

ITEM 4

Time commenced – 6.30pm
Time finished – 9:08pm

COMMUNITY REGENERATION COMMISSION 21 MARCH 2006

Present: Councillor Higginbottom (in the Chair)
Councillors Blanksby, Rawson, Samra and Smalley
Mr Kazmi – Co-opted Member

98/05 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones, Redfern and Canon MacDonald.

99/05 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

However, the Commission wished to thank Councillor Blanksby for his work and dedication to the Commission over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

100/05 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Samra declared a personal interest in minute number 105/05 Housing in Multiple Occupation Mandatory Licensing – Fee Setting as he was a private landlord.

101/05 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 January, 14 and 27 February 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Items for Discussion

102/05 Derby Citizens Advice Bureau – Revenue Funding Decision for 2004/05

The Commission received a presentation on Derby Citizens Advice Bureau – Revenue Funding Decision for 2004/05. Joan Dryburgh of Derby Citizens Advice Bureau reported that the Bureau mainly used volunteers who required supervision by managers. Redundancies following the budget cut in 2004/05 had meant that the remaining staff were very busy.

Neil Clurow, Managing Director of Derby Citizens Advice Bureau reported that there were two gaps, financial management, with no dedicated resource and the management of training and recruitment of volunteers with other volunteers currently

being used to provide the initial training required and no further training after the initial session. He was realistic about the future of the Bureau and was in discussions with Derby Law Centre regarding a merger of the two organisations.

Councillor Blanksby commented that demand always outstripped supply for these sort of services and asked what happened to those who could not access the services at Derby Citizens Advice Bureau.

Neil Clurow replied that there was a huge over subscription for the services of the Citizens Advice Bureau across the whole country and that Derby was at a worrying level. A queue regularly formed outside the door of the Bureau before it opened which was a deterrent to many who were not able to wait standing up in a queue for a long period of time. He reported that complaints were monitored and they were all relating to access of the service

Councillor Rawson asked whether the merger with Derby Law Centre would help with the post issues. Neil Clurow replied that it would to some extent as all the resources of both organisations would be used more efficiently.

Resolved:

- 1. to congratulate Derby Citizens Advice Bureau on the changes they have made following the reduction in funding from Derby City Council**
- 2. to recommend that Council Cabinet consider actively support Derby Citizens Advice Bureau in sorting their own accountancy function**
- 3. to recommend to Council Cabinet that if for 2006/07 Derby Citizens Advice Bureau can show how an increase in funding will help the organisation and is still needed an increase in grant be awarded**

103/05 Development of Derby City Credit Union

The Commission received a presentation on the Development of Derby City Credit Union. Rebecca Hunter of the Derby City Credit Union reported that the Credit Union was like a building society with the exception that everyone within the Credit Union had to have something in common. In the case of Derby City Credit Union this was living or working within the city of Derby. Some of the work that Derby City Credit Union had been involved in was the setting up of employee saving schemes with major employers in the city and tenants savings schemes for Derby Homes tenants.

Rebecca Hunter reported that there were currently 57 members with a £3 membership fee, or £1 concession and that £1 was the minimum required in the account to keep it active. She also reported that scheme had been put together in Derwent Community School, where the school children had their own branch which they would run and they could deposit small amounts. The Credit Union could also give out loans to their members. The loans could be small amount over short periods to help someone out,

which a normal bank was unable to do due to the high administrative costs of setting up a loan. The rate offered was also competitive as was the savings rate.

Councillor Rawson asked what happened to any money made by the Union. Rebecca Hunter replied that there had to be a pot which loans and interest payments could be paid out of, plus dividends would be paid to savers. Project funds could also be given out to local community projects which would mean that the Credit Union was giving back to the local community.

Councillor Higginbottom asked what support Derby City Credit Union needed from Derby City Council. Rebecca Hunter replied that on their wish list was someone to help them do their accounts and premises as their current site, although free, was in a very inaccessible location.

Resolved:

- 1. to ask the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services to look at the feasibility of capacity within Council accommodation for Derby City Credit Union**
- 2. to look into the Council employee volunteering strategy**
- 3. to put an advert in Council Life magazine funded from the Community Regeneration Commission research budget.**

Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet/Council Cabinet Member

104/05 Supporting People Budget – Action Plan Update

The Commission considered a report on the Supporting People Budget – Action Plan Update, which gave an update on the position with Supporting People. It was reported that the overall financial position had stabilised following the implementation of both a full round of individual service reviews and the Strategic Reviews which were set a target to reduce spending overall by making the minimum impact on client groups.

Resolved to note the report

105/05 Housing in Multiple Occupation Mandatory Licensing – Fee Setting

The Commission considered a report on the Housing in Multiple Occupation Mandatory Licensing Fee Setting. It was reported that the Housing Act 2004 introduced a mandatory licensing for certain types of House in Multiple Occupation –

HMO – with effect from 6 April 2006. Local authorities were given the opportunity to plan their own fee structures to reflect local circumstances. The license was designed to ensure that the properties within the license fee structure would be maintained to a certain level and the fees recover the cost of doing that. There would be an increase in staff and there would be staff checking on properties. Enforcement costs would be covered through already existing legislation.

It was reported that the Council would be charging a fee of £790 for five years, which would be charged up front. The fee would be compulsory and non-payment could result in a fine of £20,000.

Councillor Samra asked what incentive there was for landlords to apply for the license. Martin Gadsby, Private Sector Housing Manager, responded that it was a compulsory fee, however, they were considering a discount scheme using the accredited scheme for those landlords are approved as being good landlords.

Resolved:

- 1. to recommend that discounts through an accredited scheme be developed as soon as possible to encourage take up**
- 2. to recommend that a small contingency be built in as a buffer zone, with the calculations being based on the worst case scenario**
- 3. to inform Council Cabinet that the Commission were concerned that if the calculations were not accurate, the council tax payer would foot the bill. Therefore the Commission were looking for reassurance from Council Cabinet that they were happy with the figure and if they were unable to offer such an assurance the fee be increased.**

Items for Discussion

106/05 Developing the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda in Derby

The Commission further considered the development of the area and neighbourhood agenda in Derby which had first been discussed at the meeting on 27 February 2006.

Councillor Smalley commented that he had heard that there was going to be smaller localised panels instead of Area Panels and asked whether this was the case. Councillor Higginbottom replied that she had asked the question regarding this had been informed it was one of many options. Isabella Stone, Assistant Director, Community Policy, replied that within the Agenda there was an idea for pilot areas possibly with neighbourhood 'meetings'.

Resolved to receive an update from the relevant Cabinet Member, on the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda, at the next meeting of the Commission.

107/05 Performance Eye

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Resources on reviewing the Performance Eye Scorecards.

Resolved:

- 1. to remove the BV183ii indicator from the Community Regeneration Commission Performance Eye Scorecard**
- 2. to receive the BV211a, BV211b and BV64 indicators annually**
- 3. to continue to receive all annual indicators and decide whether or not to keep them on the scorecard after June when a full years data is available.**

108/05 Housing Revenue Account – Pension Aspects of the Business Plan

The Commission considered questions they wished to ask Derbyshire County Council Local Government Pension Scheme regarding the Derby Homes pension scheme.

Resolved to ask the following questions and receive a response at the next meeting:

- 1. On current assumptions, if Derby Homes continues to contribute on the current basis, would the pension's gap of £4million be eliminated, if so by when?**
- 2. If Derby Homes increased its contributions voluntarily to reduce the overall deficit, how would the fund treat the investment made?**
- 3. Should Derby Homes be wound up in the future, how would the staff be treated for pension purposes?**

109/05 Topic Reviews

The Commission received an update on the progress of the current topic review.

Resolved to note the update

110/05 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items

111/05 Call-In

There were no call-ins.

Response of the Council Cabinet/Cabinet Member to any reports of the Commission

112/05 Derby Homes Service Access Review Proposed Closure of Local Housing Offices

The Commission considered a minute extract from the Leader of the Council – Urgent Decision Meeting on 17 February 2006 regarding the proposed closure of local housing offices as part of the Derby Homes Service Access Review. It was reported that a further report would be brought to the next meeting.

Resolved to note the report

113/05 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

Resolved that the Commission should consider the following key decisions in the Forward Plan at the most appropriate time:

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Item</u>
83/05	Derby Older Persons Housing Strategy

MINUTES END