

Time commenced - 6.00 pm  
Time finished - 8:00 pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION  
12 SEPTEMBER 2006

Present: Councillor Higginbottom (in the Chair)  
Councillors Allen, Berry, Care, Carr, Dhindsa, Jackson, Jones,  
MacDonald, Samra, Turner.

Also present: Councillor Roberts

## 28/06 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

## 29/06 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

## 30/06 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Samra declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minute number 38/06 a) as he and his wife were tenants of Council Premises. He left the room during the discussion of this item.

Councillor Jones declared a personal interest in minute number 32/06 as her daughter uses the Centre

## 31/06 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## Items for Discussion

### 32/06 Consideration of a Petition

The Scrutiny Management Commission formally received a petition concerning the proposed closure of Lancaster Sports Centre. Two of the signatories to the petition attended the Commission meeting and were invited by the Chair to make statement. In their statements, the petitioners stated that:

- The petition collected over 4000 names in just four weeks, demonstrating a significant level of support for the centre
- Due to its city centre location, the Centre is a single bus journey for everyone in the city

- The Centre is well used by all sections of the community
- The Centre is well used by Community groups, schools and provides a valuable service
- The Government is trying to tackle the growing problem of obesity and closing the centre goes against this.

One of the petitioners then went on to talk about her own personal circumstances and about how it would mean taking her children on 2 buses 3 times a week to the next nearest centre.

**Resolved to request that Council Cabinet to include these comments and the petition in their consideration of proposals for future of the Lancaster Sports Centre.**

### 33/06 Previously requested reports on Forward Plan Items

#### a) Allestree Hall

The Commission received an oral report from Steve Meynell, Chief Estates Officer and noted that formal planning approval was needed before further progress could be made.

**Resolved to note the report**

#### b) Disposal of Land

The Commission received a report from the Director Corporate and Adult Social Services regarding the standing Forward Plan item on Disposal of Land.

**Resolved to note the report**

#### c) Local Area Agreements

The Commission received a report from the Corporate Director Resources and Housing which outlined the position on the Local Area Agreement Financial Governance arrangements and confirmed that a full report would be provided to the Commission's meeting on 5 December 2006.

Councillor Care expressed concern that the report would not be seen by the Scrutiny Management Commission until after a decision had been taken by Council Cabinet.

**Resolved to request that the draft report be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Management Commission for comments prior to a decision being taken by Council Cabinet.**

## 34/06 Emergency Planning

The Commission received a quarterly update report from the Director of Regeneration and Community on Emergency Planning. The Commission were informed of the work on emergency procedures that had been carried out over the last quarter of the year and of the lessons that had been learned from the simulation of disaster situations.

### **Resolved to**

**a) note the report**

**b) to arrange a visit the Emergency Planning Control Centre at Derbyshire County Council**

**c) to request bi-annual reports in future**

## 35/06 Performance Eye

The Commission received a refresher presentation on how to use Performance Eye and an update on the Commissions Performance Eye Indicators.

It was noted that there was further training scheduled for 28 September 2006 and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

**Resolved to note the presentation.**

## 36/06 Adult Social Services – Complaints and Representation Procedure Annual Report 2005/06

The Commission received a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services which provided statistical data on complaints received by Adult Social Services.

The Commission were pleased to note that efforts had been made to learn from complaints in order to improve processes.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## 37/06 The Council's Carbon Management Programme

The Commission received a presentation on the Council's Carbon Management Programme.

The Commission expressed concerns that new Council buildings were not going to be built to the highest environmental standards. Members were keen to ensure that the Carbon Trust was involved from an early stage in all new buildings.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## 38/06 Retrospective Scrutiny

- a) Estates Rental Income

**Resolved to defer the report to the New Year when the figures would present a clearer picture.**

- b) Effects of Reducing the Overview and Scrutiny Research Budget

It was noted that, as only 16% of the budget had currently been spent, it was not possible to provide any realistic prediction of the impact of the reduction in the Overview and Scrutiny research budget.

**Resolved to note the reports.**

## 39/06 Overview and Scrutiny Web Pages

The Commission received a demonstration of the Overview and Scrutiny web pages.

**Resolved that Members should individually e-mail the Overview and Scrutiny team with suggestions for the web pages.**

## 40/06 Overview and Scrutiny Commission Topic Reviews

The Commission received a report from the Chair of the Environment Commission requesting approval of the Commission's proposed topic review on Public Art.

Councillor Dhindsa suggested that the review be used to help determine a strategy for public art in the City.

**Resolved to note the report and approve the topic selected by the Commission**

## 41/06 Outcome of the Trial PublicNet Briefing System

It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny team had not found the PublicNet briefing service to be particularly useful and, as similar information was available from other sources, it was decided not to purchase the system

**Resolved to note the report.**

## 42/06 Review of Energy Use by the Council

The Commission received a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services which included the final draft report of the former Planning and Environment Commission on its topic review on Energy Use by the Council.

It was felt that some of the recommendations needed to be strengthened in order to achieve a more proactive approach to energy conservation.

**Resolved to**

- 1) ask Councillor Care to speak with David Romaine to discuss strengthening the recommendations in accordance with the comments expressed at this meeting; and**
- 2) to forward the revised report to the relevant Cabinet Members with a request that they ask Cabinet to adopt the recommendations**

**43/06 Draft Scoping Report – Electoral Registration Topic Review**

Members were advised that the first evidence gathering meetings had been arranged for the 26 September 2006 and 5 October 2006.

It was noted that Leeds and Manchester Council's were regarded by the Electoral Commission as following best practice for electoral registration and that these Authorities agreed to contribute to the review.

**Resolved to note the report and to proceed with the review.**

**44/06 Council Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Commission examined the items on the Forward Plan which were relevant to the Commissions remit.

**Resolved to request the Accommodation Strategy when the report was complete.**

**45/06 Responses from Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission**

There were none.

**46/06 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet**

There were none.

MINUTES END