

2006/07 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is recommended to accept the 2006/07 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Paragraph 6.3(4) of the Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions to 'report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate'.
- 2.2 The report contained in Appendix 2 is the fifth Annual Report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. The report summarises the work that has been carried out by the Commissions during the administrative year 2006/07.

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Background papers: Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices: Appendix 2 - Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising directly from this report.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements cover the full range of functions for which it is responsible. Delivery of the overview and scrutiny function can be undertaken by a minimum of one committee or any higher number the Council considers to be appropriate. Any committee when considering local authority education functions must, in addition to the Council members, include in the case of Derby five voting members representing faith communities and parents. The Health and Social Care Act 2001 provides for one of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees to review and scrutinise local National Health Service bodies.
- 2.2 The 2000 Act also requires that local authorities must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Personnel

3. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Team currently comprises the Scrutiny and Complaints Manager, two Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officers, one Assistant Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer and one Team Administrator.

Equalities impact

4. Effective Overview and Scrutiny is of benefit to all Derby people.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. Overview and Scrutiny activities have the potential to link to all the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Appendix 2



Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions 2006/07

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Section 1 - Foreword

This is the fifth Annual Report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commissions and covers the period April 2006 to April 2007.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 24 May 2006, members agreed to change the structure of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions in order to improve the match between Cabinet and Commission portfolios and, where possible, to reduce the workload of members. This decision resulted in a reduction in the number of Commissions from six to five and a revision of Commission portfolios.

Four of the five Commissions now each cover two Cabinet portfolios whilst the fifth, the Children and Young People Commission deals solely with issues relating to the Children's and Education Services Cabinet portfolio.

The new Commission structure was introduced without any major problems and has simplified working with Cabinet members.

It has been another very productive year for the Commissions. The lessons learned in previous years by the Commissions and the Co-ordination Team, and especially those relating to the conduct of topic reviews, have been applied effectively during the past year. Some interesting and challenging work has been completed and several other local authorities, both in the UK and abroad, have sought Derby's advice on how scrutiny should be done.

Each Commission has developed its own ways of conducting worthwhile policy development and effective scrutiny, and it has been interesting to see how these different approaches have worked and to compare the different, although equally valid and useful, outcomes achieved by the different Commissions.

The concept of the 'quick' review involving an intensive evidence gathering session and the rapid production of a final report and high quality recommendations is now well established and the ability of the Commissions to perform in this way may well be one reason for recent full Council requests for scrutiny reviews.

The past year has also demonstrated the potential of Scrutiny in other fields. The Staff Energy Awareness conference that was held in March 2007 was a prime example of the ability of the Commissions to identify and analyse issues of importance to the Council and the people of Derby, to engage Council staff and members, and to generate high quality output.

On a less positive note, it is a matter of some concern that this year there was again very little interest, even by new members, in the training in Overview and Scrutiny that is offered by the Co-ordination team and in the Performance Eye performance monitoring system. It is worrying that this lack of interest may in the future be reflected in the quality of scrutiny that members are able to deliver.

As in previous Scrutiny Management Commission Chairs have done, I should also like to express my thanks and those of the Council's scrutiny members to the officers at all levels in the Council, and to the co-opted members of the Commissions, for their input in the past year. Without their involvement and support the Commissions would not have been able to deliver the breadth and quality of scrutiny for which Derby now has a justifiable reputation.

The coming year promises to be one when scrutiny will again need to respond quickly and positively to changes. The Police and Justice Act 2006 and the legislation proposed in the Local Government White Paper recognise the ability of scrutiny to achieve and deliver high quality output but the changes that they introduce will probably require a further restructuring of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function which will in turn require a 'bedding down' period during which the process may not be fully effective. As Chair of Scrutiny Management Commission I also recognise the need for the Commissions to give more emphasis to performance monitoring and performance management. I consequently welcome the proposal to hold a performance management/scrutiny workshop and the suggestion that in the coming year there should be a particular focus on performance management by the Commissions.

Change is always a challenge, but I am totally convinced of the ability of the Commissions and the Co-ordination team to respond positively and effectively to the proposed changes and of the ability of members and officers at all levels in the Council to continue to deliver high quality scrutiny that will be of benefit to all Derby people.

Councillor Lisa Higginbottom
Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission

Section 2 - Introduction

The Council's Constitution that came into effect on 3 December 2001 required the establishment of six Overview and Scrutiny Commissions that would collectively cover all the functions of the Council. The six original Overview and Scrutiny Commissions were reconfigured at the Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2003 in order to give each Commission a more balanced workload. A further reconfiguration of the Commissions was agreed at the Council's Annual meeting on 24 May 2006 and was intended to align the Commission portfolios more closely with those of the Cabinet.

The Commission structure that was agreed in May 2006 is shown in Figure 1 of this report.

The portfolios of each of the six Commissions are described in Appendix 1 of this report. Appendix 2 lists the 2006/07 membership of the Commissions.

The role and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions are defined in the Council's Constitution and have not been changed. They are in general terms to:

- review and/or scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.
- make reports and/or recommendations to full Council and/or the Council Cabinet and/or any policy, joint or Area Panel in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants, and
- consider decisions that have been called in for reconsideration and decide whether to ask the decision maker to reconsider the decision, or, where appropriate, to refer it to full Council.

Figure 2 illustrates the complementary roles of full Council, Council Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions and shows the linkages between them.

In practice, the task of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions splits into two main components. These are:

- To carry out policy development and review and for that purpose to conduct research and consult with interested parties on the development of policy options. The outcome of this process will be recommendations that are aimed at developing and improving Council policies.

- To scrutinise and review the decisions and performance of Council Cabinet and Council officers. This may also involve research and consultation. It will lead to recommendations based on the outcome of the scrutiny process.

The policy development and scrutiny work that has been carried out by each of the Commissions during the administrative year 2006/07 is described in the following sections of this report.

The items scrutinised by each of the Commission during the past year are listed at the end of the individual Commission sections.

Subsequent sections of this Annual Report cover other scrutiny related activities that have taken place during the past year.

Derby City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Structure 2006/07

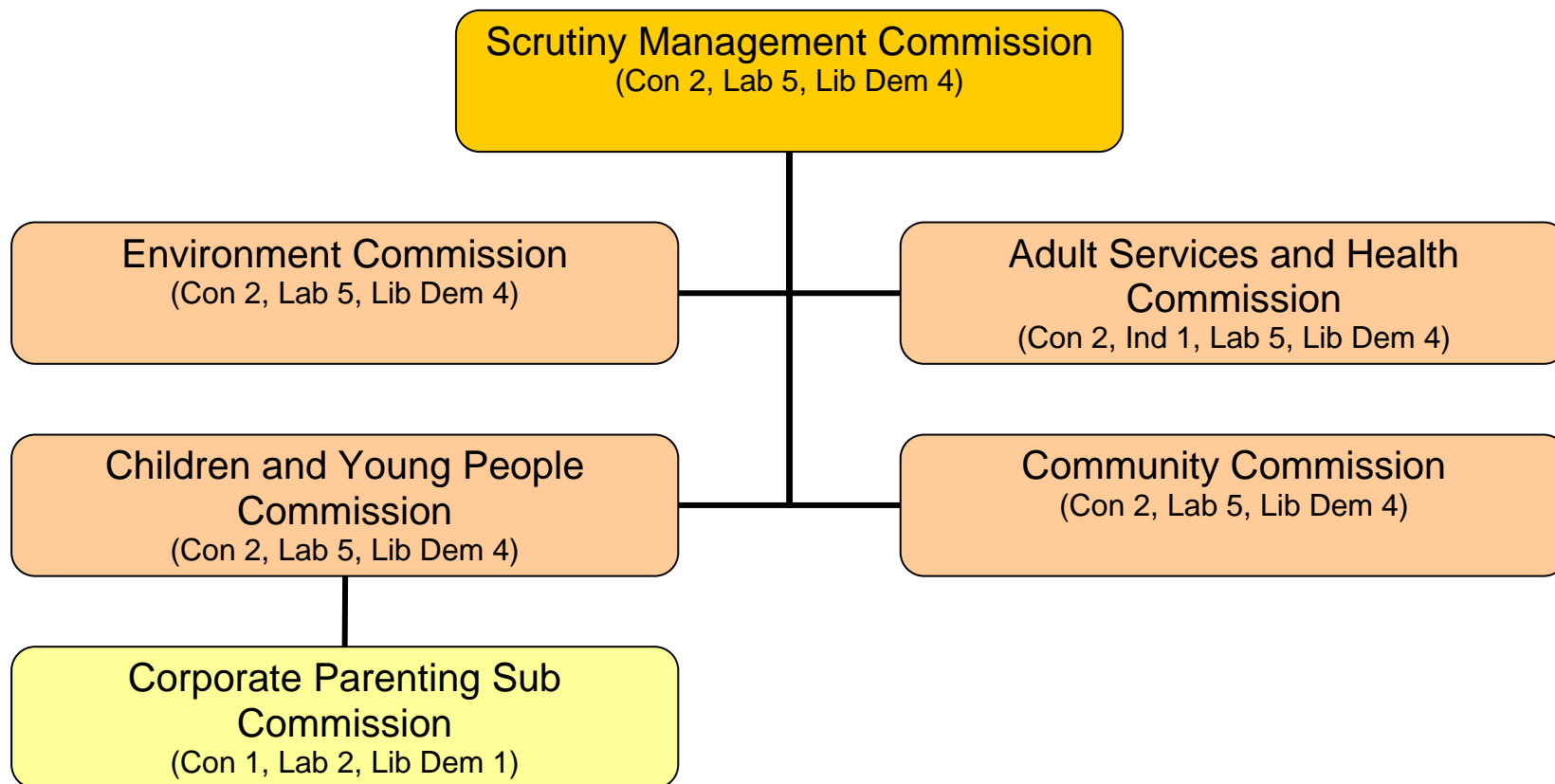


Figure 1

Linkages between Overview and Scrutiny, Council Cabinet and Full Council

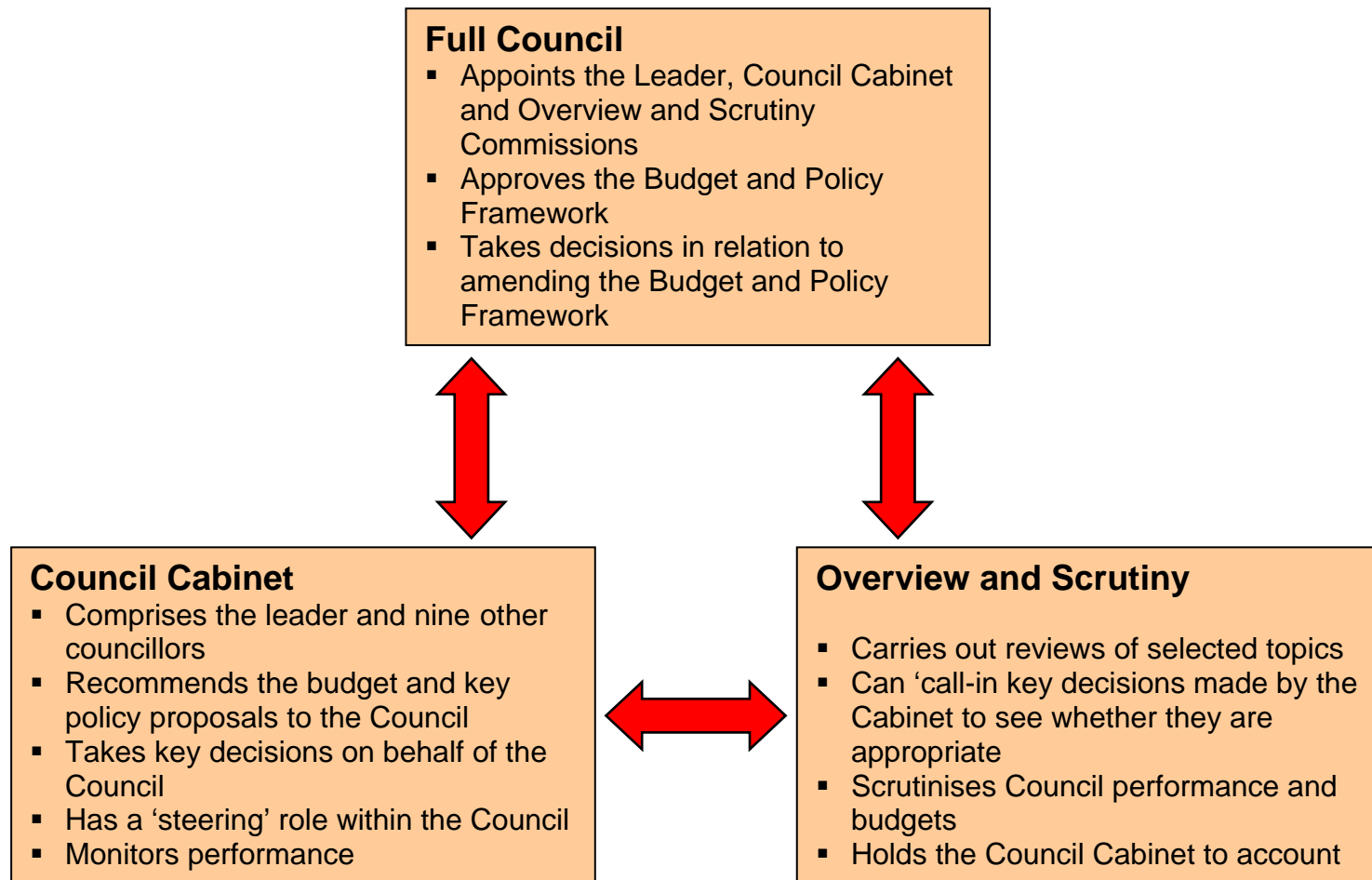


Figure 2

Section 3 - Reports of the Individual Commissions

This chapter of the report describes the activities of the individual Overview and Scrutiny Commissions during 2006/07. The section for each Commission it is divided into:

Policy Development - which describes how the 'topic reviews' and larger scrutiny exercises were conducted by the Commission. Policy development work will often involve the Commissions in extensive and detailed research and consultation with residents, service users and other interested parties. To encourage policy development work the Council's Constitution allows each Commission to carry out up to two 'topic reviews' in any one year.

Items scrutinised by the Commission - this may involve the Commission in scrutiny of a Council Cabinet decision or the performance of a service and will also involve research and consultation.

The outcome of both policy development and scrutiny will be evidence-based recommendations that are aimed at developing and improving Council policies, or influencing the decisions of other agencies. Most reports are submitted to Council Cabinet but those relating to National Health Service (NHS) matters, can be sent to the NHS decision-making body.

The individual Commissions largely control their own agenda and can decide which issues they wish to review or scrutinise and how much time to devote to any matter. Commissions must however be conscious of issues that are of importance to the Council or the people of Derby and must respond accordingly. There were a number of occasions during the past year when Commissions amended their work plans to respond to urgent and previously unexpected circumstances.

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3.1 – Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC)



Councillor Lisa Higginbottom
Chair of the SMC Commission



Councillor Peter Berry
Vice Chair of the SMC Commission

Policy Development

At the SMC meeting on 1 November 2005 members asked the Co-ordination Officer to look in more detail at the possibility of carrying out a review that would compare Council Tax income and expenditure on a ward-by-ward basis across the City. A scoping report outlining such a review was prepared by the Co-ordination Team and was presented to the Commission's meeting on 13 December 2005.

At the meeting on 13 December the Commission was advised that a review of Council Tax income and expenditure would involve a considerable commitment of the Commission's time and would require significant officer involvement. Members were also advised that it would not be possible to start work on a review of Council Tax income/expenditure until April 2006. A working group comprising members of each of the political parties represented on SMC was set up and it was agreed that it would meet with officers in April 2006 to examine the scope of the proposed review.

The scoping meeting took place on 26 April 2006 and the working group suggested that the topic could be pursued through a phased review with a first phase that would bring together:

- Information on Council Tax income from the wards – including the number per ward of Council Tax payers and the number receiving benefit
- The population of each of the wards
- The number registered to vote in each ward

Thereafter, the working group suggested that it would be worthwhile to examine the money spent in each ward on specific issues and that these should initially include:

1. The repair and maintenance of roads and pavements
2. Public Library provision and use
3. Pre-school provision
4. Spending on young people
5. Street Care provision

The outcome of the scoping meeting was reported to the SMC meeting on 20 June 2006 and a report on the first phase of the review was provided to the Commission's meeting on 11 July 2006.

The Commission considered the information provided on a ward-by-ward basis on Council Tax income, population and the number of residents registered to vote, and concluded that a review would involve considerable work and resources. Concerns were also expressed about the accuracy of any findings due to the large number of any variables involved. The Commission therefore decided not to continue with the topic and instead decided to conduct a review with the objective of investigating how more Derby residents could be encouraged to register to vote.

A scoping report on the Commission's review of Electoral Registration was presented to SMC members at their meeting on 12 September 2006. The report drew heavily on work that had been carried out by the Electoral Commission and provided considerable information on the background to non-registration in the UK. The objectives of the review were defined in the scoping report and were:

1. To achieve an understanding of the electoral registration process and of the barriers to registration
2. To examine any examples of electoral registration best practice by UK local authorities and assess the outcomes of that best practice
3. To consider the actions taken by the Council to encourage electoral registration in Derby.
4. Through discussion with selected stakeholder groups, to assess the outcomes of the Council's initiatives to encourage electoral registration and see whether there is the potential to achieve further significant increases in the level of electoral registration in Derby
5. If it is considered that there is the potential to significantly increase the level of electoral registration in Derby, to formulate recommendations, supported by reasons, for achieving the increases, and to give an indication of the level of financial and personnel resources that would be required to achieve the potential increases that have been identified.

The evidence gathering phase of the review was commenced in the latter part of September 2006 and as part of this phase of the review, the Commission interviewed:

- The Council officers involved in Derby's electoral registration process
- Representatives of:
 - the Electoral Commission,

- Leeds City Council (a 'best practice' local authority),
- the University of Derby Students Union,
- the City's minority ethnic groups
- young people

The draft report of the review was completed before Christmas 2006 and, as electoral services are a non-executive function, the final version will be reported to the meeting of full Council on 23 May 2007. In summary the recommendations of the review were:

General Recommendations

1. That the Council web pages relating to registration should:
 - a) Be interesting, attractive and informative
 - b) Include an on-line form that can be downloaded and used for registration
 - c) Incorporate a more obvious link from the Home page
2. The Electoral Services team should investigate all the opportunities that exist for using other front line Council services and advertising media to provide information on electoral registration and should work with the relevant departments to promote those opportunities that appear to have potential. These could include, but are not limited to:
 - Council Tax section
 - Houses in Multiple Occupation
 - Benefits section on home visits
 - Housing Options
 - Derby Homes
3. A generic 'Registration poster' should be prepared. The poster should be available in English and the major minority ethnic languages. The poster should be useable for all applications and should include details of how to obtain more information on electoral registration.
4. A generic 'Registration Information pack' should be compiled. The information pack should be usable for all applications where information on registration is required. The pack should be available in English and the major minority ethnic languages.
5. The Electoral Services team should identify specific areas and communities where there is a lower than average level of electoral registration and efforts to encourage registration should be targeted at those areas.
6. Consideration should be given to engaging a publicity company to advise on the promotion of electoral registration.
7. Consideration should be given to increasing the size of the Electoral Services team.

To encourage the registration of Attainers (16/17 year olds)

8. Young people at schools and colleges in the age range 16 to 18 should be provided with information on electoral registration when they reach their 16th birthday.
9. Head teachers should be asked to prominently display the generic registration poster in all Derby secondary schools.
10. The Citizenship Co-ordinator's news letter should be used to publicise the fact that 16-18 year olds are eligible to register even though they cannot vote until they are 18.
11. The Council should lobby the DfES to include electoral registration as part of the National Curriculum.
12. The Electoral Services team should offer electoral registration advice to Derby sixth form pupils.
13. As an incentive to register the Council could enter all young people between 16 and 18 who are registered in a prize draw.

To encourage the registration of Students

14. The Electoral Services team should establish contacts and work with the Students' Unions of Derby University and Derby College to provide information and promote electoral registration.
15. The Students' Unions and the University/College authorities should be asked to prominently display the generic registration poster in all University and College buildings.
16. The Electoral Services team should encourage the display of the generic registration poster in places such as shops, hot food shops, bars and clubs, and on transport, that is used by students.
17. The Electoral Services team should ensure that sufficient copies of the generic information pack are provided to the Students' Unions and the University/College authorities.
18. The Electoral Services team should make information on registration available at appropriate 'freshers' week' functions at both Derby University and Derby College.
19. The University accommodation officer should be contacted to find out if there is a database of students in private rented accommodation and if so whether this can be used to send information on registration to those students.

To encourage registration by members of Derby's ethnic minority communities

20. The Electoral Services team should seek to establish contacts in community and religious centres and work with them to make information on electoral registration available to the communities that they represent. The generic information pack will provide a starting point for this.
21. Information and advice provided to the ethnic minority communities on registration should where necessary be offered in the appropriate language.
22. The Electoral Services team should encourage the display of the generic registration poster in places such as shops, community and religious centres and on transport, that are used by members of Derby's ethnic minority communities.

To encourage registration by people who are moving house

23. The Electoral Services team should work with Estate Agents, Building Societies, Housing Associations, the Housing Options Centre and Derby Homes to ensure that people who move house are reminded of the need to register and are provided with the information and the forms that they need to do this.
24. The Electoral Services Team should seek to establish contacts with letting agencies representing private landlords and should attempt to work with them to make information on electoral registration available to their clients

To encourage the registration of people in the 18-30 age range

25. The Electoral Services team should encourage the display of the generic registration poster in places such as shops, bars, clubs and sports centres that are used by this sector of Derby's population.

Items Scrutinised by the Scrutiny Management Commission

20 April 2006

Future role of Corporate Parenting Sub Commission

A report on the future role of the Corporate parenting Sub Commission was considered together with the report on the proposed changes to the structure of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.

Removal of Public Call Boxes

The Commission considered a report on the Council's response to any proposals by BT to remove call boxes from locations in Derby. Members resolved that the SMC would take the lead in responding to such proposals.

Customer Service Information System

The Commission received a presentation from the Customer Services Programme Manager highlighting the functions of the new Customer Service Information system that was being piloted at the time.

BV156 – Percentage of authority buildings open to the public that are accessible to disabled people

The Access Officer advised the SMC that 29 of the 69 Council buildings which are open to the public met the accessibility criteria for disabled people.

Performance Eye

The Commission considered the Performance Eye indicators that fell within their remit and noted a comment by a Commission member concerning the problems caused for people with colour perception difficulties by the current 'traffic light' indicator system. Members also resolved to look in future at the quarterly indicators that relate to Performance Eye.

Proposal to change the structure of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.

The Commission considered a report setting out a proposal to reduce the number of Commissions from six to five and a separate report recommending the retention of the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission.

The Commission resolved to accept the proposals to:

- Reduce the number of Commission and to retain the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission
- Increase the membership of each Commission to 10 members
- Align the Overview and Scrutiny structure to the Cabinet portfolios and to change it to reflect any future changes to the Cabinet
- Write to the government minister seeking clarification on the position of statutory co-optees on the Commission dealing with education in the light of integrated services for children and young people

Overview and Scrutiny Conference

Members approved a contribution of £500 from the Overview and Scrutiny budgets towards the cost of organising the 2006 Overview and Scrutiny network conference.

Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting

The Commission noted the response of Council Cabinet to the recommendations from the Commission regarding Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting.

20 June 2006

Outstanding Overview and Scrutiny Items – Following the changes to the structure of Overview and Scrutiny at the Annual Meeting of Council, the Commission considered outstanding items from relevant former Commission portfolios.

Standing Agenda Items

The Commission resolved to retain Performance Eye and Retrospective Scrutiny as standing items on the Commission agenda, not to appoint a SMC Performance Eye Champion but to share the role between all Commission members and to request a retrospective scrutiny item on the Forward Plan item on disposal of land.

Work Planning and Resources

The Commission discussed its work plan for the coming year and requested that the background report on the proposed topic review on Council Tax Income and Expenditure be provided to its next meeting. Members were asked to e-mail any other suggestions for topic reviews to the Co-ordination Officer. The Commission also requested update reports on the progress of other Commission's topic reviews.

Overview and Scrutiny Training

It was agreed that the Chair would write on behalf of the Commission to all party whips and would ask them to encourage all new Members to undertake overview and scrutiny training

Co-opting individuals onto the Commission

The Commission considered the criteria for co-opting individuals onto Commissions and resolved to co-opt individuals onto SMC as and when it was considered appropriate. It was also agreed to write to the Compact Forum informing them that they would be welcome to attend any public meeting at the Council that they had an interest in and that if they wished to speak on a particular item they should discuss this with the Chair prior to the meeting.

Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Commission requested reports on the Forward Plan items on the Disposal of Allestree Hall and the Local Area Agreement Financial Governance Arrangements for 2006/07.

Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

The Commission considered and noted a report on the best Value Performance Plan and Annual Report 2006/07.

11 July 2006

Consultation Strategy 2006

The Commission received a presentation on the new Consultation Strategy that would be considered by Council Cabinet on 1 August.

Retrospective Scrutiny

The Commission received reports on the savings achieved by the closure of the bus station and on the monitoring of savings.

Local Democracy Week

The Commission agreed to approve £500 from its research budget to support the 2006 Local Democracy Week event and members agreed to inform the Co-ordination team if they were prepared to take part in the event.

Work Plan

The Commission considered the report they had requested on the proposed review of Council Tax Income/Expenditure and resolved not to proceed with the review. The Commission agreed to conduct a review of Electoral Registration with the objective of seeing how more people could be encouraged to register and vote. A scoping report on this review was requested for the September meeting of the Commission.

12 September 2006

Consideration of a Petition

The Commission received a petition objecting to the proposed closure of the Lancaster Sports Centre and resolved to request that Council Cabinet have regard of the comments when considering the future of the sports centre.

Forward Plan Items

The Commission considered reports that it had previously requested on the Forward Plan items concerning Allestree Hall, the Disposal of Land and Local Area Agreements.

Emergency Planning

The Commission received a quarterly update report on Emergency Planning and asked the Co-ordination Officer to arrange a visit to the Emergency Planning Control Centre at Derbyshire County Council.

Performance Eye

A refresher presentation on the use of Performance Eye was provided to the Commission.

Adult Social Services – Complaints and Representation Procedure Annual Report 2005/06

A report on Adult Social Services Complaints which included details of the procedure and the number of complaints received in 2005/06 was provided to the Commission.

The Council's Carbon Management Programme

The Energy Manager reported to the Commission on the form of the Council's Carbon Management programme and the progress that had been made.

Retrospective Scrutiny

The Commission were advised that it was not at that time possible to show the effects of reducing the Overview and Scrutiny research budget.

Overview and Scrutiny Web Pages

A demonstration of the Overview and Scrutiny web pages was provided to the Commission.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission Topic Reviews

The Commission approved the Environment Commission's proposed topic review of public art.

Trial of the PublicNet Briefing System

The Commission were told that the PublicNet Briefing System had not proved particularly useful and it was agreed not to purchase the system.

Review of Energy Use by the Council

The final draft report of the former Planning and Environment Commission's review of energy use by the Council was considered by the Commission and was accepted subject to some slight amendments to some recommendations. It was agreed that the report should be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet members with a request that they ask Council to adopt the recommendations.

Work Plan

The draft scoping report on the review of electoral registration was considered by the Commission and members were informed that the first evidence gathering meetings had been arranged.

Forward Plan

The Commission requested a report on the Forward Plan item on the Accommodation Strategy when this was complete.

24 October 2006

Corporate Asset Management Plan

The Commission received a presentation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan and recommended its approval to Council Cabinet.

Your City - Your Say

The Commission was provided with an oral report on the database that was being set up to support the Council's Consultation Strategy.

Local Area Agreements – Financial Governance Arrangements

The Commission considered a report that would be presented to Council cabinet on the Financial Governance Arrangements for Local Area agreements and recommended that Cabinet approve the Financial Protocol.

Local Democracy Week event

Members were informed of the arrangements for the Local Democracy Week event that had been planned for 14 November 2006.

Energy Saving Measures

Details of the ways in which the Council might save energy and reduce its carbon emissions were presented to the Commission. Members requested an update report to a future meeting of the Commission.

Proposed Conference on Energy Conservation

The Commission considered a report outlining proposals for a half day conference to engage staff in energy conservation and approved the proposals.

Work Plan

Members were informed of the progress of the Electoral Registration review.

Forward Plan

Members requested that a report on the Forward Plan item on the Swallowdale Road Development site be provided to the Commission.

5 December 2006

Corporate Priorities

The Corporate Director – Resources and Housing informed the Commission of the Corporate Priorities 2007/10.

Swallowdale Road

The Commission received a presentation on the Swallowdale Road Development site and agreed to provide an interim report to Council Cabinet on the Community Commission's recommendations relating to affordable housing.

Financial Support for 'Your Derby'

Members were informed of a proposal to produce a quarterly magazine style publication for all households that was to be known as 'Your Derby'. The Commission agreed to contribute £5000/year from the Overview and Scrutiny research budget to support the publication.

Proposed Changes to Overview and Scrutiny set out in the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'.

The Commission was advised of the proposals in the Local Government White paper that impacted upon Overview and Scrutiny.

Local Democracy Week Event – 14 November 2006

Feedback was provided on the 'Your City-Your Voice 2' Local Democracy Week event that was held on 14 November 2006.

Staff Energy Conference February/March 2007

The Commission approved the proposals for the staff energy conference. It was noted that the Leader of the Council had agreed to give the keynote address.

Work Plan

Members were advised that the evidence gathering phase of the Commission's review of electoral registration was now complete and that it was intended to prepare a draft report and recommendations for the Commission.

Forward Plan

Commission members asked for information to be provided on the Prudential Borrowing and Prudential Code and on the Derbyshire Economic Partnership Inward Investment Strategy.

Response of Council Cabinet to reports by the Commission

The Commission considered a minute extract from the Corporate Policy and Personnel, Performance Management and Economic Development Cabinet Member meeting on 14 November 2006 when the recommendations of the former Planning and Environments Commission's review of the Council's use of Energy were considered.

30 January 2007

Corporate Plan 2007-10

The Commission considered the draft Corporate Plan for 2007-10 and resolved to recommend that it be adopted by the Council.

Corporate ICT Infrastructure Capital Programme 2007/8 to 2009/10

The Commission considered the report on the proposed Corporate ICT Infrastructure capital programme and members resolved to recommend the programme for 2007/08 and 2009/10 to the Council.

Let's Talk Budget

The proposals for the draft revenue budget 2007/08 that fell within the remit of the Commission were considered by members. The Commission resolved to recommend that Cabinet review the proposals to reduce the opening hours of the Tourist Information Centre and make provision in the budget for the development of a travel plan by the Council.

Work Plan

The second draft report on the Commission's review of Electoral Registration was circulated and members were advised that there would be a meeting on 5 February to consider the report and the draft recommendations. Members were also advised that the Staff Energy Awareness Conference had been arranged for 8 March 2007.

Forward Plan

Members requested update reports on progress with the sale of Allestree Hall and the Accommodation Strategy and asked if a report on the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership Inward Investment Strategy could be provided to a future meeting of the Commission.

6 March 2007

Late Item - Street Lighting PFI

A late item on the Council's Street Lighting PFI was considered by the Commission at the request of Council Cabinet. The Commission had concerns about a number of issues including the provision of new street lighting to address lighting needs that had been identified by residents, and the maintenance implications for the Council of street lighting installed by developers on new developments.

The PFI team were advised of these concerns.

Estates Rental Income

The Commission received a short update report on Estates Rental income

Accommodation Strategy Review

The Commission were advised of the progress that had been made with the review of the Council's Accommodation Strategy

'Your Derby'

Commission members offered their views and comments on the first edition of 'Your Derby'.

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

Members were advised that the current year's Annual Report was now being prepared.

Identification and Agreement of Scrutiny Procedures to assist with Performance Management/Monitoring

Members considered how the Commissions might become more involved in performance management and monitoring. It was suggested that a seminar/workshop could be arranged to both improve understanding of the processes and to decide how best the Commissions might undertake performance management and monitoring. This suggestion was agreed by the Commission.

Response of Council Cabinet to the Commission's recommendations

Members were advised that Council Cabinet had resolved to note the views that the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions had expressed on the draft revenue budget.

3.2 – Adult Services and Health Commission



Councillor Sean Marshall
Chair of the ASH Commission



Councillor Hardy Dhindsa
Vice Chair of the ASH Commission

Policy Development

The Adult Services and Health Commission (ASH) has had another busy year scrutinising services and supporting the development of policies both within Adult Social Services and external health services.

Review of Homecare Services and Charges

The Council provides home care services to older and disabled people who are assessed as requiring those services and who meet the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligibility criteria.

Population forecasts by the Office for National Statistics show that although the city's population is set to grow by 1% over the next five years, the rate of increase in the population of people aged 85 and over is going to increase by approximately 16%. Members recognised that this will create significant pressure for the care services, particularly in respect of home care provision. Therefore at the July full Council meeting a motion was passed requesting the Adult Services and Health Commission to conduct a review of home care services and charges.



In the course of its review, the Commission considered evidence from a range of organisations and individuals who included services users. It learned that whilst the number of service users receiving home care services has declined over recent years the size of care packages have increased significantly. This is partly due to the changes to the laundry services and the changes to the eligibility criteria that were adopted in April 2006,

Evidence from service users and organisations working with older people suggested that there is still a need to meet low level needs as this will prevent people from going on to having high level needs. The Commission felt that low level needs could be met by voluntary sector organisations although there may be a need to first build up their capacity to manage the extra demand. The Commission decided not to ask for the reintroduction of home care charges. This was because of the deterrent effect that charges might have on potential applicants and because the majority of the service users who responded to the consultation were opposed to making a charge for home care services.

The Commission was also asked by the full Council to conduct a review of the self-assessment of home care services. The Commission learned that the Council had been running a pilot self-assessment process in Derby since April 2006, but that this only applied to a limited number of technical aids and minor adaptations. Since there is no self-assessment process for home care services the Commission decided not to proceed further with the review.

Health Scrutiny

The Adult Services and Health Commission is responsible for the health scrutiny function in Derby and in this capacity the Commission has looked at number of health issues. It has also responded to consultation by the local health bodies on their proposals to change or introduce new services.

Out of Hours Call Handling and Triage Services

The introduction of the General Practitioner (GP) General Medical Services contract in 2004 transferred the responsibility for providing out of hours GP care and call handling to the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). In Derbyshire the NHS Direct took the responsibility for call handling and the triage provision, whilst Derbyshire Healthcare and Derbyshire Medical Services took the rest of the workload. Towards the end of 2005 the National Audit office published a report that identified a number of shortcomings with the existing provision. This prompted the PCTs to review the provision of these services in Derbyshire.

The Derby City PCT consulted with the Adult Services and Health Commission on their proposals to change the out of hours call handling and triage services and make the service more efficient and responsive to local needs. The new specification will seek to improve the service by providing a single point of contact, reducing the average number of call backs to patients, reducing inappropriate referrals to A&E and maximising cost efficiencies.

Whilst welcoming the proposed changes, members also recommended that the tender should require the service provider to offer the option of calling back the caller where appropriate and also to ensure all GP surgeries operated a common system which allowed automatic transfer of calls to the out of hours service. These recommendations were accepted by the PCTs.

Derbyshire Mental Health proposal for foundation status

The Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust consulted the Commission on its proposals to become a Foundation Trust. NHS Foundation Trusts remain part of the NHS but are given greater levels of autonomy from central government control. They have greater freedoms to set their own priorities and have additional powers to raise monies, for instance from the money markets. Members supported the proposals as the new structure will ultimately help to improve mental health services in Derby.

Changes to Adult Drug Treatment Centre

There are 2,355 adults in Derby whose level of drug use is considered to be problematic. To address the social, economic and health problems associated with drug use, Derby has been set a Government target of 1,540 adult drug users to enter structured drug treatment during the year 2007/08.

Members considered the new adult treatment model being developed for Derby. This is based upon the needs assessment and incorporates developments to address primary and shared care. It also takes account of the latest publications on national standards and good practice in the provision of drug treatment. The model has been endorsed by the boards of the Community Safety Partnership and the Derby City PCT. The Government agency tasked with supporting and monitoring drug treatment performance, the National Treatment Agency (NTA) has also given its support to the model.

East Midlands Ambulance Trust presentation

Members have been interested in the role and responsibility of the new East Midlands Ambulance Services and invited the Director of Operations to give a presentation to the Commission. The larger ambulance service will be able spend more on front line service and thus improve its services in the region. It will get to patients faster and provide a more integrated service by utilising emergency practitioners and nurse triage services.

Site Visit of the Hospital

Members of the Adult Services and Health Commission undertook a tour of Derby City Hospital to consider the progress being made on the development of the new hospital. Members welcomed the new developments such as the helipad and new catering arrangements that offered menu-based, hot, nutritional, meals to the patients three times a day and minimised the waste. The catering arrangements are managed by an external company and their role includes delivering food to patients at the bedside and thus freeing up nurses' time to look after the patients.

Items Scrutinised by the Adult Services and Health Commission

17 July 2006

Out of Hours Call Handling and Triage Services - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed proposed changes by the Primary Care Trust to the Out of Hours Call Handling contract. Members recommended that

- The tender document should explicitly require the service provider to offer the option of calling back the caller where appropriate
- The new service should be introduced and be available for Derby residents as early as possible and that its implementation should not be delayed unduly until April 2007
- A monitoring report be brought to this Commission at future date, after the service had had time to bed-in, to assess the level of improvement to the service.

Outstanding Overview and Scrutiny Items – Following the changes to the structure of Overview and Scrutiny at the Annual Meeting of Council, the Commission considered outstanding items from relevant former Commission portfolios. The Commission resolved to consider the following items at the most appropriate meeting of the Commission:

- Adult Learning Review
- Reducing Health Inequalities
- Food Mapping and information on 'five a day'
- Presentation on the Ambulance Service
- Receive a draft paper regarding the definition of a substantial variation or reconfiguration of health services

Standing Agenda Items - The Commission resolved to retain Performance Eye and Retrospective Scrutiny as standing items on the Commission's agenda. The Chair, Vice Chair and the Performance Eye Manager were authorised to meet and establish a list of performance indicators for regular monitoring by the Commission.

Work Planning and Resources - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that requested that the Commission select the topic/s that it wished to review in order to develop the work plan for 2006/07. The Commission agreed to continue to focus on health inequalities and conduct 'light touch' topic reviews in order to allow the members to investigate a number of issues.

Overview and Scrutiny Training - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that requested that Members contact the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination team to arrange any training they required. It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny training package could be delivered on a one-to-one or a small group basis as

required.

Co-opting individuals to the Commission – The Commission thanked Pat Hill, Philip Johnson and Elaine Jackson for their contribution to the work of the Commission during the 2005/06 municipal year and recommended to Council that they be co-opted to the Commission for the 2006/07 municipal year.

Council Cabinet Forward Plan - The Commission identified the following items on the Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting:

- 80/05 Learning Disabilities Integration
- 81/05 Modernising day and Residential Services for people with learning disabilities

11 September 2006

Change in Service Delivery at Normanton Medical Centre - In accordance with Section 100(B)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit a briefing paper on the above. The Commission noted the report.

Ambulance Trust Presentation - The Commission received a presentation from the East Midlands Ambulance Trust's Director of Operations on its new role and responsibilities. The Commission discussed with the Trust's representatives procedures for 999 calls, air ambulance provision, their work with the fire and police services, the influence of traffic calming measures on the ambulance service's response times and the policy for treating people with mental health issues. The Commission noted the presentation with thanks and asked that the East Midlands Ambulance Trust update the Commission on their work on a regular basis.

Review of Home Care Services and Charges - The Commission received a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services which outlined the work that had been done on the Council's Home Care Services for Older People as part of a Best Value Review. The Commission resolved to carry out a review into Home Care Services and Charges and asked the co-ordination officer to set up a draft programme in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

Learning Disabilities Integration - The Commission received a report from the Director Corporate and Adult Social Services. The Commission stated that it would like to see improved outcomes for people with Learning Difficulties as a result of the report.

Modernising Day and Residential Services for People with Learning Disabilities - The Commission received a report from the Director Corporate and Adult Services on the Consultation on Modernisation of Day and Residential Services for People with Learning Difficulties. The Commission requested that any capital receipts be ring fenced for this service provision.

Substantial Development/Reconfiguration of Services - The Commission received a report from the Director Corporate and Adult Services regarding

the local definition of substantial variation in the delivery of NHS Health Services. The Commission approved the draft consultation form presented to them in the report.

Adult Social Services Annual Complaints Report to CSCI - The Commission noted a report from the Director Corporate and Adult Social Services.

Out of Hours Call Handling and Triage Tender Contract - The Commission noted a report from the Director corporate and Adult Social Services.

30 October 2006

Direct Payments - The Commission received a presentation from Stephen Sadler – Direct Payments Officer on Direct Payments. It was reported that Direct Payments were introduced in 1997 following 10 years of campaigning from disabled people. The Commission requested a report to a future meeting of the Commission on the take up of Direct Payments within different ethnic groups.

Reducing Health Inequalities - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the progress being made with implementing the recommendations of the reducing health inequalities topic review. The Commission was informed that good progress was being made against a number of the recommendations including smoking cessation. However, there was no progress on appointing a dedicated member of staff to tackle the issues of health inequality as recommended by the Commission when health inequalities were last discussed in April 2006. The Commission was informed that recommendation five that concerned the agreement of key local health indicators was also not progressed due to lack of resources. The Commission asked for an update on this at a future meeting.

Performance Eye - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the performance indicators that fell within the remit of the Commission. The Commission requested a complete profile on the two red indicators, AO/D56 (BV195) and HCOP 1.1.

Review of Home Care Services and Charges - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed recommendations on the scale, type and financing of home care services, in accordance with the Council's request. On 19 July 2006 full Council resolved to ask the Commission to undertake a review on Home Care charges. The Commission agreed at it's first scheduled to conduct the review and formulated a work plan that used information from the Best Value Review and a range of witnesses. The Commission considered the Review of Home Care Services and Charges report and accepted recommendations two, three and four without amendments.

The Commission resolved to present the recommendations from the review to

Council Cabinet with amendments as below:

- delete the word medium from point 113 (Recommendation 1)
- Insert the following into points 122, arguments in favour

‘The money can be also support service charges, Council Tax and other budgets’

‘The cost of collection should be less than before. This needs to be set within the context of the forthcoming difficult budget round ’

‘Due to the growing older population, more people will be requiring care services and we need to spend more just to maintain at the current level.’

- Change ‘A number’ to ‘The majority’ in arguments against the charge.

11 December 2006

Derbyshire Mental Health Trust Consultation on Proposals for Foundation Trust Status - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the proposal by the Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust to apply to become a Foundation Trust. David Pitt – Executive Director, Strategic and Organisational Development – attended and addressed the Commission to explain the role and responsibilities of Foundation Trusts. He reported that the Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust had begun a public consultation exercise with the patients, public and carers. It was hoped that approval would be agreed by July 2007. The Commission considered it important that the relationship between the Trust and the Council remain the same in terms of accountability.

Proposed Changes to the Adult Drug Services Model - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the new Adult Drug Treatment Services Model proposed for Derby. The Commission resolved to receive regular updates of the progress of the targets

Corporate Assessment/Joint Area Review 2007

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director of Resources and Housing that set out the timescales and requirements for the combined Corporate Assessment/Joint Area Review. The Commission noted the following:

- the timescales for the combined Corporate Assessment/Joint Area Review
- the requirement for preparation of two self-assessment documents and the timescales for preparation and submission
- the proposed changes to CPA outlined in the White Paper

Performance Eye - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the performance indicators that fell within the remit of the Commission.

Self Assessment for Home Care Services - The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that detailed the request by Council to review self assessment for home care services. The Commission resolved to not proceed further with the review as the self assessment process did not apply to home care and to report to Council Cabinet that the request from Council had been investigated.

Responses of the Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission - The Commission considered a minute extract from Council Cabinet on 28 November 2006 on the review of home care services and charges. A response from John Hutchison from Derby PCT on the out of hours call handling and triage tender was also considered and noted.

22 January 2007

Let's Talk Budgets

The Commission considered the revenue budget within its remit. This covered Adult Social Services, Youth Services and the Adult Learning service.

Direct Payment Ethnicity Profile

The Commission received a report from the Corporate Director Corporate and Adult Social Services. It was noted that the statistics for Direct Payments when broken down by ethnicity were not a large enough sample to show any conclusive results.

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Learning Difficulties

The Commission noted the need to modernise day care services for people with Learning Difficulties. It was suggested that the new hydrotherapy pool at Ivy House school may be able to help fulfil the community's need for such a facility.

12 March 2007

Adult Learning Service Strategic Options Review

The Commission considered a report of the Corporate Director for Children and Young People on proposals to review the structure of the Adult Learning service to meet the anticipated demand in the City.

Developing parameters for significant changes in health

The Commission agreed a questionnaire for local NHS health bodies to complete on instances when they are considering making changes to services that could be deemed to be significant. The adopted form has the support of the East Midlands Strategic Health Authority.

Annual Health Check

Members agreed their comments as part of the Healthcare Commissions annual health check on the four main NHS health organisations, namely the Derby City Primary Care Trust, Derbyshire Mental Health Trust, East Midlands, Derby Hospitals Foundation Trust and the East Midlands Ambulance Trust.

16 April 2007

Alcohol Strategy

The Commission considered the Alcohol Reduction Harm Strategy has been developed by the Derby City PCT that seeks to address the problems associated with alcohol abuse. The strategy takes a multi agency approach to reducing the harm caused by alcohol in Derby.

Joint Commissioning Framework for the Third Sector

The Commission considered the draft guidance on processes to be adopted by Derby City Council and Derby City Primary Care Trust for ensuring effective Voluntary and Community Sector involvement in the planning, commissioning and delivery of Health and Social Care services.

Local Involvement Networks – LINKs

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill currently going through parliament will abolish the PPI forums and replace them with Local Involvement Networks. The noted the proposed role and responsibilities of LINKs and the need to local authorities to procure a host organisation to establish a local involvement network.

3.3 – Community Commission



Councillor Robin Turner
Chair of the Community Commission



Councillor Roy Webb
Vice Chair of the Community Commission

Policy Development

The new Community Commission held its inaugural meeting on 19 June 2006. Among its first tasks was to finalise the important topic review on Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness, conducted by the previous Commission with responsibility for housing. Additionally members discussed important issues about how the Commission should conduct its business. It was decided to include both 'Retrospective Scrutiny' and 'Performance Eye' as standing agenda items for each meeting. There was also agreement about the monitoring of progress on issues inherited from previous Commissions.

Initially the sentiment was that a topic review should be conducted and the wheels were put in motion to gather members' suggestions and then to assess and score the options. In fact, this exercise produced no clear favourites. Commissions recognise that there has to be member enthusiasm for a major review in order for interest to be sustained over the months from start to finished report. So the Commission decided that instead of conducting a topic review they would conduct several short focussed scrutiny reviews. The three short focussed reviews that were subsequently undertaken varied in length from two hours to a full day.

The 'user friendliness' of the Derby Homefinder application form – common to 14 social landlords as well as Derby Homes - had been raised during the earlier Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness topic review. The proposed new allocations scheme and associated software also offered the opportunity to redesign the application form. A few weeks prior to the one-off review meeting at the Council House the Commission's members went through an individual exercise of completing the current form. They were given a common scenario and their completed forms were scored by a Housing Options Centre manager to see whether the necessary information had been given to enable the application to be processed. The members also fed back their opinions on the form. This information was used to inform the content and layout of the draft redesigned form. A second self-completion

exercise was undertaken so that members could feedback their views of the new version.

In recent years ward councillors up and down the country have received an increasing number of complaints from constituents about anti-social behaviour. Permanent Alcohol Free Zones (AFZs), and temporary Section 30 dispersal areas (S30 areas), have been used in Derby to deal with this problem but members had concerns about the criteria and effectiveness of both. These concerns were considered at an evening meeting which was attended by the Council's Chief Legal Officer and representatives of the Community Safety Partnership and Derbyshire Constabulary. Three recommendations resulted. In essence these were:

- to improve the equity of the assessment process and to factor in that some communities may be less inclined to speak up about problems that would cause an outcry elsewhere
- to measure the public's experiences about the both AFZs and S30 areas – which a one meeting review did not have time to do
- to lobby central government for a fast-track route to re-instate S30 orders where serious problems occur after the order has lapsed.

However, none of these three recommendations were accepted by Council Cabinet.

The largest focussed review was an all day meeting about the operation of the Council's supplementary planning guidance on affordable housing. The meeting led to a report of almost topic review scale involving 13 recommendations plus two conclusions. The Commission was also to produced two interim reports, one about the sale of land at Swallowdale Road and the other about the location and design of any new homes built by Derby Homes.



January's meeting saw the Commission make some strong comments about aspects of the revenue budget, in particular that the delivery of 3.5% cost savings was largely through service reductions and would do little to meet the other concurrent requirement for 2.5% Gershon efficiency savings. The same meeting saw members agree a collective response to the new, national Commission for Integration and Cohesion. This body had invited national organisations, local organisations and individuals in communities across the country to say what integration and cohesion means to them - and what practical steps can be taken to make our communities more cohesive and integrated places to live.

During the course of the municipal year the Commission also contributed to policy development by its selection of items from the Forward Plan.

Items Scrutinised by the Community Commission

19 June 2006

Call-in - The Commission received a report explaining the procedure for Call-in.

Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Topic Review - The former Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Regeneration Commission explained their Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Topic Review. The new Commission then approved the topic review and referred it to the Council Cabinet.

Outstanding Overview and Scrutiny Items - The Commission received a report detailing issues former Commissions were planning to look at which are now relevant to the Community Commission's Portfolio. The Commission agreed to adopt the items listed into the Commission's Workplan for the forthcoming year and also to consider responses to questions put to Derbyshire County Council regarding Derby Homes' Pension position.

Standing Agenda Items - The Commission decided to include 'Retrospective Scrutiny' and 'Performance Eye' as standing agenda items for each meeting.

Work Planning and Resources 2006/07 - The Commission considered items for their work programme for 2006/07. Members agreed to undertake a topic review and to make a decision on a topic at the July meeting. It was agreed that the co-ordination officer would seek members' ideas for possible review areas and work up the suggestions as outline proposals, and that the Commission Members would express their preferences with the collated responses being reported to the July meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Training - The Commission received a report about the modular Overview and Scrutiny training packages available.

Co-opting Individuals to the Commission - The Commission felt that the topic review choice would influence the expertise and experience required of any co-opted individual and deferred consideration of who potentially to co-opt.

Forward Plan - members decided to scrutinise the following items whilst it was possible to influence the final decisions: 83/05, Derby Older Persons Housing Strategy, 100/05 Housing Renewal Policy and 70/05 Housing Allocations Policy.

24 July 2006

Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Topic Review and the draft Housing Allocation Policy - The Commission received reports which outlined the Council Cabinet's responses to the topic review and also set out the final

draft Allocations policy which was to be sent to Cabinet for approval on 1 August. The Commission resolved to:

- a) Express regret that the Commission's suggestion there should be "indicative allocations" within bands A and B between current tenants seeking re-housing and prospective new tenants, has not been accepted due to counsel's advice that it was not lawful but to accept:
 - i. there remain some of the Commission's objectives that are achievable without those percentage "indicative allocations", and
 - ii. that swift Council agreement of the policy is important to ensure the continued support of partners
- b) Request reports at appropriate times on the progress against the topic review's objectives including:
 - i. the percentages of existing Derby Homes and RSL landlord tenants who achieve a move under the new policy
 - ii. the number of mutual exchanges, and
 - iii. other issues raised during discussion
- c) Include appropriate Performance Eye indicators on the re housing of current tenants
- d) Request that the Community Commission be consulted over the percentages for each housing band which are to be agreed at Cabinet or by the Cabinet member for neighbourhood, social cohesion and housing strategy
- e) Request for a future meeting:
 - i. a report to the Commission on the effectiveness of the new IT system
 - ii. a demonstration of how it will work
- f) Thank the officers, Councillor Nath and former Commission Members for all their work on the Housing Allocations Policy.

Area and Neighbourhood Agenda - Councillor Nath and the Director of the Community Safety Partnership gave a presentation to the Commission on the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda and described how this would devolve decision making powers to local communities.

Members resolved to request a report to a future meeting:

- a) detailing how successful the pilots are proving, and
- b) covering
 - i. the effectiveness of the model in achieving the aims of residents,
 - ii. how many staff are involved
 - iii. governance and accountability issues, and

- iv. how locally awarding higher priority to one or more services impacts on other services in the area.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration - The Commission received a report regarding the performance of the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service. The new IT System had resulted in delays of about 3 weeks in the processing of claims but additional temporary staff had been employed to help reduce the backlog. Members requested a report to the next meeting on the implementation of the new IT system and on the transitional impact on the service received by customers.

Derby Homes Re Inspection - The Commission received a report regarding the Audit Commission's inspection which had taken place in February. It resolved to note the outcomes of the inspection, to request a further report to its October meeting detailing Derby Homes' response to the recommendations, and to explore the sustainability of Derby Homes' Community Panels.

Performance Eye - The Commission decided that Performance Eye should show all the indicators relevant to the Commission's portfolio and should be provided with quarterly reports to highlight any issues of success or concern.

Sustainable Housing Business Plans and the Efficiency Agenda -

The Commission approved the expenditure of £200 to enable the Chair to attend a seminar.

Selection of Topic Review and Issues for Focussed Scrutiny 2006/07 - The new Commission discussed options for a topic review for the year. It was felt that there might be more value in conducting several smaller in-depth focussed scrutiny reviews rather than commissioning one larger piece of work.

It resolved to hold meetings during autumn 2006 and early 2007 for focussed to:

- a) Scrutinise Derby Homefinder Housing Application
- b) Investigate what happens when time limited funding dries up
- c) Examine the successes and failures associated with Section 30 dispersal orders and Alcohol Free Zones and
- d) Consider Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing – whether the Council policy of mixed siting of affordable housing across a new housing development is happening in practice.

2 October 2006

Derby Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) - The Commission considered the response of the Adult Services Cabinet Member to the former Community Regeneration Commission's report on CAB funding. It also interviewed

Councillors Gerrard and Nath and then resolved to:

- a) welcome closer partnership working and wish good luck to the newly merged CAB/Law Centre;
- b) ask Council Cabinet not to review downwards the aggregate of funding to the two current organisations after their merger, and
- c) reaffirm the previous Commission's views, namely: that Council Cabinet should be prepared to *consider* an increase in the level of grant in future years to the amalgamated CAB/Law Centre if:
 - i. the economies of scale available to the combined organisation have been fully utilised to deliver efficiencies
 - ii. the savings released are partly used to augment the financial management capacity and
 - iii. firm evidence is provided of continuing unmet need.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Administration -The Commission received an update on the new Revenues and Benefits Service computer, which went live on 17 July 2006, on time and within budget. Despite the system only being in place for two months, the workload was steadily reducing; however it would take up to nine months to completely recover. The Commission resolved to keep up to date with progress and to welcome:

- a) the flexible attitude to the backdating of benefit
- b) the proposed direct phone line for elected members.

Joint Service Delivery Options for Derby Homes Former Local Housing Offices - The Commission received an update on the implementation of the Service Access Review. This showed how Derby Homes intended to maintain a local housing service through joint working with partner organisations. Osmaston, Cowsley and Chaddesden Park local offices were being kept open at alternative locations. The Commission welcomed Derby Homes' efforts to maintain a local presence and its willingness to absorb the financial consequences.

Area and Neighbourhood Agenda - The Commission received a briefing on developing Area and Neighbourhood Agenda. Key themes of the agenda were:

- Creating safer, stronger and cleaner communities
- Community enjoyment
- Building trust
- Responsive and accountable services
- Developing community leadership

The Commission welcomed ward members' involvement in the weekly tasking

meetings and asked that any necessary steps be taken so that confidentiality is not seen as a reason to exclude ward members. The Commission also requested that a portion of the budgets devolved to neighbourhoods be allocated to ward members to spend on issues raised by constituents.

Derby Homes Re-inspection - The Commission considered a report detailing Derby Homes' response to recommendations arising from the Audit Commission Inspection in February 2006, which had assessed Derby Homes as providing an excellent three star service.

Housing Renewal Policy - Martin Gadsby explained that a review of the Policy was necessary due to a shift in government priorities for private sector housing, the new Housing Act 2004 and changes in funding arrangements. He outlined the timetable for the adoption of the new policy. The Commission recommended that Council Cabinet promote an accredited landlords scheme as a means of raising standards.

Report 1362: Community Based Finance Institutions: Derbyloans -

The Commission considered a report regarding the ability of the Council to make loans or grants to Derbyloans.

Performance Eye – Members considered performance data relating to the Commission's score card. It was decided to receive specific information on BV76a, BV76d and HCOP 6.1 at the following meeting.

4 December 2006

Housing Application Receipt - The Commission was pleased to note that everyone who submitted Housing Application Forms would now receive a receipt for their application. If any forms were subsequently lost the date on the receipt would be used for processing the replacement forms.

Service Charges in the Sheltered Accommodation Service – A key decision on this issue had been taken subject to the Commission's comments. The Commission welcomed the outcome of the review, which would result in significantly reduced charges for many service users; but were concerned about the possible impact on residents with incomes close to the eligibility threshold for means tested benefits. Members recommended that Council Cabinet and Derby Homes should act to ensure that each service user is offered a full benefits check at least once per year. Also, while the new service is planned to be sustainable it could be vulnerable in the event of future cutbacks, so members requested that the Council Cabinet member monitors the Supporting People budgets and ensures, in the event of future reductions in the allocation to Derby, that these Supported Living schemes are suitably protected.

Housing Rent and Service Charges - The Commission received a report on rent and charges increases. It felt that Central Government was requiring councils to follow two incompatible policies, as they were asking local authorities to achieve convergence between council rents and those of Registered Social Landlords by 2012 but were also capping the percentage rent increases below the rises needed. It resolved to request that Council Cabinet make representations to central government to:

- clarify the government's intentions regarding rent convergence and rent capping in subsequent years and to,
- seek an extension beyond the current 2012 deadline to enable convergence to be achieved through reasonable year-on-year percentage increases.

Draft Housing Renewal Policy The Commission received the draft policy. It welcomed: the proposals contained in the policy, the Council's commitment to the Disabled Facilities Grant, as shown by the substantial financial support to that budget *and* the development of a landlord accreditation scheme, as previously requested by the Commission.

The Percentage of Allocations Awarded to each band in the new Housing Allocations Policy – Members considered the forthcoming Key Decision. The Commission whole heartedly welcomed this response to the former Community Regeneration Commission's recommendations and considered the new 4 band system and percentage of allocations to each band should offer much better chances for current social housing tenants seeking to move. It also offered its best wishes to all the staff who will operate the new system given the context that social housing is a scarce resource, and recommended that Cabinet approve the proposed initial percentage of allocations to bands.

Performance Eye - The Commission examined the Performance Eye data relating to indicators within the Commissions portfolio. Members decided that at a future meeting they would examine BV212 – average time to re-let local authority housing. It was also decided to request details about future proposed changes relating to performance indicators so that the Commission have a prior understanding as to why performance appears to be affected.

Section 30 Order and Alcohol Free Zones - The Commission received a draft report setting out the findings and recommendations arising from the focussed scrutiny review held on 16 October 2006 and approved the report for submission to Council Cabinet.

15 January 2007

Responses of the Council Cabinet/Cabinet Member to earlier reports by the Commission - The Commission received responses regarding

- Area and Neighbourhood Working – a general review of area and neighbourhood working was currently under way.

- Swallowdale Road
- Services Charges in the Sheltered Accommodation Service
- Housing Rent and Service Charges
- Draft Housing Renewal Policy
- Housing Allocations Policy

Revenue Budget - The Commission discussed the proposals for the 2007/08 budget with the Deputy Leader. Members resolved to express concern regarding the risk assessment process for water and electrical equipment testing. They requested Council Cabinet review its proposals regarding staffing and other support for Area and Neighbourhood Working and in relation to the external funding unit and the Council's maintenance budgets as they were concerned that reducing these budgets may be a false economy. Members also expressed concern that most of the savings being proposed across the Council involved reductions in service levels and that while these would clearly contribute to achieving a balanced budget, they would not contribute to the achievement of Gershon efficiencies.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget 2007/08 -

Consultation - The Commission considered a report which noted that the overall financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was stable this year and that funding could be maintained at a similar level to last year. The half year position of the Repairs Account was on target to remain in balance at the end of the year but that this would need continual monitoring. Concerns were expressed about whether the Major Repairs Allowance was sufficient to ensure that houses continued to meet the Decent Homes standard. It was resolved to express concerns regarding the likely negative subsidy in the future and Council Cabinet was asked request a Government review of the formula to ensure the maintenance of up to standard properties continues satisfactorily.

Housing and Social Care Capital Programme 2007/08 -2009/10 – Details of the grant would not be known until March but it was likely that there would be an 8% reduction in the grant compared to this year, except for Rosehill and regeneration schemes. The Commission discussed the need for an 'Extra Care' facility in the City and it was noted that funding was being sought to create this facility for the people of Derby.

The Minor Repairs Grant and the Disabled Facilities Grant were publicised in the Housing Renewal Policy Booklet. The Commission resolved to:

1. Welcome the continued support of the Disabled Facilities Grant
2. Request a more targeted and sophisticated approach to providing information on the grants available.
3. Welcome the Council's approach to 'Extra Care' and to encourage Cabinet to locate a suitable site that could lead to an 'Extra Care' village being developed in the City.

Experimental Adoption of Portfolio Working within the Commission -

The Commission discussed the Chair's proposal to allocate portfolios to Commission Members and charge them with responsibility for monitoring particular issues and reporting back to the Commission. Some Commission Members expressed concerns that the majority of the work would fall to the most committed Members of the Commission. They felt that the Commission as a whole should be responsible for all of its remit. Other members stated that they preferred to have an overview of the topics covered in the Commission's remit rather than developing a specialism. Concerns were also expressed regarding the time commitment that would be involved.

Other Members did however feel that portfolio working would be a beneficial measure and agreed to pilot it. It was resolved that the following Councillors would pilot portfolio working in the following areas:

- Councillor Rawson – Housing Issues, Housing strategy and Derby Homes
- Councillor Webb – Customer Services
- Councillor Chera – Performance Eye
- Councillor Afzal – Social Cohesion

Commission on Integration and Cohesion – ‘ Your Chance to tell us what you think’ - It was noted that 4 members responses had been received to the consultation and those had used to prepare the draft Commission response. It was agreed that the draft formal response from the Commission be confirmed and submitted together with all 4 individual responses.

Key Decision 28/06 – Derby Homes New Build – Derby Homes Able to Deliver New Affordable Housing - The Commission discussed the redevelopment of council houses on large existing plots. It was resolved to request that:

- There be conditions put in place wherever possible to ensure that there was no visual distinction between affordable housing and the rest of a development.
- In existing areas of social housing where clearance is proposed to make way for new build there should be no net loss in the number of affordable units. Therefore the number of units demolished should be the minimum number to be replaced.
- The wisdom of increasing housing density be very seriously examined because the loss of private open space to more housing is likely to result in the creation of additional social problems.
- A quarterly statement regarding the number of affordable houses that are developed in the City. [NB the resolution was modified on 21 Feb 2007]

21 February 2007

Proposed Derby Community Legal Advice Centre - The Commission received a presentation from Kirsty Alldread on proposals for a Derby Community Advice Centre. The aim is to create a new centre to provide a single co-ordinated and cost effective service which focuses on people's needs and ends the present need for individuals to be referred between agencies. By becoming involved in the pilot project, Derby would be well positioned to influence the service. Members resolved to endorse the proposed community advice centre subject to detailed transitional arrangements being worked up for a tender bid by the main local providers.

Draft Report by the Commission entitled 'Affordable Housing, Sustainable Communities' - the Commission reviewed the final draft of their report on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and agreed a number of changes to the text, including to the Interim Report on Derby Homes new build.

Response of the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and E-Government

The Commission received a draft minute extract from a meeting of the Individual Cabinet Member for Community Safety and E-Government on 16 February 2007 regarding Section 30 Orders and Alcohol Free Zones. The three recommendations made by the Commission had not been accepted. On the third recommendation the Cabinet Member was satisfied with the current arrangements regarding the reinstatement of Section 30 Orders which were described as robust. The Commission expressed disappointment at the decision as it felt the arrangements to reinstate Section 30 Orders were *too* robust. Members resolved to refer the decision on recommendation 3 back to the Council Cabinet Member's next meeting, highlighting that the current procedures were too robust and suggesting that legislative changes be sought to enable fast track reinstatement when warranted.

2 April 2007

Community Cohesion

The commission received a report and a presentation from Tony Hurrell on Community Cohesion in Derby. The report had been developed in response to national concerns about extremism built on extensive consultation with local communities. It made 27 recommendations to address community cohesion in the city.

Implementation of the Housing Allocations Policy

There is considerable member interest in Derby Home Finder and the Commission received an update on the council's housing allocations process. Following a long discussion, members asked to receive regular updates on the allocations process which included statistics on the numbers on the waiting list

and broken down into the various categories including homeless, numbers being allocated for each band.

Performance Eye

Members considered the performance during the 3rd quarter of indicators that fall within the Community Commission's remit

3.4 - Environment Commission



Councillor Barbara Jackson
Chair of the Environment Commission



Councillor Paul West
Vice Chair of the Environment Commission

Policy Development

At its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Vice Chair of the Culture and Prosperity Commission put forward a suggestion that as its 2005/06 work plan topic the Commission should conduct a review to identify and investigate best practice methods of obtaining sponsorship for the Council's Arts Events programme. This suggestion was subsequently agreed and the Co-ordination Officer was asked to draft an appropriate scoping report.

The evidence gathering phase of the review of sponsorship commenced in January 2006 and the review was completed by the Environment Commission which took on responsibility for arts and culture following the reorganisation of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's at the Council's Annual meeting on 24 May 2006.

As part of the review the Commissions took evidence from Arts Team officers, the Leicester Comedy Festival's Sponsorship Director, a member of Arts & Business and a Sponsorship consultant employed by the Council in 2005.

The review was completed in June 2006, although because no earlier meeting was available, the recommendations were not reported to the Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Direct Services until 11 September 2006.

The recommendations of the review were:

1. To address the fact that there is currently no dedicated officer within the Arts Team who is responsible for seeking sponsorship for arts events through one or a combination of the following ways:
 - a. Creating a post for an Arts Event Sponsorship Officer that should be self-financing from the sponsorship obtained

- b. Employing a sponsorship agency, the fee for which would be based upon a percentage of the income received
- 2. That the Arts Events Team should adopt a more professional approach to seeking sponsorship by developing an arts events sponsorship strategy that:
 - a. Includes a structured and defined process, like the ones advocated by Arts & Business and Leicester Comedy Festival
 - b. Makes it clear that any sponsorship income will be in addition to the Council's core funding for arts events and set out how the income could be used to develop the events programme
 - c. Improves the understanding of and training in sponsorship development for the Council's Arts Team Officers
 - d. Makes suitable arrangements which would ensure that different departments across the Council are aware of what others are doing with regard to sponsorship
 - e. Fully evaluate the market value of events to identify sponsorship potential
 - f. Investigate in detail the business membership offered by Arts and Events
- 3. For the Council to fully exploit the sponsorship potential of the biennial Format Photography Festival.
- 4. If the Arts Events programme is to be developed any income received from sponsorship should be retained within the Arts Team's budget in order to build the portfolio.

At its meeting on 31 July 2006 the Environment Commission considered a number of possible topics for review in the coming year and agreed to investigate the ways in which Section 106 monies might be used to procure public art.

A scoping report on the review was prepared by the Co-ordination Officer and was considered and agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 25 September 2006. The Commission agreed that the objectives of the review should be to:

- 1. Understand the role of the Public Art Officer Working Group and Steering Group and become familiar with the 2001 Public Art Strategy
- 2. Understand the process whereby S106 monies can be used to provide public art
- 3. Look at existing public art in the city and find out what public art has been commissioned and installed in the last five years and the mechanism by which it was achieved
- 4. Find out how other Cities go about obtaining public art and how successful they have been
- 5. Look in detail at the use over the past five years of S106 monies to procure public art and at the outcomes and costs of this process
- 6. Develop recommendations for the future use of S106 monies to procure public art for Derby.

The first five of these objectives were achieved by the Commission through:

1. Meeting(s) with representatives of the Public Art Steering Group and Officer Working Group to explore the brief and priorities of the groups and the role that group members saw themselves as having.
2. A meeting with Council officers at which the process of using S106 money was explored
3. Undertaking the Heritage in Public Art Circular Walk in the company of HH
4. Visits to Manchester, Cardiff and Birmingham to look at examples of their public art and to see how they had gone about obtaining them

The draft report on the review was completed before Christmas 2006 and recommended that:

1. There should be a clear overall plan for public art in Derby. This plan should include details of the type, size and location of the public art pieces that it is considered desirable for the city to acquire. It is also considered that as part of this process the aim should be to include one or more iconic pieces that would give Derby a new visual identity.
2. When developing its plan for public art in Derby the Council's approach should favour pieces which are recognisably 'art' rather than 'functional'.
3. Arrangements should be put in place to pool the S106 monies acquired from developers for the purposes of providing public art. The pooled monies should be used to procure the pieces of public art that have been identified as needed by the plan.
4. Where developers wish to provide a piece of public art rather than contribute financially, they should be encouraged to provide something that conforms to the Council's public art plan. Ideally, the piece of public art provided by the developer should be located in accordance with the plan.
5. Where appropriate, public art procured by the Council should be the subject of public competition and local artists should be encouraged to compete.
6. Consideration should be given to the procurement of a large spectacular piece of public art that could be positioned at a strategic location in the northern half of the City centre.

These recommendations were subsequently adopted by the Commission who agreed that they should be presented to the appropriate Council Cabinet member.

As well as conducting a review of the use of Section 106 monies to procure public art, the Commission also considered and offered comments on a proposal to amend a Traffic Regulation Order so as to permit cycling in the City Centre pedestrianised area at certain times.

On 10 January 2007 the Commission visited the Vital Earth composting plant at Ashbourne to see how the City's biodegradable waste is turned into compost for use as a soil conditioner.

Items Scrutinised by the Environment Commission

5 June 2006

Sponsorship Topic Review – Progress Report

The Commission considered the progress that had been made towards completion of the review and agreed to a meeting at which potential sponsorship opportunities could be discussed and the draft recommendations of the review agreed.

Format 06 Photography Festival

The Commission received a presentation from the Arts Project Co-ordinator on the Format 06 Photography Festival. The presentation formed the last part of the Commission's review of Sponsorship for Arts Events.

Standing Items – Performance Eye and Retrospective Scrutiny

The Commission considered a report and confirmed that it wished to continue with the standing agenda items.

Work Planning and Resources

The Commission agreed to hold a special meeting before its next scheduled meeting to discuss the work plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Training

Members were informed of the Overview and Scrutiny training that could be provided and were asked to contact the Co-ordination team to arrange any training that they required.

Co-opting Individuals to Commissions

Members considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services that outlined the procedure for co-opting non-voting members to the Commission.

31 July 2006

Performance Eye

Members considered a report from the Director of Resources and Housing that detailed a list of Best Value Performance Indicators and measures from the new Corporate Plan that were relevant to the Commission. The Commission resolved to request quarterly monitoring information on a range of Best Value Performance Indicators.

Closure of the Riverside Walk adjacent to the Silk Mill

The Assistant Director – Property Services informed the Commission of the background to the closure of the Riverside Walk.

Sponsorship Topic Review – Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Commission considered a report from the Chair of the Commission that detailed the final recommendations of the Sponsorship Topic Review. The

Commission agreed to approve the recommendations and to ask the Chair to present them to the Cabinet member for Leisure and Direct Services.

Work Plan 2006/07

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services and agreed as its topic review to look at how public art could be developed in Derby

Sports Centre Development Plan

Members considered a report by the Director of Environmental Services that provided an update on the Sports Development Plan. Members were advised by the Cabinet member for Leisure and Direct Services that although the closure of the Lancaster Sports Centre could be delayed it would be better for the money to be invested in other sports centres. The Commission resolved to note the progress that had been made with the Sports Centre Development Plan and that the proposed closure of the Lancaster Sports Centre would be considered by Council Cabinet on 1 August 2006.

QUAD

Members received an update on the progress with QUAD and were informed that work would commence in October 2006 and would finish in December 2007.

Visit to ULTra Test Track Cardiff

The Commission considered a report on the visit by members and officers to the test track for the ULTra personalised rapid transport system in Cardiff.

25 September 2006

Retrospective Scrutiny – Consideration of the decision to proceed with applying new Traffic Orders to St Peter's Street

The Chair of the Disabled People's Advisory Forum asked the Commission to consider requesting the reversal of a decision to proceed with new traffic orders that would allow cyclists to use St Peter's Street and other identified streets between the hours of 5pm and 10am.

The Council's Traffic Control Engineer explained that the decision to allow cyclists to use the streets during the stated times was based on Government guidance. Representatives of disabled groups attended the meeting and told members of their concerns about the decision.

The Commission resolved to investigate the issue further and to prepare recommendations to the Council Cabinet member for Planning and Transportation before the trial commenced in January 2007.

Cityscape

The Commission resolved to note a presentation from the Director of Development at Cityscape on the proposed changes to the Cityscape Masterplan which was shortly due to go out for public consultation.

Cycling England

The Commission were provided with a verbal report on the Cycling England initiatives in Derby. Members were told that the aim of the initiatives were to encourage young people to continue to cycle after the age when many stopped using their bicycles. Members were also told that 600 cycle stands had been installed at Derby schools to encourage pupils to cycle to school.

Assessment Criteria for Council supported Local Bus Services

The Commission were provided with a report on the criteria for supporting local bus services and resolved to support the proposals.

Work Plan – Draft scoping report and timetable for the Commission’s review of Public Art

Members considered and agreed to support the draft scoping report and timetable for the Commission’s review of public art.

Responses of Council Cabinet/Council Cabinet members to any reports of the Commission

The Commission received and noted the minute extract from the Cabinet Member meeting to which the report on the Commission’s review of Sponsorship was presented.

27 November 2006

Report on the Assembly Rooms

The Commission received a presentation from the manager of the Assembly Rooms and Guildhall Theatre on the current working and position of the Assembly Rooms. Members were advised that there had been limited investment in the building and facilities and that some elements of it were now coming to the end of their working life.

Tree Management Policy

The Commission considered and resolved to note a report on the revisions to the Council’s Tree Management Policy.

Consideration of Proposals contained in the Regional Plan

The Commission considered an oral report by the Head of Plans and Policies on the East Midlands Regional Plan. Members resolved to request the Co-ordination Officer to survey the Commission by e-mail and to prepare a response based on the comments received.

Performance Eye

The Council’s Waste Manager reported to the Commission on the performance achieved against BVPI119 which covered graffiti, street cleaning and detritus. Members resolved to note the report.

Retrospective Scrutiny – Update on the decision to proceed with applying new Traffic Orders to St Peter’s Street

Members were informed that as it had been decided at Council not to proceed with the proposals there was no longer a need for the Commission to consider

the issue.

Council Cabinet Forward Plan

It was decided to request reports on the enforcement of Dog Fouling and Dog Control for a future meeting of the Commission.

Responses of the Council cabinet/Council cabinet Members to any reports of the Commission

Members received a minute extract from the Council Cabinet Member meeting to which the recommendations of the former Planning and Environment Commission on the review of the Council's use of Energy were presented.

22 January 2007

Performance Eye

The Commission requested that a report on BV215a – average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault – be presented to its next meeting.

Local Transport Plan – Highways and Transport Programme Consultation

As a prelude to its special meeting on 30 January 2007, the Commission received a briefing report on the LTP Highways and Transport Programme

Work Plan 2006/07

Members were provided with an update on the progress with the Commission's Public Art review and were informed that a meeting to consider the draft report and recommendations had been arranged for 14 February 2007.

Let's Talk Budget – Revenue Budget

The Commission considered the draft Revenue Budget for 2007/08-2009/10. Members were concerned about the proposed reductions in funding for the Events Grant programme, the Arts freeze and the staffing reductions proposed within the Environmental Strategy Development Team. Members were also concerned that funding had not been identified to continue the Reading Rocket service.

The Commission recommended that Council Cabinet did not seek to make savings by:

- The reduction in funding for the Events programme
- The Arts grant freeze
- Reducing staffing levels within the Environmental Strategy Development Team
- It was also recommended that Cabinet seek to identify funding to maintain the Reading Rocket service

Let's talk Budget – Capital Programme

The Commission considered a report setting out the proposed capital

programme for Environmental Services over the coming three years. Members resolved to note the report and commend the work done in upgrading the fleet of vehicles.

26 March 2007

Performance Eye

BV215a – Average number of days to repair a street lighting fault

Members received a report on Performance Eye indicator BV 215a and were advised of the steps that the Council was taking to deal with the repair of street lighting faults.

BV 216b – Percentage of sites where remediation of the land is necessary

The Commission was informed of the steps that are been taken to identify and deal with contaminated land within the City.

Forward Plan item - Derby City Council's Enforcement of Dog Fouling and Dog Control Legislation

Members were informed of the actions that the Council was taking to implement the new legislation relating to the enforcement of the dog fouling and dog control legislation

Forward Plan item - Street Lighting PFI

The Commission was provided with an update on progress with the street lighting PFI.

Work Plan

Commission members agreed the report and recommendations arising from the Commission's review of Public Art. It was confirmed that the Chair would take the report and recommendations to the next appropriate Cabinet Member meeting.

3.5 – Children and Young People Commission (CYP)



Councillor Yvonne Williams
Chair of the CYP Commission



Councillor Anne MacDonald
Vice Chair of the CYP Commission

Policy Development

The new Children and Young People Commission was created in response to two wider influences. These were the Children Act 2004 which required each unitary and upper tier council to appoint both a lead member and a director of children and young people services, and the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Council which took the decision that the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions should mirror the Council Cabinet portfolios.

At the first meetings of the Commission it was necessary to agree on several organisational issues in order to establish 'the way things would be done'.

At their first meeting, members considered items from the former Education Commission and the former Social Care and Health Commission to determine which should be included in the new Commission's work programme.

Members decided to:

- Conduct a review of Services to Looked After Children as their first topic review
- Request regular updates on school place planning at strategic points,
- Retain School Transport as a six monthly agenda item
- Adopt the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Commission that Performance Eye and 'retrospective scrutiny' should be standing items on the Commission's agenda.

It was also decided to request Council Cabinet to consider reallocating the responsibility for the Youth Service from the Adult Services portfolio holder – to whom it had been given at the Annual Meeting - to the Children and Young People portfolio. Because of the mirroring principle this arrangement meant that the Youth Service fell within the Adult Services and Health Commission (ASH). This had the practical consequence that the five statutory added members for education purposes would have to be invited to attend ASH if the Youth Service was to be discussed. Just as importantly this lack of co-terminosity between departmental structures and the political management

arrangements was seen as detracting from the seamless services the 2004 Act was designed to promote. The Council Cabinet considered but did not accept the Commission's representations.

The Council's constitution provides for five added members to serve on the Commission dealing with education matters, being two parent governor representatives, one each from the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church and an 'other faiths' representative nominated by the Derby Race Equality Council. A report explained that the faith representatives could only vote on Education matters and asked the Commission how they wished to arrange the agenda. It was decided to continue to format the agenda as at present, with the Constitutional Services Officer advising the Chair of the Commission of the items the faith representatives were eligible to vote on.

A related issue was that a request had been received from the Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory Committee (MECAC) asking for an increase, from one, of the 'other faiths' representation. The Commission considered the request but resolved to not agree to agree it. This was because the historic reason for having Anglican and Roman Catholic representation was because both operate schools. A letter was explaining the reasons was sent to MECAC.

It was recognised that in order to be comprehensive, the Looked After Children topic review was clearly going to require members to take evidence from a wide range of stakeholders. It was estimated that using periodic half day meetings it could take around six months to complete the evidence gathering, and this was considered to be too long. It was therefore decided to conduct the review in the single week, 24 to 28 July. The review began on the Monday morning and concluded on the Friday afternoon. The Commission is very grateful to Keith Woodthorpe and Hazel Lymbery from the Children and Young People Department for co-ordinating the attendance of various staff as this was key to enabling the review to be accomplished in such a tight timescale.



The resultant report contained 34 recommendations and 18 conclusions. These were grouped under the headings:

- Legal,
- Policy and Social Work Practice,
- Placement of Looked After Children, ‘
- Health,
- Education
- Leaving and After Care.

In their subsequent response the department fully accepted 25 of the recommendations and agreed to the further investigation on six more and the preparation of detailed plans and a timetable for implementation.

As a part of its performance monitoring the Commission undertook focussed scrutiny of annual academic examinations and key stage results. This also enabled new members to become more conversant with the Performance Eye system.

It was clear by the early autumn of 2006 that the setting of a revenue budget for 2007/08 would be difficult. Rather than wait until the January 2007 round of meetings, the Commission first looked at the issue at its November 2006 meeting, which was attended by the Corporate Director of Resources and Housing as well as the Corporate Director for Children and Young People. The Commission were informed that the Department was required to find 10% savings within its controllable budget of £33m over three years (£1.1 in each of the three years). The meeting with the Directors Apart informed the Commission of the approach being taken by the Department and allowed members to reiterate the point that some of the Looked After Children topic review recommendations were invest-to-save opportunities. The January 2007 meeting involved detailed consideration of the specific proposals contained in the draft revenue budget.

Items Scrutinised by the Children and Young People Commission

6 June 2006

Outstanding Overview and Scrutiny Items – Following the changes to the structure of Overview and Scrutiny at the Annual Meeting of Council, the new Commission considered outstanding items from relevant former Commission portfolios. The Commission decided:

- to continue with the Review of Children Looked After Services and confirm the Terms of Reference previously agreed on 3 October 2005, these being centred on foster care, the recruitment of social care workers, adoption and foster carers.
- to request regular updates on School Place Planning at strategic points
- to keep School Transport as a six monthly agenda item
- to request that Council Cabinet consider reallocating the Youth Service from the Adult Services Council Cabinet portfolio to the Children and Young People Council Cabinet portfolio

Standing Agenda Items - The Members resolved to have Performance Eye and Retrospective Scrutiny as standing items on the Commission agenda.

Work Planning and Resources – Members considered the options available to the Commission regarding their work planning for the rest of the Municipal Year. The Commission decided to conduct one topic review during 2006/07 on services to Looked After Children with the previously agreed terms of reference.

Overview and Scrutiny Training - The Commission considered a report explaining that the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination team would arrange any training that Members required. The Overview and Scrutiny training packages could be delivered on a one-to-one or a small group basis as required. The Chair asked that members be provided with the training modules in electronic form and requested each Member to complete two of the modules before the next meeting.

Co-opting Individuals to the Commission - Members considered a report detailing the options the Commission had in terms of co-opting individuals to its membership, without voting rights. The Chair explained how she saw the role of observers. Following a suggestion from a member, the Commission decided to invite the City's two Youth Parliament Members to attend the next meeting to inform the Commission about their role.

Constitution and Operation of Schools Forum - The Commission considered a report on the Constitution and Operation of a Schools Forum which would be considered by Council Cabinet on 1 August 2006. The Council was required to establish a Schools Forum, a consultative body to consider a range of matters relating to the Schools Budget. Council Cabinet subsequently agreed a Schools Forum of 32 members, as detailed in the report.

Revised Childcare Charging Policy - The Commission considered the Revised Childcare Charging Policy, to be considered by Council Cabinet on 1 August 2006. The report detailed that childcare was being developed in maintained schools in Derby as part of the Children's Centre and Extended Schools initiatives. The childcare places would initially be supported by General Sure Start Grant, but would eventually have to become sustainable through charging. There had been no rise in childcare costs since March 2004 and the proposed revised charges would reflect current costs for childcare across the city in both the private and voluntary sectors.

One member commented that the increase was fairly nominal, another said that as the prices had not been increased for a couple of years, the increase was fair

Performance Eye - Members considered a report detailing *all* the performance indicators relevant to the Commission and decided to continue that practice. It was agreed that at the pre-meeting members would select the indicators they wished to consider in more detail at the next meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Training - The Commission were reminded of the alternative ways in which the Overview and Scrutiny Training could be provided. It was agreed to continue with the distance learning Overview and Scrutiny training.

Voting Rights of the Statutory Added Members - The Commission considered a report on the Voting Rights of the Statutory Added Members. The report explained that the statutory added members could only vote on Education matters and the members were asked to consider how they wished to arrange the agenda. It was decided to keep the same agenda format and to ask the Constitutional Services Officer to advise the Chair of items that Statutory Co-optees were eligible to vote on.

Other Faiths Voting Representation - The Commission considered a minute extract from the Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory Committee and a related report of the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services. The Commission did not agree to an increase in other faiths representation on the Commission and asked the Co-ordination Officer to draft a response letter setting out the reasons.

Proposal to co-opt an individual to the Commission - The Commission considered a proposal from one of the members to co-opt Mr Joe Russo to the Commission. The Commission decided to not co-opt Mr Russo at that time, but to call on his expertise and guidance if required once the Commission had determined its work programme for the remainder of the municipal year and future topic reviews had been identified.

Home to School Transport - The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People on the home to school transport review 2005-6. The report detailed the changes that had taken place and the savings resulting from the changes in the appeals procedure and the introduction of the new policy.

Simon Longley – Assistant Director, Strategic Support, reported that there had been a reduction in the number of appeals in 2005/6 compared with 2004/5 as the revised policy and guidance was much clearer and parents have to identify their specific grounds for appeal against criteria in the guidance.

The Chair asked for the Commission's thanks to be passed on to officers for the work they had put in to make the new system work. The Commission were particularly pleased that there had been no complaints.

Children's Social Services Annual Complaints Report to the Commission for Social Care Inspection - The Commission considered a report on the Annual Children and Young People's Social Care Services Complaints 2005/6.

Performance Eye – Members considered the first quarter 2006-7 performance eye data relating to the Commission's scorecard on Performance Eye. As requested by the Chair and Vice Chair, the report included a more detailed commentary on four areas of concern,. Simon Longley provided further information on each of the four indicators and offered to provide further information relating to Surestart, CYP 2.6, to before the next meeting.

Forward Plan - The Commission asked for a report on Building Schools for the Future to be brought to a future meeting. The Commission was concerned that schools would be built without facilities for the Youth Services and Community Groups. The Chair undertook to raise the issue at the forthcoming liaison meeting with the Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission:
Proposed Re-Allocation of Youth Service - The Commission noted Minute Extracts from Council Cabinet on 4 July 2006 and 1 August 2006 detailing the Cabinet's decision, to not reallocate the Youth Service to the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

Revenue Budget 2007/08 - The Commission received an oral report from Paul Dransfield - Corporate Director of Resources and Housing on the current position on the revenue budget process for 2007/08. The Children and Young People's Directorate was required to find 10% savings within its controllable budget of £33m over three years (£1.1m in each of the next three years). The Commission asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to take account of the recommendations from the Looked After Children topic review when preparing the 2007/08 revenue budget.

Consultation on the future location of the Ronnie MacKeith Assessment Nursery - The Commission considered proposals concerning the future location of the Ronnie MacKeith Assessment Nursery. The Commission supported the proposals.

Post-16 Provision at Lees Brook Community Sports College - The Commission considered a report agreed by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 31 October 2006 regarding the proposal for post-16 vocational provision at Lees Brook Community Sports College.

A member of the Commission referred to problems experienced elsewhere regarding VAT liability and asked if this scheme would have a similar implication on adult education at the school. The Director for Children and Young People confirmed that he would look into the issue and respond to the Commission members.

Area Panel 1 Pilot of Integrating Children's Services

The Commission received a presentation on the progress of the Area Panel 1 pilot of Integrating Children's Services that would be launched on 27 November 2006.

Local Safeguarding Children Board: Serious Case Review Report -

The Commission considered a report which outlined the Executive Summary of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review. Rachel Dickinson – Assistant Director, Locality Services presented the report to the Commission, who noted the content of the Executive Summary.

Looked After Children Topic Review - The Commission approved the final draft report of the Looked After Children Topic Review. The Chair advised members that she had written to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People asking that the report be considered by the Council Cabinet so that the recommendations could influence the 2007/08 budget process. Members were advised that officers had been asked to submit any comments on factual accuracy in the report and that these would be incorporated in the final report with the agreement of the Chair. .

Work Plan for the Remainder of 2006/7 – As work on the Looked After Children Topic Review was coming to an end, Commission members were

asked to consider their work programme up to April 2007. The coordination officer advised that this could include a short topic review or several 'focussed scrutiny' meetings. Suggestions included:

- Special Educational Needs Provision
- A comparison of the Children Looked After Review with the Green Paper
- Provision of children's play areas and youth provision in new build schools
- Awareness raising on the role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

The Coordination Officer was asked to liaise with members of the Commission and officers to establish the resource implications for each suggestion and report back to the next meeting of the Commission.

Members were invited to forward any further suggestions to the Coordination Officer.

30 November 2006

Performance Eye – A special meeting considered the annual performance indicators relevant to the Commission.

12 December 2006

Response of the Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to the Looked After Children Topic Review – The Commission welcomed the response from the Cabinet Member and looked forward to receiving a more detailed response at the January 2007 meeting of the Commission.

Building Schools for the Future - The Commission considered the response of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on Building Schools for the Future. Members resolved to note the comments of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and to request further updates when they are available.

Local Safeguarding Children Board - The Commission received a presentation from Rachel Dickinson – Assistant Director, Locality Services on the activities and functions of the new Local Safeguarding Children Board, required by the Children Act 2004.

Performance Eye – Second Quarter 2006/7 - The Commission considered a report detailing the Performance Eye commentaries for 2006/7 Quarter 2. Also included were explanations of points raised at the special meeting held on 30 November 2006. Members were asked to consider performance areas to focus on at the January 2007 meeting.

Members discussed the following:

- CF23 – Looked After Children Adopted
- CYP 2.1 - Number of weeks waiting time for access to specialist CAMHS services

Work Plan for the remainder of 2006/7 - Members agreed to look at the provision of Children's play areas and youth provision in new build schools, as a short topic review subject to the inclusion of Derby in the fifth phase of the building schools for the future programme.

Appointment to the Adoption Panel - The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services requesting the Commission to appoint one of its members to a second Adoption Panel. Councillor Ingall was appointed.

Forward Plan - The Commission studied the latest Plan and requested a report on item 41/06 – Approval of Play Strategy - at the next meeting of the Commission and asked Council Cabinet to make its decision on 19 December subject to any comments of the Commission.

23 January 2007

Lets Talk Budget

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services, detailing the Council Cabinet's proposals for the draft revenue budget 2007/08-2009/10 within the portfolio of the Children and Young People Commission. The Commission questioned the Corporate Director for Children and Young People on the proposals. The Commission resolved:

1. To inform Council Cabinet that the Commission was pleased to learn that since the preparation of the consultation document it was now proposed to have a marginally above inflation increase in the rates of allowances payable to foster carers and the Commission would continue to monitor the Council's further progress toward achieving the government's recommended allowance level.
2. To ask the Council Cabinet to adopt a policy that external funding applications must not state that mainstreaming either would or might be available upon time expiry but should set out a proper exit strategy and that this be communicated to Council staff and partner organisations.
3. To advise Council Cabinet that the Commission recognised the achievements of the Derby Youth Service and wished to see it flourish when resource availability allowed.
4. To advise Council Cabinet that the Commission wished to be consulted during the working up of proposals on service commissioning for the successor to Connexions Derbyshire.

Children and Young People's Department Capital Programme 2007/08-2009/10

The Commission received a report from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People, outlining the Council's proposed Capital Programme for

2007/08-2009/10. The Commission resolved to endorse the proposed Children and Young People's Department Capital Programme for 2007/08-2009/10.

Children Looked After Topic Review – Action Plan

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People presenting the proposed response and action plan in respect of the recommendations made by the Children and Young People Commission following its review of services for looked after children. The Commission had made 34 recommendations. 25 of these recommendations were accepted and plans were in place to achieve these over the next 12 months, although many would be achieved before this. Six of the recommendations required further work to examine their viability for Derby and their potential impact. These were specifically identified within the plan and a time scale was given for the necessary work. One recommendation was partially accepted but was not achievable in the financial year 2007/08 and two recommendations were not accepted. The Commission resolved:

1. To note and endorse the action plan produced in response to the topic review recommendations.
- 2 To request a report on progress against the action plan in October 2007.

Care Matters – Council Response to the Green Paper

The Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People outlining the Council's formal response to the Government Green Paper "Care Matters – Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care". Members resolved to note and endorse the Council's formal response to the Government Green Paper "Care Matters – Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care".

Derby Play Strategy

The Commission considered a report that had been approved by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 16 January 2007, which detailed the Play Strategy that had been developed following extensive consultation with partners and this would form the basis by which the Council would develop the city's application to the big lottery on 12 March 2007. The Commission were asked to endorse the strategy. The Chair raised concern regarding the connection between being able to attract external funding and where in the city this could be spent. The concern was that the five priority areas, plus New Deal, already attracted funding from other sources and how funding could be equalised to ensure other areas of the city were not left out. The Head of Sport and Leisure, advised the Commission that there was no prescription in the Play Strategy around targeted areas and maybe the Council could look at pockets of deprivation regarding play amenities over the long term. The Chair said it would be interesting to look at the non-priority neighbourhood renewal funded areas still with pockets of deprivation to see if some money could be spent to implement the strategy in these areas. Members agreed with the Chair's sentiments. One member commented that he liked the term 'play deprivation' that had been used because it was specific to the issue. The Commission resolved to endorse the Play Strategy.

which asked the Commission for comments prior to a decision on Connexions Derbyshire Transitional Arrangements. It was noted that the proposed transitional arrangements would mean little change to the current service, which was achieving success. The Commission complimented the Connexions Service on their work.

Performance Eye 3rd Quarter data – the Commission considered the latest quarterly performance data. Questions were asked regarding several looked after children indicators. Members also agreed the need to monitor ‘CYP 2.1 - the number of weeks waiting time for access to specialist CAMHS services’ because this had risen to 26 weeks.

Annual Performance Assessment (APA) and Joint Area Review (JAR) - A report was considered that explained the recent changes to Annual Performance Assessment (APA) and Joint Area Review (JAR) inspection processes. For Derby, these would apply to the APA inspection in September and JAR in October 2007. The JAR would involve a review of 100 case files chosen by the Council. Inspectors were keen to have an audit trail that demonstrated good multi-agency approaches were being followed.

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – As this would have been the sole report item for the Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission on 19 March, it was decided instead to add it to this meeting’s agenda. It proved a useful exercise as it resulted in questions being posed by a wider group of elected and added members.

Children Social Care Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Funding for 2007/08

The Commission considered a report that had been approved by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 16 January 2007 setting out the Children and Young People Social Care Grant Funding including joint funding with partner agencies, to be provided to voluntary and community organisations in 2007/08. The Commission resolved to endorse:

- a) the grant proposals for 2007/08
- b) the intention at paragraph 4.14 of the report that a full review will be conducted to assess whether the outputs and outcomes of the currently funded activity meet the priorities identified within the Children and People Plan, acknowledging that changes may be painful but may need to happen.

13 March 2007

Consultation document - Designated Special School and Pupil Referral Unit Facilities – The Commission considered the proposals to establish a special school and make changes to the current Pupil Referral Unit facilities, (PRU). It involved the establishment of a special school to meet the needs of key stage 3 and 4 young people with particular behavioural, social and emotional needs. It also included parallel arrangements to create a key stage 3 and 4 pupil referral facility specifically for Looked After Children with similar complex needs. The Commission welcomed the proposals.

Building Schools for the Future. The Commission considered a report on Building Schools for the Future (BSF) which aimed to replace or renovate all the Council's secondary school buildings during the next 15 or so years. It had been confirmed that Derby would be included in the BSF programme from September 2007. The planning and preparation for this huge programme needed to begin prior to September. Cabinet had approved funding for the establishment of project organisation structures, including a Project Board providing strategic direction, and a BSF Delivery Team *and* for preparing an Outline Business Case for a children's centre at Lakeside Primary School. The Commission asked for updates at appropriate stages.

Overview of Special Education Needs - provision and services – As a prelude to possible topic review in the late autumn. The Commission received a report and a presentation on the statutory duties, responsibilities and provision of services for children and young people with a range of special educational needs (SEN). So as not to restrict future Commission members it was decided that the choice of any topic review be deferred until after the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Connexions Derbyshire Transitional Arrangements - The Commission received a report from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

3.6 – Corporate Parenting Sub Commission



Councillor Anne MacDonald
Chair of Corporate Parenting Sub Commission



Councillor Yvonne Williams
Vice Chair of Corporate Parenting Sub Commission

Policy Development

This is Derby's only standing Scrutiny sub-commission which shows the importance the City's councillors place on the well being of the children looked after by the Council. The role of the Commission is mainly one of monitoring and the full Commission owns the policy development aspects – as evidenced by the topic review described elsewhere in this report.

At each meeting the sub-commission considers detailed statistical information about the placement, welfare, health and education of the almost 400 children who are looked after by the City Council.

There is also a rolling programme of reports so that over the course of the year different aspects get thoroughly aired. These have included:

- Inspection and Management Visits to Children's Homes
- The Fostering Service
- The role and activity of Independent Reviewing Officers
- The Adoption Agency
- The Leaving Care Service

The Chair and Vice Chair are strong advocates that all councillors fulfil their corporate parenting role, including visiting the Council's children's homes.

Items Scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission

4 July 2006

Inspection and Management Visits to Children's Homes - The Sub Commission considered a report that gave details of the outcomes of the latest inspections and management visits to Children's Homes throughout Derby.

Members were informed that the homes were assessed and scored against 35 standards; details were presented in the report.

It was noted that due to service improvements all homes had demonstrated a steady improvement on earlier inspections,. These improvements included new systems for administration and recording of medicines, and changes to the way complaints and allegations of abuse were dealt with.

It was also noted that maintaining the standard of the buildings was challenging as young people often damaged the property during difficult times. This was an area within the standards where Derby didn't score highly, although this year had improved in comparison to previous years.

Statistical Information on Children Looked After - The Sub Commission noted a report that provided statistical information on children looked after. The evidence presented in the report set out details of progress made towards the Council's objective of healthy, safe and independent communities.

Fostering Service Report - The Sub Commission considered a report that detailed the activity of the Derby City Fostering Service. The Fostering Panel met 24 times between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2006. During this period the service responded to 224 requests for new foster placements, which was an increase of 18 from last year.

It was reported that there had been little change since the previous year. The reasons for the resignation of carers were mainly due to work commitments or personal reasons, although five carers had retired during the year.

It was noted that a main concern was that payment for carers did not match the amount that independent agencies offer. This takes prospective carers away from the Council's fostering service. It was reported that the Council's payments had improved on previous years but there was still a significant financial gap. The Service was currently trying to address this issue.

A member asked that in future the report should include the number of carers that continue to support young people after they reach the age of 18 years.

The sub commission resolved to:

1. request that the Fostering Service continue to provide an annual report for the period 1 April to 31 March and reviews the Statement of Purpose as required by the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.
2. request that a monthly highlights report be produced to track key indicators of performance.
3. note the work and developments of the Fostering Service as outlined in the report.

5 September 2006

Statistical Information on Children Looked After - The Sub Commission noted statistical information on Children Looked After. A member of the Commission raised her concerns about the steady rise in the figures relating to Children Looked After and about the long term impact of the removal of Family Support Worker posts as part of the 2006/07 budget. The Sub Commission asked the Cabinet to protect the posts of Family Support workers who work with Children In Need when considering future budgets.

Role and Activity of Independent Reviewing Officers - The Sub Commission received a report relating to the Role and Activity of Independent Reviewing Officers.

Adoption Agency Policies - The Sub-Commission received a report regarding Adoption Agency policies. A member of the Commission pointed out that there were a number of inconsistencies with the timescales given in the report. The Sub Commission noted that case law had now clarified previously unclear regulations and laws regarding Human Rights and the rights of the grandparents of the biological family.

Additional Information Sought Relating to the Looked After Children Review - The Sub –Commission were given the opportunity to discuss the Looked After Children topic review with the Assistant Director Children and Families before they began to formulate their recommendations. The Sub Commission resolved to email any outstanding questions or requests for information to the Coordination Officer by 11 September and to meet on 18 September at 1pm to formulate its recommendations.

12 December 2006

Consultation on Care Matters - The Sub Commission received a presentation on the consultation on care matters and transforming the lives of children and young people in care. It was reported that the Green Paper was very much welcomed by the Children and Young People Services Department.

The Sub Commission were advised that specific key issues included increasing the number and quality of foster carers, a choice of high quality

placements and preventative action for children on the edge of care.

Members were advised that any comments on the consultation should be submitted to the Assistant Director – Specialist Services - by 10 January 2007.

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – The Sub Commission noted a report which provided statistical information on Children Looked After. On 1 December 2006 the number of Children Looked After was 390, which showed no increase from August 2006.

A member asked if the possibility of placing children at boarding schools had been investigated. They were informed that the Council had been consulted by the Department for Education and Skills earlier in the year and that there was a great range of possibilities. A drawback of homing children at boarding school was that it was only for 38 weeks of the year.

The Sub Commission was informed that the children's homes were all currently full.

A member asked who would be financially responsible if a child was required to be placed in secure accommodation and was told that the accommodation would be paid for by the youth offending service.

19 March 2007

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – As this was the sole item for the agenda, it was decided that instead of proceeding with the meeting this important report would instead be added to agenda of the full Commission on 13 March. That proved a useful exercise as it resulted in questions being posed by a wider group of elected and added members.

4.0 – Public Involvement in Scrutiny

During the past year public involvement in the scrutiny process has again been confined to issues where there has been a lot of public interest. A prime example of this was the proposed closure of the Lancaster Sports Centre and the resulting objections, petition and call-in.

There has been other public involvement in scrutiny during the past year but this has primarily been the result of work by the Co-ordination Officers whose task it has been to identify those members of the public who could potentially contribute to the Commissions' reviews and to encourage them to take part.

As with previous years, this approach has generally proved productive and members of the public have made some very worthwhile contributions to a number of the Commissions' reviews. It is also of note that the members of the public who took part in the Commissions' reviews all seemed to have found the experience interesting, worthwhile and even in some cases enjoyable!

The involvement of the public in scrutiny has in the past been hampered by the difficulty of making the public aware of the work of the Commissions. Various approaches, including the weekly bulletin, the scrutiny notice boards and press releases have previously been tried with varied although usually limited success. This problem may be reduced now publication has started of 'Your Derby' the Council's new quarterly magazine. This publication will go to all households in the City and as the Scrutiny Commissions are contributing to its production costs, they will be possible to use it to inform the public of forthcoming scrutiny activities and of their outcomes.

Local Democracy Week 2006

It was reported in the previous Annual Report that in October 2005, as part of that year's Local Democracy Week activities, the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination team organised and ran an event entitled 'Your City – Your Voice' at which Derby young people were given the opportunity to quiz Councillors on issues of concern to them.

The event was well received, both by the young people who took part in it and perhaps more surprisingly by the Councillors who had to answer their questions, and this year the Co-ordination team was asked to repeat it.



'Your City – Your Voice 2' was held on 14 November 2006. The event followed the same format as its predecessor but this year with the benefit of experience the organisation was streamlined and the Co-ordination team was able to make a number of minor but worthwhile improvements to the game itself.

Your City – Your Voice 2 was first publicised in June 2006 and from the responses received it was immediately

apparent that young people in Derby remembered the previous year's event and were keen to have another go at their Councillors. Entries were eventually received from ten teams of young people and this year's panel of Councillors included no less than five Council Cabinet members.

The event again proved interesting and entertaining for the teams and highly challenging for the panel, so much so that Councillor Richard Smalley, the panel member who won was moved to declare that it was more exhausting than an election! Councillor Smalley was presented with his Winner's Certificate by Theresa Michel, this year's Osnabruck envoy



The event, which started at 5.30 and lasted about two hours, was again recorded and webcast using the Council Chamber's sound and camera system. Very positive feed back was received from the teams and the panel members as well as from the audience and it was again suggested that this was something the Council should do more often.



On a more negative note it was disappointing that, despite the issue of press releases by the Council, there was no coverage of the proceedings by either Radio Derby or the Derby Evening Telegraph and this sadly is not untypical of the interest shown by the media in scrutiny in Derby.

5.0 – Decisions Called-In by the Commissions

5.1 Introduction

Under Rule OS33 of the Council's Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions can 'call-in' executive Key Decisions that they consider have not been taken in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in Article 13 of the 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

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

Call-in should only be used in exceptional circumstances and is triggered when any three members of the Council are of the opinion that one or more of the principles of decision making have been breached. A decision must be called-in during the five days prior to its implementation 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.

5.2 Lancaster Sports Centre

During the municipal administrative year 2006/07 one executive Key Decision was called-in and considered.

In August 2006 the Council Cabinet took the decision to permanently close Lancaster Sports Centre on the grounds of having insufficient funds to address the health and safety risks identified by the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. This decision was called-in by three members of the Council who suggested that all of the principles of decision making had been breached and that other relevant issues had not been taken into consideration.

The issue was considered on 23 October 2006 at a special meeting of the Environment Commission under whose area of responsibility the item falls. The Commission received evidence from a range of individuals including the three call-in sponsors, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Direct Services, the Corporate Director for Environmental Services, the sports centre's manager and representatives from its user groups.

After considering the evidence presented to them the Environment Commission resolved that none of the principles of decision making had been breached and therefore the item was not referred back to Council Cabinet.

6.0 – Overview and Scrutiny Training

6.1 Introduction

Over the last few years there has been a steady decline in the number of members participating in Overview and Scrutiny training.

As mentioned in the Chair's Foreword it is a matter of some concern that this year there was again very little interest, even by new members, in the training in Overview and Scrutiny that is offered by the Co-ordination team and in the Performance Eye performance monitoring system. It is worrying that this lack of interest may in the future be reflected in the quality of scrutiny that members are able to deliver.

6.2 Scrutiny Health Check

Derby Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officers, in association with the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Officer Scrutiny Network, were again involved in organising a successful overview and scrutiny conference. The conference entitled 'Scrutiny Health Check' was held in September 2006 in the picturesque setting of Ringwood Hall Hotel near Chesterfield, and attracted 75 delegates, who were made up of both councillors and officers.

The event featured a varied programme ranging from current local and national developments in health scrutiny to a "thinking outside the box" workshop, which involved innovative and fun ways of problem solving. Delegates also had the opportunity to share information about their health scrutiny arrangements, experiences and achievements.

The Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire Officer Network was established in 2003 and is well supported by Scrutiny Officers from 19 authorities throughout two counties. It meets bi-monthly to exchange information and support scrutiny practitioners.



Chair of the Adult Services and Health Commission, Councillor Marshall "thinking outside the box"

7.0 – Staff Energy Awareness Conference

At its meeting on 12 September 2006 the Scrutiny Management Commission considered the draft final report on the review of the Council's Use of Energy that had been carried out by the former Planning and Environment Commission.

The report highlighted the implications for the Council of the increasing cost and likely future scarcity of energy and made a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the findings of the Commission. One of those recommendations was that the Council should engage in a high profile programme to engage all Council employees in the Carbon Management Programme and to emphasise to them the need to conserve energy and minimise energy use.

To address this recommendation it was suggested that the Scrutiny Management and Environment Commissions might jointly consider arranging a half day conference to advise members and staff of the issues facing the Council and to seek practicable ideas for conserving energy and minimising its consumption. This suggestion was wholeheartedly supported by the two Commissions. Arrangements were therefore made to hold a conference with the twin aims of finding ways to reduce the Council's energy use and associated costs, and identifying how the Council might reduce its carbon emissions and hence its contribution to climate change. It was agreed that funding for the conference would be provided by the Commissions from their research budgets.



The Staff Energy Awareness (SEA) conference that was delivered on 8 March 2007 involved not just the two Overview and Scrutiny

Commissions and their Co-ordination team, but also the Council's Energy Manager and the Council's Environmental Sustainability team.

Councillor Chris Williamson, the Leader of Derby City Council agreed to give a keynote address to the Conference and there were also presentations from, Richard Davies of Marches Energy, Don Lack of Atkins and Richard Rugg of the Carbon Trust.

Each of the Council's five Departments were asked to nominate delegates to the conference and it was suggested to Chief Officers that as well as sending those members of staff who would normally be very keen to attend, they also nominated as delegates some staff members who would 'not normally go anywhere near an event of this sort'.

The Conference was only a half day event so the timetabling it was somewhat challenging. Nevertheless it proved possible to accommodate all four speakers and a workshop and feedback session. During the latter, the

delegates were asked to work in groups and to discuss and agree on short, medium and long term suggestions for reducing the Council's use of energy and for reducing its Carbon emissions. These suggestions were presented to the conference and are ultimately intended to form an action list for the Council.

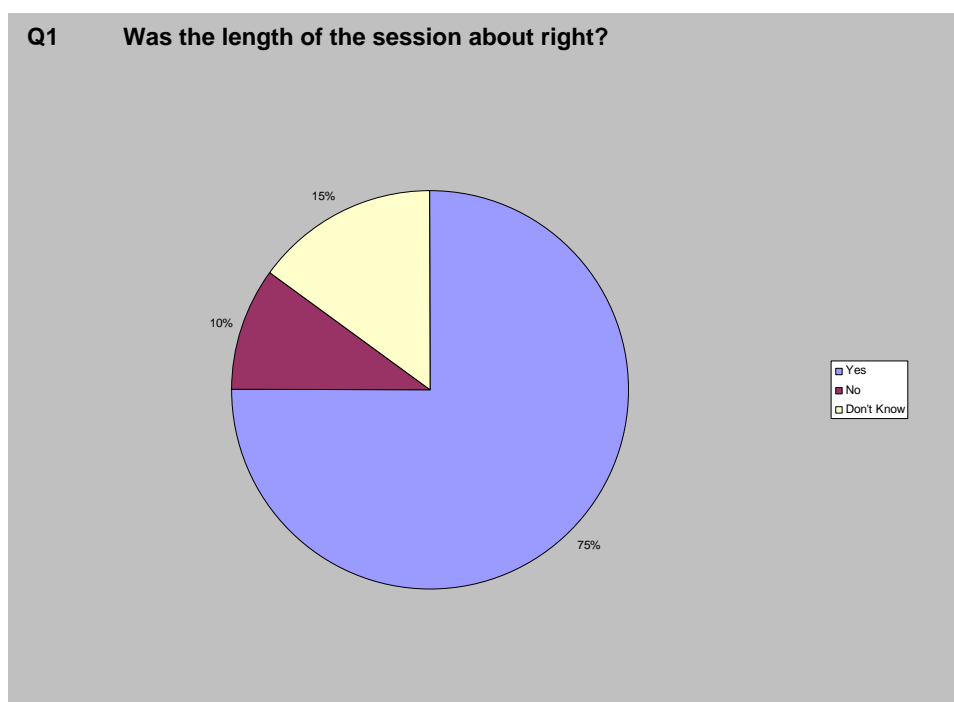
The event proved to be highly successful. All the delegate places were taken and presentations from the four speakers were informative and very well received. The workshop session was very productive and a large number of useful suggestions were received from the delegates. Feedback from the also showed that the employees who attended thought it very important that elected members were seen to be taking a key role and to be talking to staff on issues that affected the Council and the services for which it was responsible.

It was also very gratifying to find that 24 of the 130 or so employees who attended the Conference as delegates asked for information about becoming energy champions in their departments.



The suggestions made by the delegates were collated and presented to the Scrutiny Management Commission meeting on 10 April 2007. At that meeting members resolved to ask the relevant Council Cabinet members to discuss the suggestions with their Chief Officers and seek ways of implementing all those that were considered practicable. SMC also resolved to ask for regular updates on the progress being made by the service departments in implementing the suggestions.

Evaluation Form Responses



8.0 – Outside Bodies

8.1 Introduction

During 2006/07 the Overview and Scrutiny team was asked to arrange and host three visits by members and officers from other authorities, two of which were international delegations. Details of the visits are given below.

8.2 Visit by delegation from Sweden

A group of eight senior managers from local authorities across Sweden visited Derby City Council in April 2006 as part of their study tour of successful local councils in the UK. Derby was chosen due to its growing reputation for delivering excellent services in the Midlands region and for retaining its four star excellent rating under the new, stricter CPA assessment regime.

Local authorities or 'Municipalities' as they are called in Sweden, effectively operate as small unitary authorities but also have additional responsibilities for social welfare and health. The smaller authorities have a population of approximately 9000 inhabitants and the larger around 88000. The participants on the tour were all Directors of Education, Social Care or the Environment. The group wished to learn the reasons behind Derby's success and to explore leadership issues for Education, Social Care and the Environment to help them improve their services. The tour was organised as part of a management-training programme run by Price Waterhouse Coopers in Sweden.

The visit was hosted at the Assembly Rooms by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Team with presentations on the key factors for Derby's success delivered by Michael Foote – Corporate Director, Corporate and Adult Social Services and Deputy Chief Executive; Gordon Stirling - Business



Improvement and Change Manager; Mick Connell - Senior Assistant Director Adult Services; John Young – Head of Secondary Support; Colin Stewart - Contract Development Officer and Mahroof Hussain – Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer.

This process seemed to have struck a cord with the group as they wrote back on their return to Sweden saying:

“we were very pleased with our visit to Derby, the participants were impressed by your organization and your professionalism”

The group also visited INLOGOV at the Birmingham University and Islington LBC as part of their tour.

8.3 Visit by delegation from Faisalabad, Pakistan

On 30 August 2006 delegates from Pakistan's third largest city spent a day on a fact-finding visit studying Derby's approach to key areas of local government.

The delegation from Faisalabad, which has a population of around 2.6 million, was here to look at local authority good practice and how it might be applied in Pakistan. The Mayor of Derby, Councillor John Ahern, and Councillor Fareed Hussain welcomed the Faisalabad party, who were led by retired Major Azam Suleman Khan, the District Co-ordination Officer of Faisalabad.

The event was co-ordinated by the Overview and Scrutiny Team and involved presentations and question and answer sessions by Michael Foote, Steve Dunning, Don McLure, Rod Wood and Mark Edwards on aspects of corporate governance, financial planning, human resource planning and performance management.

The delegation was impressed with the presentation and the approach taken by Derby in improving services and engaging the community. Major Khan commented that, although there are big differences between the two cities, several of Derby's initiatives and practices could be used in Faisalabad.



Delegates from Faisalabad and officers from the Council look on as the Mayor of Derby, Councillor John Ahern welcomes retired Major Azam Suleman Khan, the District Co-ordination Officer of Faisalabad.

8.4 Visit by a Delegation from Herefordshire County Council

On 30 November 2006 members from Herefordshire County Council's scrutiny committees visited Derby City Council to find out about how Overview and Scrutiny works here.

Prior to the visit the delegates had indicated that they were particularly interested in the following areas:

- Scrutiny support arrangements
- Proactive scrutiny
- Joint working
- Scrutiny of partner organisations
- Member development

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny team gave presentations on each of the first four topics. The presentation on Member Development was delivered by the Civic and Members' Services Manager.

The Community Commission was holding a focussed scrutiny review of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance on the same day and this gave delegates an opportunity to sit in on one of the evidence gathering sessions. As a result of this involvement one of Herefordshire's members who had knowledge of innovative planning policies in an adjacent district council, was invited to make a direct contribution to the review,.



9.0 – Budget Scrutiny 2007/08 to 2009/10

9.1 Introduction

An important part of the annual scrutiny cycle is the consideration during January of the draft Revenue and Capital Budget proposals.

On the Revenue budget the Commissions put forward the recommendations shown below. These were submitted to Council Cabinet as one composite document. The boxed and shaded comments show the response of Council Cabinet.

9.2 Recommendations of the Commissions on the Draft Revenue Budget 2007/08 to 2009/10

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

The Scrutiny Management Commission recommended that Council Cabinet review the proposals to reduce the opening hours of the Tourist Information Unit

Reasons 1

The Commission was concerned that reducing the opening hours of the Tourist Information Unit would impact adversely on the promotion of Derby.

Council Cabinet response: Proposals for closure have been withdrawn.

Recommendation 2

The Scrutiny Management Commission recommended that Council Cabinet make provision in the budget for the development of a Travel Plan for the Council.

Reasons 2

The development of a Travel Plan for the Council would be of benefit in tackling climate change and reducing the Council's carbon emissions.

Council Cabinet response: The travel plan will be developed in 2007/8, once Personnel resources from job evaluation can be freed up. The costs of any projects will be subject to business cases and will have access to the modernisation fund.

ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

The Council Cabinet should reconsider its proposal to introduce charges to the Blue Badge scheme.

Reasons 1

The draft revenue budget for 2007/08 includes a proposal to make a charge on the blue badge scheme. The charge would be set around £2.00 per badge in accordance with national guidelines and is expected to raise a net income of £10,000 for 2007/08. In discussing this proposal, Commission members felt that the administrative costs associated with collecting the charge was likely to be high in proportion to the income it is expected to generate. Members were also of the view that Blue Badges are provided to cars that carry registered blind, older and disabled people who have severe walking difficulties to enable them to park closer to shops and other facilities. Introducing a charge on the blue badges will mainly affect older and disabled people, many of whom are amongst the most economically deprived members of the city.

Council Cabinet response: This proposal has been withdrawn.

Recommendation 2

The Commission supports the continued efforts of the Council Cabinet to secure Government funding for 'Extra Care' provision in the city and to meet the care needs of the growing older people's population.

Reasons 2

The Commission was informed that for the third year running, the Council has been unsuccessful in its bid to secure government funding for extra care provision in the city. Members were informed that it is becoming increasingly more expensive to provide 24/7 care to people with high level needs in their own home than caring for people in a group setting where the equivalent number of carers may look after six or seven service users. The principles of extra care enable people to live independently in their homes whilst allowing carers to provide care in group settings. The Commission offered its support to secure Government funding and establish an extra care village in the city.

Council Cabinet response: Agreed.

Recommendation 3

The Commission reiterates the need for the Council to ensure individuals' wishes are taken into account when determining care provision whilst taking into account financial position of the Council.

Reasons 3

The Commission was mindful that service users generally have a good understanding of their personal care needs and how these could be met. Some people with high level needs are happy to go into residential homes whilst others prefer to live independently and have their care needs met in their own home. Members recommended that Council respect service users' wishes and offer placements in care homes if this meets their needs and is what they want, even though this may not be in line with the national policy of encouraging people to remain independent in their own homes.

Recommendation 4

The Commission asked that it is offered the opportunity to comment details of the adult learning budget during the consultation by the LSC and setting of course fees.

Reasons 4

The Commission was informed by the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Services that the Adult Learning budget is a self contained and consists primarily of funding from the Learning and Skills Council and supplemented by learner fees. No financial details were available as the adult learning year runs from 1 August to 31 July and the LSC had not yet announced their funding allocation for Derby City Council. It was anticipated that the LSC will conduct its consultation on the budget over the next few months and make its allocation for Derby. This will in turn enable the Council Cabinet set course fees for the 2007/08.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

Fostering Allowances - that Council Cabinet note the Commission was:

- a) pleased to learn that, since the preparation of the Consultation Document, it is now proposed to have an above-inflation increase in the rates of allowances payable to foster carers, and;
- b) will continue to monitor the Council's further progress toward achieving the Government's recommended allowance levels.

Reasons 1

The level of fostering fees was not referred to in the budget Document, as no change to current policy was planned other than applying inflation. However, this issue has been a continuing concern to the new and previous scrutiny Commissions. Most recently this was expressed in Recommendation 12 of the new Commission's topic review on Looked After Children which contained the comment:

“The Council must complete the move to Fostering Network-recommended allowances”.

- 2.4 “One recommendation, 12, is partially accepted but is not achievable in the financial year 2007 – 08. This refers to our alignment of fostering allowances with fostering networks recommended levels. Currently our allowance levels are within the Governments indicative level for fostering allowances excepting our allowances for children under two years of age. Our allowance levels for teenagers are now slightly above these indicative rates. It is our intention to review again our allowance structure and use the increase planned for 2007 – 08 to address this. It remains a Council commitment to improve allowances and fees paid to our foster carers as resources permit”

It was therefore particularly pleasing for the Commission to hear from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People that an above-inflation increase is proposed, weighted toward the care of younger children. Although modest it is in the right ‘direction-of-travel’ and signals to the foster carers the Council’s commitment to achieving the Government’s recommended rates.

Recommendation 2

Time Limited External Funding Derby - That Council Cabinet:

- a) adopt the policy that external funding applications:
 - i) must not state that mainstreaming either will or may be available upon time expiry
 - ii) but should set out a proper exit strategy and,
- b) this be communicated to Council staff and Partner organisations.

Reasons 2

There was a concern that there may be occasions when the Council’s, another organisations’, or wider stakeholders’, interests are to access time limited funding and that, in order to unlock those opportunities, applicants may use forms of words that suggest the City Council will or may take over the funding in the longer term. Without express permission from the Corporate Director of Resources and Housing that should not happen, as it compounds the pressures on the revenue budget and/or creates false expectations.

Having a properly thought out exit strategy is essential. In 2003 the topic review *Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment* recommended that: ‘Council Cabinet should require that an agreed exit strategy be in place before the commencement of time-limited area funding’. This logic applies equally to external funding of a city-wide nature.

Recommendation 3

Youth Service - That Council Cabinet note that the Commission recognises the achievements of the Derby Youth Service and wish to see it flourish when resource availability allows.

Reasons 3

Derby's Youth Service has been rated as one of the best six in the country. The Commission recognises that it has not been required to find its full 3.5% savings for this year. However, the Commission wishes to register the importance of the Youth Service in serving the young people of Derby well and preventing or diverting some individuals from an adulthood of anti-social behaviour or criminality. Members therefore consider that funding the Youth Service can be characterised as spending-to-save.

Recommendation 4

Connexions Derbyshire - That Council Cabinet note the Commission's wish to be consulted during the working up of proposals on service commissioning for the successor to Connexions Derbyshire.

Reasons 4

From 2008 funding for Connexions will be routed through the Council but the details have not yet been made known by central government.

ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

That Council Cabinet does not seek to make savings in the areas listed below:

1. Reduction in funding for the Events programme (£4k for Shopper performances)
2. The Arts grants freeze (£21k)
3. The Environmental Strategy Development Staffing reductions (£11k)

Reasons 1

1. **The Events programme** - the Shopper concerts are enjoyed by the public and are an added attraction for visitors to the City
2. **The Arts grant freeze** - freezing the Arts grant will have a detrimental effect on small arts organisations in Derby and may ultimately reduce the scale of the arts scene in the City.
3. **The Environmental Strategy Development Staffing reductions** - reducing the staffing and the supplies and services costs of the Environmental Co-ordination team will reduce its ability to respond at a time when environmental issues are of high and increasing priority to the City.

Recommendation 2

That funding is identified to maintain the Reading Rocket service.

Reasons 2

This service is seen as very important to the development of basic reading skills in a sector of the population that is most in need of assistance. Consequently it is recommended that maintenance of the service is given a high priority.

COMMUNITY COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

External Funding Unit - The commentary says these small but cumulative savings “may have an adverse impact on our ability to attract external funding”. As the multiplier effect of every £ spent on the EFU is well known the Commission **consider** these reductions could be a false economy.

Council Cabinet response: The External Funding Unit carries out accountable body work for the Council as its main function. A relatively small element of the budget is spent on seeking out external funding. The modest savings proposals put forward will not affect this work.

Recommendation 2

Area and Neighbourhood - For 2008/09 and 2009/10 the savings proposed within the Regeneration and Community Department “will have an impact on the extent to which the current neighbourhood management arrangements are serviced”. A corresponding comment is made by the Children and Young People Department “. Area 1 is now operating as a pilot. It will need infrastructure costs for any premises costs and ICT. Although a potential location has been determined, only one-off funding from the LAA has yet been identified and this presenting a real barrier to progress”. It has on previous occasions been explained to the Commission that the choice of a pilot area was because of the availability of funds to assist with the transition to innovative ways of working. Given that logic, the Commission **consider** that the value of the pilot will be seriously undermined if it cannot develop as intended.

Council Cabinet response: The Area and Neighbourhood agenda is a key priority for Derby City Partnership and the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Partnership is dependant on Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and other externally sourced funds to deliver this in priority neighbourhoods. In its white paper the Government has signalled its support for the ongoing support and development of LAAs. It is hoped that following the comprehensive spending review, the funding through NRF is continued and ideally, mainstreamed to make sure these successful programmes can be made permanent.

Recommendation 3

Health and Safety – General - The Commission shared the **concern** of Cllr Roberts that some health and safety measures, like Portable Appliance Testing, are perhaps being conducted with greater frequency than required by legislation.

The possibility of savings is not restricted to the checking of electrical equipment and we should request a review of all the most expensive health and safety checks to determine their need. This is to optimise the return versus cost aspect of the exercise.

Subsequent to the Commission meeting this information was provided to its members:

It is rare to find actual legislation that prescribes the frequency of equipment testing. Instead both the HSE and the professional Institution of Electrical Engineers provide good practice guidance. These distinguish between different types of equipment, its use and its location. It was acknowledged by the responsible Council section that the current practice regarding equipment testing is a compromise involving a twelve month test of all items. This means some items are being tested more frequently than necessary while others are not tested as often as guidance recommends. The reasons for this are:

- All new electrical items should be tested before being put into use because it cannot be assumed something straight out of the box is safe to use *and* in order to establish base test data for the item in new condition for comparison with later test results. Most equipment is IT based and would best be tested by CAPITA as part of the supply price. All other equipment can be reported through to maintenance for testing before use,
- but this is often not complied with, so over time there is a build up of new(ish) items that have never been checked and the existence of which have not been notified.
- Items are tested where they are first found and are logged to the room where found. Office moves mean that equipment is often subsequently found in a different location from where it was last tested. It may have been damaged in the move and/or not re-installed properly so testing is again necessary
- Because the tester has to check what equipment is in each room by visiting each room while the actual time spent testing an individual item is so short, there would be little efficiency gain by checking some while omitting others.

Aspects where testing is short of the guidance are for example: public libraries and reception areas and Council equipment in members' own homes.

It would appear that if there was a new willingness by departments to ensure new items are routinely logged in and tested, and records kept up to date when office moves occur, it would be possible to have different retesting frequencies appropriate to the type of equipment and its location. It would be unlikely to produce overall efficiencies though as the 'gains' would be used to

improve testing where it is not currently adequate.

Council Cabinet response: A review of health and safety priorities is to be conducted as part of introducing a comprehensive health and safety system for the Council. Any opportunity to redirect funds to higher priorities will be explored during the review.

Recommendation 4

Maintenance and Repairs – General - The budget summary shows: Repairs and Maintenance – general reduction in planned maintenance of £40k for 2007/08, £127k for 2008/09 and £79k for 2009/10. These are of course cumulative and would have the result that in 2009/10 and every subsequent year the Council would be spending £246k less per year than now on planned maintenance. Added to which is the reduction by £50k per year starting 2008/09 of the spend on cyclical painting. The Youth Service is also to have a £5k reduction in its repairs and maintenance budgets. The Commission **considers** all reductions in maintenance to be false economies that can only compound the deterioration in the quality of Council assets.

Council Cabinet response: The long term solution to spending on repairs is to develop and implement the Council's Asset Management Plan. This will help us rationalise assets and invest in those needed for the future. The logic then is that the demand for day to day and emergency repairs would diminish. To that effect the level of investment in the capital programme in repairs and the asset management plan is increasing significantly. The revenue budget needs to be considered alongside these proposals.

Recommendation 5

General comment on budget construction. The Council has two imperatives to meet. These are:

- to set a balanced budget, as required by law, and
- to achieve Gershon efficiency savings.

Departments have been required to achieve a 10% expenditure reduction over the next three years, with 3.5% in 2007/08. The Budget consultation papers do not directly refer to Gershon but the logical result of delivering the annual requirement of 2.5% efficiencies should be to leave only 1% further savings, for 2007/08, to be found from a combination of:

- service reductions and/or above inflation price increases and/or
- above target efficiencies

In fact, most of the savings being proposed involve reductions in service levels, like reducing the opening hours of the Tourist Information Centre, or price increases above inflation, as with meals-on-wheels, or introducing new

charges, as for Blue Badges. While these will clearly contribute to achieving a balanced budget, they do not contribute to the achievement of Gershon efficiencies. The Commission **consider** this to be matter of concern.

Council Cabinet response The Gershon Efficiencies are set at 2.5%, but only 50% of these need be cashable budget savings. The remainder are expressed as non-cashable savings to capture productivity increases at same cost. To date the Council has exceeded its Gershon targets. The savings proposals do include cashable efficiencies but also savings which affect service levels. The priority will be on maximising efficiency savings on an ongoing basis but that requires ever increasing examination of the Council's already low cost base.

9.3 Recommendations of the Commissions on the Draft Capital Programme 2007/08

The Scrutiny Management Commission and Community Commission also considered the Capital Programme 2007/08 and made the following recommendations to Council Cabinet, all of which were noted.

Scrutiny Management Commission

Recommendation 1

The Commission made no specific recommendations on the content of the Capital Programme other than to suggest it should be referred to as the '.....Capital Programme 2007/08 and Indicative Capital Programme 2009/10'

Community Commission

Recommendation 1

To note that the Commission welcomed the Council's continuing support for Disabled Facilities Grants.

Reasons 1

The Commission had given full consideration to the housing renewal policy at its December meeting. At the time of its January meeting, the 2007/08 to 2008/09 proposed expenditure figures showed the continuing augmentation from the Council's own resources of the Disabled Facilities Grant budget by £483,000 above the Government-supported level.

Recommendation 2

To note the Commission was concerned that some of the people most in need of the housing renewal grants and other schemes of assistance would not know to apply and *recommended* that more sophisticated, targeted information be produced

Reasons 2

It is also the case that resident demand for many of the schemes is likely to outstrip the budget available. This runs the risk that more socially isolated residents, or those with literacy problems, may not know they could be eligible for the help available.

Recommendation 3

To ask Council Cabinet to agree:

- i) That a key policy aim should be to develop an Extra Care Village in the City and
- ii) To take steps to identify an appropriate site.

Reasons 3

Extra Care 'villages' provide a permanent home for people from late middle age and, as it becomes needed through ageing, a continuum of on-site care. Communal facilities (example below) can promote a 'village' sense of belonging and sport and gym facilities can help keep residents physically fit and healthy.

Residents will have a 'home for life'. All properties will be fully accessible with up to 24-hour support available for those who require it.

Communal Facilities

Properties will surround a number of communal facilities including the following:

Fitness Gym	Restaurant and Bar
Spa Pool	Village Shop
Arts and Crafts Centre	Village Hall
IT /Technology Suite	Hair Dressing Salon
Library	Greenhouse
Woodwork Shop	Well-being centre

10.0 – Outcome of the Satisfaction Survey

Introduction

Overview and scrutiny is an important political management tool that supports the Council's decision making process. It enables members to develop policy, challenge decisions and generally hold the decision makers to account on behalf their electorate. The Government intends to strengthen this function through Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill. It seeks to extend the duty on public organisations other than just the health bodies to appear before the committees and give evidence; establish overview and scrutiny area committees; and also enable local people to have their concerns on unresolved issues to be heard by the scrutiny using the 'Community Calls for Action' process.

To assess the effectiveness of the Council's overview and scrutiny process and consider how it can be improved further, members were once again asked to complete an overview and scrutiny member satisfaction survey. The design of the questionnaire was broadly the same as in previous years with questions split into two parts. The first part sought views on the officer support provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Team whilst the second concentrated on the principle and effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny process.

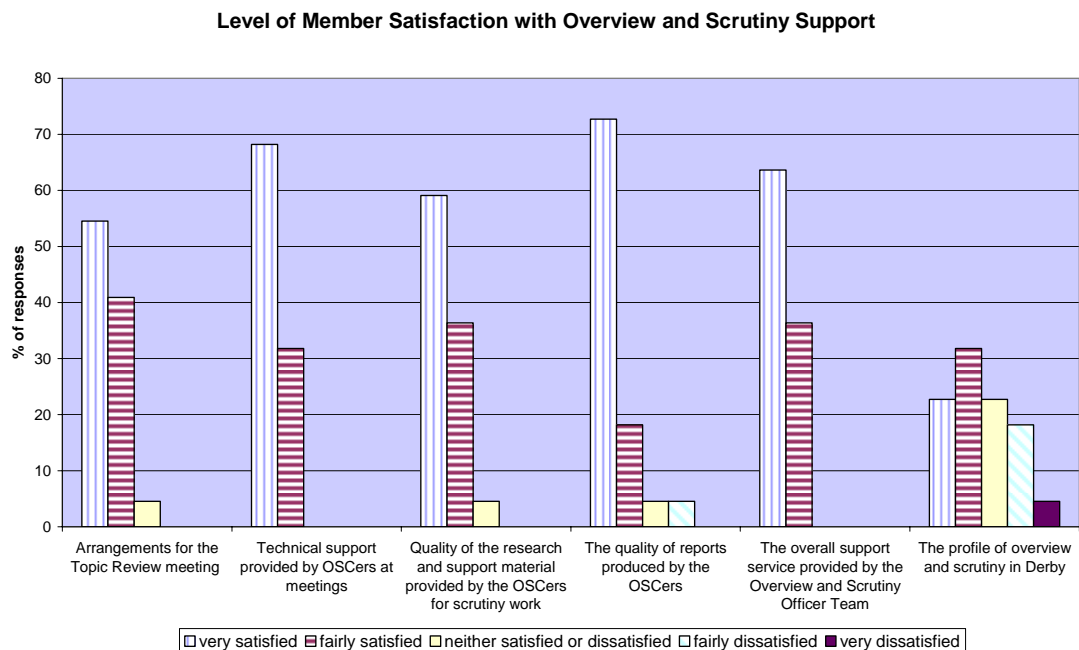
There were a few changes in the questions. The question asking members about their experience on member training was no longer considered appropriate due to members' lack of participation in the training programme and was removed from the questionnaire. This was replaced with a two new questions asking members for their views on the profile of overview and scrutiny in Derby and the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny. These questions should help us achieve a better understanding of the overview and scrutiny process in Derby.

Analysis

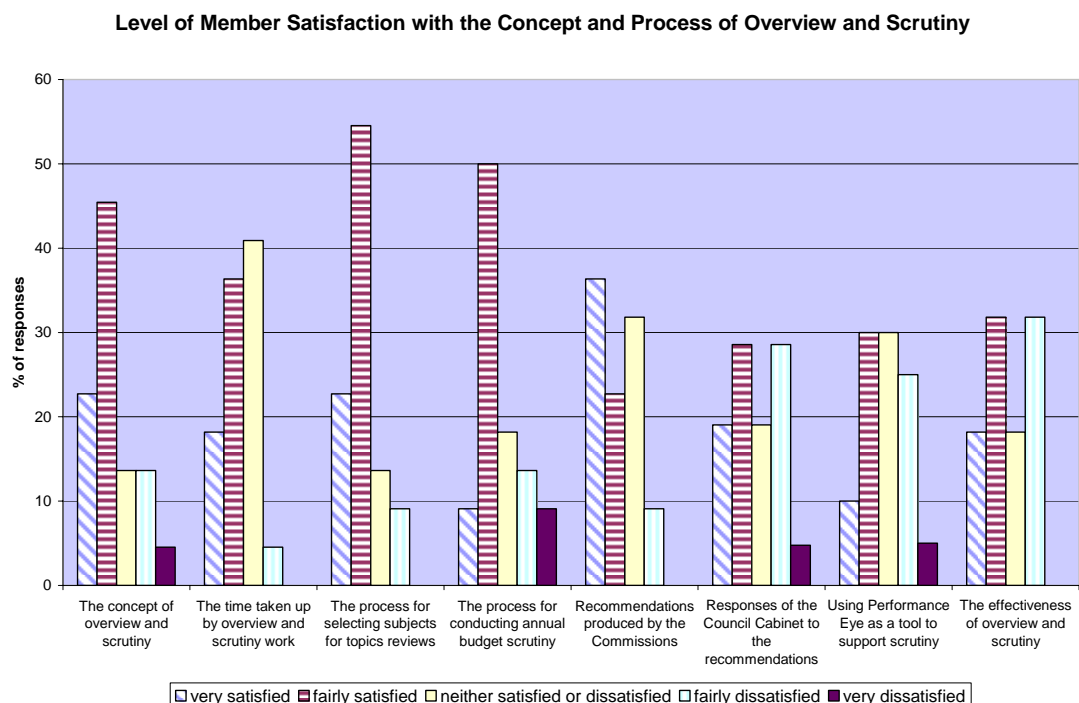
A total of 57 forms were distributed to elected members and co-opted members of which 22 have been returned, giving a response rate of 35%.

The graph below shows that members were satisfied with the support they received the OSCers. All respondents (100%) were very or fairly satisfied with the technical support provided by OSCers at meetings and with the overall support provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Team. 73% of the respondents were very satisfied with the quality of reports produced by OSCers and 95% very or fairly were satisfied with quality of research and

support material provided by the scrutiny team.



A number of areas of concern were raised by the members. 55% of members were either very or fairly satisfied with the profile of the overview and scrutiny in Derby whilst 23% were fairly or very dissatisfied.



The above graph shows that there a range of views on the concept and process of overview and scrutiny which are not restricted any one political party. It shows that 68% of the respondents were fairly or very satisfied with the concept whilst 19% were fairly or very dissatisfied. 23% of the

respondents were fairly or very dissatisfied with the process for conducting annual budget scrutiny, 34% with the responses of the Council Cabinet to the recommendations and 30% with using Performance Eye as a tool to support scrutiny. Only 50% of the respondents were fairly satisfied with the overall effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny whilst 32% were fairly dissatisfied.

Member Comments

Members were also asked to make comments and give suggestions on how the O&S function could be improved further. The Comments below are presented as verbatim.

‘Officer Support is excellent. It is the perception of the public and other statutory bodies that need changing, including Cabinet. The concept and work done is good, but when Cabinet take no notice whatsoever then the whole system is worthless. Also budget needs to be done earlier. Councillors need to forget party politics and make useful comments/ recommendations’ – **Chair O&S Commission**

‘Small group working, doing a larger variety of smaller/ shorter term investigations might be more satisfying’ - **O&S member**

‘Better more independent professional advice on complex subjects, not just from Council Officers and stakeholders’ - **O&S member**

‘Hopefully profile will be improved by features in Your Derby. Perhaps more focus on Performance Eye’ – **Chair O&S Commission**

‘Personally, I feel O&S is very much member led as you have outlined and if members are not motivated then it is difficult to achieve good scrutiny. The more enthusiastic members are, the better the outcomes of scrutiny. There have been some excellent pieces of work, which tended to have stemmed from more active members. O&S officers have always responded positively when this is the case’ – **Cabinet Member**

‘Officer support on Commissions I have been a member of has always been excellent. Dare I suggest more funding for topic reviews? I have for a long time thought that more dialogue directly with Council Cabinet by O&S Commissions is vital. Direct “point making” is far better than the written word – **O&S member**

‘In my view the OSCers do a good job, the problem lies with Members of overview and scrutiny, information and OSCers’ access to busy staff. OSCers should challenge Cabinet Members more and encourage their Chairs and Vice Chairs to be more effective. I would support both of the above suggestions, but feel that there is a lack of understanding of the service areas by many overview and scrutiny members that limits their effectiveness. These members should read their cabinet and council papers and take the opportunity to discuss any issues and background with the Cabinet Member and Officers’ - **Cabinet Member**

‘Agreed that there should be greater focus on Council’s priorities by O&S Commissions and more dialogue with the Council Cabinet etc. A lot of work with little to show. For example the need for trading standards officers to inspect food outlets. Up to 100% not implemented’ - **O&S member**

‘I think the public should be made more aware of the role of O&S’ – **Chair O&S Commission**

‘Works well providing its service to the members, keeping them well informed. The OSC works well in general and usually has a fairly a political approach to its work to the benefit of the population of Derby. My main interest is certainly the general well-being of the people of Derby in all health aspects. This includes both primary and secondary care and quality of application across all levels and ethnicity’ –**co-opted member**

Conclusion

The annual Member satisfaction survey provides members with an opportunity to comment on the concept and process as well as the officer support for the overview and scrutiny functions. Responses from this year’s survey show that although members are satisfied with the overall officer support provided by the overview and scrutiny officer team, they are less satisfied with a number of other areas. Members are less satisfied with the responses of the Council Cabinet to their recommendations, the use of Performance Eye and the profile of the overview and scrutiny. This statistical evidence is supported by member commentary which identifies the strengths as well as areas for further work.

One major issue identified by the members is the need to raise the profile of the overview and scrutiny function as some members feel that public and other statutory organisations are unaware of the good work carried out by the Commissions. It is anticipated that the profile of overview and scrutiny will improve when the legislation requiring more public bodies to appear before the Commissions to give evidence is passed and also with the introduction of the Community Calls for Action. It is suggested that more features in ‘Your Derby’ may also improve local profile.

Some Members are also dissatisfied with the budget scrutiny process and have suggested conducting the process earlier. There is an argument that the current process does not provide sufficient time for members to properly assess the budget and give their informed comments. Some members are also dissatisfied with the response of the Council Cabinet. This issue has occurred in the past and needs to be addressed otherwise it could act as a barrier to active participation in the scrutiny process for some members.

11.0 – Appendices

Appendix 1

Commission Membership

Scrutiny Management Commission

Chair:	Higginbottom			
Vice Chair:	Berry			
Members:	Allen	Jackson	Redfern	
	Care	Jones	Samra	
	Carr	MacDonald	Turner	

Community Commission

Chair:	Turner			
Vice Chair:	Webb			
Members:	Afzal	R Khan	Tittley	
	Baxter	Lowe	Troup	
	Chera	Samra	Winter	

Environment Commission

Chair:	Jackson			
Vice Chair:	West			
Members:	Afzal	Hird	Rawson	
	Care	Ingall	Tittley	
	Carr	Poulter	Travis	

Adult Services and Health Commission

	Councillors			
Chair:	Marshall			
Vice Chair:	Dhindsa			
Members:	Dhamrait	Leeming	Richards	Webb
	Gerrard	Mitchell	Skelton	
	Harbon	Rawson	Turner	
Co-optees:	Pat Hill			
	Elaine Jackson			
	Philip Johnson			

Children and Young People Commission

Chair:	Williams		
Vice Chair:	MacDonald		
Members:	Allen	Higginbottom	S Khan
	Banwait	Ingall	Marshall
	Ginns	Jones	Mitchell
Statutory co-optees:	John Honey	Roman Catholic Diocese	
	Phil Moncour	Church of England Diocese	
	Nasreen Iqbal	Parent Governor	
	Dr K Devendra	Parent Governor	

Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission

Chair:	MacDonald
Vice Chair:	Williams
Members:	Ginns
	Higginbottom

Appendix 2

Commission Portfolios

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission Portfolios were changed in 2006 in order to align better with those of the Council Cabinet. Details of each Commission's areas of responsibility are given in the table below:

Scrutiny Management Commission

- Corporate Council Policies and Strategies, including Community Strategy
- Corporate Finance and Financial Services, including Taxation
- Corporate Legal and Administrative Services
- Corporate Communications, including Derby Pointer
- Community Consultation
- Derby City Partnership
- Sub Regional Strategic Partnership
- Local Area Agreement
- External Affairs – European, National, Regional and Local
- Mayoral Office/Electoral Issues/Registrars
- Emergency Planning
- Performance Management
- Best Value functions and Best Value Performance Plan
- Corporate Personnel and Equalities
- Economic Development and Tourism, including External Employment Initiatives
- Estates/Property Services including Markets (apart from Historic Buildings)
- Building Design Services and Repair and Maintenance
- Health and Safety
- Energy Conservation
- Members Services/Allowances
- Community Safety Partnership
- E-Government
- Computer Services
- Telecommunications
- Scrutiny Co-ordination

Adult Services and Health

- Adult Social Services
- Assessment and Care Planning
- Health Improvement Planning
- Health Services Partnerships - Adults
- Mandatory and Discretionary Awards (Excluding Education Awards)
- Community Centres
- Community Grants
- Supporting People
- Youth Service
- Adult Education
- Health Scrutiny

Children and Young People

- Designated Lead Member for Children's Services
- Schools
- Centrally funded Schools Services, including Special Needs
- Access Support, including Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
- Mandatory and Discretionary Education Awards
- Children and Family Services
- Social Services Support Services
- Health Services Partnerships – Children
- Early Years
- Play Development

Community

- Area and Neighbourhood Co-ordination, including Area Panels
- Community Development
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- External Regeneration Funding
- New Deal for Communities
- Equality Grants
- Customer Services
- Housing Strategy and Development
- Private Sector Housing
- Housing Options, including Homelessness
- Supporting People
- Social Cohesion
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits
- Community Legal Services Partnership
- Derby Advice Service
- Housing Management Client
- The Council's Buildings of Heritage and Importance

Environment

- Strategic Planning and Transportation
- Planning and Building Control
- Footpaths, Highways and Maintenance, Car Parks
- Roads – Engineering and Design Services
- Car Parking Strategy and Client
- Highways Property Administration
- City Centre Management
- Land Drainage
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy/Environment Co-ordination
- Grounds Maintenance
- Client – Street Cleaning/Waste Collection and Disposal/Public Conveniences
- Recycling
- City Centre and Neighbourhood Horticultural Features
- All Direct Services
- Non-Highway Engineering
- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- Arts and Libraries
- Assembly Rooms/Guildhall
- Museums/Art Gallery
- Festivities
- Outdoor Events
- Parks and Allotments
- Sports including Grants
- Leisure Centres and Coaching
- Environmental Health
- Trading Standards
- Car Parking Enforcement

Appendix 3

Overview and Scrutiny Team Contact Details

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