

Time started – 6.00pm
Time finished – 8.40pm

COMMUNITY COMMISSION
9 JUNE 2010

Present: Councillor Naitta (Chair)
Councillors Davis, Graves, Jackson, Leeming, Lowe, Rawson
and Redfern

01/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chera.

02/10 Late Items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

03/10 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Redfern declared a personal interest in Minute 7/10 as a Council appointed member of the Board of Derby Homes.

04/10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**05/10 Municipal Golf Courses – Award of the
Management Contract**

During the consideration of the following item the Chair, Councillor Naitta, declared a personal and prejudicial interest as he was Cabinet Member when the decision on the contract was made. He left the room while it was considered. Councillor Rawson, as Vice Chair of the Commission, chaired this item.

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods on the award of a management contract for the authority's municipal golf courses.

Councillor Davis expressed concern that none of the Ward Members in Allestree had been consulted on this. She asked what consultation had been done. The Interim Director of Culture and Leisure, Helen Osler, stated that the consultation had gone the Pointer Panel. Councillor Davis stated that there should be two separate consultations one to Sinfin and one about the Allestree course and the future of Allestree Hall.

The Interim Director of Culture and Leisure informed the Commission that this had come about because there had been concerns about the accessibility of the two courses under the previous management. The contract had been brought back under the authority's management but was running at a loss and the Council cannot afford the capital investment that is required to regenerate the facilities. The management of both courses was put out to tender and the successful bidder has offered the necessary finances to invest in the courses if the return is based on a contract for 50 years.

Councillor Redfern expressed concern that the neighbourhood forums were not being used for consultation purposes.

The Vice Chair stated that it is not adequate to just send consultation to the Pointer Panel. Both the neighbourhood boards and ward councillors should be included in any future consultations. Reference was also made to undertakings regarding consultation offered in early 2009 when an earlier decision on market testing the golf courses had been called in and referred back to the Council Cabinet.

Resolved to recommend Council Cabinet:

- 1. To not confirm the contract because the consultation over the proposal was unsatisfactory**
- 2. To rectify the inadequate consultation, prior to taking any final decision, by consulting, at minimum, the ward councillors and the Neighbourhood Forums and Boards for the two wards plus the golf course users**
- 3. To not award this or other service management contracts for 50 years, as that is too long a period to be tied in, but instead accept the Commission's preference that such contracts should generally not exceed about 25 years.**

06/10 Homelessness Strategy Review

Councillor Naitta rejoined the Commission before discussion commenced on this item and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director of Adults Health and Housing on the Homelessness Review 2010. Jeremy Mason, Housing Strategy Officer, stated that the review was a stage recommended by DCLG in the preparation of Homelessness Strategies. The purpose of the review was to analyse the changes and the pressures on the service since 2003. The review has found that the main cause of homelessness is now eviction by either family or friends. This has now replaced domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness. The younger groups still account for the majority of cases with 90 percent of those affected being aged between 16-44 years old. Home visits are being used as a preventative measure to attempt

to solve problems which may lead to homelessness. But this requires a large amount of resources to be effective.

Members posed questions that were responded to by Mark Menzies - Assistant Director, Lisa Callow – Head of Service for Housing Options and Jeremy Mason. Reference was made to the drafting of the new Homelessness Strategy, whose recommendations would be shaped by the responses to the review.

Resolved to note the update

07/10 Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System Reform

The Commission considered a report of the Strategic Director of Resources on the Housing Revenue Account. Members were asked to consider the consultation on the future of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System.

The Head of Finance – Adults, Social Care and Housing, David Enticott, informed Members that the Government had published a 'prospectus' for the reform of the Housing Revenue Account, HRA, Subsidy System, HRASS, on 25 March and requested responses to the consultation contained within it by 6 July. Clarification has been sought from CLG that a response received on 7 July will be considered. He stated that overall, the HRA was in surplus but will lose the benefit of additional funds currently available as a result of the ALMO settlement from next financial year. This will mean that the Council will start to make significant payments of negative subsidy at that point.

The offer from the government implied by the prospectus was that debt would be increased from current levels but then be capped at that level. This was clearly better than the alternative that would see increasing levels of negative subsidy paid to the government over time.

Councillor Leeming stated that this would be an ideal opportunity to strengthen the authority's current housing stock. However, to keep costs low any building schemes should be on Council owned land but it was noted that suitable sites may be in short supply.

Councillor Davis expressed concern that the potential interest rates the Council would be tied into paying appeared quite high. The Head of Finance – Adults, Social Care and Housing stated that officers had identified that they would need to service about £400m of debt. Since they had £300m already the higher rates of interest would only apply to £100m. Officers would seek to exploit the low interest rates currently offered wherever possible.

Councillor Redfern expressed concern with the risks the Council would be exposed to in taking on these loans. The Head of Finance – Adults, Social Care and Housing stated that £300m of the loans had been taken on for a

very long period and so were low risk than on the short term borrowing which has a variable rate.

Resolved to note the report

08/10 Call-in

There were no call-ins to report to the Commission

09/10 Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action to report to the Commission

**10/10 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any
reports of the Commission**

There were no responses of the Council Cabinet to report.

11/10 Remit and Work Programme 2010-11

Members were asked to reflect on the previous year's programme and suggest new items for inclusion on the 2010-11 work programme.

**Resolved to consider including the following items in the work
programme for 2010-11:**

- 1. Causes of prostitution**
- 2. Social Cohesion**
- 3. The Sports Strategy**
- 4. Private Sector Housing**

**and to carry over Public Toilets and the Derby Live items from the
previous work programme.**

**12/10 Matters referred to the Commission by Council
Cabinet**

There were no items referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet.

13/10 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items of retrospective scrutiny.

14/10 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

There were no items on the Forward Plan relevant to the Commission's remit.

MINUTES END