

Time commenced 6.00pm
Time finished 8.20pm

**NEIGHBOURHOODS COMMISSION
9 NOVEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillor Jackson (Chair)
Councillors Davis, Hillier, Keith, Rawson, Richards and Troup

46/11 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

47/11 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

48/11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

49/11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2011 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment and signed by the chair.

Minute no 39/11 – resolution 2 to read ‘To note that Council Cabinet wanted to relocate the Local Studies Library to Blagreaves Lane if a city centre location could not be found that was affordable.’

50/11 Call-in

There were no call-ins received for the commission to consider.

51/11 Revenue Budget Proposals

The Commission considered the revenue budget proposals for 2012-13. Michael Kirk, Acting Head of Finance – Neighbourhoods provided Members with outline details of the Council’s budget position and explained the shape of the budget consultation.

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods explained that the directorate was very diverse with a large number of staff and buildings. There was a difference in the base budget from last year because the directorate now included areas such as cleaning, catering and caretaking which had previously sat in the Chief Executive’s department. Consideration had been given to which services provided were

statutory and which were discretionary and the level of services that needed to be provided.

The Leisure Strategy was a key priority, benchmarking had been undertaken with both other local authorities and the private sector.

It was noted that Neighbourhoods had out performed the savings targets for last year because some savings were brought forward.

The Commission then considered the Revenue Budget savings proposals in detail.

In respect of air quality monitoring Commission Members were concerned about the effect this may have on particular problem areas and major planning applications.

With regards to Trading Standards consumer advice, Commission Members were concerned that customers would lose the frontline provision of advice and that other agencies which were being asked to pick this work up (such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau) may not be able to cope with the extra demand.

In respect of Quad and Deda, Commission Members expressed concerns about the additional savings required over and above the planned 30% savings for all arts grants over four years. Particular concern was raised on the impact on partners and economic growth of the city. It was noted that Quad were provided with rent free accommodation which amounted to a £302,000 saving each year, and Deda currently received a peppercorn rent benefit of approximately £18,000 per year. The Council had also previously written off a £250,000 loan for Quad. The reductions had been spread over time to reduce the effect and allow other ways of operating to be considered. It was also noted that there had been extensive talks with both Quad and Deda to look at alternative ways of operating to minimise the effects of the reductions. Councillor Rawson asked if there was a 'plan B' in place in case the Arts Council also withdrew funding.

It was reported that in respect of Derby LIVE the big screen was both under utilised and very costly. Talks were on going regarding sponsorship but there was a possibility it may be removed altogether. It was noted that the new Pride Park Plaza development may include a screen at the football ground.

The proposals for Derby Theatre would allow the Guildhall to remain open. The question of the University of Derby covering the additional costs associated with the future programme of live events at the theatre would form part of their consultation process.

The library service was being redesigned to ensure that the venues did not close, by reducing the opening hours this would enable all the libraries to remain open. Commission Members suggested that other services could be relocated into libraries to make better use of the venues, and that community groups could assist in the delivery of these services. Commission Members also suggested that libraries which had an overlap in service provision to nearby communities could stagger their opening hours to provide a full and complementary service. Councillor Hillier expressed concern on how library user numbers were identified where there were shared services and asked for this to be clarified.

The Park Ranger service was being reviewed to make better use of the rangers.

The Commission requested a report on the position with community transport in looking for alternatives to the dial-a bus service.

Changes were being made to the Tree Management Policy to enable a back log of works to be carried out to unsafe, diseased and damaged trees. A more detailed report on this policy would be presented to the next meeting of the Commission.

The Commission then considered in detail the budget pressures in the revenue budget consultation document.

Resolved

- 1. To request Council Cabinet to be mindful of the financial position of Quad and Deda and consider what action might be necessary if Arts Council funding is withdrawn or significantly reduced.**
- 2. To request Council Cabinet to target the resources for air quality monitoring to high risk areas and to explore the possibility of getting applicants for major planning applications to monitor air quality as a condition of their planning consent.**
- 3. To request a report on air quality to a future meeting.**
- 4. To request Council Cabinet to consider greater co-location of services into library buildings to improve sustainability of library services.**
- 5. To request Council Cabinet to consider partnering libraries to facilitate staggered opening hours in areas of the city to give a fuller library service.**
- 6. To request a report on the progress of identifying alternatives to the community transport 'dial a bus' services.**
- 7. To thank officers for the very comprehensive budget consultation booklet.**

52/11 Highways Transport Programme 2012-13

The Commission received a presentation from Sam Divall, Transport Programming and Performance Team Leader on the highways transport programme 2012-13. The programme would be sent to Commission Members for consultation.

Resolved to note the presentation.

53/11 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items of retrospective scrutiny requested by the Commission.

54/11 Forward Plan

There were no items requested.

55/11 Responses to any reports and enquiries of the Commission

There were no items.

56/11 Matters referred by the Council Cabinet

There were no items referred by the Council Cabinet.

MINUTES END