out nationally in October.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The potential to stereotype claimants rather than for them to be treated on an individual basis;
- The concept of behavioural ‘nudges’ and whether there was a limit to the number of times people would respond to nudges;
- The need for Councillors to be supportive of the concepts to ensure that successes recorded so far would not be lost;
- The extent of the problem of Benefit fraud and the penalties currently in place to deter and prevent;
- The problems associated with using online self serve initiatives which sometimes do not provide good customer experience;
- The need for ‘appropriate contact’ to be retained with certain customers who can’t self serve and for adequate resources to be diverted to support this requirement;
- The recognition that resources may need to be provided to people in order to enable them to interact in different ways;
- The need to work with customers to find out what suits them better in order to change small pieces of behaviour;
- The similarities between demand management and what could also be termed intelligent marketing.

*RESOLVED* that –

(i) Elspeth Kirkman and Carol Adams be thanked for the insights they provided and their valuable contributions to the meeting.

*RECOMMENDED* to Cabinet that the following issues be borne in mind when considering the Behaviour Change framework and future programme of work:

(i) The benefits of expanding and building on the Behaviour Change work;

(ii) The need to provide Behaviour Change training and support to staff and councillors in order to manage demands;

(iii) The valuable assistance and support provided by the Cabinet Office Insights Team.

#### **14. Economic Development Strategy 2010 - 2015**

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services reviewing the Council’s Economic Development Strategy 2010 to 2015 and the corresponding Delivery Plan which would help inform and shape the Council’s future delivery of the Strategy and the proposed strategic refresh.

Nigel Myers Enterprise and Tourism Manager reminded the Panel that the Council had originally adopted the Economic Development Strategy in 2010, the primary role of which was to set out a framework to steer the activities of the Council and partner organisations to achieve a sustainable and strong local economy, foster the conditions for economic resilience and growth and to capture the economic benefits for residents

and businesses in the Borough.

Whilst the lifetime of the strategy extended to 2015 it was recognised that there was now a need to align the Colchester strategy with the Essex County Council Economic Growth Strategy and with the emerging South East Strategic Economic Plan from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. The latter in particular would be instrumental in securing funding to enable economic growth locally and regionally.

It was explained that Colchester was a diverse and growing Borough with a resilient and buoyant economy and recognised as a successful place with the drive and the tenacity to deliver an ambitious growth programme. The Colchester economy was worth in the order of £17.2 billion. The key employment sectors being manufacturing, construction, retail, IT and business services, tourism and public administration, health and education. One in six businesses in the Borough was a creative company in activities ranging from architecture, software, publishing through to artistic creation and media. In addition, Colchester had over 20,000 businesses the majority of which were micro businesses with less than 10 employees and small to medium enterprise size with less than 200 employees.

The UK CACI 2012 Retail Dimensions Survey classified Colchester as a Primary Retail Centre. It was ranked as one of the top 50 retail centres in the UK with an annual retail expenditure of £440m. Colchester was included as one of the most robust retail destinations in the UK in the 2012 Javelin Group report. Whilst recognising the inherent strengths and resilience of the local economy, the Borough continued to face some significant economic challenges in the lifetime of the current strategy. These included the level of unemployment, the effects of reduction in public sector spending given the relatively high level (31%) of public sector jobs and the relatively high level of young people aged 16 to 19 who are not in education, employment or training (5.0% of the cohort – 272 young people).

Nigel also took the opportunity to update the Panel on the progress with the Town Centre Broadband initiative which would deliver speeds in excess of 25Mb. The Council was also in contact with County Broadband in order to deliver a wireless solution across the Borough which would mean that, despite delays so far, Colchester would be ahead of most other Boroughs in Essex.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The positive contribution made by the Strategy in terms of the delivery of the Colchester Enterprise Hub;
- Concerns about the influence Colchester would be able to exert over the funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the welcome news regarding the prospect of a Federated Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Concerns regarding the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training, especially since the winding up of the Connexions service;
- The need for apprenticeships to be subject to evaluation and the impact on people's willingness to take up this type of opportunity;
- The need to work with businesses towards the provision of a workable broadband solution;

- Speculation as to whether the predominance of small to medium enterprises and creative industries would work against the use of apprenticeships as a means of securing employment by young people;
- The potential to formulate a case study to capitalise on the marketing of Colchester as a Creative and Digital Hub.

*RECOMMENDED* to Cabinet that the following issues be borne in mind when considering the proposed refresh of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2010 to 2015:

- (i) The potential lack of influence that Colchester will be able to exert over the funding priorities of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, given its size and scope;
- (ii) Whether there are sufficient training solutions for older people needing to access digital services in the future;
- (iii) The need for the approach to the Town Centre to be focused;
- (iv) The need to learn from partners in Suffolk in relation to the Visit Anglia Strategy;
- (v) The continuing need for ways to stimulate more investment;
- (vi) Whether the targets for a Borough wide Broadband solution are too ambitious;
- (vii) The need for improvement in the feedback about apprenticeships from education providers to local businesses;
- (viii) To acknowledge the fact that generally investors require a return on their investment within five years;
- (ix) To welcome the news that Colchester has a thriving economy of £17.2 billion;
- (x) For support to be given to the creation of a Creative Business Centre in Colchester but to acknowledge the need for more marketing of Colchester as a Creative and Digital Hub.

## **15. Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group // Update**

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Operational Services providing an interim update on the work of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group prior to a full report being presented to a future meeting of this Panel.

Matthew Young, Head of Operational Services, attended the meeting explaining that the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group had been set up to aid the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste in considering matters identified in the Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal that was produced by the Strategic Waste Team in January 2009. At that time the methods identified in this appraisal to meet the vision

were agreed as follows:

- Less waste is produced by everyone
- There is an active reuse culture
- Home composting is 'the norm'
- Being able to recycle is easy for everyone
- More waste is recycled and composted than sent to landfill
- The collection service is high quality
- There is high customer satisfaction with the service

The first meeting of the Group took place in April 2009 and it agreed to aid the Portfolio Holder for Waste and Street Services, in considering the amount of residual waste going to landfill, investigating recycling options. Since 2011 the Task and Finish Group focused itself on two main issues to look at in support of the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste:

- The experience and results from the Food Waste Collection Trial that was due to commence in November 2011
- The initiatives undertaken to strongly encourage recycling

Over the trial period the Task and Finish Group received regular updates on the progress of the trial particularly the participation rate and the tonnages being collected. It reviewed the data being presented by officers and would comment on the success of the methods being used to encourage participation. It also made suggestions on improvements that could be made to the service and questioned officers on the lessons being learnt as the Trial progressed. Also during the existence of the Task and Finish Group the Council was successful in being selected to receive two grants from Government to support its waste collection services.

In response to questions Matthew acknowledged the hard work of the refuse operatives and also spent some time explaining where the food waste and other recyclable materials were sent. He referred to the current development of a anaerobic digestion plant which Essex County Council was developing and speculated about the potential opportunities available to a private business which might choose to enter this market, especially given the known high percentages of food waste generated by commercial companies.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The value provided by the Task and Finish group in being able to work cross party, outside the gaze of publicity;
- The importance of continuing the group in the future when important discussions need to be had about the delivery of the waste and recycling service in the future;
- The availability of food caddy liners from local retailers;
- The benefits of giving people information about tangible benefits of recycling such as the products that can be made from recycling materials in order to obtain buy in;
- The ability of councillors and the public to report households which regularly leave large numbers of black sacks for collection;
- The possibility of providing councillors with explanatory recycling information for

- inclusion in leaflets delivered to households in their wards;
- The need for updated information to be made readily available on what materials are currently recyclable;
  - The cost of food waste caddy liners and which local retailers had agreed to offer them for sale

*RESOLVED* that –

(i) Arrangements be made for councillors to be supplied with the necessary information for them to include in their ward leaflets, together with the list of local suppliers of caddy liners;

(ii) The next report from the Task and Finish Group to be presented to this Panel in March 2014 to be based on potential future options, including but not exclusively, the Waste Strategy, encouragement of an Anaerobic Digester for Colchester.

*RECOMMENDED* to Cabinet that the work of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group be acknowledged and the Group be given authority to continue its work to assist the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste in important issues for the delivery of the waste and recycling service in the future.

## **16. Work Programme 2013 -14**

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive setting out the current Work Programme for the Panel for 2013-14.

The Work Programme has been updated since the meeting of the Panel held on 5 August 2013 to reflect the decisions that were made in relation to the deferral of the 20 mph Speed Limit Task and Finish Group Update to the meeting in November 2013 and for an update from the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group to be submitted to this Panel's meeting. In addition, following the Chairman's suggestion regarding the issue of Fracking, a request has been formally submitted to Cabinet to consider the merits of a report being provided to a future meeting of the Panel giving details on the process and its implications for Colchester.

It was noted that a further report on the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group would be submitted to the meeting in March 2014.

*RESOLVED* that the current situation regarding the Panel's work programme for the year be noted.