

Thursday 20 January	Time commenced	- 6.00 pm
	Time adjourned	- 8.15 pm
Monday 24 January	Time recommenced	- 4.00 pm
	Time finished	- 5.45 pm

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION 20 and 24 JANUARY 2005

Present: Councillor Ahern (in the Chair)
Councillors Baxter, P Berry, Bolton, Jackman, Leeming,
Rehman, Troup and Willitts

54/04 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

55/04 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

56/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

57/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

58/04 Call-In

There were no call-ins.

59/04 Tobacco Smoke in the City

The Commission received a presentation from Andrew Hopkin – Assistant Director – Environmental Health and Trading Standards – on the Councils initiative to make the City 'smoke free'.

It was reported that the Council would announce it's no smoking ban on No Smoking Day on 9 March 2005. The Commission were told that the Chief Officer Group had recommended that employees who wished to stop smoking should be offered with seven one-hour sessions with the Primary Care Trust. It was suggested that in time it might become a disciplinary offence to smoke on Council premises.

The Commission were advised that following consultation on smoking and possible smoke free policies over 80% of residents indicated their support for a ban on smoking in enclosed public places. Andrew Hopkin said that until the details of the

Government's Public Health White Paper had been agreed, the Council had no powers to enforce a complete ban.

Councillor Ahern raised two further issues with Andrew Hopkin.

1. Proof of Age Cards

Councillor Ahern asked how the Proof of Age card scheme was progressing?

Andrew Hopkin responded that money from the Home Office had been received for a Blue Print scheme and three new members of staff had been taken on. The cards were currently being issued through schools

Councillor Troup reported that Scrutiny Management Commission had recommended that the Council should allocate £70,000 from the Public Priorities Fund to the scheme.

The Commission agreed to recommend that £70,000 be allocated from the Public Priorities Fund to fund the Proof of Age card scheme.

2. Dog Fouling Review

Andrew Hopkin reported that over 80% of the work carried out by the Dog Control Section was dealing with strays whilst 20% was dealing with dog fouling. He suggested that the Commission should extend its review of Dog Fouling to cover the broader topic of dog control in Derby.

60/04 LTP Capital Programme

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Development and Cultural Services which set out proposals for schemes under the 2005/06 LTP Capital Programme. The proposed schemes included walking, cycling, public transport and road safety, and travel awareness – RSTA.

The Commission were advised that the programme would be presented to Council Cabinet on 22 February 2005.

Councillor Bolton requested a breakdown of work carried out through Section 106 Agreements funding and asked closely the Bus Quality Partnerships were monitored.

Resolved

1. to recommend that the proposals listed in the report should be addressed in the following order of priority:

- 1. Public transport**
- 2. Walking**
- 3. Road Safety and Travel Awareness**

- 4. Transport Management and Demand Restraint**
- 5. Planning and maintaining the transport network**
- 6. Cycling**

- 2. to recommend that £450,000 of the unallocated Public Priority funding is allocated for footway repairs and £50,000 for works to street trees.**

61/04 Revenue Budget 2005/06 to 2006/07

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services. The Council's draft Revenue Budget was issued to Overview and Scrutiny Commission members at a briefing on 11 January 2005. All the Commissions were given an opportunity for detailed consideration of the draft revenue budget at their business meetings, during January 2005. The Commissions had been told that decisions had not yet been taken about the ways in which a sum, totalling £700,000, would be allocated for spending on public priorities. It was suggested that where appropriate, that each of the Commissions made recommendations on proposals contained in the draft budget which fell within the remit of the Commission. Commissions were also asked to make recommendations on what they considered to be the best ways of using the unallocated public priority spending.

The Performance Eye performance monitoring facility gives the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions the means of monitoring the effects and outcomes of the funding for Council services, agreed through the budget process. It was suggested that each Commission could identify particular service areas within its remit and could, at subsequent meetings, use Performance Eye to track progress and to examine the effects on performance of the budget allocation within those areas. A summary of the information from the draft Revenue Budget, which related to the Planning and Environment Commission, was set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Andrew Hopkin, Assistant Director Environmental Health and Trading Standards informed the Commission that progress with implementing the Proof of Age Card Scheme through Derby schools had been excellent. However he said that there was currently no provision for funding the initiative beyond March 2005 and all the good work would be lost if the funding ceased. Commission members considered it would be appropriate to recommend that money from the £700,000 of unallocated Public Priority funds should be used to support the Proof of Age Card Scheme.

Development and Cultural Services

Jonathan Guest outlined the Development and Cultural Services Directorate's Revenue Budget proposals that fell within the remit of the Planning and Environment Commission. It was reported that base budget review savings and efficiency savings had enabled improvements to be made in key service areas, including continuing the roll-out of the Rethink Rubbish twin-bin scheme. He told the Commission that base budget reviews on car park income, winter maintenance and public liability insurance had resulted in savings of £198,000 which could be used to offset budget pressures. It was explained that a further £258,000 of service pressures could be met by increasing city centre car parking charges.

The Commission were told that the draft Revenue Budget did not allow for continuing contributions to the Derby and Sandiacre Canal which had previously amounted to around £8,000 per year.

The Commission considered that that the improvement of public transport services should be given high priority and members recognised that there were no proposals under the current revenue budget to address this issue. It was agreed that it was appropriate to increase city centre car parking charges to the levels indicated in Appendix 10 of the report provided that the additional funds generated by the increased charges were used to fund public transport improvements.

Commission members considered that it would be appropriate to use £8,000 of the unallocated Public Priority funds to continue the Council's support of the Derby and Sandiacre Canal.

The Commission agreed that it would be advantageous to use Performance Eye to track the improvement in recycling that results from the roll-out of the Rethink Rubbish twin-bin scheme.

Commercial Services

John Winters outlined the Commercial Services draft Revenue Budget proposals to the Commission. He explained that these proposals included increasing the cost of cremations and ceasing participation in Britain in Bloom. He confirmed that Commercial Services would like to implement the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's recommendations on improvements to the Parks Service and the recommendations arising from the review of the Tree Management Policy, but explained that they could not be implemented as no funding was likely to be received and funding could not be found within the service. A proposal to reduce the number of grass cuts from the current 15 to 12 was included in the list of those proposals that had not been included in the draft budget.

At the request of the Commission John Winters provided detailed information about the operating costs of the Bereavement Service to the meeting on 24 January 2005. The need to comply with new mercury emission regulations at the Crematorium was listed as a Service Planning Issue. Information about this requirement which was circulated at the meeting on 24 January showed that the Council had until 2012 to complete the installation of any mercury emissions abatement equipment.

The Commission was opposed to ceasing participation in Britain in Bloom and any proposal to reduce the number of grass cuts across the City..

The Commission was disappointed that the draft Revenue Budget did not include funding to implement its recommendations in respect of the Tree Management Policy. Commission members considered that the draft Revenue Budget should include funding to implement their recommendations on improvements to the Parks Service and the recommendations arising from the review of the Tree Management Policy

The Commission considered that:

- Crematorium charges should be increased by a maximum of 4%
- Burial charges should be increased by a maximum of 10%
- The cost of Cemeteries Grounds Maintenance should be examined closely to see whether there were ways in which it could be reduced

Resolved

1. to recommend to Council Cabinet that £70,000 of the unallocated Public Priorities Fund should be allocated to cover the operating costs of the Proof of Age card scheme during the 12 month period April 2005 to March 2006.
2. to recommend to Council Cabinet that city centre car parking charges be increased to the levels set out in Appendix 10 on page 129 of the draft Revenue Budget with the proviso that the increase in income, over and above that which would have been received had the car parking charges in Appendix 9 on page 128 been imposed, was used to fund improvements in public transport in Derby
3. to recommend to Council Cabinet that £8,000 of the unallocated Public Priorities Fund should be contributed to the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society
4. to recommend to Council Cabinet that the Council should continue to participate in Britain in Bloom
5. to recommend to Council Cabinet that the draft Revenue Budget should be amended to include funding to implement the recommendations made by the Planning and Environment Commission as a consequence of their review of the Council's Tree Management Policy and the recommendations made by the Commission for improvements to the Parks Service
6. to recommend that reducing the number of grass cuts from 15 to 12 per year should not be considered as a further service budget proposal
7. to recommend that
 - Crematorium charges should be increased by a maximum of 4%
 - Burial charges should be increased by a maximum of 10%
 - The cost of Cemeteries Grounds Maintenance (£274,000 per year) should be examined to see whether there are ways in which it can be reduced

62/04 Forward Plan

Members did not identify any items from the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting:

63/04 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission

None.

64/04 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

Supplementary Planning Guidance on the After-Use of Sand and Gravel Sites

The Commission considered a referral from Council Cabinet who had agreed to adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance, subject to their being no adverse views from the Commission.

The Commission were told that the document had been prepared jointly with the County Council and would guide planning decisions on how sand and gravel quarry sites would be used after they had been worked out. The principle new matter covered was the balance between returning sites to water uses (which may attract birds which have the potential to cause problems to aircraft) and infilling them. The problem had been caused by a likely lack of suitable fill material in the next few years.

The document had subject to to extensive consultation and altered in the light of comments, since the Commission last saw it.

Resolved to note the report.

Minutes End