

Time commenced - 6.00 pm
Time finished - 7.55 pm

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
16 FEBRUARY 2005**

Present: Councillor Ahern (in the Chair)
Councillors Baxter, P Berry, Bolton, Jackman, Leeming,
Rehman, Troup and Willitts

65/04 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

66/04 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

67/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

68/04 Call-In

There were no call-ins.

69/04 Best Value of Bereavement Services

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Commercial Services that set out the outcome of the Best Value Review of Bereavement Services and included the Executive Summary, Improvement Plan and Financial Implications of the review.

It was reported that since the inspection of memorials commenced in January 2002 20,000 memorials had been inspected and 2,000 had been laid down. It was estimated that up to 50% of headstones may be unsafe and would have to be laid down. It was noted that the inspection of high-risk memorials would be completed by December 2005 and the inspection of 6,000 lawned graves would commence in January 2006.

Members considered that as no complaints appeared to have been received about the service offered to the public at Nottingham Road Cemetery and at Markeaton Crematorium, there seemed to be no need to increase the staffing levels at these facilities in the way proposed in the Best Value report.

The Commission considered it inappropriate to compare adult cremation charges at Markeaton Crematorium with those of other Unitary Authority Crematoria and to maintain them in line with the national average for Unitary Authorities. This was because of the differing nature and staffing levels of the other crematoria. The

Commission also pointed out that when the issue of charging had been considered as part of their review of the Council's draft Revenue Budget they had recommended that the increase should be limited to a maximum of 4%.

The Commission noted that the operation of the cremators was largely automatic and all the cremator operators were fully trained. Members found it difficult to see how the efficiency of the technicians could be improved by reviewing the opening/operating hours of the crematorium.

The Commission considered that there was no real need to provide a covered area for viewing the flowers at Markeaton Crematorium and it was felt that this could actually have a detrimental effect on the flowers.

Resolved to request that Council Cabinet reconsider the recommendations of the Best Value report on Bereavement Services in light of the comments made by the Commission.

70/04 Proposed Extension to the Commission's Review of Enforcement of the Dog Fouling Legislation

The Commission considered a report from the Chair of the Planning and Environment Commission that set out the proposed extension to the Commission's review of enforcement of the dog fouling legislation.

It was reported that at the Commission's meeting on 2 September 2004 Members had agreed to carry out reviews in 2004/5 of the Derby City Council's Tree Management Policy and the enforcement of the Dog Fouling legislation in Derby.

At the Commission's meeting on 20 January 2005, it was suggested by the Assistant Director – Environmental Services and Trading Standards that the proposed review of Dog Fouling was extended to cover the whole Dog Control service.

Resolved:

1. To agree to extend the Commission's review of enforcement of the Dog Fouling legislation to cover the whole of the Council's Dog Control Service.
2. To visit Tameside on 8 March 2005 and Mansfield on 9 March 2005 to gain an understanding of how other Local Authorities deal with dog fouling.
3. To write to all Councillors asking them to inform the Chair, Vice Chair or Co-ordination Officer of any areas within their wards. It was agreed that issues should be taken to community panels, Derby Homes and area panels.

71/04 Tree Management Policy

The Commission considered the response of the Commercial Services Directorate to the Commission's interim report on the Council's Tree Management Policy to Council Cabinet on 19 October 2004.

Geoff Hall, the Assistant Director – Works and Engineering, informed the Commission that it would be premature for Council Cabinet to respond to the Commission's recommendations before the budget process had been completed. He said it was then hoped to present a comprehensive report to the Commission.

The Commission were told that the Highways Inspectors had been given basic training by the Senior Arboricultural Officer. During the course of their routine highway inspections the Inspectors would identify defective trees and report them to the Arboricultural Officers. Park Rangers were also to be trained in tree inspection and funding for this was included in the Commercial Services Budget.

The Commission were told that that regular inspections needed to be carried out on Derby parks trees. It was considered that Commercial Services were not in the best position to respond to Derby homes trees.

Councillor Troup considered that Derby Homes should be responding to issues of trees on their properties.

72/04 Street Lighting

The Committee received a presentation from John Hansed – head of Street Care and Waste Management on the current level of response by Development and Cultural Services to complaints by members of public about street lighting and on the general response of Streetcare to calls from the public.

It was reported that Street Lighting PFI was to commence in Summer 2006 and would be a 25 year contract. The Commission were told that in the first five years two-thirds of the street lighting in Derby City would be replaced.

John Hansed told the Commission that the section had had many staffing problems and that the number of Lighting Engineers had at one time been reduced from six to two. New appointments had now been made and the backlog of complaints had been recovered by the end of October 2004 with the exception of traffic sensitive streets. It was noted that the target for repairs following a complaint was 10 days, and the section were currently achieving around 12 days.

Councillor Redfern was concerned that there was no indication of repair timescales in Performance Eye and asked what happens when a call is taken from a member of the public.

John Hansed responded that calls from member of the public would be to the Streetcare hot line or a member of staff who would then refer the call to the Lighting Section. It was hoped that local targets for street lighting would be shown on Performance Eye eventually.

Geoff Hall reported that every street light in the city was inspected every 2 weeks and if a fault was spotted it was hoped that the repair would be completed within 3 weeks.

John Hansed reported that Streetcare currently employed seven staff who dealt with incoming calls and e-mails. However it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit staff at the grade offered. It was noted that there had been a turnover of 24 temporary staff in 18 months. The number of enquiries was estimated at £45,000 a year.

73/04 Forward Plan

Members did not identify any items from the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting:

74/04 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any Reports of the Commission

None.

75/04 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

None.

Minutes End