

Time commenced - 6.10pm  
Time finished – 8.30pm

## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 14 SEPTEMBER 2004**

**Present:** Councillor Troup (Chair)  
Councillors Ahern, P Berry, Graves, Hussain, Jones, Latham,  
Lowe, MacDonald, Redfern, Repton Smalley and Travis

### **12/04 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **13/04 Late Items Introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

### **14/04 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Lowe and Troup declared personal interests in Minute No 18/04 as they were both Board Members of Derby Homes.

### **15/04 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **16/04 Call-In**

There had been no call-in of a decision.

## **Items for Discussion**

### **17/04 Scrutiny Management Commission's Topic Reviews**

#### **a) Over-Lapping Areas of Control and Management Topic Review**

Rob Davison, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer, updated the Commission on the progress of this topic review.

**Resolved to work towards presenting the draft report to the next meeting.**

#### **b) Possible Topics for Review by the Scrutiny Management Commission**

Rob Davison, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer, presented a report detailing each of the options for future topic reviews, put forward by members. All members had

been encouraged to analyse the options, the results of which were circulated at the meeting. The collective choices were, in order of preference:

- 1 So what's happened since?
- 2 Home to School Transport
- 3 The Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in Derby
- 4 Mobile Phone Masts - Health and Safety Matters
- 5 Dropped Kerb Programme

The promoters of each of the reviews put to the Commission why their option should be chosen.

Councillor Graves suggested that the Commission should look at the health and safety issues associated with mobile phone masts. He considered this an important issue that concerned many local residents.

Councillor MacDonald supported the Commission looking at Home to School Transport, as there were many unsatisfactory elements of this. Councillor Redfern added that although there had been concerns for over two years, nothing had been done. Councillor Berry agreed that this area had lots of shortcomings and needed to be reviewed. Councillor Latham said that she understood Councillor Allen, Council Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning would be leading a cross-party working group to look at Home to School Transport. She considered that it would be best dealt with there rather than the Commission.

Councillor Redfern was keen for the Commission to look at the Council's dropped kerb programmes as she considered the budget to be too small. She was concerned that the lack of dropped kerbs was limiting access for disabled people. Councillor Ahern concurred that this was an important issue, particularly in the city centre. Councillor Smalley agreed that there was a need but that, given other demands on money it would not necessarily be possible to increase the budget. He therefore questioned whether this would be a good review for the Commission to undertake.

Councillor Troup recommended that the Commission should look at the organisation of Overview and Scrutiny for the reasons set out in the report.

Councillor P Berry supported the Commission looking at what had happened since Overview and Scrutiny Commissions had presented their topic reviews to Council Cabinet. Councillor Redfern agreed that it was important to know if the topic reviews had made a difference.

There was some discussion as to whether "so what's happened since" should be combined with the "Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in Derby".

Rob Davison reported that the Chief Executive had offered to request chief officers to bring progress reports on previous topic reviews to the next meeting.

## **Resolved**

- 1. To combine "So what's happened since?" and "The organisation of**

**Overview and Scrutiny in Derby” into one topic review.**

- 2. To select the combined topic review as the main review for 2004/05, with “Home to School Transport” as a reserve topic review.**
- 3. To request a report to the next meeting on the scope and methodology for the combined review.**

## **18/04      Petition**

The Commission received a petition on the changed timing of Derby Homes rent increases.

Sue Glithero, Director of Policy, introduced a report which set out the process followed prior to full Council taking the decision to change the timing of Derby Homes rent increases. It was noted that in reaching their decision, full Council had considered all of the points raised in the petition.

Councillor Higginbottom, Mackworth Ward, presented the petition to the Commission. She asked the Council to reconsider the proposals as she feared that now that rent and Council Tax increases would be made at the same time, it would cause difficulties for a number of people. As she believed the change in rents had been suggested purely for housekeeping reasons, she argued that the Council needed to be more aware of its customers and not make the changes.

### **Resolved:**

- 1. To note the petition letter did not raise any new points that were not considered by full Council when they made their decision on 28 July 2004 to change the timing of the annual rent rise.**
- 2. To note that the changes had been subject to full consultation.**

## **19/04      Topic Reviews**

The Commission considered proposals by the Planning and Environment and Community Regeneration Commissions for their topic reviews for the remainder of the municipal year.

### **Resolved**

- 1. To approve the Planning and Environment Commission undertaking the following topic reviews in 2004/05:**
  - a) review of the way in which dog fouling legislation is enforced in Derby**
  - b) review of the Council’s Tree Management Policy.**

2. **To approve that the Community Regeneration Commission undertaking Community Involvement and Consultation as their topic review in 2004/05.**

## 20/04 Compact Forum

The Commission was asked to appoint one further member to represent it on the Compact Forum.

**Resolved to appoint Councillor Bayliss to the Compact Forum subject to full Council on 15 September 2004 agreeing to Councillor Bayliss being a member of the Commission.**

## 21/04 Customer Service Progress Report

Don McLure, Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits, presented a report, which updated the Commission on the progress of the Customer Service Strategy. He circulated a project plan which detailed what actions would be taken and when.

The costings and sources of finance associated with the implementation of the customer services strategy were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. It was noted that while most of the actions either had no significant financial implications, or were approved within existing budgets, there were others that still needed funding approval or the funding to be secured.

A working group had been set up to formulate a strategy to make improvements to the website. A report would be presented to a future meeting of the Commission once the strategy had been drafted.

It was noted that the first stages of implementation of the call centre was scheduled from February to September 2005. The implementation and review of the virtual call centre would be carried out by a project board chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. The virtual call centre would be located within existing Council buildings. It would grow incrementally over the next three years until there was one contact centre covering all of the Council's services. Although the number of hotlines would be substantially reduced it would not be possible to have one single number for the Council.

A number of Councillors voiced their aversion to automated menu driven answering services and referred to a recent public survey, which found that most people disliked them.

Councillor Hussain questioned why changes were being made as in his experience telephones were nearly always answered promptly. He asked if there was performance data that could be used to compare now and the future. It was noted that currently limited performance data was available. It was also acknowledged that while calls to the Council were initially answered very promptly, problems had been reported when calls were transferred. Employees in the virtual call centre would be equipped to take ownership of about 80% of all incoming calls, the remaining 20%, those calls of a

more specialist nature, would need to be transferred to the relevant departments.

Don McLure alerted the Commission to a report on Customer Services Standards that would be considered by Council Cabinet on 28 September 2004 prior to a launch event on 4 October 2004. The Commission agreed that it would like a special meeting prior to Council Cabinet to consider the report.

#### **Resolved**

- 1. To note the progress on the Customer Services Strategy.**
- 2. To hold a special meeting of the Scrutiny Management Commission at 5.30pm on Tuesday 21 September 2004 to consider the Customer Services Standards.**

### **22/04      Budget Scrutiny – Proposed Arrangements**

Steve Dunning, Assistant Director, Democratic Services, introduced a report, which put forward proposals for continuous budget scrutiny linked to the quarterly exceptions reporting performance monitoring. He suggested that, once poor performance had been identified, the Commission should call in the relevant Council Cabinet Member and Director to explain what was being done to remedy the problem.

#### **Resolved**

- 1. To introduce, from October 2004, a continuous element of budget scrutiny linked to the quarterly exceptions reporting under the new Performance Monitoring System including LPSA target monitoring.**
- 2. To cease the previous practice of conducting service area budget reviews.**

### **23/04      Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission**

There were no reports.

### **24/04      Council Cabinet Forward Plan**

**Resolved to consider, at the most appropriate time, 'Priorities for Derby's 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Local Public Service Agreement'.**

## Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

### 25/04 Internal Audit

Richard Boneham, Head of Audit and Governance, introduced a report of the Director of Finance which detailed the activity and performance of internal audit in 2003/4.

**Resolved to note the report.**

### 26/04 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

### 27/04 Overview and Scrutiny Staffing Arrangements

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services, which provided a progress report on the arrangements for providing professional support to the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. Councillor Hussain queried when the policy on internal advertising only for career development had been introduced as he considered such a policy was not consistent with the council's equality policies and he asked for more detail.

**Resolved to note the report.**

MINUTES END