



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
16 MARCH 2004

Report of the Community Regeneration Commission

Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment – Comments on the Council Cabinet response

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council Cabinet be recommended:

1. To reconsider their response to recommendation 9 and be asked to establish a Cabinet Committee.
2. To accept that the Commission had evidence based reasons for making recommendation 10, namely examples of joined up working not taking place.
3. To lobby central government on a cross party basis to change the legislation to enable the Council to enter private property for the purpose of removing drugs litter and other associated threats to public health and safety.
4. To commend the initiative of the Community Safety Partnership in removing drugs litter.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Regarding recommendation 1 above (relating to recommendation 9 of the topic review report), the Commission members feel strongly that their reasoning in Section 10 (attached as appendix 2) of the topic review report is logical, economical and most likely to ensure *continued* attention is paid to these tackling these malaises. Para 10.3 states: “high level attention paid to issues can in itself act as a catalyst to better performance...”
- 2.2 Regarding recommendation 2 above, the Commission members feel the response suggests their recommendation 10 was considered by Council Cabinet to be either unnecessary or redundant. In fact Commission members heard of and saw examples where co-ordination was clearly not being achieved. This evidence related to both the direct remit of the review, and also wider aspects of communication: reference was made (para 10.5) to a “worrying lack of communication between community groups, regeneration agencies and local council functions”. The evidence was thus the basis for both recommendations 10 and 9 which are linked. Establishment of the Cabinet Committee (rec 9) would facilitate focussed monitoring and therefore make the better local co-ordination sought (rec 10) more likely to be achieved.
- 2.3 Regarding recommendation 3 above, since the topic review on *Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment* was completed, the Commission has been undertaking a review on *Crime and Disorder and Young People* and has heard further evidence about drug misuse and the abandoning of needles on private

property. Children often have access to such land, either playing or when used as short cuts. This new recommendation can be seen as a sensible addition to recommendation 11 which Council Cabinet have agreed and Councillor Burgess has written to the Deputy Prime Minister about.

- 2.4 Regarding 4 above, this was considered by Commission members to be an excellent six-month pilot initiative made possible through Home Office funding. It enables drugs litter to be removed from areas close to land for which the Council is already responsible, like public open spaces and highways, and therefore land likely to be traversed by children and young adults.
- 2.5 The Commission hopes Cabinet will reflect on the above comments that are made in the same positive vein as the original report, which was the result of extensive evidence gathering. The foreword in the colour booklet stated that the report contained “no grand gestures with price tags but, has a package of measures to tackle the problems and the speed of response instead through improved inter-agency working and more efficiency.” Further the report was intended “as a reference point for three to four years, with Council Cabinet providing a periodic progress report on implementing the various proposals”.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Commission meeting was attended by John Hansed, representing Jonathan Guest who had co-ordinated the production of the Council Cabinet response. He answered members’ questions and subsequently the Commission deliberated and made the recommendations shown.

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Background papers:	All public domain
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications; Appendix 2 – Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment Section 10 Council-wide Political Co-ordination

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Dealt with in the response report submitted to Council Cabinet on 13 January 2004.

Legal

- 2 Dealt with in the response report submitted to Council Cabinet on 13 January 2004.

Personnel

3. Dealt with in the response report submitted to Council Cabinet on 13 January 2004.

Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

4. The topic review recommendations can help deliver five of the seven *Corporate Objectives* :• strong and positive neighbourhoods • protecting and supporting people • a healthy environment • shops, commercial and leisure activities • integrated, cost effective services and six of the ten *Priorities for change*: 1. Minimise increases in Council Tax and increase value for money from Council services. 2. Tackle under-achievement in schools, in particular by helping schools come out of special measures or serious weakness and preventing other schools entering these categories 3. Promote the city as a major force for industry, commerce, culture and tourism throughout the country and as an equal participant within the East Midlands region. 5. Develop an integrated management system of the city and district centres to improve their attractiveness and viability. 8. Enhance the community leadership role of the Council both at strategic and neighbourhood level, through partnership working and listening to, and communicating, with the public. 9. Respond to people's needs appropriately, on time and first time, by developing a customer-focused culture, using new technology and investing in the Council's buildings to provide modern working environments for service delivery and employees.

Appendix 2

Extract from 'Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment': Section 10. Council-wide Political Co-ordination

- 10.1 At the very first meeting, on 8 January, the description of different departments being responsible for different land parcels and operating to different standards and frequencies had prompted the Vice Chair to ask the rhetorical question: "So we need an environment authority then?" Reflecting back, at the end of the review, on the accumulated evidence from all the intervening meetings and visits, the Commission concluded that there was indeed a need for a powerful co-ordinating role. During the last decade there has been a fashion in the UK and USA for responding to an issue by creating a new role, badged "tsar" but with an official job title of co-ordinator. As with the UK drugs tsar, the outcome has not necessarily been happy.
- 10.2 Rather than go down that route, which also ties up resources in a large salary, the Commission proposes a no cost "authority" which will bring together key players but in a small enough forum to focus on results. The Commission propose that from the Council Cabinet a *Physical Environment Committee* (PEC) be created, comprising those portfolio holders responsible for *land* and, using 2002/3 portfolios would include: Leisure and Cultural Services (re. parks and allotments), Environment and Direct Services (re. street cleaning and grounds maintenance), Planning and Prosperity (re. footpaths, highways, car parks), Lifelong Learning (re. schools and school playing fields), Housing and Social Inclusion (re. Derby Homes) and Regeneration and Performance Management (re. estates).

- 10.3 High level attention paid to issues can in itself act as a catalyst to better performance – a national example was the rise in the number of children placed for adoption after the Prime Minister took an interest and before any report was issued. The proposed PEC can speed up delivery of the good intentions regarding better co-ordination between departments of area-based clean ups of litter, graffiti and fly posting. The PEC should seek overtime to achieve a convergence in cleaning standards. With one proviso, the benchmark standard should be that of highway land firstly because that is always in any vicinity and secondly because the street care staff are consistently attuned to the standards required under the EPA. The proviso is that schools will need to comply with litter duties which differentiate between hard surfaced areas and grassed areas and between term time and holiday times.
- 10.4 The Commission have recommended (at para 5.1) city-wide close working between youth workers and park rangers and this again is likely to be realised in a bespoke political forum focussed on results.

Box 3: Scrutiny being heeded – on street lighting

The Commission had recommended as its highest priority amongst the Flagship schemes City Wide Improvements to Street Lighting explaining it was “currently undertaking a topic review on social inclusion and the physical environment and has received evidence that a joined up approach to neighbourhood improvements can best deliver improvements to the street scene and therefore residents quality of life. Better illumination may in itself discourage vandalism, fly tipping, graffiti as well as crimes against the person; the beneficial effect may also be magnified if more people feel safe to walk or cycle the streets so reducing the opportunity for unnoticed offending”.

- 10.5 The proposed Cabinet Committee can provide the political coherence at corporate level. In the same vein, co-ordination of the existing services can achieve more, as the output of the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts. Therefore, using the vehicle of Integrated Service Development, at the more local level the Commission believe Derby's *area panel managers* and *neighbourhood co-ordinators* also have a key, corresponding role in making connections between departments and agencies to help solve problems similar to those at Chaddesden Park and to help achieve and maintain coherence in public service delivery. Later in the report, the narrative at Box 6 shows a worrying lack of communication between community groups, regeneration agencies and local council functions. Local co-ordination therefore also needs to improve the information loop. One aspect of that is to keep abreast of current usage of various publicly funded facilities (number/type of activities and actual take-up) and change/cessation of use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. **Under Council Cabinet Procedure Rule 1 a PEC be created, comprising those Council Cabinet portfolio holders responsible for land to achieve a co-ordinated approach and convergence of standards.**
10. **At local service delivery level, the area and neighbourhood officers should be a complementary means of making connections between individual council**

departments and other agencies and securing better sharing of information between departments, agencies and local community groups.

