

# ITEM 4

Time started – 6.00pm  
Time finished – 8.10pm

## **COMMUNITY COMMISSION 16 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Present: Councillor Grimadell (Chair)  
Councillors Bayliss, R Khan, Redfern and Richards

In attendance: Councillors Naitta and Troop

### **32/09 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chera and Lowe.

### **33/09 Late Items introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

### **34/09 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **35/09 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 July 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **36/09 Call-in**

There were no call-ins to report to the Commission.

### **37/09 Councillor Call for Action**

There were no Councillor Calls for Action to report to the Commission.

### **38/09 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission**

There were no responses of the Council Cabinet to the report to the Commission.

## **Items for Discussion**

### **39/09 Public Conveniences – Evening Opening of Toilets**

The Commission received a report by the Corporate Director of Environmental Services on the provision of public conveniences in the city. It was reported that public toilet provision in the city is based on facilities that were introduced during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The facilities were design to meet the needs of the working population and boasted few creature comforts such as a flushing toilet. Because of a lack of funds, public toilets, managed by Waste Management, are generally in a poor condition. The remaining public conveniences can best be described as functional and basic, and at worst not meeting the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century society.

Councillor Redfern stated that, as Chair of the Licensing Committee she has experienced the city's night time economy during site visits with Licensing Officers, Taxi Marshals and Street Pastors. Some patrons who visit bars and pubs are urinating in the street in addition to which some also expose themselves in public. She stated that the Council has a responsibility to provide a clean and safe environment for the people who use the city both during the day and at night. Councillor Redfern stated that the proposed five automatic public conveniences would not meet the demand of the city's growing night time culture.

The Chair echoed Councillor Redfern's comments and said that the Council should consider refurbishing the existing toilets as they are already in prime locations. The Policy Strategy Manager for Waste Management stated that retaining the existing facilities will render the section unable to achieve the budgetary savings it has been under pressure to meet.

Councillor Bayliss stated that he understood the pressures the division faces but this proposal is hugely unpopular with the public. The temporary solutions proposed such as the Pissoirs are male orientated and do not provide for the city's female citizens. He proposed that the Commission should recommend refusal of the recommendation as printed in the report and move towards refurbishment of the existing facilities instead as proposed in section 7.2 of the report.

Councillor Redfern stated that the automated public conveniences only provided one toilet but each of the existing facilities provides several toilets so this should be factored into any eventually funding.

**Resolved to recommend Council Cabinet approves the strategic approach but note the Commission's reservations and that the emphasis of any future provision of public conveniences should focus on the refurbishment of the existing facilities.**

40/09      Community Legal Advice Centre and Derby  
Advice

The Commission considered an update report on progress of the Derby CLAC and Derby Advice's relationship with the CLAC partners. It was reported that

a customer satisfaction survey carried out between April 2008 and March 2009, using a sample of 540 clients, 96% stated that they would recommend the CLAC to someone else. Their satisfaction target was 80%.

Chris Pass, of Access2Law was also reported to the Commission that Derby Advice had exceeded its targets. The centre has dealt with 635 welfare rights cases; against a target of 600. It has provided debt advice to 180 clients; meeting its target of 120. It identified 1700 new entitlements to benefits which amounted to £3.5million of financial gain.

The Chair asked what could be done to further improve the service. It was reported that currently the service uses three triage staff; two in the morning and one in the afternoon. To make best use of the system the centre would need three triage staff in the morning and two in the afternoon. Each triage staff member is paid about £18,000 a year, so the centre would need around £40,000 to employ the additional staff.

**Resolved:**

- A. To note the progress of the Derby CLAC and Derby Advice's relationship with the CLAC partners and request Cabinet to support the CLAC partner in the forthcoming budget round for 2010/11 report; and**
- B. That the Chair of the Commission will write a letter of commendation to the CLAC in recognition of the excellent work and outcomes achieved on behalf of the citizens of the city of Derby.**
- C. That Members of the Council be provided with contact details for Derby CLAC and Derby Advice.**

## 41/09 Housing Services

The Commission received an oral report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Services providing Members with the Housing Services Division's response to the recession.

Housing Strategy and Research Manager Angelina Novakovic reported that the economic down-turn had meant that unemployment had risen by 11%, repossessions had tripled in the region, house prices have fallen by 10-20% across all property types and first time buyers are experiencing record high deposit fees of a 25% down payment.

To combat the recession, Derby City Council has brought in a number of measures to aid residents:

- A. Development of person catered products
- B. Implementing Government initiatives and schemes to provide financial relief and reduce the burden of debt and repossessions;

- C. Developing new affordable housing products;
- D. Acting proactively to raise awareness and prevent further increases in household debt and to take the lead on the dissemination of information;
- E. Ensure information is shared and make sure that the appropriate services are targeted.

Councillor Bayliss raised concern with the range of services that were being proposed and used by the Council to provide relief to residents. He asked how a product could be tailored to each individual resident, who the Council is helping and what is considered a measure of success. He raised concern with utilising private landlords for social housing and what evidence there is available to support this scheme. Councillor Bayliss also asked about the provision of affordable housing as he believes that some of these projects remained unfinished or had not been started. Housing Strategy and Performance Manager Ian Fullagar stated that four PFI sites have not yet been developed. However, 189 houses were delivered around the city in the last financial year. The ALMO houses have not been built but this is under contract. Officers have negotiated on the problems holding up the progress of the remaining PFI projects and they are hopeful that these will proceed in the new year.

Councillor Redfern stated that she did not think that using private landlords should be considered the long term solution to provide affordable housing and that building more Council housing stock is the real viable option. Housing Strategy and Performance Manager Ian Fullagar stated that when the Council uses privately owned housing, they would have to ensure that they were well managed possibly through an ALMO like Derby Homes. The Assistant Director Housing and Advice Mark Menzies said that building new affordable housing stock would be an ideal option and officers are trying to tap into Government. However, he stated that in the short term realistic options need to be considered and private housing, so long as it is well managed, is a viable option.

Councillor Redfern also queried the progress that had been made in bringing empty properties back into use. The Assistant Director Housing and Advice Mark Menzies said that last year's target of bringing 200 properties back into use by direct intervention by officers had been achieved. Councillor Bayliss asked for all the addresses of all the properties that had been brought back into use to be circulated to the Commission.

**Resolved that the presentation be noted and that the Commission be informed of the 200 properties brought back into use following the intervention of officers.**

## 42/09 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items of retrospective scrutiny.

## 43/09 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

Members considered the current forward plan and the items which fall into the Commission's remit.

Resolved to review the proposals relating to the Food Law Enforcement Plan (Ref. 20/09) and to earmark Public Conveniences and CLAC to be reviewed in the forthcoming budget round for 2010/11.

## 44/09 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet.

MINUTES END