

Time commenced 6.00pm
Time finished 8.54pm

**COMMUNITY COMMISSION
16 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Present: Councillor Nath (Chair)
Councillors Banwait, Bayliss, Chera and Richards

28/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Khan, Leeming, Lowe and Redfern.

29/08 Late items introduced by the Chair

Under Overview and Scrutiny rule 15 Councillor Bayliss requested than an item be placed on the agenda regarding the traveller site at Russell Street. The Chair agreed this was urgent as there not another scheduled meeting of the Commission until January 2009.

30/08 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nath declared a personal interest in Item No. 35/08 as he was Chair of the Community Legal Advice Centre.
Councillors Nath and Bayliss declared a personal interest in Item No. 34/08 as they were on the Derby Homes Board.

31/08 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32/08 Call-in

There were no items called in.

33/08 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

The Commission noted the responses of the Council Cabinet on the following reports of the Commission:

- Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2008-11
- Derby Accredited Property Scheme.

Resolved to note the responses.

Items for Discussion

34/08 Travellers Site at Russell Street

The Commission considered an item under the Overview and Scrutiny Rule 15 brought to the Commission by Councillor Bayliss on the Russell Street Travellers Site.

Members requested that officers look into the concerns raised in the report and report back any findings to the next scheduled meeting of the Commission.

Resolved that an item be brought to next scheduled meeting of the Commission.

35/08 Derby Housing Strategy 2008-2013: Consultation

The Commission considered a report from Director of Corporate Services on Derby Housing Strategy 2008-2013: Consultation. This report introduced the draft Derby Housing Strategy and its consultation process. It also outlined the proposed housing priorities to tackle over the next 5 years, including the Housing Strategy Priority Themes which were:

- Cohesive Communities
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Improving Homes and the Living Environment
- Supporting Vulnerable Residents.

It was anticipated that the Strategy would be published in December 2008.

Members raised concerns that there were challenges over residents using private sector landlords, as they were not seen as accessible as social housing providers. It was also noted that there were issues concerning properties that had been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled resident but, after that tenancy ended, then being available to everyone with further money being spent to install similar adaptations on other properties within the City.

The report did not mention Council mortgages and it was suggested that this was something to look into further. It was noted that Liverpool City Council had produced an innovative housing strategy to look at Council mortgages. It involved residents borrowing a deposit from the local authority and paying it back at a lower rate.

It was reported that there were shared ownership scheme schemes and low cost initiatives for residents within the City but this was not something Derby Homes was directly involved with. It was noted that Derby Homes could be more aware of these schemes and help to promote them to residents within the City. The Commission did note that a further report would be brought back to them on Council mortgages.

Ian Fullagar informed the Commission that empty homes continues to be a concern and that currently two officers were being recruited to provide a greater emphasis on empty homes in Derby.

Members noted that they were overall impressed with the draft report; it seemed to be a good basis as to work from but there were issues that needed to be explored further.

Resolved to note the draft Housing Strategy and receive a further report at the next meeting of the Commission.

Work Programme

36/08 Community Legal Advice Centre

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Services on Community Legal Advice Centre. It was reported that the CLAC had opened on 1 April 2008 and that 2 meetings had taken place in May and July so far. It was noted that a launch event had taken place on 26 June. The relationship with Derby Advice had been well established and was working well to the service level agreement that had been adopted. It was noted that the service was meeting the needs of the identified priority groups. The Commission were informed of the future priorities for the CLAC which included a publicity and marketing plan, continuing to develop the assessment review and a mapping of client's journeys.

Members requested that at a future meeting of the Commission a progress report was provided giving details of usage on a ward by ward basis.

Resolved to note the progress of the Derby CLAC and receive a report back to the Commission in six months.

37/08 Public Art Strategy and Priorities

The Commission scrutinised the draft Strategy and interviewed the Assistant Director – Cultural Services, Ray Rippingale on Derby's Public Art Strategy and Priorities. It was reported that the Strategy had existed since 2002, but there was now a new sense of ambition in the City about what public art can deliver. It was reported that there were five key themes identified within the document that represented the assets of the City, they were:

- Surprising City
- River City
- Heritage City
- Green City and
- City of Innovation.

Members were supportive of the proposals but raised concerns that to be fair to interested artists they need to have a clear brief in order to be able to respond. This required prior thought and agreement among those responsible for approving the project itself and, if taken by different decision makers, for its funding and siting. It was noted provided the commissioned artist responds within the brief it should then be accepted. That is because art is in the eye of the beholder and the subjective views of officials and funders should not intervene as a second stage.

Members agreed that the new Neighbourhood of Boards and Forums could be the vehicles to gather the views of local people about public art on local streets, at district centres, public parks etc. When residents and traders wishes had been ascertained

that information should then fully inform the types of public art that are to be commissioned locally and the subsequent design briefs.

Members pointed out that the Equalities Impact did not currently incorporate references to the contributions of minority ethnic communities, including those of Derby's emerging communities. Mr Rippingale agreed and offered to do more work on this point.

Members of the Commission agreed with Mr Rippingale that widespread consultation with the public and stakeholders should commence at the Action Plan stage rather than prior to the adoption of the Strategy. Cllr Naitta also commented that future consultation will have the purpose of reflecting what the community wants.

Resolved that the report and Strategy be revised so as to:

- a) clearly set out that in relation to commissioning a good design brief is the key to success,**
- b) pursuant to a), agree that if a proposal meets the agreed brief it should be accepted even if it does not suit the personal taste of decision makers,**
- c) agree that for local communities the Neighbourhood Boards/Forums be involved in determining wishes and thus fully inform the local brief and expand the Equalities Impact to incorporate references to the contributions of minority ethnic communities, including Derby's emerging communities.**

38/08 Derby LIVE update

The Commission received a progress report from Peter Ireson, on Derby Live. It was reported that phase 1 was complete and that phase 2 was currently running. This included a re-organisation of the marketing of Derby Live. The Commission were provided with the revised programme of Produced Theatre for 2008/09 to 2010/11. It was noted that a business plan had been submitted to the Arts Council for the Playhouse but there was currently no further news on this issue. It was reported that there would be shows on Cathedral Green in the future and other outdoor events likely.

Members were impressed with the programme of events available and commended Derby Live and thanked the management team and staff for their hard work.

Resolved to note the report.

39/08 Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

The Commission welcomed the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture and received details of his plans and priorities for the 2008-09 municipal year. Councillor Naitta outlined his vision and strategy for the community and explained how he had been promoting active recreation and sport. The main points discussed were:

- Reviewing Leisure facilities within the City
 - New Springwood gym
 - Refit of gym equipment
 - Facilitating a condition survey

- Free swimming for over 60's
- Strategic Provision for the City around swimming activities
- Key decisions made in full consultation with the Community
- Credit crunch issues.

Members noted that the Neighbourhood boards should be utilised to engage the communities regarding what leisure facilities they required in their local area.

The Commission requested further details on the discussion around swimming facilities. It was noted that this could include the suggestion of fun water facilities rather than the Olympic size pool. This raised concern about the 2012 Olympics and how the Council could promote residents to train and enter the Olympics. It was noted that a report with more detail would be available at the next meeting of the Commission.

Resolved to note the points raised and discussed at the meeting but receive a detailed report on the swimming facilities at the next meeting of the Commission.

40/08 Twin Bins Roll Out

The Commission received an oral report from Andrew Hopkin, AD on the twin bins roll out and commenced a discussion as to whether some areas that were densely terraced would prefer bottle banks and other recycling facilities instead of the twin/triple bins which are often kept on the pavement.

The Commission had requested that this item be on the agenda to gain advice from the professional officers as to any solutions for the residents. It was noted that there were currently 105,000 homes on the recycling scheme for which the response was generally good. There were 12,000 homes not on the scheme of which 4,000 properties were Derby Homes houses. It was reported that in high rise facilities there was a package to be put in place for recycling facilities to be available to residents. There was a NEAT scheme in place to tackle any fly tipping and that community engagement was being carried out in problem areas.

Members noted that an ideal way to engage with local communities would be to attend the local forum. It was requested that officers did this to educate residents and begin a meaningful dialogue.

It was reported that members often received complaints as their bins had not been collected. This was due to the wrong waste in each different bin. It was again noted that this was due to the education of the residents.

Andrew Hopkin informed the Commission that by March 2009 all households in the City would have recycling facilities apart from the 4,000 Derby Homes houses which would be by 2010.

The Commission noted the discussion.

41/08 Performance Eye

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Services on the performance monitoring 2008/09. The Commission were asked to consider how they could add value to the Council's performance management over the three year life of the Local Area Agreement. The Commission agreed to monitor the key nine indicators for the next municipal year.

Resolved to a) note the report and b) to monitor the key nine indicators for the next municipal year.

42/08 Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Commission received further information in response to item no 21/08. A question was received prior to the meeting from Councillor Bayliss – write question.

Rob Davison, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer reported that the charge of £790.00 for each house visited was decided from advice from Central Government. It was noted that the local authority was not permitted to make any profit from the licensing. It was noted that currently the procedure in place was an accurate costing for the work required, although if the situation changes this may not longer be the case. Of the 70 houses that have been visited most cases have needed further inspection as the property has needed changes to bring it up to a safe category. It was noted that Mr Davison would provide further details to members of the Commission by email.

Resolved to note the response provided.

43/08 Retrospective Scrutiny

The Commission requested that a further report be brought to a future meeting on Bringing Empty Houses Back into use.

44/08 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

There were no items.

45/08 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items.

MINUTES END