

Time commenced - 6.00 pm
Time finished - 7:45 pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
20 APRIL 2006

Present: Councillor Graves (in the Chair)
Councillors Ahern, Allen, Higginbottom, Hickson, Jackson, Jones,
Latham, MacDonald, Travis and Turner.

106/05 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Smalley

107/05 Late items introduced by the Chair

The Chair introduced 2 late items

a) Future Role of Corporate Parenting Sub Commission

The Chair requested that this report be considered with the report on the agenda entitled 'Proposal to Change the Structure of the Overview and Scrutiny commissions.' The discussion is detailed in minute number 115/05

b) Removal of Public Call Boxes

A report recommending that the Scrutiny Management Commission took the lead in responding to any proposals by BT to remove call boxes in Derby was taken as a late item.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Management Commission would take the lead in responding to any proposals by BT to remove call boxes and that BT be asked to supply a map of existing call boxes.

108/05 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

109/05 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

110/05 Call-In

There had been no call in of a decision.

Items for Discussion

111/05 Customer Service Information System

The Commission received a presentation from Andy Elliot, Customer Services Programme Manager highlighting the functions of the new Customer Service Information System which was currently being piloted.

The system could be used to give advice to customers, take a payment, make an appointment and email the customer with receipts. The feedback from the pilot had been generally very positive.

Some concerns were raised regarding the storage of information about customers (for example customers who had been violent to Council employees in the past) on the system but it was noted that currently no information was stored on the system other than names and addresses and the details of the problem reported and that there was no capacity to share information stored on the system.

Resolved to note the report and thank Andy Elliot for an interesting and informative presentation.

112/05 BV 156 – Percentage of authority buildings open to the public which are accessible to disabled people.

The Commission received a presentation from Mick Watts, Access Officer regarding the performance indicator for the percentage of Local Authority Buildings open to the public which are accessible to disabled people.

It was noted that of the 69 buildings owned by the Council which are open to the public, 29 of them met the strict accessibility criteria regarding access for disabled people. Mick Watts highlighted that many of the Council's buildings had been adapted over recent years with over £1,000,000 being spent on alterations.

It was noted that the accessibility criteria used were very strict and that a number of Council buildings were accessible by disabled people but did not quite meet the criteria, for example because a ramp was not at the correct gradient.

It was noted that disabled customers had been involved in choosing the priorities for the DDA Access Programme.

Resolved to note the report and thank Mick Watts for his work.

113/05 Performance Eye

- a) The Commission examined performance indicators that fell within their remit.

Councillor Latham pointed out that the 'traffic lights' used to demonstrate whether a performance indicator was above the target, being met or not being met, were not suitable for people who were colour blind and suggested that 'smiley/frowning' faces could be added to the diagrams to avoid this problem.

Resolved not to select any Performance Indicators for scrutiny at future meetings and to request an examination of the ‘traffic light’ indicators to make them easier for people with colour perception difficulties to use.

- b) The commission discussed how often Performance Eye Scorecards should be reviewed.

Resolved to look at the quarterly indicators in relation to Performance Eye Scorecards.

114/05 Derby’s Local Area Agreement for 2006-09

Heather Greenan, Planning and Performance Manager gave a presentation to the Commission on Derby’s Local Area Agreement highlighting how the pilot had worked and the short term and longer term plans.

Resolved to note the report.

115/05 Proposal to change the structure of Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

This item was considered in conjunction with the late item regarding the future role of the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission. The Commission considered a report of the Chair containing a proposal to reduce the number of Overview and Scrutiny Commissions from six to five, together with a report of the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission on the value of retaining that Sub Commission as a separate body.

Councillor Latham expressed her concern that a similar proposal had been made in 2005 and had been rejected at the Annual Meeting. She was also concerned that the proposal had been made just before the election.

Councillor Jones felt that a system that enabled as many back benchers as possible to be involved in Overview and Scrutiny was preferable. She circulated a paper to illustrate.

Steve Dunning, Assistant Director - Democratic Services outlined the rules regarding political representation on Commissions.

Councillor MacDonald emphasised the need for a Corporate Parenting Sub Commission and Councillor Allen felt that it was important that this Sub Commission be formally written into the Commission structure.

The Chair explained that the aim of the proposed structure outlined in the report was to bring the Commission’s broadly in line with the Cabinet Member portfolios. He felt that there should be a process of ongoing review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

Concern was raised about maintaining the interest of co-opted Members and about their voting rights under the proposed structure.

Resolved to recommend that Council:

- 1. Accept the five Commission structure set out in paragraph 2.4 and 2.5 of the report, but to include a Corporate Parenting Sub Commission in the structure**
- 2. Increase the membership of each Commission to 10 members**
- 3. Accept the principle that the Overview and Scrutiny structure should align to Council Cabinet portfolios and should change as necessary to reflect any changes to the structure of the Council Cabinet**
- 4. Write to the Government minister to seek clarification of the position of the statutory co-optees on the Commission dealing with education matters in the light of integrated services for children and young people.**

116/05 Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions 2005 -2006

The Commission received a draft annual report proposed by the Scrutiny and Complaints team in conjunction with Commission Chairs.

Resolved to approve the draft report.

117/05 Overview and Scrutiny Conference

The Commission received a report outlining proposals by the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Scrutiny Officer Network to hold a scrutiny conference in September 2006. The report requested that, in return for five free places at the conference, the Commission make a contribution of £500 towards the cost of putting on the event. It was noted that last year's event had been well attended by Derby Councillors and the Commission felt that the funding was worthwhile.

Resolved to approve a contribution of £500 from the Overview and Scrutiny research budget towards the cost of organising the Overview and Scrutiny conference.

118/05 Retrospective Scrutiny

No new items were identified for retrospective scrutiny.

119/05 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

No items were selected from the Forward Plan.

120/05 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

Resolved to note the response from the Council Cabinet to the recommendations from this Commission regarding Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting.

121/05 Matters Referred to the Commission by Council
Cabinet

There were none.

MINUTES END