

Time commenced – 5.30pm
Time finished – 6.12pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 21 SEPTEMBER 2004

Present: Councillor Troup (Chair)
Councillors Ahern, P Berry, Hussain, MacDonald, Redfern, Repton.

28/04 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bayliss, Graves, Jones, Latham, Lowe, Smalley and Travis.

29/04 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

30/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Items for Discussion

31/04 Customer Services Standards

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services, which stated that the Service Access Review, completed earlier this year, had recommended the development of a Customer Services Strategy and Customer Services Standards for the Council. The Strategy was approved by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 10 August 2004. The Customer Services Standards had been developed by the Frontline Employee Forum and Customer Services Group. The Standards outlined how the Council would improve Customer Service by detailing the responses customers could expect when they contacted the Council. They covered all forms of interaction and communication with the Council and set targets for all employees to meet when dealing with customers. The Standards would be considered by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 28 September 2004 and would be launched to employees and members at events to be held at the Assembly Rooms on 4 October 2004. Standards would be officially published and launched to the public in January 2005.

The Commission was concerned that the Standards should also apply to Derby Homes and any contractors associated with the Council. Councillor Ahern was concerned about the use of answer phones and to make sure that messages left were responded to quickly. It was reported that there was to be a rationalisation of hot lines and the Chief Officer Group would receive a report recommending that answer phones were not used. Councillor Redfern was concerned for customers who were hard of hearing and the difficulties they encountered when they got through to an answer phone. She

was also concerned that customers should be given a place to discuss their issues in private should they request it. It was reported that the Standards would apply across the Council and performance would be monitored against the Standards and the results publicised. Councillor Redfern said that if someone required bulky waste to be collected from their house, they had to go to Celtic House to pay for the service before the collection would be made. It was suggested that people should be able to make such payments at the Council House and local housing offices if it was more convenient for them to do so.

Resolved to make the following comments to Council Cabinet:

- a) The Commission strongly recommends that the Standards be applied to Derby Homes and any service provided by contractors and where possible be incorporated within contracts**
- b) Customers should be able to pay for services at any service point**
- c) Facilities should be provided for face-to-face consultations and in private should customers request it**
- d) The Council should move as quickly as possible to a system across the whole Council which does not use answer phones on customer service lines**
- e) The Commission wishes to receive regular reports on the progress of the implementation of the Customer Services Standards.**

MINUTES END