

Overview and Scrutiny

Draft Annual Report 2005/06

PART 3

(Pages 59 –90)

5. Budget Scrutiny Areas 2005/06

An important part of the annual scrutiny cycle is consideration of the draft revenue and capital budget proposals during January. On the *revenue* budget the Commissions put forward the recommendations shown, submitted to Council Cabinet as one composite document. Most were noted by Cabinet; the boxed comment shows the fuller responses and/or the final outcome when the revenue budget was approved Council on 1 March. The *capital* budget was submitted as a late item to the Scrutiny Management Commission and it decided not to make any recommendations.

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

Recommendation 1

The Scrutiny Management Commission recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny research budget is not reduced by £24k as is proposed in the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09.

Reasons for the recommendation

Reducing the Overview and Scrutiny research budget would send the wrong signal about Overview and Scrutiny to the other parts of the Council.

<p>Cabinet response The Commission budgets have had to be reviewed like all other budgets to deliver a low tax and protect front line services. This budget has consistently been underspent in previous years.</p>
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Recommendation 2

The Scrutiny Management Commission recommends that Council Cabinet considers the recommendations made about the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09 by the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.

Reasons for the recommendations

For the reasons given in the reports of the other Overview and Scrutiny Commissions in the sections below.

Recommendation 3

That Council Cabinet note the thanks offered by the Scrutiny Management Commission to the officers involved in the preparation of the budget documents.

Recommendation 4

That Council Cabinet are informed that the Scrutiny Management Commission consider the presence of Council Cabinet members at the recent round of budget meetings to have been important to the budget process and that they also note that the presence of the Cabinet members was appreciated by members of the Scrutiny Management Commission.

Recommendations of the Community Regeneration Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

Recommendation 1: To note that the Commission considered the revenue budget and decided to make no specific recommendations, however some members had expressed concerns.

Reasons for recommendation 1: The Commission conducted a thorough interview with Cllr Bayliss and appropriate officers lasting over one hour. This covered the range of the Commission's portfolio and questions were posed, and responded to, on most aspects of proposed budget changes between 2005/06 and 06/07 (and subsequent years). When the Commission later deliberated on the budget proposals it became clear that any motion making specific comments would lead to a vote splitting the Commission along party lines. There was however a consensus regarding Recommendations 2 and 3.

Recommendation 2: Cabinet subsequently inform the Commission about the replacement for the Derwent Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team, when the proposals are worked up but preferably before implementation, and how this might be rolled out to other parts of the City.

Reasons for recommendation 2: The Derwent 'NEAT' project funding expires in March 2006. The indicative budget for 2006/07, as approved at this time last year, had anticipated this being 'mainstreamed' from April 2006 and showed the figure £128k to enable that to happen. That sum is removed in this year's draft budget, meaning that the service will cease in its current form. Cllr Bayliss confirmed the intention (page 102 refers) of "developing and introducing new models for 'NEAT' within priority neighbourhoods". He had commented that the current 'rolls-royce' level of service could not be afforded. The Commission therefore wish to track how the replacement service is developed, funded and rolled out. The Commission's continued interest stems from its review *Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment*.

<p>Cabinet response Agreed – the Council, DCP and Derwent are currently working together to design a replacement scheme to be delivered in each of the priority neighbourhoods.</p>
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Recommendation 3: After it has become clear whether/how much of the

Public Priorities Fund can be released, Cabinet give the Commission the opportunity to make suggestions about uses for the Fund in 2006/07.

Reasons for recommendation 3: paragraph 27 in the Overview (page 9) says the use of the Public Priorities Fund “will be determined in the final stages of the budget process” so only then can the available sum and any criteria be known. The Commission’s members have tentative views about good uses for the Fund. When the amount/criteria are known the Commission wishes to have a window of opportunity to influence the spending decisions. The next scheduled meeting will be 21 March but, if necessary, an earlier meeting could be held.

Recommendations of the Culture and Prosperity Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

Recommendation 1

The Culture and Prosperity Commission urges Council Cabinet to review the spending cuts in the Museums Service that are proposed in the draft Revenue Budget.

Reasons for recommendation 1

The proposed cuts would send the wrong signals about the Council’s commitment to providing a high quality Museum Service in Derby. The cuts might also result in a loss of external funding and affect the Council’s CPA future rating.

Pickford’s House is a popular attraction. There were 21,000 visitors in the past year and 19,000 of them were individual visitors, not organised groups. Instead of effectively closing Pickford’s House to the general public and restricting access to the other museums, the Council should properly explore the ways of more actively promoting visits to its Museums and of generating additional income from the visitors.

The closure of visitor attractions in the City is contrary to the Council’s stated intention to promote and market Derby. The suggested spending cuts in the Museums Service will not facilitate the work of Derby Marketing, which the budget proposes should be supported to the extent of £100k in 2006/07 and £200k in 2007/08.

<p>Initial Cabinet response The Cabinet is reflecting on the feedback regarding the museums service and will finalise its views prior to Council on 1 March 2006. Outcome The proposed curtailments did not proceed.</p>
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Recommendation 2

The Commission is in agreement with the budget proposal to hold arts grants at their cash level for 2005/06.

Reasons for recommendation 2

The Commission recognises that this is a necessity arising from the current budget situation.

Recommendation 3

The Commission supports the proposal to allocate £100k to Derby Marketing in 2006/07 and £200k in 2007/08.

Reasons for recommendation 3

The Commission recognises the need to market and promote Derby and considers that this can best be done through an organisation such as Derby Marketing.

Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that some of the income resulting from the increased sales and revised pricing at the Assembly Rooms should be ring-fenced and itemised in subsequent budgets.

Reasons for the recommendation

To enable some of the increased income generated to be used as appropriate by the Assembly Rooms.

Cabinet response Income generated from the success of the Assembly Room has consistently been reinvested in the service.

Recommendations of the Education Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

Recommendation of the Education Commission

The Education Commission, having concerns about a number of areas of the Education Budget, particularly relating to Adult Learning, the Gatsby Project and for English Speakers of Other Languages, recommended that there should be no cuts in the education budget.

Reasons for the recommendation

1. The Adult Learning Service plays an important role in providing accredited and non-accredited learning services to adults in the city. A substantial element of the budget for the accredited learning is provided by the Learning and Skills Council with the remainder of the course costs covered by fees. Costs for providing non-accredited learning courses are predominantly supported through fees charged to learners with support from the Council where appropriate. Members were concerned that cuts in the adult learning service would have an adverse impact on adult learning, particularly in the non-accredited learning provision. This could result in either a reduction in the number and types of courses, higher fees for the learners, or both. Members were concerned that non-accredited learning makes an important contribution to the quality of life for some of the vulnerable people in our society such as older people who often take up these types of learning provision.
2. The Gatsby Project has had a major impact in improving the education of children looked after by the City Council. Funding for the project from the Gatsby Foundation is coming to an end and members were concerned that if sufficient funds were not found to continue this excellent project by some means, possibly making it mainstream, it could have a detrimental effect on the future education of looked after children.
3. Members were informed that there will be reductions in the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and the Grant will be directed prescriptively, in ways that partly do not accord with Derby LEA's identified priorities. The affected schools are currently being consulted. Members were concerned that the reduction in grant and prescribed use will impact children who have English as a second language, particularly in areas of social deprivation.
4. Members welcomed comments from Councillor Dave Roberts, Deputy Leader of the Council, who apparently stated at the last Area Panel Five meeting that there will be no cuts in education budgets.

Cabinet response The proposals avoid service reductions by reappportioning costs to utilise the growth in the central part of the Schools budget to offset the impact of the savings target in the LEA budget. Including the Dedicated Schools Grant, net spending on Education is increasing by 5.2% in 2006/7, with significant growth above inflation.

The final budget proposals have reassigned £21k of funding to protect the Gatsby Project.

The Adult Learning budget is dependent on funding from the Learning and Skills Council and changes reflect that body's decision to refocus provision on

basic skills training. The budget for English Speakers of Other Languages is similarly sensitive to reductions in Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Both of these issues are outside of the Council's control.

Recommendations of the Planning and Environment Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

Recommendation 1

The Planning and Environment Commission recommends:

- a) That cremation fees are increased by £25 in addition to the 2.25% above inflation increase that is proposed in paragraph 3.5.1 of the draft Revenue Budget document.
- b) That the income derived from the £25 increase in cremation fees is ring-fenced and used to off-set the cost of the mercury abatement equipment that the Council is required to install at the crematorium

Reasons for Recommendation 1

The Planning and Environment Commission is concerned that the draft Revenue budget document makes no mention of the actions that the Council will need to take to address the DEFRA requirement that by 31 December 2012, 50% of all cremations at existing crematoria are subject to mercury abatement.

In the report (November 2005) on its review of the ways in which the City Council might comply with the DEFRA requirement to control mercury emissions from Crematoria, the Commission, the Commission recommended:

'That cremation charges are increased by say £25/cremation from 2006, and that the money raised is ring-fenced so that it can be used in the future to off-set the cost of the works that will be needed at the Crematorium'.

The Commission considers that the Council's Revenue Budget report should that account of this recommendation.

Cabinet response A separate report will [later] be prepared regarding the mercury abatement requirements during 2006/7 to consider what actions are appropriate.

Recommendation 2

The Planning and Environment Commission recommends that the report on the Council's use of energy, which was requested by the Council Cabinet member for Environment and Direct Services following her meeting on 6

December 2005 with the Planning and Environment Commission, is completed in time for its conclusions to be considered as part of the Council's 2006/07 Revenue Budget process.

Reasons for Recommendation 2

The review that the Planning and Environment Commission is carrying out into the Council's use of energy has highlighted the high current and future costs of energy and the implications that this will have for the Council. The review has also identified actions that the Council might take to reduce its energy costs. It is understood that the report requested by the Council Cabinet member will further examine this issue. The Commission considers that any cost saving measures identified in the report should be considered as part of the Council's 2006/07 Revenue Budget process.

Cabinet response The report is due to be completed prior to the start of the financial year, but not in time to consider impact on current budget. Any financial implications will be considered once the report is available.

Recommendations of the Social Care and Health Commission on the draft Revenue Budget 2006/07-2008/09

The Social Care and Health Commission considered the draft budget report at its 16 January meeting.

Recommendation 1

The Commission recommended that the Council Cabinet review its proposal to impose a capital limit in relation to the "self funders" as the Commission doesn't believe this is a fair method for setting home care charges.

Reasons for Recommendation 1

The proposal to set a capital limit on home care charges at £21500, above which the users are expected to pay the charge for the service, was discussed at length by the Commission. Members had mixed views on this issue. Some members felt that this was a reasonable limit whilst others wished to see the limit abolished altogether as it affected a relatively small number of users. Members also felt that the limit penalised people with savings above the limit and provided a disincentive to others to save in the future. Members queried the assertion that there will be no costs under the new system as there are costs attached to the means testing of benefits and collection of the charges albeit smaller than the current costs. The capital limit is also seen to be unfair on some users who may have to pay higher charges due to their high level needs and any savings would quickly disappear.

<p>Initial Cabinet response The Cabinet will consider this issue prior to making its recommendation to Council on 1 March. Outcome The capital limit was not introduced.</p>
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Recommendation 2

The Commission supported the proposed budget in relation to Children Services and asked the Council Cabinet to continue with its aspirations to increase fostering allowance and bring them in line with comparator authorities.

Reasons for Recommendation 2

The Council has a statutory duty to provide services to children that come into its care, which could be due to a variety of reasons and therefore could have a significant impact on the budget Children. This can create volatility in children services budgets. Members therefore supported the budget. However, the cost of looking after children through in-house foster care is considerably lower than placing them with independent fostering agencies. Members noted that the Derby has increased its fostering allowance to bring it closer to the comparator authority averages and asked the Council Cabinet to continue with the aspirations to improve financial support to foster carers further. Members were also disappointed at the loss of funding to the Gatsby Project but understood the financial pressures and were reassured to some extent by the statement by the Cabinet Member to pursue other options to try and keep some external funding.

6. Decisions ‘Called In’ by the Commission in 2005/06

Under Rule OS33 of the Council’s Constitution the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions can ‘call-in’ executive decisions that they consider have not been taken in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in Article 13 of the Council’s Constitution. These principles relate to:

- Proportionality (the decision must be proportional to the desired outcome)
- Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers
- Respect for human rights
- A presumption in favour of openness
- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes
- Keeping a record of what options were considered and giving the reasons for the options

Decisions may also be called-in where relevant issues do not appear to have been taken into consideration.

The decision may be ‘called-in’ by any three members of the Council and the relevant Commission must review the decision within ten working days of the ‘call-in’ notice being received.

If having considered the decision the Commission is still concerned about it, they may refer it back, with their recommendations, to Council Cabinet or full Council.

During the administrative year 2005/06 two executive decisions were called-in and considered. Details of the call-ins are set out below:

31 October 2005

Considered by a Special Joint Meeting of the Scrutiny Management and Culture and Prosperity Commissions

This request for call-in related to the decision made by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 18 October 2005 in respect of

- i. The Prioritisation of Heritage Lottery Projects in Derby
- ii. St Helen’s House.

The stated grounds for the call-ins were that in taking the two decisions the Council Cabinet had breached the following principles of decision making:

- a) proportionality
- b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers
- d) a presumption in favour of openness
- e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes

- f) a record of what options were considered and giving reasons for the decision

The Call-in was considered by members of the Scrutiny Management and the Culture and Prosperity Commission.

After hearing the submissions from:

- the Councillors that called-in the decision,
- the Chair of the St Helen's House Trust,
- the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services
- the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Performance Management and Economic Development,

the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions jointly considered whether the decisions of Council Cabinet had breached any of the principles set out in Rule OS33.

On the casting vote of the Chair, the Commissions upheld the reasons for the call-in and asked the Council Cabinet to reconsider their original decisions on the grounds that in taking the decisions they had breached principles (d), (e) and (f) of Rule OS33 of the Constitution.

The Council Cabinet reconsidered the call-in items at their meeting on 8 November 2005. The Council Cabinet Member for Personnel, Performance Management and Economic Development reported that following the Call-In, he had met with representatives of the St Helen's House Trust to agree an acceptable way forward. He asked the Council Cabinet to support his recommendation to underwrite any costs incurred by the Trust should St Helen's House be sold to another developer.

The Council Cabinet resolved:

1. To confirm the decisions of the Council Cabinet made on 18 October 2005
2. To ask the Director of Corporate Services to prepare documentation confirming that, in the event of St Helens House being sold, the Council would underwrite costs incurred on the feasibility study carried out by the Trust up to a maximum of £50,000.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Training

One of the objectives agreed by the SMC for 2005/06 was that commissions should 'identify the skills needed by Chairs and Members and prepare training programmes to address any skill shortages'. In response the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Team developed a modular training package covering the following aspects of Overview and Scrutiny.

- a) Getting Started
- b) Conducting Reviews
- c) Conducting Scrutiny
- d) Engaging the Public
- e) Selecting Topics
- f) Interviewing

What the Modules Offer

The modular package enables members to receive training on a one-to-one or small group basis, as well as the more traditional larger group basis. The training also has the flexibility to be tailored to the needs of individual members and to be delivered at times which are most convenient to members. For members able to use Powerpoint it is also easy to use the modules on a teach-yourself basis, in front of their own computer screen.

They are all "free standing" – it is not necessary to have done one for another to make sense. However, for members wanting to do several, or all six, there is a logical running order, as shown.

Getting Started – How decisions get made – the Commission structures – sources of agenda items – the Forward Plan – types of activity now and in future – deciding what to do – overview and scrutiny outcomes – preparing reports – good recommendations – how call-in works (60 minutes)

Conducting Reviews – key points of a review – a review timetable – evidence-gathering – selecting witnesses – arranging meetings – preparing for interviews and visits – room layouts – effective interviewing – assessing the evidence – key points – elements in a major report – assembling the draft – good recommendations – outcomes of 'SMART' scrutiny activity (90 minutes)

Choosing Subjects to Review – types of activity now and in future – key points of a review – choosing what to review – what SMART means – sources of subjects – deciding what to review – using a rating matrix (45 minutes)

Interviewing Politicians, Senior Officers, Stakeholders and Citizens

– why interviewing is key to conducting reviews – room layouts – working with witnesses – the 6 six basic questions – preparing for interviews and visits – effective interviewing – open and closed questions – interview structure and lines of enquiry – asking difficult questions (60 minutes)

Engaging the Public – the experience in Derby 2002-05 – balancing importance of issues with public interest – new opportunities offered by medium sized scrutiny – sources of local issues – assessing public engagement potential – factors when arranging meeting – mixing people and places – choosing witnesses with differing a opinions – room layouts – working with witnesses – effective interviewing of representatives (60 minutes)

As mentioned in the Chair's Foreword, take up to date has been disappointing – particularly given the frequency of earlier member feedback that training in scrutiny skills was wanted. However, the good news is that these training materials do not have a 'shelf life'. Members wishing to avail themselves of the training should contact the Co-ordination Team by telephone or e-mail.

The Co-ordination Team is also able to provide support and advice to individual Commission members, including co-optees, on all aspects of Overview and Scrutiny.

For example, the Co-ordination Team can provide individual members with training in the use of Performance Eye, the computer-based system showing how well the Council is doing compared to the targets central government judge our performance by.

Beyond the City boundary, a conference entitled 'Scrutiny in Practice' was held at Ringwood Hall Hotel, Chesterfield on 29 September 2005. In total 86 delegates attended from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire including ten from Derby City Council.

The event was organised by a team of officers under the auspices of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Scrutiny Officer Network which has been established to share good practice and provide support to officers involved in overview and scrutiny. Officers from Derby City Council played a full and active part in the team organising the event.

The conference focused on practical rather than theoretical aspects of overview and scrutiny and aimed to:

- Develop the skills and knowledge of Scrutiny Members & Officers
- Raise the profile of Scrutiny within the region and to promote the Officer Network
- Showcase achievements of effective scrutiny from all across the region

- Enable elected members and officers from the region to meet other colleagues and share ideas and experiences

A keynote address was given by Dr Jane Martin, Executive Director at the Centre for Public Scrutiny, CfPS, on 'Public Scrutiny for Public Accountability'. Presentations were made by David Romaine on the Scrutiny Simulator and Councillor Les Allen on his experiences as a Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education and a Vice Chair of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Commission. There were also four workshops covering

- Budget Scrutiny
- Engaging the Community
- The role and skills needed to be an effective scrutiny councillor
- Developing effective relationships with the executive, the council and area committees.

Feedback from the delegates shows that the event was successful and that it achieved its aims. Members found the opportunity to network and share experiences extremely useful with the vast majority remaining behind right till the end, which is not often the case.

Delegates commented that this conference was focused on local needs and was considerably cheaper than some of the national events and thus offered good value for money.

The experience showed that organising an event in partnership with other authorities has many positive benefits. It reduces administrative workload, spreads the financial risk and encourages higher level of participation from members.

Perhaps the best proof of success is that a second event is being planned for the autumn of 2006

As continuing evidence that Derby's current practice compares well to many other councils, the Co-ordination Team were asked to deliver a workshop at the CfPS officer development day on 'Writing Readable Reports' and at the East Midlands Local Government Association scrutiny network on 'Community Involvement & Consultation – the links to the Four Principles of Good Scrutiny'.

8. Scrutiny of External Organisations

Several reviews during 2005/05 focussed on the services or structures of other public agencies that serve the Derby public. The proposed merger of PCTs and budget-driven cut backs to mental health services are both fully described under the Policy Development section of the Social Care and Health Commission report. The reduction in adult learning provision in the city is featured under the Policy Development section of the Education Commission. Below is featured how Derby's scrutiny function responded when the greatest change to policing structures for 40 years was announced...

As a result of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) report "Closing the Gap"¹ the Home Secretary asked all police forces and their police authorities to examine the options for creating larger more strategic forces through mergers, based on existing regional Government boundaries. This is also predicated on continuing the "laminated" British model of one-police-force-does-all in its territory.

"Closing the Gap" concluded that the present make up of 43 police forces in England and Wales needed to change in order to effectively deal with terrorism, domestic extremism, major, serious and organised crime, public order, civil emergencies and roads policing.

The five forces in the East Midlands region met to decide on the best way forward. Five options were examined based on guidelines from the Government and two options were identified as being viable (in terms of the criteria of having more than 4,000 police officers and 6,000 staff in total) to put forward for further consideration:

- The amalgamation of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire as one police force and Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire as another
- The merger of all five forces in the region (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire) into one regional force.

At its meeting on 1 November 2005 the Scrutiny Management Commission resolved to meet with the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Police and the Chair of the Derbyshire Police Authority to discuss proposals for the restructure of the East Midlands Police Forces. The Commission set up a working group to

¹ <http://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/docs/closinggap.pdf>

lead the investigation, although all members of the Commission were invited to attend the meeting.

The Commission arranged to meet with the Chief Constable of Derbyshire, David Coleman and the Chair of the Police Authority, Janet Birkin on 28 November 2005. An invitation was extended to all members of the Council at its full meeting on 23 November 2005, by the Chair of the Commission.

The meeting was supported by fifteen members of the council, including non-Commission members and a Cabinet member.

Conclusions and Comments

The Commission were concerned that as no clear business case had been drawn up for either of the options given above they could not indicate which would be the better of the two or whether either would be better than leaving things as they are.

It seemed apparent to the Commission that the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority were of the opinion that the Police Force structure needed to be changed. However they were both unable to support either of the options at this stage due to a lack of information from the Government, particularly with regard to funding.

The Commission welcomed the suggestion from the Chief Constable that restructuring the East Midlands Police Force could result in some significant efficiency savings, particularly with regard to training, the HR function, and procurement. However they would wish to see any realised saving directed into front line policing, particularly local crime policing (level 1).

The Commission recognised that any resulting amalgamation of local Police Forces would have implications for how the people of Derby would be represented on the Police Authority. They would wish to have clarification of the implications for either option.

The Commission would wish to see the above concerns addressed and for further public consultation to take place prior to a preferred option being put forward.

The Commission shared the concerns of the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Police Authority about the inadequate consultation period allowed for such a substantial change to a key public service.

These conclusions and comments were presented to the whole Commission at its scheduled meeting on 13 December 2005. The Commission resolved to refer the report to Council Cabinet with the following recommendations:

Having regard to the resolution of the Council passed on 23 November 2005, the Scrutiny Management Commission recommended the Council Cabinet to:

- a) express the Council's support for the resolution made at the Association of Police Authorities Summit of Chairs and Chief Executives of Police Authorities on 7 December 2005 and,
- b) seek a solution which will secure effective policing of the city of Derby as the top priority.

The Council Cabinet endorsed and adopted these recommendations at its meeting on 20 December 2005.

PCTs

9. Satisfaction Survey

Members were once again invited to complete the Overview and Scrutiny Satisfaction Survey which contained the same set of questions as last year to enable us to monitor any changes. A total of 23 completed forms were received of which 19 are from elected members and four from co-opted members. This is three less than last year and gives a total response rate of 38%.

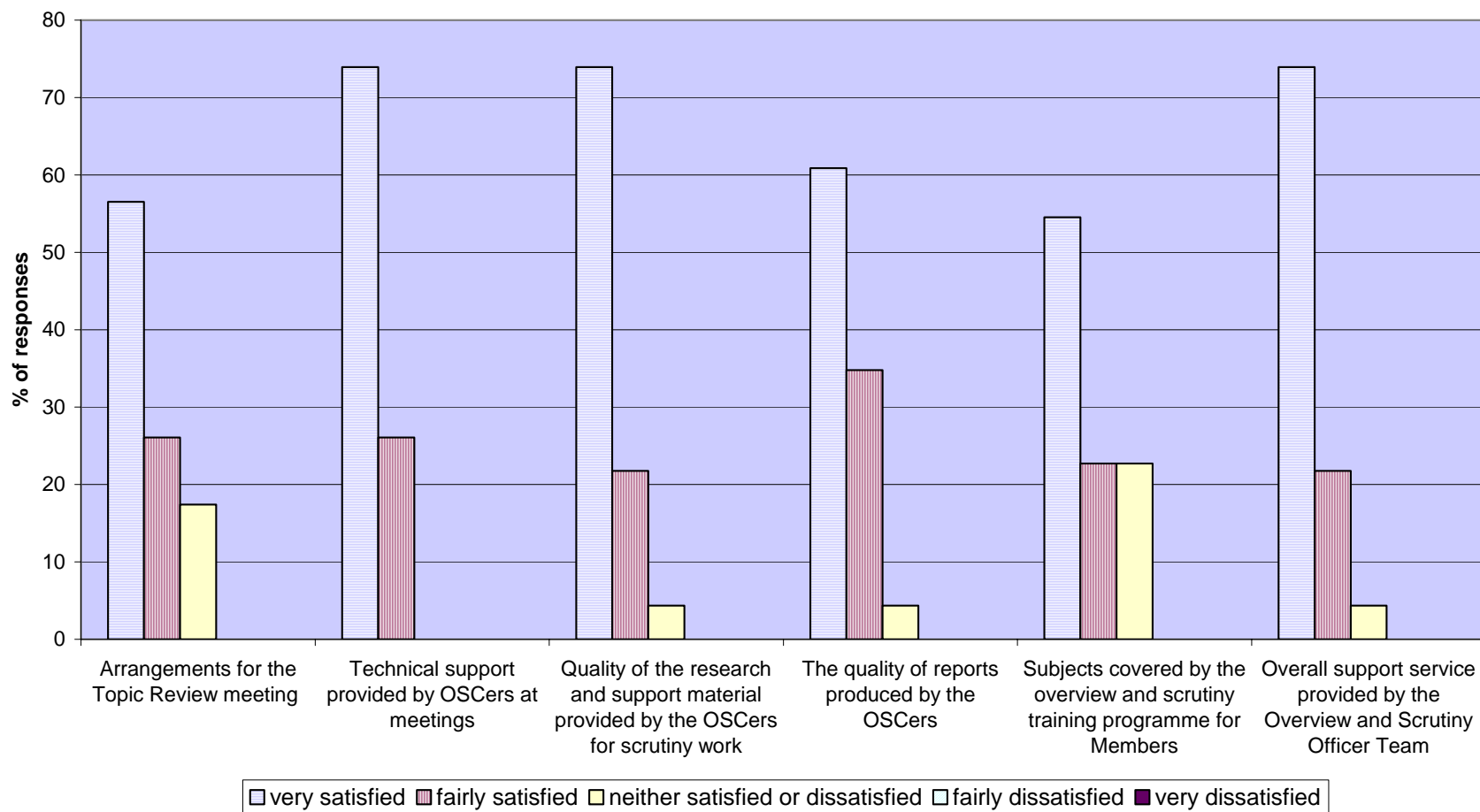
The satisfaction survey is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the support services provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Team whilst the second covers the concept and processes of the overview and scrutiny function. Analysing the responses shows a high level of member satisfaction with the support provided by the team. 83% of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the arrangements made for topic review meetings, up 6% from last year and 100% with technical support provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officers, OSCers, at meetings.

96% of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the quality of research and support material and with the quality of reports produced by the OSCers. 96% of the members are very or fairly satisfied with the overall support services provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Team. The question on the subjects covered by the Overview and Scrutiny training programmes for Members produced was a slightly lower response compared with other categories but was quite high at 78%. However, a note of caution needs to be exercised with question as the actual take-up of training by members was quite low.

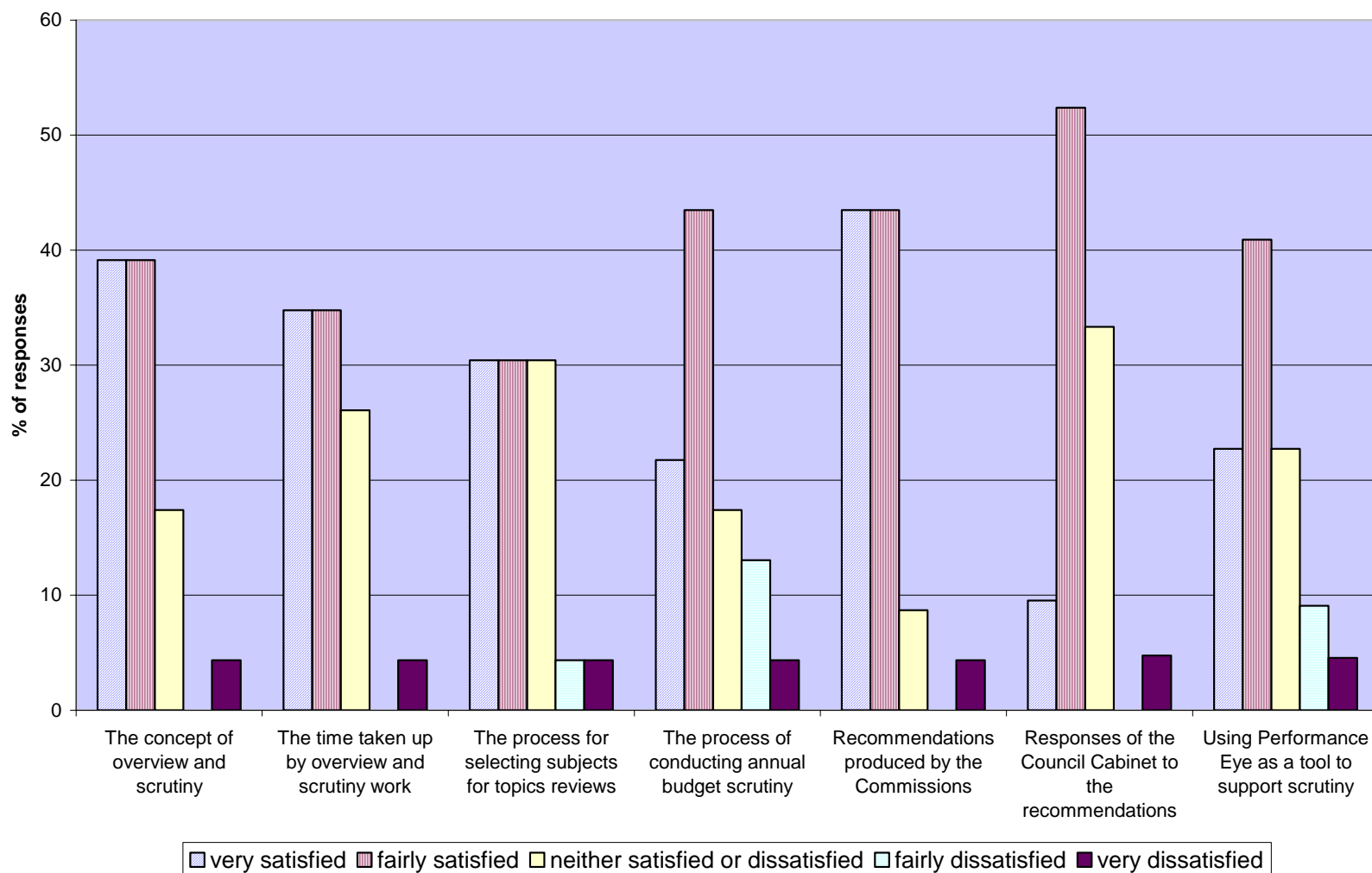
The concept and process of Overview and Scrutiny received a greater mixture of responses. 78% of the respondents very or fairly satisfied with the concept with 4% or one member very dissatisfied. 86% of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the recommendation produced by the Commissions with one member again very dissatisfied.

The highest level of member dissatisfaction relates to the process for conducting budget scrutiny with 13% of the members very or fairly dissatisfied. A greater proportion of members were satisfied by responses of Council Cabinet to the recommendations produced by the Commissions this year 62% than was the case last year when only 35% of them were very or fairly satisfied against 45% fairly or very dissatisfied. 70% of the members were very or fairly satisfied by the time taken up by overview and scrutiny work this year compared with only 41% last year.

Level of Member Satisfaction with Overview and Scrutiny Support



Level of Member Satisfaction with the Concept and Process of Overview and Scrutiny



	very satisfied %	fairly satisfied %	neither satisfied or dissatisfied %	fairly dissatisfied %	very dissatisfied %
Arrangements for the Topic Review meeting	57	26	17	0	0
Technical support provided by OSCers at meetings	74	26	0	0	0
Quality of the research and support material provided by the OSCers for scrutiny work	74	22	4	0	0
The quality of reports produced by the OSCers	61	35	4	0	0
Subjects covered by the overview and scrutiny training programme for Members	55	23	23	0	0
Overall support service provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer Team	74	22	4	0	0
The concept of overview and scrutiny	39	39	17	0	4
The time taken up by overview and scrutiny work	35	35	26	0	4
The process for selecting subjects for topics reviews	30	30	30	4	4
The process of conducting annual budget scrutiny	22	43	17	13	4
Recommendations produced by the Commissions	43	43	9	0	4
Responses of the Council Cabinet to the recommendations	10	52	33	0	5
Using Performance Eye as a tool to support scrutiny	23	41	23	9	5

Overview and Scrutiny Member Satisfaction Survey 2006 – Table of responses

Member Comments

Members were given the opportunity to make suggestions for improvements to the overview and scrutiny function. Their comments are presented as verbatim.

Question 6 asked Members to suggestions on how the support provided by the OSCer Team could be improved.

1. At the beginning of each municipal year we, need to explain to new councillors (and some old ones sometimes) the powers and responsibilities of the OSC - **O&S Chair**
2. Need more person hours – **O&S Chair**
3. One OSCer per Commission – **Cabinet member**
4. All seems to be working quite satisfactory with a well supported with postal & email notifications etc.

Question 13 asked members for suggestions on how the overview and scrutiny process could be improved.

5. I think there still needs to be a cultural change regarding scrutiny. It is still in the mould of the old committee system, and it is quite obvious that some members are whipped (either directly by their party or they restrain themselves because they know the “consequences” of failing to toe the party line). It is an adversarial under-current. **O&S member**
6. Need to separate the health function from social care. (create) Either another Commission or a sub commission like corporate parenting. - **O&S Chair**
7. Need to align commissions with cabinet functions better, especially Children’s Services and Adult Services - **O&S Chair**
8. Need to get more commitment from some members of commissions. How much free thinking is there, and how much protecting party interests? - **O&S Chair**
9. Meet too infrequently to be really effective at scrutinising Cabinet. **O&S Chair**
10. Some issues (e.g. the environment) cut across all commissions and should be in the mindset of all council decisions, as are equal opportunities, for example. **O&S Chair**

11. Improved dialogue with the Cabinet. Lovely idea, if naive. O&S is a pointless futile system of local government. Last year when in opposition, Labour were desperate to improve communications and their members impact on the Cabinet. This year now many of their same member's, Repton, Bolton, Wynn etc are in the Cabinet, all of the warm words of cooperation and dialogue between the two entities from last year have gone straight out of the window. O&S is ultimately toothless and the Cabinet know it. Until that changes we can all continue to meet and kid ourselves we are making a difference but the fact is unless Cabinet agrees with you, your topic reviews remain unimplemented and your scrutiny of Cabinet is utterly pointless. **O&S member**
12. Probably more focus on Council's priorities. Some members tend to use Scrutiny Commissions to make their own particular points and pursue their own individual interests or their party's instead of using the scrutiny process in the way in which it was intended. **O&S member**
13. If used properly by the commissions and members, it is a vital tool in holding the cabinet to account. **O&S member**
14. We have sporadic engagement with the public, some commissions are either better or are more susceptible to this. I think we should all become better engaged and perhaps we could use the Area Panels to help achieve this. **O&S Chair**
15. The Oscars are excellent team, enthusiastic, reliable with research there should be more of them. As we are moving more to partnership working it is essential , we focus on these links and scrutinise this relationship. As our star rating could well depend on good working relationships. **O&S member**
16. Improvements are already being made in use of this as a tool. Seminar was excellent, practical relevant and interesting – **O&S Chair**
17. There is a need for more OSCers - To be able to request some of the extra work that is presently covered by the team – **O&S Chair**
18. If any proposals are put forward to the Cabinet for consideration, recommendation or decision then the Cabinet Member should attend (Commission meeting) to give the Commission its responses whether positive or negative and possibly why. **Co-opted Member**

Overview and Scrutiny Member Satisfaction Survey

Overview and scrutiny is an important function to support the Council's decision making process. Since scrutiny involves working with and for Members, it is important to have your views. Last year Members felt that the service area budget reviews were ineffective so we removed it from this year's budget scrutiny process. The overview and scrutiny team continues to seek improvements to the scrutiny process and this further annual questionnaire should enable us to monitor the progress against last year. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the questionnaire.

Please put a cross in one box for each question.

How satisfied are you with level of support provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officers (OSCers)?

	very satisfied	fairly satisfied	neither satisfied or dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
1. Arrangements for the Topic Review meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Technical support provided by OSCers at meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Quality of the research and support material provided by the OSCers for scrutiny work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The quality of reports produced by the OSCers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Subjects covered by the overview and scrutiny training programme for Members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The overall support service provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any suggestions on how the officer support provided by the OSCer Team could be improved?

How satisfied are you with the overview and scrutiny process?

	very satisfied	fairly satisfied	neither satisfied or dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
7. The concept of overview and scrutiny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The time taken up by overview and scrutiny work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The process for selecting subjects for topic reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The process for conducting annual budget scrutiny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Recommendations produced by the Commissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Responses of the Council Cabinet to the recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Using Performance Eye as a tool to support scrutiny	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any suggestions on how the overview and scrutiny process could be improved? For example greater focus on Council's priorities; improved dialogue with the Council Cabinet etc.

Please tell us if you are:

A Council Cabinet Member ☐ an Overview and Scrutiny Commission Member ☐

A Co-opted member ☐ Neither a Cabinet Member or an Overview and Scrutiny Commission Member ☐

Please tell us who you are (optional)

Please return the completed form by Thursday 10 March 2005:

Mahroof Hussain, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Team

Room 137, The Council House, Tel. 255597 e-mail mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk

Commission Portfolios

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission Portfolios remained unchanged from those of 2003/04, though there were substantial alterations to the membership of all. The details are given in the table below:

Scrutiny Management Commission

- Corporate Council Policies and Strategies
- Corporate Legal, Administrative, Estates/Property Services and Repair and Maintenance
- Chief Executives Policy, European, Best Value and Communications functions
- Corporate Finance and Financial Services including Taxation
- External Affairs – European, National, Regional and Local
- Democratic Representation
- Mayoral Office/Electoral Issues/Registers
- Concessionary fares
- Best Value Performance Plan and Derby Pointer
- Members Services/Allowances
- Corporate Personnel, Recruitment and Training functions and issues
- Employment Training
- Health and Safety
- Corporate Equality Functions and issues
- E-Government, IT services/development and telecommunications
- Repairs and Maintenance Programmes
- Design Services
- Emergency Planning

Community Regeneration Commission

- Social inclusion including Anti Poverty initiatives
- Community Governance and Consultation
- Community Regeneration and Development, including Community Planning
- Special Programmes management including all Single Regeneration Budget Schemes
- New Deal for Communities
- Community and Equalities Grants
- Cultural Diversity
- Housing and Council Tax benefits
- Welfare rights
- Community Legal Services including Law Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau
- Crime and Disorder including Youth Offending Service
- External Employment Initiatives
- Housing Management
- Housing Strategy and Development

- Private Sector Housing

Culture and Prosperity Commission

- Community Centres and Council Activity Centres
- Arts and Libraries
- Assembly Rooms/Guildhall
- Museums/Art gallery
- Outdoor Events
- City Centre Management
- Markets
- Sports, Fitness and Play including Grants
- Leisure Centres and Coaching
- Economic Development
- Tourism and Tourist Information Centre
- Festivities
- Parks and Allotments, including Client Grounds Maintenance

Education Commission

- Schools
- Centrally Funded School Services, including Special Needs
- Youth Service
- Adult Education
- Mandatory and Discretionary Awards
- Access Support including Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
- (Role of Education Evaluation Panel)

Planning and Environment Commission

- Strategic Planning including Traffic and transportation
- Development Control and Building Control policy
- Footpaths, Highways and Maintenance, Car Parks
- Roads – Engineering and Design Service
- Highways Property Administration
- City Centre and Neighbourhood Horticultural Features
- Licensing policy issues – taxis/Entertainment etc
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy, Environmental Co-ordination and Initiatives
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards
- Outdoor Amenities
- Client – Street Cleaning/Waste Collection and Disposal/Convenience
- Recycling
- Land Drainage
- Energy Conservation
- Building cleaning
- All Direct Services
- Non-Highway Engineering
- Cemeteries and Crematorium

Social Care and Health Commission

- Children and Family Services
- Corporate Planning
- Adult Services
- Assessment and Care Planning
- Social Services Support Services
- Health Improvement Planning
- Health Services

Commission Members

- Appointments for the period 25 May 2005 to 20 July 2005:

Scrutiny Management Commission

Chair: Councillor Smalley
Vice Chair: Councillor Graves
Councillors: Ahern, Bayliss, P Berry, Hussain, Jones, Lowe, MacDonald, Repton, Troup, West

Community Regeneration Commission

Chair: Councillor Bayliss
Vice Chair: Councillor Lowe
Councillors: Blanksby,, Richards, West , Redfern, Tittley and Liversedge,
Co-opted: Mr S Kazmi, Canon MacDonald

Culture and Prosperity Commission

Chair: Councillor Repton
Vice Chair: Councillor West
Councillors: Dhamrait , Dhindsa, Jackson, Marshall, Smalley, Travis

Education Commission

Chair: Councillor Jones
Vice Chair: Councillor MacDonald
Councillors: P Berry, Khan, Skelton, Higginbottom, Wynn and Willitts
Statutory John Honey (RC Diocese), Dr Devendra (Parent Governor),
Co-opted: David Edwards (CE Diocese), Nasreen Iqbal (Parent Governor),Tony Walsh (Derby REC)

Planning and Environment Commission

Chair: Councillor Troup
Vice Chair: Councillor Ahern
Councillors: Baxter, Bolton, Leeming, Liversedge, Skelton, Smalley Liversedge

Social Care and Health Commission

Chair: Councillor Hussain
Vice Chair: Councillor P Berry
Councillors: Winter, Chera, Hird, Leeming, Nath, Turner, Willitts
Co-opted: Pat Hill, Elaine Jackson, Philip Johnson and Sir Michael Raymond

Corporate Parenting Joint Sub-Commission

Councillors: Jones, MacDonald, Wynn, Turner, Hussain and Hird

- **Appointments for the period commencing 20 July 2005:**

Scrutiny Management Commission

Chair: Councillor Graves

Vice Chair: Councillor Latham

Councillors: Ahern, Allen, Higginbottom, Hickson, Jackson, Jones, MacDonald, Smalley, Travis and Turner

Community Regeneration Commission

Chair: Councillor Jones

Vice Chair: Councillor Higginbottom

Councillors: Blanksby,, Rawson, Redfern, Richards, Smalley and Samra

Co-opted: Mr S Kazmi, Canon MacDonald

Culture and Prosperity Commission

Chair: Councillor Travis

Vice Chair: Councillor Jackson

Councillors: Dhamrait , Graves, Rawson, Troup, West and Willitts

Education Commission

Chair: Councillor MacDonald

Vice Chair: Councillor Allen

Councillors: Afzal, Higginbottom, Hird, Khan, Latham, Liversedge

Statutory John Honey (RC Diocese), Dr Keerthi Devendra (Parent

Co-opted: Governor), David Edwards (CE Diocese), Tony Walsh (Derby REC) and Nasreen Iqbal (Parent Governor)[

Planning and Environment Commission

Chair: Councillor Ahern

Vice Chair: Councillor P Berry

Councillors: Baxter, Care, Carr. Leeming, Rehman, West and Tittley

Social Care and Health Commission

Chair: Councillor E Berry

Vice Chair: Councillor Turner

Councillors: Chera, Gerrard, Khan, Leeming, Marshall, Skelton, Willitts
Co-opted: Pat Hill, Elaine Jackson, Philip Johnson and Sir Michael
Raymond (resigned on 3 October 2005)

Corporate Parenting Joint Sub-Commission

Councillors: E Berry, Turner, Marshall, MacDonald, Hird, Higginbottom

Overview and Scrutiny Team Contact Details

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More information about the work of Overview and Scrutiny can be found on our website:

<http://www.derby.gov.uk/CouncilGovernmentDemocracy/Councils/ContactsConsultationAndFeedback/Default.htm>