

Time commenced - 6.00 pm
Time finished - 8.29 pm

**CULTURE AND PROSPERITY COMMISSION
MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2004**

Present: Councillor Repton (in the Chair)
Councillors A Hussain, J Hickson, Jackson, Latham, Redfern, Travis
and Troup

40/03 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

41/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

42/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

43/03 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2003 were approved as a correct and signed by the Chair.

Items for Discussion

44/03 Diverse Universe Week

The Commission received information from Matt Bromley of the University of Derby Students' Union advertising an event orientated towards the cultural diversity at the University. A range of activities would occur throughout the week which would begin on 23 February 2004 and include stands from local and national charities, commercial stands, University race equality, chaplaincy and multi faith centres, amongst others.

Councillor Martin Repton urged Members of the Commission to attend for all or part of the week.

Resolved that those Members who wished to go to the event would contact David Romaine for further information.

45/03 Revenue Budget 2004/2005-2006

The Commission received budget presentations from Chris Edwards – Assistant Director Property Services, John Winters – Director of Commercial Services, Andrew Flack – Director of Education and Jonathan Guest – Director of Development and Cultural Services.

Chris Edwards presented the main issues on markets:

- There had been no rent increase since 1992.
- Allenton market had experienced a decline in occupancy and was at approximately 50% capacity.
- The cattle market use had gradually increased since the end of the foot and mouth outbreak.
- The wholesale market was currently well occupied.

Questions were received from the Commission. Councillor Repton enquired whether a report was being prepared with regard to Allenton market. Chris Edwards responded that an Options Appraisal for Allenton market was currently being carried out. He said there was a need to provide a service and issues to do with stalls, rent and number of customers.

John Winters presented the budget for Commercial Services specifically parks, open spaces and allotments. He stated that £91,000 savings would need to be made in order to balance the budget and that the department was looking at the closure of some sports facilities covering 26 parks which had little demand for them. He emphasised that if demand for these facilities returned that they could be reinstated in the future, and the closures were proposed for reasons of efficiency.

Councillor Repton referred to the proposal to delete parking charges at Markeaton park and stated that only 43% of people who had been asked about the proposal were in favour of it and that a significant number of those people had said that they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax in order to maintain services. Councillor West – the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services responded that the Council wanted to encourage people to use the park facilities and that scrapping car parking charges would encourage them to use the facilities. He gave an example that when car parking charges were introduced at Markeaton park that Pitch and Putt takings had dropped. Councillor Repton responded that many people from outside the city used the facilities at Markeaton park and that it was only right that they contributed through the charges.

Councillor Troup asked whether the reason why people were not using the facilities was because they were in the right place and stated that there was demand for football pitches in Littleover but there were none available in that area for people.

Councillor J Hickson stated that the car parking charges which had been introduced outside Queens Leisure Centre had had an adverse impact on the use of the Leisure Centre. Councillor West stated that there had been a 25,000 person decrease in visits to the Leisure Centre since the introduction of parking charges. Councillor Burgess stated that the Council would consider car parking charges outside Queens Leisure Centre over the next few years.

Councillor Repton stated that removing car parking charges at Markeaton park would reduce the amount of parking for the users of the facilities because students and shoppers would use the car parks rather than those in the city for which they would be charged.

Councillor West responded that it was only proposed to remove parking charges at peak times in order to prevent University traffic parking there.

Councillor Repton asked about which facilities would be provided for young people at the parks. Councillor West responded that the issue needed review but was receiving support from the Area Panels and that skate board park had been constructed at Sunny Hill and Spondon. He stated that there was a lot of local support for more leisure facilities for young people and that the Council was looking to constantly improve facilities across the city but that historically it had experienced massive under funding.

Councillor Troup pointed out that the Base Budget included £100,000 of savings to be made following the Best Value Review of the parks service two years ago but that to date it had proved difficult to achieve and that £90,000 of these savings had not materialised.

John Winters responded that some of the initial options that were proposed for the savings were not politically acceptable, and were now on the B list.

Councillor Jackson asked whether there were any proposals to replace changing facilities at Field Lane Community Centre, Boulton ward.

John Winters responded that it was not economically viable to provide changing facilities at Field Lane but that there were proposals to provide changing facilities at the Race Course and Alvaston Park.

Councillor A Hussain asked what external funding was available and Councillor Martin Repton asked whether New Deal money would be supporting the parks service. John Winters responded that New Deal money would not be used for the Base Budget and was only intended for enhancing facilities whilst Lottery funding provided 75% of the money needed for the Arboretum with 25% to be found by the Council.

Councillor Repton asked how many poop scoop bins existed around the city.

John Winters stated that there were currently 61, all sited on parks land but that 181 had been requested from Area Panels, Dog Wardens and Park Rangers. Many of those requested would not be on parks land. John Winters stated that it would cost

£292.00 per bin to purchase and install it. Councillor Maurice Burgess committed to provide the additional costs that would be required to maintain the poop scoop facility. John Winters stated that the additional costs of maintenance would be necessary, as dog bin litter could not be collected at the same time as parks litter as it was classed as clinical waste.

Andrew Flack – Director of Education presented the Derby City Council Education Service Revenue Budget Strategy 2004 to 2007 and highlighted specifically those items pertinent to the Sport and Leisure budget.

He summarised the budget as follows.

There would be a 3.7% net growth in the Sport and Leisure budget, which would be raised by £98,000. The 2003/2004 overspend was projected to continue in the Sport and Leisure service, though at a reduced level. Savings of £18,000 were anticipated from restructuring and an early retirement within the service. Provision could be made to meet a loss of income due to through necessary maintenance of £44,000; statutory measures for Legionella prevention of £16,000; and essential sports equipment maintenance of £20,000.

Councillor Repton stated he would wish to ensure that any reduction in service or increase in costs that would deter people from using sports and leisure facilities would be resisted. He referred to the loss of income experienced at Moorways Leisure Centre when its swimming pool had to be closed as an item of maintenance equipment could not be obtained. He said that procedures should be flexible to avoid a similar situation.

Councillor West stated that he did not dispute the view of the Chair and that loss of income and customers was a major factor for the Council to consider. However it would also need to consider the market place and whether the Council was providing a service for different customers to those of the private sector. He stated that this would need investigation and that the Best Value Review would provide a lot of valuable information.

Jonathan Guest – Director of Development and Cultural Services presented the Draft Revenue Budget Presentation which included the Corporate guidelines and the Development and Cultural Services Budget Strategy. The Development and Cultural Services Strategic Budget issues were presented. Pertinent to the Commission were the items on the Visual Arts and Media Centre, the Derby Playhouse, the Central and Mickleover Library.

Councillor Repton stated that the Council should invest in the Assembly Rooms if the Pantomime was to compete with other major venues in the region.

Councillor West agreed that some investment in the sound system of the Assembly Rooms would be necessary and that it might be possible to reinvest some of the Pantomime profits in this.

Councillor Repton referred to the Concert in the Park and asked what the intentions were for adding a second day into the programme.

Jonathan Guest reported that last year had been the most settled with regard to external events and that £55,000 would be needed to meet the shortfall in the budget for the event.

Councillor West stated that one way forward would be to appoint an external fundraiser on a temporary contract.

Councillor Repton asked whether there were plans to support IT at libraries.

Ray Ripplingale – Assistant Director, Cultural Services responded that free Internet access in libraries would be launched shortly but said that in the long term the problem would be maintaining the technology and in the medium term libraries would not have the latest technology, whilst in the medium term libraries would not be able to offer the latest technology to users.

The Commission thanked the Cabinet Members and Officers for attending the meeting to present and respond on the Draft Revenue Budget.

Resolved to request David Romaine to summarise the budget position for the Commission who would send their comments to him.

46/03 Call In

There were no items.

47/03 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

Members identified the following items from the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting.

107/03	Quad: Arts Council decision update.
109/03	Quad: Result of architectural competition and further update.

48/03 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission

There were no items.

49/03 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items.

50/03 Work Plan

The Commission received a presentation from David Romaine of the first draft of the Review of Culture in Derby.

The Commission thanked David for his hard work and time in gathering the evidence of the Review together and summarising it in the report.

Councillor Repton stated that he would like to see an Action Plan to achieve the recommendations in the report.

Resolved to request Members of the Commission to review the draft document and bring their comments and suggestions to a special meeting of the Commission which was arranged for Tuesday 2 March 2004 at 6.00 pm.

MINUTES END