

Time commenced - 6.00 pm
Time finished - 8.25 pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 31 JANUARY 2005

Present: Councillor Troup (in the Chair)
Councillors Ahern, Bayliss, P Berry, Graves, Hussain, Jones,
Lowe, MacDonald, Repton, Smalley

60/04 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Latham, Redfern and Travis

61/04 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items. However the Chair reminded members of the Commission about a website workshop to be held in Room 143 at the Council House at 5.45 pm on 2 February 2005.

62/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

63/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

64/04 Call-in

There had been no call-in of a decision.

Items for Discussion

65/04 Revenue Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services, which set out aspects of the draft revenue budget 2005/06 – 2007/08 which fell within the remit of the Commission. The Commission also considered reports from the Community Regeneration, Culture and Prosperity, Education, Planning and Environment and Social Care and Health Commissions which set out recommendations based on the aspects of the draft revenue Budget which fell within the remit of those Commissions. Councillor Burgess, Leader of the Council, Ray Cowlshaw, Chief Executive and Paul Dransfield, Director of Finance attended the Commission meeting and responded to

Commission Members questions about the Draft Revenue Budget. Commission Members expressed their concerns about the growing problem of graffiti in the city. There was a discussion about the possibility of using some of the unallocated project priority fund to address the graffiti problems. The Leader of the Council told the Commission Members that Council Cabinet would consider the views of the Commission on this matter. Commission Members also expressed concern about the provision of parking for residents of Derby and it was suggested that Council Cabinet should consider this when setting the budget.

The recommendations made in respect of the draft revenue budget by each of the other five Overview and Scrutiny Commissions were considered in turn by the Scrutiny Management Commission.

Community Regeneration Commission

The Commission agreed with the recommendations 1 and 2 of the Community Regeneration Commission but in respect of recommendation 2. considered that it would be more appropriate if the £72,000 were made available from a revenue source rather than Public Priority Fund.

Culture and Prosperity Commission

The Commission agreed with recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the Culture and Prosperity Commission. Members also recommended that the reference to the possible closure of the Chaddesden Park Paddling Pool be deleted from the Commercial Services budget list of 'further service budget proposals and strategy to meet them'.

Education Commission

The Commission agreed with the Education Commission's recommendation.

Planning and Environment Commission

The Commission agreed with the seven recommendations proposed by the Planning and Environment Commission.

Social Care and Health Commission

The Commission agreed with four recommendations proposed by the Social Care and Health Commission.

Resolved:

- 1. To recommend Council Cabinet to consider the issue of graffiti and car parking provision when setting the budget and ask as a matter of urgency for the Planning and Environment Commission to be provided with a report, detailing the actions that would be taken to address these issues.**

- 2. To recommend Council Cabinet to consider the recommendations by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in respect of the Draft Revenue Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.**

66/04 Capital Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Finance on the Capital Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08. The Director of Finance told the Commission that the report had not yet been considered by Council Cabinet and said that the bullet points listed in the recommendation indicated the areas where the views of the Commission were sought. He then gave a brief explanation of the Capital Budget and asked the Commission whether they considered that the prioritisation of the budget was correct. The Commission Members discussed the need to refurbish Mickleover Library. Councillor Burgess, Leader of the Council, told the Commission that he thought there would be value in exploring a planned programme for refurbishing the district libraries. There were questions from the Commission members about depreciation and repair. The Director of Finance and Chief Executive both agreed that there was also need to tackle problems with Council buildings.

Resolved to support the Capital Budget proposals set out in the report.

67/04 Update on the Achievement and Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in Derby Topic Review

David Romaine, Scrutiny and Complaints Manager, reported that interviews on the 'So What's Happened Since?' aspect of the review were almost complete. The report on the outcome of the Cabinet /Scrutiny Workshop was being prepared by the Consultant and was expected in the next week or so. This report would be forwarded to the core group. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination team were looking at what other Local Authority leaders in scrutiny did in order to see if they had any good practice methods that Derby could adopt. The Overview and Scrutiny team would prepare a short report on the findings for the core group. The intention was to draw all the information together into a draft report which would be presented to the Commission at its meeting on 22 March 2005. The Commission Members could then look at all the information which had been compiled. The final version of the report would be presented to the Scrutiny Management Commission meeting 19 April 2005 so that Members would have several weeks following the 22 March 2005 meeting in which to decide on the final form of the report and the recommendations that they felt were appropriate. It was intended that the final report on the review would be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 25 May 2005.

Resolved to note the report.

68/04 Update on the Overlapping Areas of Control and Management Topic Review

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services, which set out the results from the investigation carried out by the Sub Group of Members on

behalf of the Commission. Work involved surveys of departments and directorates, interviews conducted by support officers and direct evidence gathering interviews by Members. The report looked at the personnel involved in the Procurement function. The report had been kept intentionally brief it included an appendix listing the evidence document and the number of recommendations.

Resolved to approve the draft report for submission to Council Cabinet.

69/04 The Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities Draft Corporate Plan

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, setting out the Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities Draft Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008. The Director of Finance told the Commission that the intention was to present a report to Council at its meeting on 2 March 2005. The updated Plan which contained detailed targets and objectives was available on DerbyNet. The Director told the Commission that all the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions would be given the opportunity to comment on the Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities Draft Corporate Plan.

Resolved to agree to the Vision, Objectives and Priorities and Draft Corporate Plan and offer no comments on it to Council Cabinet.

70/04 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Commission considered the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for February 2005 and requested that when time permits the following item be considered by the Commission at the appropriate time:

72/04 Consortium of Local Authorities Special Projects - CLASP.

Matters Referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

71/04 Internal Audit Inspection Report in 2004/05

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Finance which gave details of the Internal Audits that had been conducted during the period April – December 2004. Richard Boneham, Head of Audit, informed the Commission that to date audit work had found nothing which would compromise the internal control environment of the Council. However, he reported that Internal Audit had experienced some delays in obtaining feedback from managers on draft audit reports. To avoid delays in issuing final reports Internal Audit had now implemented a procedure whereby any draft report not responded to within six weeks of the date of issue was sent to the appropriate Chief Officer to secure a response. He also explained that there was a shortage of Audit providers and that the proposal to waive contract procedure rules was to enable Internal Audit to bring in the additional resources they needed in order to complete 2004/05 Audit Plans.

Commission Members expressed concern that the period of six weeks that managers were allowed in which to respond to a draft report was too long. Members were of the opinion that this period should be reduced to four weeks because Internal Audit was important and that it did not seem to be taken as seriously as it should be. It was felt that procedures should not be changed to make it more convenient for managers. Members also expressed concern about the proposal to waive contract procedure rules. Members were concerned about the lack of response to the Audit report in some areas, for example, 'going places'. Managers needed to be aware that a lack of response was not acceptable.

Resolved to make the following comment to Council Cabinet - that the period that managers were allowed in which to respond to a draft report should be reduced from six weeks to four weeks and that responding to draft reports was mandatory.

72/04 Developing Derby's Pilot Local Area Agreement – LAA

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Policy, which set out a report that had been considered by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 18 January 2005 and had been referred to this Commission for comment. The timescales for the development of Derby's Pilot Local Area Agreement were given. It was noted that these were extremely tight.

Resolved to note the report.

72/04 Land Adoption Across Derby

The Commission considered a minute extract from Area Panel 1, relating to Community Facilities at Breadsall Hilltop, Derwent. The Area Panel were concerned that land could not be adopted until it was made up to a standard suitable for maintenance. There were several areas of land across the city which remained unadopted. The Area Panel had requested the Commission to investigate the wider issue on land adoption across the city with a view to the situation at Breadsall Hilltop, Derwent, being prevented in future.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the minute extract from Area Panel 1.**
- 2. To request the Planning and Environment Commission to consider the detail of the report and report back to Scrutiny Management Commission with their findings.**

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