



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET 15 FEBRUARY 2011

Report of the Scrutiny Management
Commission

ITEM 2a

DERWENT NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES

SUMMARY

1. In September 2010 the Resources Commission commenced a review on the Succession Strategy for Derwent New Deal for Communities, NDC. When the Resources Commission was disbanded by Council in November, the Scrutiny Management Commission, SMC, took over the review. Reports have already been made to Cabinet on 28 September and 23 November 2010. On 1 February 2011 the SMC considered further documentation including answers to questions previously posed to GOEM and NHS Derby City plus comments on those answers from the Chair of the NDC Board. Councillors Redfern, Roberts and Marshall addressed the meeting. The outcome was to make the recommendation (at 2.1) and to conclude the review.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That a) in order to secure the legacy of Derwent NDC for local residents, if the Gateway Centre is handed over to the Derbyshire Cricket Club all available steps be taken by the Council to prevent the future sale of the land for development,

and b) these steps should include:
 - i) the protection of any current covenants and creation of new ones and / or
 - ii) the enforcement of land planning policies.
- 2.2 To note that on 1 February the Commission unanimously resolved to conclude its review at that point.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This review has necessarily been conducted as a work-in-progress. The two strands have been:
 - Looking to the future, to help secure a legacy for local people
 - Looking to then past, to understand how the widely reported problems arose
- 3.2 Regarding the future, all the NDC schemes close on 31 March 2011 and the scrutiny recommendations previously made to Cabinet on 28 September and 23 November 2010 sought to influence the Succession Strategy, to help secure a legacy for Derwent residents.

- 3.3 The Commission meeting on 1 February was updated on the exit strategy. This which resulted from a meeting involving senior civil servants from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Councillor Marshall and Council officers, the NDC Board and Derbyshire County Cricket Club. That meeting was on 13 December 2010 and the proposals were endorsed by the NDC Board on 21 December.
- 3.4 Councillors Redfern and Roberts told the SMC on 1 February of the misgivings of all three ward councillors about the exit strategy. Councillor Rawson reflected their views at the 21 December Board meeting and had voted against the proposition. Their particular concerns, which led the Commission to make recommendation 2.1, were that the Cricket Club is being handed the freehold title to the Gateway - and Revive - Centres at nil cost. Their concerns regarding the Revive Centre and various other aspects are recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Regarding the cricket club they felt that there had historically been little willingness to engage with the surrounding community. This only began to change when NDC money became available. Their greatest concern about the exit strategy is about the long term future of the cricket ground.
- 3.5 Cllr Redfern said that the future of the Gateway Centre was currently protected by a covenant which acted *akin to* a 'ransom strip'. One definition of that is: 'a piece of land separating a property from the public highway or public services which can thereby prevent access or development'. Should the freehold transfer that would give the cricket club control of the land involved. It would enable the whole site to become accessible and marketable for housing development. At some point in the future the club could be tempted to realise the value by selling the land, with the proceeds going for investment in a new cricket ground elsewhere in the county. Such a result would be a publicly funded windfall for a private organisation, with no lasting benefit for the local community who were the intended beneficiaries of the NDC scheme.
- 3.7 After scrutiny reports were made to Cabinet in the autumn about the future of NDC, the SMC then continued with the review with the intention of learning how the key public agencies had been involved in project evaluation and expenditure approval. Although written answers were provided by GOEM and the PCT the unwillingness of both to attend meetings has meant the SMC were unable to clarify key points. With the demise of GOEM and the PCT the Commission reluctantly but unanimously concluded that the review should now cease. There was a consensus that the ward members and local resident representatives on the Board and on connected bodies were not responsible for the problems that had arisen.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4. The evidence bundle considered by the Commission comprises 202 pages and is available from the co-ordination officer.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	n/a
Financial officer	n/a
Human Resources officer	n/a
Service Director(s)	n/a
Other(s)	Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission

For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Name 01332 643648 e-mail rob.davison@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None directly arise. However, the ward members feel strongly that the remaining £3m should be made available to secure the legacy.

Legal

2. None directly arise but the recommendation that 'all available steps be taken by the Council to prevent the future sale of the land for development' will require legal input.

Personnel

3. The end of NDC funding means the remaining staff will be redundant.

Equalities Impact

4. The inclusion of Derwent in the NDC programme was based on it being an area with enduring socio-economic deprivation. The concerns addressed by this report are that the local residents, as intended beneficiaries, will have little enduring legacy for amount of public funds injected into the area. Conversely, the cricket club may get a windfall from the increased value of the land if the covenant controlling on access ceases.

Health and Safety

5. None in this report

Carbon commitment

6. None in this report

Value for money

7. None in this report

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

8. CG3 is 'Produce a succession strategy by March 2011 to ensure that the benefits of the New Deal for Communities programme in Derwent continue into the future.'