

Time commenced - 6.00 pm  
Time finished - 7.37pm

## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 21 OCTOBER 2008**

Present: Councillor Graves (in the Chair)  
Councillors Batey, Bolton, Hussain, F Khan, Poulter and Webb

In attendance Councillors Carr, Hickson, Jackson, Jennings, Naitta, Turner and  
Williamson

### **68/08 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hird, Latham, Repton and Williams

### **69/08 Late items introduced by the Chair**

In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit the following late item on the grounds that it could not wait until the next meeting.

- Gayton Swimming Pool.

### **70/08 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of Interest.

## **Items for Discussion**

### **71/08 Revenue Budget Strategy 2009/10 – 2011/12**

The Commission considered a report which had been approved at Council Cabinet at its meeting on 30 September 2008. The report outlined the Council's revenue budget strategy over the next three years. The key issues covered included:

- The revenue budget and resources forecasts, and the emerging cost pressures over the next three years
- Clear linkage between the budget process, performance of services and value for money.
- Reinforcing the requirement to deliver the already agreed efficiency savings for 2008/09 and 2009/10, and to identify realistic and robust proposals for efficiency savings to meet the £3 million identified revenue shortfall in 2010/11.
- Ensuring the Council integrates the budget and corporate planning process with its corporate priorities.

The Commission made the following comments:

1. Highways maintenance: This had been identified by the Director as a potential pressure. Members were disappointed with the performance of the new highways contract and felt that the problems needed to be resolved as quickly as possible.
2. Inflation: Members queried the validity of the figure of 2.5% included in the strategy compared to actual inflation levels and in particular how 'local government inflation' could be even higher (para 3.4). The Director explained that the inflation figure can depend on the index used. He confirmed that the figure in the report was based on the Revenue Support Grant factor but said when compared to Consumer Price Index the current level of inflation was 5.2%. Members considered the strategy should use a more realistic inflation rate. It was agreed that this was an issue that the Commission should highlight in its report to full Council.
3. Salaries and Pensions: The Director confirmed to members that a budget contingency provision of 2.5% was being held towards the cost of the pay award settlement and that there would be a pressure if the settlement ultimately exceeded this amount. It was also confirmed that there would be a pensions revaluation in 2011/12 and that this could result in a pressure that was higher than the £0.75m forecast in the strategy.
4. Public toilets: A number of members made comments about the proposed closure of public toilets in Derby and felt this was contrary to providing a City centre 'for all ages' as a Council corporate priority. The proposal was the subject of a call-in meeting the outcome of which will be reported to Council Cabinet on 28 October.
5. Fees and Charges: A Commission member noted that the Grant Thornton report on fees and charges was due in September 2008 and asked whether the consultants had considered the possibility of charging public toilet users. It was suggested by the Commission that the impact of increasing fees on the level of use of the services needed to be fully assessed before any changes were made.
6. Identification of savings: The Chair commented that he saw the role of Overview and Scrutiny as one of commenting on budget proposals and not that of suggesting savings or proposing cuts to services. He said that when the present administration were in Scrutiny they had not suggested budget savings.
7. Corporate Priorities: Members were concerned that the Corporate Priorities on which the draft strategy was based had not been approved by Council. Members also felt that there needed to be a way of measuring the progress of achieving the Corporate Priorities on a 'where we are and where we want to be basis'. It was considered there was a need for a baseline and a three year target. The Commission also noted that the Priorities needed to be approved by full Council before any consultation could be carried out.
8. Job Evaluation: It was noted that the pressures relating to Single Status job evaluation were not identified in the strategy. The Commission was told that it would soon be possible to start looking at likely costs and that other Local Authorities had found these significant. It was agreed that this was an issue that the Commission should highlight in its report to full Council.
9. Building Schools for the Future: In respect of the departmental savings suggested for the Children and Young People Department, a Commission member said it would be important to ensure that any savings did not detract

from the care and well being of children in the City.

10. Chaddesden Library: Commission members pointed out that whilst there was a commitment to provide a new library from both the Labour and Conservative Groups, there was no mention of the Library in the Strategy. Councillor Carr stated that the Council Cabinet were to consider a scheme commencement report for the Library on 28 October 2008.
11. Treasury Management and the Repayment of Debt: A Commission member suggested that in the current financial climate the Council should give very careful consideration to the implications of any future borrowing.
12. Having considered the Budget Strategy report the Commission resolved to recommend there should be an urgent meeting of the leaders of the three political groups to attempt to agree a cross party approach to the Budget Strategy and Corporate Priorities.

### **Resolved**

- 1. That Council notes the Commission's comments on the draft Revenue Budget Strategy 2009/10 - 2011/12.**
- 2. There should be an urgent meeting of the leaders of the three political groups to attempt to agree a cross party approach to the Budget Strategy and Corporate Priorities.**
- 3. That at its meeting on 19 November 2008 Council does not approve the draft Revenue Budget Strategy 2009/10 - 2011/12 and the 2009 – 2012 Corporate Priorities contained in it.**

## **72/08      Gayton Swimming Pool**

The Commission considered a report which would be considered at Council Cabinet on 28 October 2008. The report stated that the Court judgement required the Council to carry out such works as to put and keep Gayton Pool and changing rooms in good repair and to reach agreement with the Community Association by 18 October 2008 to avoid the possibility of the Court appointing an 'expert' to determine the works necessary. Further detailed work on possible options had now been carried out and the best option was to replace the whole of the building and changing rooms with a new building detached from the Community Centre. The estimated cost of this proposal was in the region of £1 million. Revenue costs were being developed.

**Resolved to recommend Council Cabinet to reject the proposal to build a new facility at a cost of £1m and to bring forward a more affordable and proportionate proposal which is acceptable to the court.**

Chair of the next ensuing meeting  
at which these minutes were signed