

Overview and Scrutiny

Draft Annual Report 2005/06

PART 2

(Pages 9 – 58)

3. Reports of the Individual Commissions

This section shows the activity of the individual Overview and Scrutiny Commissions during 2005/06 and each is divided into two parts.

- **Policy Development**, setting out how 'topic reviews' and larger scrutiny exercises were conducted. Either can include the conduct of research and consultation with residents, service users and other interested parties to help develop policy options. To encourage policy development work the Council's Constitution allows each Commission to carry out up to two 'topic reviews' in any one year.
- **Items scrutinised by the Commission**, summarising the outcomes when a decision of Council Cabinet or performance of a service has been scrutinised. This may also involve research and consultation.

The outcome of these processes will be evidence-based recommendations that are aimed at developing and improving Council policies, or influencing the decisions of other agencies. Most reports are submitted to Council Cabinet but, regarding National Health Service matters, can be sent direct to the NHS decision-making body.

The individual Commissions largely control their own agenda, which issues they wish to review or scrutinise, and how much time to devote to any matter.

3.1 Scrutiny Management Commission



Councillor Alan Graves
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Pauline Latham OBE
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

The outcome and recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Commission's Review of Scrutiny (see the 2004 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Commissions) were reported to full Council at the Annual Meeting on 25 May 2005. In summary the recommendations of the SMC were that:

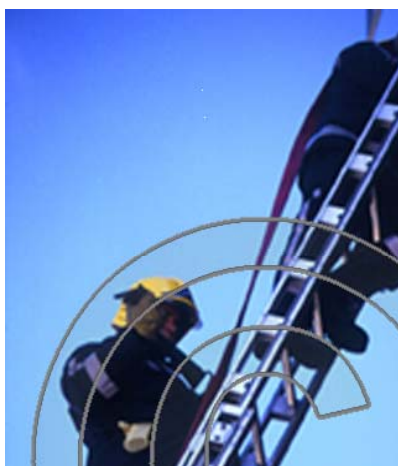
1. The engagement between Cabinet and the Scrutiny Commissions should be improved.
2. The Commissions should increase their involvement in scrutiny.
3. The Commissions should review their work processes with a view to improving outcomes and the linkages to Council priorities.
4. The Commissions should identify the skills needed by Chairs and members to deliver effective scrutiny and prepare training programmes designed to address any skill shortages they identify.
5. The number of commissions should be reduced from six to four and each Commission should be linked with two Cabinet portfolios.

When these recommendations were voted on at the Annual Meeting the first four were approved. However the recommendation to reduce the number of Commissions from six to four was defeated by one vote and the original six Commission Overview and Scrutiny structure was retained for 2005/06.

During the past year the Scrutiny Management Commission has examined a number of possible work plan topics. One proposal was to look again at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure and to see whether it was possible to develop one with better linkages between the Scrutiny and Cabinet portfolios. A scoping report outlining such a review was presented to the

Commission's meeting on 13 September 2005 but members took the view that much of the work had already been done as part of the Commissions 2004/05 Review of Scrutiny and decided not to proceed.

At their meeting on 1 November 2005 SMC members received a scoping report on a possible review of the Council's Emergency Planning procedures. The Commission were told that emergency planning for Derby was provided under a Local Service Agreement by Derbyshire County Council and Ian Shuttleworth, the County Council's Emergency Planning Officer, gave a presentation to the Commission. However, having considered the report and the presentation, Commission members resolved to ask for regular emergency planning updates but decided not to proceed with a review of emergency planning.



Some other possible work plan topic reviews, which had been suggested at a previous meeting of the SMC, were further discussed at the Commission meeting on 1 November 2005. As a result of that discussion members agreed to look in more detail at the possibility of carrying out a review that would compare Council Tax income and expenditure on a ward by ward basis across the City. A scoping report outlining such a review was prepared by the Co-ordination Team and was presented to

the Commission's meeting on 13 December 2005.

At the meeting on 13 December the Commission was advised that a review of Council Tax income and expenditure would involve a considerable commitment of the Commission's time and would require significant officer involvement. Members were advised that it would consequently not be possible to start work on a review of Council Tax income/expenditure until April 2006 and that the first task would be to clarify the objectives and to define the methodology of the review. Having considered the report members agreed to proceed with the review on that basis.

In addition to the consideration of possible work plan topics the SMC has also conducted a short review to consider and comment upon the impact of the proposed reorganisation of UK Police Forces on Derbyshire Constabulary.

The review of the proposed reorganisation of Derbyshire Constabulary took the form of a single meeting that was held on 28 November 2005.



The SMC took the view that the issue was of interest to all the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions and invited all members of the Council to take part. David Coleman, the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary, and Janet Birkin, the Chair of the Derbyshire Police Authority, gave evidence to the meeting which was attended by about 15 members of the Council. Having heard the evidence, the Commission recommended that Council Cabinet:

- a) express the Council's support for the resolution made at the Association of Police Authorities Summit of Chairs and Chief Executives of Police Authorities on 7 December 2005 and,
- b) seek a solution which will secure effective policing of the city of Derby as the top priority.

These recommendations were subsequently adopted by Council Cabinet.

◆ **Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06**

19 APRIL 2005

Review of Children Looked-After Services – The Commission approved Children Looked After Services as the next topic review by the Social Care and Health Commission.

Energy Policy for Buildings – The Commission considered a new policy that had been written to reflect the Government and European Union's target for reducing energy consumption and establishing good practice. The Commission proposed the additional wording: 'the Council will actively seek to identify and implement as a priority low cost energy saving measures that have a quick return on investment' be incorporated into the report.

Draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions – The Commission agreed that the objectives for Overview and Scrutiny for the coming year should be to:

- Improve engagement between Cabinet and the Commission
- Increase involvement in Scrutiny by reducing the emphasis placed on topic reviews
- Review the Commissions' work processes to improve outcomes and linkages to Council priorities
- Identify the skills needed by Chairs and Members and prepare training programmes to address any skill shortages.

Draft Report on the Review of Scrutiny – The Commission resolved to recommend the above objectives to full Council and that the number of commissions be reduced from six to four and the split in functions between Commissions should link each commission with two Cabinet portfolios.

7 JUNE 2005

Property Disposals: Update on 126 Osmaston Road and land at Wood Road / Wayfaring Road, Oakwood – The Commission considered the current position and recommended to Council Cabinet that 126 Osmaston Road should not be converted to a house in Multiple Occupation in order not to increase the residential density in the area.

Adoption of Land – The Commission considered the issues relating to the adoption of land by the Council and asked the Plans and Policies Section to consult with Ward Members on the conditions of Section 106 agreements. The Co-ordination Officer was asked to draft a report on the way in which Section 106 agreements were implemented.

Developing the Use of Performance Eye by the Commissions – The Commission resolved to include Performance Eye as a standing item on Commission agendas, to request reports on all red indicators, to invite explanations where there were particular areas of concern, and to allow time for remedial action to take effect.

Overview and Scrutiny Objectives and Work Planning for 2005/06 – The Commission resolved to include retrospective scrutiny as a standing item on agendas and requested a report on improving alignment between Commission and Cabinet member portfolios. It was also decided to invite Council Cabinet members to Commission pre-agenda meetings.

Energy Policy for Buildings – The Commission noted that the Council Cabinet had approved the Energy Policy for Buildings amended as suggested by the Commission.

The Review of Scrutiny – The Commission were informed that Council Cabinet had commended the Commission for its work in reviewing the current Overview and Scrutiny Function and for suggesting options for reforming the Scrutiny function.

Forward Plan – The Commission asked Council Cabinet to look at the format of the forward plan and suggested some improvements.

Best Value Performance Plan 2005-2008 – The Commission recommended that Council Cabinet review the cost and effectiveness of consultation with the public.

Internal Audit Plan 2005/2006 – The Commission received a report on the Internal Audit Plan 2005/2006.

19 JULY 2005

Objectives and Work Planning for 2005/06 – The Commission approved “Review of the Housing Allocations Policy” as the Community Regeneration Commission’s 2005/06 topic review.

I’m a Councillor Get Me Out Of Here – The Commission was informed of a proposal to hold an event similar to ‘I’m a Councillor Get Me Out of Here’, being arranged to help engage Derby young people in democracy, and an allocation of £300 from the Commission’s budget was agreed.

Overview and Scrutiny Conference – The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Scrutiny Officer Network had agreed to organise a conference focus on the practical aspects of overview and scrutiny and the Commission approved a contribution of £500 from its research budget towards the cost.

Performance Eye – The Commission received reports from the relevant officers on:

- BV157 – the number of transactions enabled by electronic delivery
- BV8 – the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days
- BV16a – the percentage of employees declaring they were disabled
- BV2b – the Council’s duty to promote race equality

Internal Audit – Annual Report on Progress in 2004/05 – The Commission considered the 2004/05 annual internal audit plan and the progress that had been made.

13 SEPTEMBER 2005

Performance Eye – The Commission considered a report on Performance Eye and asked officers to investigate different methods of displaying results for data that was not produced quarterly, such as exam results.

Disposal of land in the Vicinity of the Baseball Ground – The Commission considered a report on the disposal of land in the vicinity of the Baseball Ground and asked how the proposals had been publicised.

Corporate Asset Management Plan – Members received a report on the Asset Management Plan and raised questions regarding the content of the Plan.

Section 106 Agreements – The Commission noted a report of the Co-Ordination Officer on Section 106 Agreements.

Overview and Scrutiny Training – The Commission noted that all Members of Commissions could attend the Overview and Scrutiny Training.

Work Plan 2005/06 – The Commission decided to delay the proposed review of Overview and Scrutiny until the management structure for integrating Children's Services was in place.

Members suggested some possible work plan topics for the Commission and agreed to indicate their preferences to the Co-ordination Officer.

31 OCTOBER 2005

Call-In – The Call-in of St Helen's House and Prioritisation of Heritage Lottery Projects were considered at a Special Joint Meeting with the Culture and Prosperity Commission (see section 6).

1 NOVEMBER 2005

Petition – Inner Ring Road and Ancillary Works – The Commission considered a petition from Derby Heart asking the Council not to proceed with the new Inner City Ring Road. Members resolved to not give the petition the Commission's support.

Performance Eye – The Commission noted that the Performance Indicators for the Scrutiny Management Commission had not altered significantly since the last meeting. It was noted that officers were considering how to produce the information for quarterly reports in a more meaningful way.

External Scrutiny – The Commission considered a report on external scrutiny and appointed a Sub Group to look at the proposals for the merger of local Police Forces.

Scrutiny in Practice Conference – The Commission received a report on the very successful Scrutiny in Practice Conference that had been held in September 2005.

Review of the requirement to control Mercury Emissions from Markeaton Crematorium – The Commission approved the Planning and Environment Commission's proposed review.

Review of Energy Use By Derby City Council – The Commission approved the Planning and Environment Commission's proposed review.

13 DECEMBER 2005

Derby Marketing – The Commission resolved to note the report and requested future updates on the marketing of Derby.

Gershon Update – The Commission received an information pack and resolved to refer the matter to all Overview and Scrutiny Commissions for consideration.

Meetings with Individual Members of the Council Cabinet – The Commission received a report from the Director of Corporate Services outlining the proposed arrangements for meetings with individual members of Council Cabinet. The Commission resolved to ask the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission to meet with the Leader and Deputy Leader to discuss the comments and concerns of Commission members.

Performance Eye – The Commission noted that the Performance Eye indicators had not altered significantly since they were examined at the last meeting.

A Vision for Ageing – The Commission welcomed the report from the Cabinet member for Adult services.

Reviewing the Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities – The Commission received a report from the Cabinet member for Corporate Policy on the Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities for 2006/09 and resolved to note the report.

Review of Council Tax Income/Expenditure – The Commission considered a scoping report on a possible review of Council Tax income/Expenditure and resolved to ask Councillors Higginbottom, Hickson/Smalley and Allen to form a sub group to take the review forward to the first stage.

Proposals for the merger of Local Police Forces – The Commission resolved to refer its report to Council Cabinet with the following recommendation:

Having regard to the resolution of Council passed on 23 November 2005, the Scrutiny Management Commission recommends Council cabinet to:

- a) express the Council's support for the resolution made at the Association of Police Authorities Summit of Chairs and Chief Executives of Police Authorities on 7 December 2005 and,
- b) seek a solution that will secure effective policing for the city of Derby as the top priority

Corporate Plan – The Commission resolved to request that the Scrutiny Management Commission's recommendations be incorporated in the Corporate Plan and that a specific high level objective be developed to highlight the Council's commitment to economic growth in Derby.

Revenue Budget 2006/07 to 2008/09 – The Commission received a report from the Director of Resources detailing the Council's proposals for the draft Revenue Budget and resolved to:

1. ask the Cabinet not to make the cut to the Overview and Scrutiny research budget of £24,000 as proposed in the draft Revenue Budget as this would send the wrong signal about the value of Overview and Scrutiny.
2. congratulate officers for providing detailed documents on the budgets enabling all Councillors to have the opportunity to input to the consultation process effectively.
3. thank Cabinet members for attending the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions during the consultation process.
4. ask Council Cabinet to consider the recommendations made about the draft Revenue Budget by the other five Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.

Capital Budget 2006/7 to 2008/09 – The Commission received a report from the Director of Resources outlining the Council's capital Budget proposals for 2006/07 to 2008/09 and resolved to make no formal recommendations to Council Cabinet.

Comments from the other Commissions on the Draft Revenue Budget – the Commission received a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services detailing comments that had been made by the other Overview and Scrutiny Commissions during the consultation process and resolved to note the report.

Meetings with individual Cabinet Members – The Commission received a report from the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission on the revised proposals for meetings with individual Cabinet members. The Commission resolved to agree the recommendations in the report and to ask Council cabinet to endorse them.

Overview and Scrutiny Commission reviews – The Commission resolved to approve:

1. the proposal by the Social Care and Health Commission to review the proposals for the reorganisation of the Derbyshire Primary Care Trusts
2. the proposal by the Culture and Prosperity Commission to conduct a review of Sponsorship and Fundraising to support the Arts and Events Programme in Derby

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| Emergency Planning Progress Report – The Commission received and noted the first quarterly update report on Emergency Planning procedures in Derby |
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| Police Force restructure – The Commission noted the response of Council Cabinet to its report on the proposed restructure of the Police Forces |
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3.2 Community Regeneration Commission



Councillor Hilary Jones
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Lisa Higginbottom
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

The change in control saw the very effective two and a quarter year partnership of Cllrs Bayliss and Lowe as Chair and Vice Chair replaced by the new team of Cllrs Jones and Higginbottom.

The period covered by this annual report saw the Commission engaged with two topic reviews.

The early part of the year was spent completing the review on Community Involvement and Consultation. It had the terms of reference to: consider the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Council consultation methods and how the outcomes of consultation are used to inform policy. The resulting report was based on evidence given at traditional across-the-table interviews with witnesses but also given at two open forum meetings where a wide range of community and residents groups could share their experiences with the Commission.

The Foreword included the words: 'we see no need to go back to the drawing board or for a revolutionary approach – but our recommendations for evolution and improvements to present practices do need to be heeded if fuller coherence is to be achieved and duplication and [consultation] fatigue minimised'. The report contained 13 recommendations and 9 conclusions; the 9th conclusion was that 'Derby City Council policy makers have an appropriate understanding of the role of consultation and the extent it should guide decisions, giving weight to the result but not allowing it to override the need to balance complex considerations'.

Council Cabinet later asked the relevant Cabinet member to consider the conclusions and recommendations and report back to future Council Cabinet and Commission meetings on how they could be implemented.

Before that changeover the 5 July meeting had seen unanimous agreement that Housing Allocations and Homelessness should be the Commission's next topic review. The changed leadership - and membership - of the Commission were content to leave that decision undisturbed. This enabled a prompt start to be made.

The Commission's own review was paralleled by a separate review organised by the Housing Options Centre, HOC, management. During August 2005, 9 out of 10 Commission members attended one or more of the focus groups organised by HOC with a comprehensive range of stakeholders.

The Commission's own review commenced on 22 September with a series of scene setting presentations given by HOC managers. After that, the autumn saw an intense series of evidence gathering interviews with a board range of witnesses. What might normally have taken until March to undertake was concertinaed to enable the evidence-gathering to be completed before Christmas. That was to align with the timetable of the parallel reviews, as requested by the HOC managers.

On 19 December the Commission met to form draft conclusions and recommendations. These were shared with HOC managers and discussed at a meeting with them on 19 January.

Subsequently the HOC's draft allocation policy was shared with the Commission, together with a summary showing how account had been taken of the Commission's views. At the time of writing a further joint meeting had been arranged to seek clarification plus some assurances and fine-tuning to the HOC proposals.



The Commission considered a range of proposals going through the Council's decision-making processes, as shown below. This necessitated two additional meetings in early 2006, one to give focussed attention to the revenue budget and the second to discuss the new Area and Neighbourhood Agenda. The latter was open to all councillors and was attended by over half the body of the Council.



Also worthy of particular note was scrutiny of the Green Lane Assessment Centre which resulted in the Commission supporting the proposal and giving advice - accepted by Cabinet - on the parameters of consultation. The Commission also concluded that the 'no inflation, no new organisations' proposal for awarding the community grants budget was best in the circumstances but also voiced concerns about the operation of the scheme.

On the closure of several Derby Homes local offices, the evidence led to the Commission reluctantly supporting the proposal but requesting tracking of the practical consequences for the tenants affected.

The Scrutiny process affords local authorities a better 'memory' than the previous committee system. The Commission have continued to track progress in the Benefits section by receiving regular reports, a process first put in place in December 2002.

The computer-based Performance Eye system allows a wide range of targets to be monitored. The Commission has Performance Eye as a standing item and has held a series of focussed interviews on different service areas, concentrating on areas of weaker performance. The quarterly reports allow performance commentaries to be tracked back so that Members can see whether earlier actions proved sufficient to improve underperformance.

The Commission had always asked for a periodic update on the implementation of previous topic reviews, of which there a growing number. This has now been regularised by a decision that an annual update on all should be provided to an early autumn meeting. The logic behind this was that where inadequate resources are reported as an impediment to progress, the Commission might choose to lobby Cabinet at a time when it is still possible to influence the following year's budget.

The term retrospective scrutiny or retro-scrutiny has entered the Commission's lexicon. It was a product of the Review of Scrutiny and met a wish to look at how previous Cabinet decisions have actually worked out in practice.

On the suggestion of members, the Commission has considered the effect of the grant decision in early 2004 in respect of the Citizens' Advice Bureau and also the development of the city-wide credit union – the latter being a recommendation in the Commission's own 2002 'Report 1362'.

◆ **Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06**

10 May 2005

Redevelopment of the Derbyshire Blocks, Arnherne Terrace, Spondon - a report was considered which set out the options being investigated for the redevelopment of the 'Derbyshire Blocks'. The Commission requested that the proposals be implemented as a matter of urgency.

Implementation of Previous Topic Reviews – the Commission considered a progress report on the implementation of the Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment Topic Review. It resolved to recommend to Council Cabinet that it ensures swifter progress be made a) generally on implementing those recommendations within the direct control of the Council and b) specifically in connection with enhancing land stewardship to improve the visual appeal of buildings and land.

Community Grants Budget Review – the Commission considered the Community Grant Budget Review and changes to the criteria.

Derby Homes' Performance Monitoring – a report was received regarding the Derby Homes' Performance Monitoring for quarter 3 – 2004/05.

Performance Eye – the Commission received an oral update from the co-ordination officer on Performance Eye.

Topic Reviews for 2005/06 – the Commission received a report on topic reviews for 2005/06. Four options had been put forward which were detailed in the report.

erbyloans – the Commission considered a minute extract which stated that

Council Cabinet had agreed to respond to the Commission's earlier recommendations, to include a financial evaluation of Derbyloans.

Draft Crime and Disorder and Young People Action Plan – the Commission considered a report on the draft Crime and Disorder and Young People Action Plan

5 July 2005

Co-option of Members of the Commission – The Commission recommended to Council to re-appoint Canon Donald Mac Donald and Mr Syed Kazmi as co-opted members of the Community Regeneration Commission

Area Panel Funding – A report was considered which looked at amending the criteria for area panel funding in light of recent concerns.

The Commission resolved to not make any recommendation on this matter to Council Cabinet but instead to refer the report to the area panel review and recommend that the funding on luncheon clubs and repeat events should be considered as well.

Disposal of Land at Leytonstone Drive, Mackworth – The Commission considered a report on disposal of land at Leytonstone Drive, Mackworth.

Britannia Court Redevelopment – A report on the redevelopment of Britannia Court was considered. The proposed demolition and redevelopment would enable an attractive new development to be achieved.

Redevelopment of the 'Isle of Wight Blocks' Branksome Avenue/Durley Close Alvaston – The Commission also considered a report on the redevelopment of the 'Isle of Wight Blocks' in Alvaston which detailed four options being considered.

Osmaston and Allenton Proposed Neighbourhood Base Hubs – The Commission considered the Osmaston and Allenton proposed Neighbourhood Base Hubs.

Developing the use of Performance Eye – The Commission resolved:

1. to consider Performance Eye reports at each meeting
2. to select at pre meetings which indicators to examine at the next meeting and to invite the relevant officers to that meeting, and
3. to ask the Director of Policy to send the empty houses list to all ward councillors and ask them to check the list is up to date for their area.

Overview and Scrutiny Objectives and Work Planning for 2005/06 – The Commission resolved to select "Review of the Housing Allocations Policy" as the Commission's next topic review.

Community Involvement and Consultation – The Commission approved the

draft report and referred it to Council Cabinet.

Community Grants Budget Review – The Commission considered a minute extract from Council Cabinet on Community Grants Budget. It was reported that the recommendation made by the Commission on this had been adopted.

Market Testing Housing Responsive Maintenance Work – the Commission considered a report on Market Testing Housing Responsive Maintenance Work as it was evident that there would be interest from several national organisations.

Derby Homes' Performance Monitoring – The Commission considered Derby Homes' Performance Monitoring – Quarter Four 2004/05

Framework and Process for preparing the Community Strategy 2006-09 – The Commission considered the process for preparing the Community Strategy 2006-09.

Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment – Implementation Progress Report – The Commission considered a report by Council Cabinet which gave details of progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Commission following a topic review on Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment.

Derbyloans – Response to Community Regeneration Commission Report – The Commission considered a minute extract from Council Cabinet on Council Support for Derbyloans which was being actively pursued and that a full response would be brought to Council Cabinet when investigations into potential funding streams were concluded.

20 September 2005

Performance Eye – The Commission received a presentation on the Performance Eye computer programme and then gave attention to the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Indicators including the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service Quarterly Report.

Topic Review Update – The Commission considered and approved a scoping report on the Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness Topic Review.

Private Sector Housing Renewal Programme – The Commission considered the Private Sector Housing Renewal Programme and expressed support for the proposed action.

Derbyloans – Response to Community Regeneration Commission Report – The Commission received an update report on the funding of Derbyloans.

25 October 2005

Community Policy Division – The Commission considered a presentation from Isabella Stone – Assistant Director – Community Policy, regarding the work of the Community Policy Division of Derby City Council and a report on the Division's Business Plan for 2005/06.

Neighbourhood Policing – the Commission considered a presentation from Councillor Bayliss, Cabinet Member for Community Services, Regeneration and

E-Government on the proposals for neighbourhood policing and resolved to support the proposed new boundaries for neighbourhood policing as long as the boundaries can be reviewed in future.

Previous Topic Reviews – The Commission considered an annual progress report on previous topic reviews. On Report 1362: Community based Finance Institutions – Derbyloans, it welcomed the update report on developments relating to Council support to Derbyloans and the prospect in the near future of a positive

recommendation being presented to Cabinet on the matter of making an assessed, prudential loan to Derbyloans. The Commission recommended that the Council Cabinet encourage private and public sectors to financially back Derbyloans' development. On Social Inclusion and the Physical Environment it resolved to receive an update when the Central Government's Cleaner, Greener Strategy Agenda became clearer. The Commission also considered a report regarding progress on the topic review on crime and disorder and young people.

Overview and Scrutiny Objectives and Work Planning – The Commission resolved to continue to concentrate on the Allocations Policy review and to consider after Christmas a separate smaller review for the remainder of the municipal year.

Current Topic Review Update – The Commission received a report on the current topic review which detailed the progress made so far.

Performance Eye – The Commission considered a report on Performance Eye which gave information on BV198 – the percentage change in the number of problem drug users accessing treatment services. It resolved to welcome the substantial progress made since the Commission's 2003/04 report Crime and Disorder and Young People and to request a letter be sent by the co-ordination officer on behalf of the Commission congratulating the Partnership staff.

Derby Homes' Performance Monitoring Quarter 1 2005/06 – The Commission considered a report which examined the performance of Derby Homes during the period 1 April to 30 June 2005.

6 December 2005

Housing Allocations Policy and Homelessness – Evidence Gathering – The

Commission considered a presentation from Northern Counties Housing Association regarding the “3 Streams” approach adopted to housing allocations.

Housing in Multiple Occupation Fee Structure – The Commission also considered a presentation on the Housing in Multiple Occupation – HMO – Fee Structure which stemmed from the Housing Act 2004 as the city had

approximately 3,200 HMO’s with 4-500 requiring a license under the new scheme.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service – The Commission considered the Quarterly Performance for the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service. The report gave details of current performance including where the service had improved and how earlier suggestions by the Commission had helped to improve the service offered. The Commission considered the action plan developed by the

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Service in June 2005 to improve the time it took the service to process benefit claims for customers.

Green Lane Centre – The Commission considered the proposed Green Lane Centre and, in light of the evidence resolved to inform Council Cabinet that it welcomed the project as a whole.

Community Involvement and Consultation – The Commission received a Cabinet response on its Community Involvement and Consultation topic review.

10 January 2006

Community Grants Budget 2006/07 – the Commission recommended Council Cabinet i) approve and adopt the grant proposals as the best course of action in the current circumstances as it would preserve the status quo for key partner organisations ii) should a points system be considered as a key component in decision making for future grant allocation, this should be made clear to organisations ahead of their applications being submitted. The Commission also identified a number of concerns about this scheme, which in practice excluded new applicants from receiving awards, and said it may later conduct a review on the topic.

Derby Homes Delivery Plan 2005/06 – the Commission: recommended that being ‘Family Friendly’ be added into service standards for Local Offices, welcomed the item on New Build and decided to take account of the Delivery Plan in the current topic review.

Housing Rents and Services Charges 2006/07 Consultation - the Commission considered proposals for Housing Rents and Service Charges for 2006/7, noted the report and welcomed a proposed Service Charges Review.

Current Topic Review Update - a document containing draft conclusions and recommendations was circulated ahead of a meeting with Housing Options Centre managers on 19 January 2006.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan - A report set out the financial position of the HRA in the current year and projected the position forward using a series of assumptions about future funding levels. The financial position was satisfactory in the short term, but funding in the long term, beyond 2012 would be more problematic. The Commission decided to ask an appropriate officer from Derbyshire Local Government Pension Scheme to attend a future meeting to explain about the pensions aspects of the Business Plan.

Performance Eye - The Commission interviewed Phil Davies, Chief Executive of Derby Homes, regarding the indicators BV211b and BV66b.

Derby Homes – Evictions and Write Offs - The Commission considered a report on Derby Homes Evictions and Write Offs, which gave details of the levels of arrears, court cases and evictions over the last 7 years. A private collection agency was used to try and trace debtors. The Commission resolved to request further information on the costs of using a collection agency compared to the amount recovered.

19 January 2006

Derby Homes Service Access Review Proposed

Closure of Local Housing Offices - The Commission considered the proposed closure of three Local Housing Offices and was informed that Derby Homes were carrying out further consultations on the closure of three more offices. It resolved to i) reluctantly accept the proposed closure of the first three, ii) receive further information on current and planned outreach work, iii) seek monitoring of the affect on users of the closed offices and iv) requested that information be taken in to consideration when the decision is taken on the other offices considered for closure.

Draft Revenue Budget 2006/7 - The Commission received a presentation on the Draft Revenue Budget and asked questions. It then i) noted that some members had raised concerns, ii) requested that Cabinet consult it on the best ways of using unallocated public priority funding and keep it informed of the replacement for NEAT.

14 February 2006

Derby's Community Strategy 2006-2009, the 2020 Vision - The Commission considered the draft Community Strategy 2006-2009, the 2020 Vision.

It recommended that Council Cabinet amend the strategy to make it more inclusive of the whole city and requested future reports on the analysis done on comparing deprived areas and more affluent areas of the city and on the Action Plans for the Community Strategy

A Co-ordinated Prostitution Strategy - The Commission considered the Home Office proposals on a Coordinated Prostitution Strategy and the effect they would have on Derby. The presentation also outlined the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership in dealing with prostitution within Derby.

Housing Capital Programme - The Commission noted a report on the Housing Capital Programme for 2006/07 – 2008/09.

Performance Eye - The Commission considered the Performance Eye statistics for quarter three 2005 – 06 and received a presentation on performance indicators BV79a, BV79bi and BV79bii relating to benefits administration.

Retrospective Scrutiny - The Commission resolved to undertake retrospective scrutiny on i) the impact on Derby's Citizen's Advice Bureau of the Community Grants Budget award for 2004/05 and ii) the development of Derby City Credit Union, following the 2002 'Report 1362: Community Based Finance Institutions'.

Cabinet Feedback - The Commission noted minute extracts showing that the Community Services, Regeneration and E-Government Cabinet Member had agreed the Commission's recommendations regarding Safer Neighbourhood Policing Boundaries *and* regarding Derbyloans.

27 February 2006

Developing the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda in Derby - The Commission received a presentation from Sharon Squires, Director of Community Safety Partnership on developing the Area and Neighbourhood agenda to empower local people in order that they could influence and, where appropriate, design and commission service provision for their local area or neighbourhood.

21 March 2006

Derby Citizens Advice Bureau – Revenue Funding Decision for 2004/05 – The Commission undertook retrospective scrutiny of the impact on the organisation of the Community Grant Award for 2004/05 and interviewed the CAB's Chair and Chief Executive.

Development of Derby City Credit Union - The Commission undertook retrospective scrutiny of the development of Derby City Credit Union and interviewed the organisation's Chief Executive.

Supporting People Budget – Action Plan Update – The Commission noted an update report on the Supporting People Budget.

Housing in Multiple Occupation Mandatory Licensing – Fee Setting – Members scrutinised the proposed fee structure for the mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Developing the Area and Neighbourhood Agenda in Derby – Members discussed the evidence given at the 27 February meeting and how the Commission could track the development of the initiative.

Performance Eye - performance tracking 2006/07 – the Commission held a dialogue with officers responsible for the Performance Eye system about the indicators to be used for 2006/07, including local targets arising from the Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy.

Housing Revenue Account – Pension Aspects of the Business

Plan – Members considered questions to pose to Derbyshire County Council Local Government Pension Scheme regarding staff working for Derby Homes.

Derby Homes Service Access Review Proposed Closure of

Local Housing Offices – The Commission noted a minute extract showing the Leader of the Council had confirmed the decision to close three Local Housing Offices.

3.3 Culture and Prosperity Commission



Councillor Joan Travis
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Barbara Jackson
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

The first Culture and Prosperity Commission meeting of the 2005/06 Municipal Year was chaired by Councillor Repton. However, following a bye-election in July 2005, the political administration of the Council changed and for the remainder of the 2005/06 Municipal Year Councillor Travis was Chair of the Commission.

The workplan for 2005/06 was discussed by the Culture and Prosperity Commission at its first meeting in June 2005. At that meeting the Commission identified Derby Markets and the impact of the Westfield Development as subjects for possible work plan topic reviews.

Presentations on these topics were made to the Commission's meeting on 26 September 2005 by the Council's Markets Officer and by the Managing Director of Cityscape, and the Council's Head of City Development and Tourism. However, having received the presentations the Commission resolved not to proceed with a review of either of these topics and at the suggestion of a Commission member asked the Co-ordination Officer to prepare a scoping report on a review of the City's allotment gardens.

A scoping report, and a supplementary document setting out possible options for a review of allotment gardens, was prepared for the Commission's meeting on 31 October 2005. In addition to this, the Chair, Vice Chair and a Co-ordination Officer met with Professor Crouch of Derby University to explore the possibility of a review aimed at developing a 'tourist trail' that would link significant buildings in the northern part of the City. A report on this proposal was also prepared for the Commission's meeting on 31 October 2005.

During the past year the members of the Culture and Prosperity Commission have taken particular interest in the development of the QUAD project that will provide the City's new arts and media centre. For several Commission

members this interest has included not only the contribution of QUAD to the cultural life of the City, but also the prosperity issues associated with the energy costs of the centre and the ways in which it will be funded and powered. The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services was therefore invited to attend the meeting on 31 October when the intention was for the Commission to seek information about the funding of QUAD, on the likely costs of operating it, and on the likely cost and benefits of the green energy measures that had been considered in the early stages of the project.

Unfortunately, due to the Special Joint Meeting with the Scrutiny Management Commission to consider Call-in of St Helen's House and Prioritisation of Heritage Lottery Projects, the Commission's meeting on 31 October had to be postponed. Consequently the meeting with the Cabinet member on QUAD had to be deferred to a separate meeting of the Commission on 15 November, and other arrangements had to be made for the Commission to consider the two scoping reports.

At the meeting with the Cabinet member on 15 November there was discussion of two areas which had been part of the original design features of QUAD. These were the use of photovoltaic cells to generate electricity and the inclusion in the design of a borehole to provide a geothermal heat source.

The Council Cabinet Member agreed that it would be desirable for the greenest options to be included in the project but pointed out that the capital costs of such measures were significant and told the Commission that there was insufficient finance to incorporate these measures into the design of the QUAD building. The Cabinet Member did however agree to ask officers to investigate a range of options for providing green energy to the QUAD building. The Cabinet member subsequently reported that the Carbon Trust had been asked to carry out a study to determine whether any changes could be made to the heating system of the QUAD building that would yield medium to long term savings in terms of energy and cost. However he emphasised that any proposals could not be allowed to delay the sign-off of the designs and the subsequent tendering process.

Some Commission members continue to have major concerns about the future cost of providing energy to the QUAD building and about the impact of rising energy costs on the prosperity of the City. Consequently they have welcomed the Planning and Environment Commission's review of energy use by the Council. They hope that the findings of the review will be adopted by Council Cabinet and that this in turn will result in a Council wide policy to encourage the use of green energy and the installation of alternative energy sources in Derby. They urge that such a policy is applied wherever possible and particularly in new 'flagship' buildings such as QUAD, and they hope that these buildings will ultimately become showcases for the City that demonstrate how energy use and costs can be effectively minimised.

In order to progress the Commission's workplan in November 2006 the Co-ordination Officer consulted electronically with members on the reports that had been prepared for the 31 October meeting of the Commission and asked

for their views on the allotment garden and tourist trail topic reviews. There was a mixed response to this e-mail. Some members suggested that it would not be appropriate for Commission members to conduct a review of allotment gardens, others were in general agreement with the tourist trail idea and one member suggested an entirely new topic for review. It is also of note that the Council Cabinet had asked the Commission to consider carrying out a review on a specific aspect of Derby Markets, such as ways of encouraging younger people to use the markets.

At its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Vice Chair of the Commission put forward a suggestion that as its 2005/06 work plan topic the Commission should conduct a review to identify and investigate best practice methods of obtaining sponsorship for the Council's Arts Events programme. This was subsequently agreed and the Co-ordination Officer was asked to draft an appropriate scoping report.

It is intended that the review, which is work-in-progress at the time of writing of the Annual Report, will investigate how the Council could improve the way in which it seeks sponsorship for Arts Events. As part of the review the Commission are holding evidence-gathering interviews with Arts Team officers, the Leicester Comedy Festival's Sponsorship Director, a member of Arts&Business and a Sponsorship Consultant employed by the Council in 2005. It is aimed to complete this review by June 2006.

◆ **Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06**

| 6 SEPTEMBER 2005 |
|---|
| <p>Derby Markets - The Commission considered a report on progress made against the 11 recommendations in the 2001 Best Value report and recommended that Council Cabinet find ways to reduce or recycle other waste materials produced by the markets, that all year round provision is made to compost the vegetable waste from market stalls, that external signage to Derby's markets be improved, that stall holders are discouraged from allowing goods to encroach into the aisles as this has a detrimental effect on the access to the market by disabled users.</p> |

A programme should be developed to ensure minor maintenance is carried out more frequently. In the longer term consideration should be given to resurfacing work at the Cattle Market and the Wholesale Market and to re-wiring the Wholesale Market.

Derby CityScape Masterplan – The Commission received a presentation on the CityScape Masterplan.

Work Plan for 2005/06 – The Commission discussed various topics and asked for a scoping report for a review into the city's allotments and to receive a presentation on library provision at a future meeting.

Cycle England Bid – The Commission received an information item about the Council's application to Cycle England to be a Cycling Demonstration Town. The Commission resolved to express its support for the bid.

Performance Eye - Councillor Troup was nominated as the Commission's Performance Eye Champion.

Review of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site - The Commission considered a minute extract from Council Cabinet in which the Commission was congratulated on an outstandingly thorough and helpful piece of work. The Council Cabinet approved the range of initiatives outlined in the report which were designed to better exploit Derby's World Heritage Site status in months and years to come.

31 OCTOBER 2005

Call-In - Due to consideration of the Call-In of St Helen's House and Prioritisation of Heritage Lottery Projects at a Special Joint Meeting with the Scrutiny Management Commission (see section6), items from this agenda were deferred until the Commission's meeting on 5 December 2005.

5 DECEMBER 2005

QUAD Update – The Commission received an update on the progress of the QUAD programme. It was noted that a contractor would be appointed in May 2006 and construction would begin in August 2006.

The Commission thanked the Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services for meeting with them on 15 November 2005 and for agreeing to ask officers to explore the possibility of incorporating more 'green' energy saving measures into the Quad building.

The Future of Libraries – The Head of Library Services presented a report from the Director of Development and Cultural Services following the failure of a Private Finance Initiative. The Commission noted that the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) had wished to make a landmark development of at least £20m. The largest library proposed in the Derby bid was for half this amount. The Commission also noted that an alternative

Lottery funding stream focused on community and lifelong learning would be open to bids from June 2006.

East Midlands Museums Hub – The Commission were informed that Derby Museum and Art Gallery would receive £313k from the East Midlands Museum Hub, one of the nine English regions. The 'hub' consists of Derby, Leicester City, Nottingham City, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire museum services.

Performance Eye, BV170c – The Commission received a presentation from the Head of Museums on the number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups. It was noted that the Audit Commission allowed outreach groups to be included in the attendance figures.

Workplan Topic – The Commission considered a report from the Vice Chair, suggesting a review of sponsorship and fundraising in order to support the Arts Events programme in Derby. This was agreed and the co-ordination officer asked to prepare a draft scoping report.

Responses of the Council Cabinet – The Commission noted the following minute extracts from the 8 November 2005 Council Cabinet meeting:

- Report of Call-In 31 October 2005
- Best Value Review of Markets Update

23 JANUARY 2006

Draft Revenue Budget 2006/07 – The Commission considered those aspects of the 2006/07 draft revenue budget that came under their remit. The Commission made 5 recommendations to Council Cabinet, which can be found in Section 5 with the Council Cabinet's response.

A petition was presented by Friends of Derby Museums and Art Galleries objecting to the proposed cuts to the Derby Museums budget. This was referred to Scrutiny Management Commission for consideration.

Sports Centre Development - Consideration of this item was deferred to a special meeting of the Commission on 20 February 2006.

Workplan Topic Review – the draft scoping report on the Commission's review of sponsorship for Arts Events was approved.

20 FEBRUARY 2006

Sports Centre Development – The Commission noted a presentation from the Head of Sport and Leisure on the progress made on the Sport Facilities Development Plan. Councillor Dhindsa, Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services was also present.

The report set out the development plan which is structured around three possible options for investment; Basic refurbishment, Adaptation and

Remodelling, and Rebuild.

27 MARCH 2006

Performance Eye – A report was presented by the Performance Management Team, which included the indicators relevant to the Commission's portfolio. The Commission resolved that all 13 be displayed on the Performance Eye Scorecard and to receive a report at a future meeting detailing the local indicators.

QUAD Update - The Commission received an update on the progress of the QUAD programme. It was noted that the construction contract would be awarded in April 2006, work would commence in October 2006 and that the new building would be opened in April 2008. The landscaping around QUAD would be carried out in two phases. The Commission noted that the artistic programme was already being developed and linked with QUAD: the Format06 Photography festival and Under Scan, a video technology installation.

The Chair invited John Beardmore of the Carbon Trust to speak to the Commission with regard to a renewable energy assessment for the building. The Commission noted that as the project was now in Stage E this could not be carried out, but that retro-fit options could be considered.

World Heritage Site Review Update – The Assistant Director for Culture presented a report on the progress made against the recommendations made following the Commission's 2004/5 workplan topic. The Commission noted that significant progress had been made.

Sponsorship Topic Review – The co-ordination officer informed the Commission of dates arranged for the evidence gathering sessions.

Response of the Council Cabinet – The Commission noted a minute extract from the 21 February 2006 Council Cabinet meeting showing how the Commission's views on the Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting had been taken into account.

3.4 Education Commission



Councillor Anne MacDonald
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Les Allen
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

As with other political administrative structures of the Council, the Education Commission was also affected by the bye-election. The Education Commission was chaired by Councillor Jones for the July meeting before the reins were taken up by Cllr MacDonald.

The following main areas of work were carried out by the Education Commission during the 2005/06 municipal year.

Youth Service

The Youth Service had been subject of an inspection by the Office for the Standards in Education – Ofsted and was found to provide good youth services where its strengths clearly outweighed its weaknesses. The Commission received the inspection report together with the post inspection action plan to address its weakness at its July meeting.

In September, the Commission considered a summary of the Government Green Paper entitled – Youth Matters. The Green Paper sought comments on the Government's proposal to reform the provision of services to young people in England through a range of measures such as developing 'opportunity cards' which will provide discounts on a range of things to do and places to go. The Commission considered this to be a significant issue that merited a response from Derby. The Commission held a special meeting at Derby Youth House in October and considered the issues raised by the Green Paper in detail and passed its comments to the Cabinet Member for submission to the Government.

Adult Education

Members learned that Derby College was reducing its adult learning provision in the city which could potentially affect thousands of learners. They suspected that this may be in response to the Learning and Skills Council's, LSC, national Agenda for Change Programme.

The LSC's Agenda for Change proposed a programme of fundamental changes to the learning and skills sector which apply to the whole post-16 sector which include seven key areas for change:

- **Skills for employers** – to increase the skills of the adult population and equip the businesses to compete with our international competitors and bridge the productivity gap
- **Quality** - to support improvements in quality among all providers and all subject areas
- **Funding** - proposes a radical shift in funding system and focus on the delivery of training and achieving outputs rather than on qualifications funding
- **Data** – to reduce the bureaucracy attached to current data collection procedures
- **Business excellence** – to encourage providers to focus on value for money and benchmarking against comparable organisations
- **Reputation** – to provide a clear vision for providers and enhance the reputation of the sector
- **Transformation** - to reduce LSCs staffing levels from 4700 to 3400 nationally and save £40m on management and running costs

The Commission resolved at its September meeting to review the likely impact of the LSC's Agenda for Change Programme to deliver post-16 education in Derby. The review mainly revolved around interviewing key witnesses that included the Council's Adult Education Service and Lees Brook School to give a local provider's perspective and the Principal of Derby College and the Acting Director of Derbyshire LSC.

The Commission produced its report largely based on the evidence received during the interviews and made ten recommendations to improve adult learning provision in the city. The Commission's report was presented to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services by the Chair and a copy sent to Acting Director of Derbyshire LSC for his comments.

Performance Monitoring

All Commissions are encouraged by the SMC to regularly monitor performance of areas within their respective remit. Under the Education Commission's view in the Performance Eye, the council's electronic traffic light monitoring system, the majority of the indicators measure performance on an annual basis such as Key Stage assessment results. This limited the Commission's scope for regular monitoring. Members therefore decided to look at ways of improving the scrutiny

of performance management. They agreed to consider a batch of indicators currently being monitored by the Children and Young People's Directorate at each meeting and consider the factors that contribute to the performance rather than pure numbers. This should enable the Commission to have greater input and have more influence in the annual performance of the service.

◆ **Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06**

3.5 Planning and Environment Commission



Councillor John Ahern
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Peter Berry
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

In May 2005 the Planning and Environment Commission completed the review of dog control and dog fouling enforcement that it had started in February 2005.



The draft report on the outcome of this review was presented to the Commission meeting on 5 September 2005 and the final report was agreed at the meeting on 17 October 2005. The Commission's report made two recommendations. In summary these were that the Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division should:

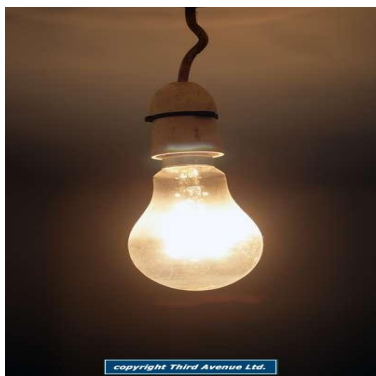
1. Consider and consult on how the Council might use the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to deal with the problems of dog control and dog fouling.
2. Prepare a report on the financial and personnel implications of putting into effect the dog control provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

A copy of the report is available through the Scrutiny webpage on <http://www.derby.gov.uk/councilgovernmentdemocracy/councils/contactsconsultationAndFeedback/default.htm>

At its meeting on 5 September 2005 the Planning and Environment Commission considered a number of possible work plan topics for the coming year and after discussion decided to undertake a review of the use of energy by the City Council.

The decision to look at the Council's use of energy was prompted by members' concerns about climate change and about the increasing cost of energy and the possible impact that this might have on Derby. The interest of members in the possibility of developing sustainable sources of energy had also been whetted by a

visit of council members to the West Beacon Energy Farm on 3 September 2005.



Recognising that the Council's use and the cost of energy was an issue of likely interest to all members of the Council, the Commission decided to invite members of the other Overview and Scrutiny Commissions to take part in the review. The offer was well received and members of the Culture and Prosperity, Education, and Scrutiny Management Commissions, as well as a Cabinet member, have regularly attended the evidence gathering sessions of this review. The objectives of the energy review were set out in the scoping report that was approved

by the Commission at its meeting on 17 October 2005 and were to:

- a) To obtain information on likely future UK energy costs and any supply constraints and use this to assess the current impact and short/medium term implications of the Council's current energy policies and energy procurement arrangements.
- b) To examine the implications for the Council on any forthcoming legislation on energy/fuel use.
- c) To consider and where appropriate make recommendations on the actions that the City Council might take in order to:
 - a. Reduce its energy consumption and energy costs
 - b. Minimise the effect of energy price increases or energy shortages on Council services and the City
 - c. Increase its resilience to possible energy shortages
 - d. Utilise alternative energy sources

As the first phase of the review the Commission engaged Professor Paul Fleming of De Montfort University to investigate security of supply and legislative issues associated with the Council's use of energy and to suggest ways whereby the Council might reduce energy use and its energy costs.

Professor Fleming reported the outcome of his investigation to a meeting of the Commission on 18 November 2005. As a consequence of his investigation Professor Fleming recommended that the Council:

1. Develop a comprehensive energy strategy, involving all the key players in the city to address ambitious energy reduction targets.
2. Establish guidelines for new developments that maximise both energy efficiency and renewable energy, with a target of a specific percentage for on-site renewable energy to be agreed for all developments.
3. Save cost through a combination of:
 - a. centralising existing utility billing procedures
 - b. more effective energy monitoring
 - c. investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.

These recommendations were reported to the Council Cabinet member for the Environment and Direct Services at a meeting on 6 December 2006.

The second phase of the Commission's review included a series of evidence gathering meetings that were intended to investigate and assess the actions that the Council might take to reduce its use of energy and so minimise the impact of increasing energy costs. These meetings took place in January 2006 and were with representatives of the Centre for Sustainable Energy and the Carbon Trust.



It is planned to present the draft report on the outcomes of the Commission's review of the Council's use of energy to the Commission's meeting on 19 June 2006. The final version of the report and the Commission's recommendations will be reported to a subsequent meeting of Council Cabinet.

In addition to its review of the Council's use of energy, the Planning and Environment Commission has conducted a short review to investigate the ways in which the Council might respond to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

requirement that by December 2012 50% of UK cremations must be subject to mercury abatement.

The review was carried out during October and November 2005 by a small working group consisting of three members of the Commission. The working group examined the requirements of the legislation and met with the Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager and with representatives of the cremator manufacturers. The working group reported its findings to the Planning and Environment Commission's meeting on 21 November 2005 and its recommendations were subsequently reported to the Council Cabinet member on 6 December 2005. In summary the working group recommended that:

1. The City Council informs DEFRA before 1 June 2006 that it intends to abate mercury emissions from Markeaton Crematorium by 50% and that the abatement plant will be installed before the 2012 deadline.
2. The Council delays compliance with the DEFRA regulations for as long as is legally and practicably possible.
3. That cremation charges are increased by say £25/cremation from 2006, and that the money raised is ring-fenced so that it can be used in the future to off-set the cost of the works that will be needed at the Crematorium and that the possibility of selling surplus land currently held for cemetery extensions, which are unlikely to be needed, and the use of that money to off-set the cost of the works that will be needed at the Crematorium, is investigated.
4. The cost and practicality of equipping the existing cremators with mercury abatement plant, modifying the existing crematorium building to overcome the recognised deficiencies, and retaining the existing cremators until after 2012, is fully investigated and compared with the alternatives.

A copy of the report on the review of the ways in which the Council might respond to the DEFRA requirement will be available through the Scrutiny webpage.

Overview and Scrutiny members visit West Beacon Energy Farm

On 3 September 2005 a mini-bus load of Overview and Scrutiny members visited West Beacon Farm in Leicestershire to see how Professor Tony Marmont, formerly the Managing Director of Carter's Gold Medal Soft Drinks, has turned a small Leicestershire farm into a showpiece for sustainable energy.



From the approach down a tree shaded track the farm appears nothing out of the ordinary, but with the enthusiastic guidance of Professor Marmont the Commission members quickly realised that nothing could be further from the truth. The estate has everything – two wind turbines, hydroelectric power from a purpose built lake and a small stream, solar cells, a heat pump, a low energy dwelling house, and electric vehicles and its own hydrogen generation plant, both powered by the green electricity generated on the site. Not only is the farm self sufficient so far as its own energy demands are concerned, it is also a net exporter of electricity to the National Grid. All the power sources are interconnected, so energy can be generated from whatever source available and can be stored in different ways until needed.



The visit to West Beacon Farm proved to be a true 'eye-opener' for the Commission members and was a deciding factor in the Planning and Environment Commission's subsequent choice of its work plan topic for the coming year.

◆ Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06

21 April 2005

Markeaton Park Toilets – Councillor Redfern informed the Commission of an ongoing problem of anti-social behaviour at the toilets on Markeaton Park.

The Commission decided to await the outcome of an investigation by the police and Council officers and requested that a report be brought to a future meeting.

Review of Dog Control and the Enforcement Dog Fouling Legislation – The Commission interviewed Councillor Carr and Andrew Hopkin as part of the evidence gathering process for the review of dog fouling.

Update on Street Lighting PFI – The Commission received an update on progress with the PFI bid.

Local Transport Plan Workshop – Members were informed that a workshop session had been arranged to enable the Commission to consider and comment upon the development of the Local Transport Plan.

Land Adoption across Derby – The Commission considered the issues relating to the adoption of land in the city and agreed to prepare a report for the Scrutiny Management Commission on the matter.

Tree Management Policy – The Commission resolved to ask Council Cabinet at the Commission meeting to be held on 2 June 2005 for a response to the recommendations contained in the Commission's report

Response of Council Cabinet to the Commission's Revenue Budget Recommendation – The Commission resolved to thank Council Cabinet for their positive response to the Commission's budget recommendations.

27 June 2005

Presentation by Council Cabinet Members – The Commission received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Environment and the Cabinet Member for Personnel, Equalities and Direct Services.

Presentation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement - The Commission received a presentation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement

Home Energy Conservation Action Plan – The Commission considered an update on the action plan drawn up in response to the Scrutiny report on Home Energy Conservation – How's Derby Doing?

Developing the Use of Performance Eye – The Commission agreed to monitor the performance information available through Performance Eye on its portfolio areas.

Objectives and Work Planning for 2005/2006 – The Commission considered objectives and work planning for 2005/2006 including a list of topic suggestions received from members.

First Draft of the Review of Enforcement of the Dog Fouling and Control Legislation – Members considered the content of the report, the scope and format of the review and discussed changes they wished to make to the report.

Response of Cabinet to Reports by the Commission – The Commission considered the response of Cabinet to the review report on the Tree Management Policy.

Matters Referred by Council Cabinet – The Commission received a presentation on the Waste Strategy and resolved to recommend to Council Cabinet that consideration be given to the ways in which the public might be informed of the need for a residual waste disposal plant in the City.

5 September 2005

Public Conveniences – The Cabinet Member told the Commission that a proposal to close some public conveniences at night was being considered. The Commission asked if the appropriate officer would monitor the effect of the pilot closures and report back to a future meeting.

Performance Eye – The Commission was satisfied with the commentary which explained why Performance Eye indicators BV200a and BV82c were red and asked for a future presentation on the nine BVPIs associated with traffic accident casualties.

Retrospective Scrutiny – The Commission resolved to consider the decision to change the collection frequency of black bins as an item for retrospective scrutiny.

Second Draft of the Dog Fouling Review – The Commission considered and approved the second draft report of its review of Derby City Council's Enforcement of the Dog Fouling and Dog Control Legislation.

Work Plan for 2005/2006 – The Commission considered a number of possible work plan topics and resolved to conduct a review of the possible ways of reducing the Council's energy consumption and its emission of Carbon Dioxide.

Overview and Scrutiny Training – Members were informed that six training modules on various aspects of Overview and Scrutiny had been prepared by the Co-ordination Team.

17 October 2005

Retrospective Scrutiny – The Commission considered the implications of alternate weekly black bin and brown bin collections and complaints that had been received from the public about maggot infestations

Consideration of Objections to A514 Weight Restrictions – The Commission considered a report on the objections to the A514 weight restriction, and agreed to write to Derbyshire Constabulary requesting their cooperation in enforcing the weight restrictions and to the Highways Agency about signage on the A50.

Promotion of the City's New Bus Services – The Commission considered the actions being taken to promote the new bus routes and the changes to bus services that would be needed due to the closure of the bus station.

Cycle Demonstration Town – The Commission received a report advising that Derby had been shortlisted for possible support as a Cycle Demonstration Town.

Nature Conservation Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal – The Commission considered the draft revised Nature Conservation Strategy which is intended to protect and enhance the wildlife and geological heritage of the city and asked that a summary of the points in a simpler format be sent to schools.

Control of Mercury Emissions from Crematoriums – It was reported that the Council needed to comply with the Government's guidance on the abatement of mercury emissions from crematoria. The Commission decided to conduct a review to see how the Council might comply with the legislation and formed a sub group to look at the issues in more detail.

Proposed Review of Energy Use by Derby City Council – The proposal to use consultants was discussed and the Commission agreed to engage Professor Paul Fleming of De Montfort University to carry out the work..

21 November 2005

Performance Eye – The Commission received a report on performance indicators BV99a(i) to BV99c(iii) – Road Accident Casualties.

Review of Council's Energy Use – The Commission considered a report prepared by De Montfort University which looked at energy costs, the security of supply and legislative issues associated with the use of energy in Derby. The Commission resolved to present an interim report on the findings to Council Cabinet.

Mercury Abatement at Markeaton Crematorium – The Commission considered the report of the working group on the way in which the Council might comply with the DEFRA regulations for controlling emissions from Markeaton Crematorium and resolved to present the working group's final report to Council Cabinet.

Waste Strategy – The Commission received an oral report on the Waste Strategy.

Responses of the Council Cabinet to reports of the Commission – The Commission considered the response of Cabinet on the review of Dog Control/Dog Fouling and resolved to ask Cabinet what action would be taken in response to the Commission's recommendations.

16 January 2006

Consideration of the Council's Draft Revenue Budget - The Commission made the following recommendations on the Draft Revenue Budget:

1. To recommend to Council Cabinet that cremation fees are increased by £25 in addition to the 2.25% above inflation increase that is proposed in paragraph 3.5.1 of the draft Revenue Budget document.
2. That the income derived from the £25 increase in cremation fees is ringfenced and used to off-set the cost of the mercury abatement equipment that the Council is required to install at the crematorium
3. To recommend that the report on the Council's use of energy, which was requested by the Council Cabinet member for Environment and Direct Services following her meeting on 6 December 2005 with the Planning and Environment Commission, is completed in time for its conclusions to be considered as part of the Council's 2006/07 Revenue Budget process.

Outcome of the Commission's meeting on 6 December 2005 with the Council Cabinet Member – The Commission resolved to note the report.

Police and Highways Agency Responses to the Commission's letter concerning A514 weight restrictions – The Commission resolved:

3. To write to the Police about their responsibility to police the roads and to raise concerns about the unsatisfactory response to the previous letter
4. To invite the Chief Inspector of Police and an Officer from Environmental Health and Trading Standards to the Commission's next meeting, based on the response to the above letter.

27 February 2006

Performance Eye – Members requested that a report on BV82(a) and BV82 a(ii), percentage and total tonnage of household waste that has been recycled, be provided to the March meeting of the Commission.

Derby Declaration on Climate Change – Members received the report

Council Cabinet Forward Plan – The Commission considered the Forward Plan for March 2006 and asked for reports on Winter Maintenance (Item 99/04) and Air Quality (Items 75/05 and 76/05) to be provided to the March meeting.

3 April 2006

3.6 Social Care and Health Commission



Councillor Evonne Berry
Chair of the Commission



Councillor Robin Turner
Vice Chair of the Commission

◆ Policy Development

This Commission has the duty for providing scrutiny of local NHS health services and this year in particular it has spent considerable amount of its time fulfilling this responsibility. It has scrutinised a number of important areas and conducted detailed reviews on pressing issues.

Access to Dental Health

Members were anxious that nationally some people were experiencing problems in accessing NHS dental health services and therefore wished to see how NHS dental services were being provided in the city.

Members received a presentation from Mr Ken Wragg, a Consultant in Dental Public Health, which gave an overview of the situation in the city. Members noted that there were significant differences in dental health in the city with disease in the western part of Derby being caught and treated whilst Central Derby had a high proportion of extractions.

It was stated that some sections of the community chose not to visit a dentist whilst others didn't have access to one but this would improve through the new commissioning of dental health services.

Reconfiguration of GP Surgeries

The new General Medical Services (GMS) contract gives GPs the freedom to develop their own management structures and determine the size of their patients list. It also provides opportunities for GPs to expand the range of local services to meet local need, improve convenience and choice by a number of GPs co-locating to a large surgery. This was the preferred local PCT preferred model for delivering GP services.

Members were aware that a number of GPs in the city were retiring in the next few years, especially in the inner city areas and therefore invited the Director of

Operations and Primary Care at the Central and Greater Derby PCTs to attend a meeting of the Commission and explain how this situation was being addressed locally. Members received a detailed presentation from Trish Thompson and Rosemary Stucky from Central and Greater Derby PCTs. The presentation covered the Trusts' policy for reconfiguration of GP surgeries and included the formal consultation process with the patients affected.

Reconfiguration of Mental Health Services

The Commission received a letter from two representatives of Derbyshire Voice, a voluntary sector organisation that promotes the interests of mental health service users and their carers, expressing concerns that services were being withdrawn or changed by the Derbyshire Mental Health Services Trust without consultation with its service users. The letter also stated that discussions were being held and decisions taken by the Trust Board behind closed doors. The Commission was also contacted by the Chair of the Mental Health Trust Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum expressing concerns about the lack of public consultation on changes to mental health services.

The Commission learnt that the Trust was experiencing severe financial pressures with up to £1.25m overspend in July and the Trust Board had indeed agreed to make changes to a number of schemes. The Chair and Vice Chair felt that these were significant changes and merited a more detailed look by the full Commission.

The Commission held a special meeting in the Council Chamber to consider whether there had been substantial reconfiguration of services, the impact of changes on Derby residents and the extent to which the Trust has consulted the Commission and also the patients and the public. The meeting was attended by:

1. Mike Shewan – Chief Executive, Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust
2. Nina Ennis – Chief Executive, Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trust and Chair of the Commissioning Group
3. Elaine Jackson, Chair, Mental Health Trust PPI Forum
4. Mick Walsh and Muriel Townley, representing the patient and public perspective
5. Mick Connell, Assistant Director, Derby City Social Services

On hearing the points from the key stakeholders, the Commission concluded that significant changes had been made to mental health services although not all affected Derby residents. The Commission also learned that no consultations had taken place with the service users, staff or the overview and scrutiny committees of Derby City Council or Derbyshire County Council prior to the decision by the Trust Board.

The Commission therefore recommended that the Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust:

- establishes an effective patient and public involvement strategy and presents it to the Commission for consideration

- discusses any proposal for service change with the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission at an early stage in order to agree whether or not the proposal is considered to be substantial
- consults the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission on significant developments or variations in mental health services

The Commission's report and recommendation were presented to the Trust Board at their January meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair. The Board accepted the Commission's recommendation and thanked the commission for a balanced review.

Reconfiguration of Primary Care Trusts in Derbyshire

The Government is seeking to reconfigure the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and the Ambulance Trusts to provide a patient led service and deliver at least 15% savings in management costs.

PCTs manage services such as those provided by doctors, dentists and pharmacists, people you would normally see when you have a health problem. They also commission (buy) services from hospitals and walk in centres. They work with local councils and other agencies that provide local health and social care to make sure they meet the health needs of residents in their area. The reorganisation of PCTs will therefore have a major impact on the provision of local health services as they are responsible for improving and protecting the health of the local community.

The Commission conducted a detailed review on the two options put forward by the Trent Strategic Health Authority affecting Derby. These were to have either:

- two PCTs for Derbyshire, one PCT coterminous with the City Council boundary one for the rest of the County;
- or one PCT for whole of Derbyshire

The review involved an intensive set of interviews with 33 key stakeholders ranging from chief executives and chairs of the local health bodies to doctors and opticians as well as local and national politicians. With assistance from an external consultant, the Commission also conducted a public survey and received residents' views on the two options. Questionnaires were sent out to four thousand Derby citizens who were randomly selected from the postal address file (PAF). A total of 413 surveys were returned, making the results statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.



The Commission considered the financial arguments relating to the two

options and also the proposals by the strategic health authorities in other areas with population size similar to Derby. After considering all the evidence the Commission recommended that there should be two PCTs in Derbyshire, one for Derby, with its boundary coterminous with that of the City Council, and the other covering the rest of Derbyshire.

The Council Cabinet considered the final report at its 16 March meeting and thanked the Commission for conducting an objective and balanced review and fully supported the recommendations. The final report together with its recommendations was submitted to the Trent Strategic Health Authority, SHA, and Derby's case presented to its Board by the Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Adult Services. The decision of the SHA was that there should be two PCTs, as the Commission's review had recommended.

Review of Children's services

Members reviewed the terms of reference of this topic at their October Meeting and sought have greater focus on recruitment and retention of foster carers and social workers. Unfortunately the Commission was unable to make as much progress it would have liked, not least due to having to spend more time on health scrutiny. Attempts were made to arrange visits to a number of authorities but were unsuccessful since they were in a similar position to ourselves in responding to Children's Agenda's and didn't have capacity to support the visit. It is intended that this would be the priority review for the next Commission.

Statement from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on local health bodies

The Healthcare Commission is a national organisation that promotes improvement in the quality of healthcare and public health through independent assessment of performance of those who provide NHS health services. It is responsible for reviewing the performance of each local NHS trust and awarding an annual rating of that organisation. The Healthcare Commission developed a new approach to assessing and reporting annual performance of healthcare organisations last year which involves measuring performance against core government standards. These cover issues of concern to the public, patients and carers such as patient safety, patient focus and clinical effectiveness.

The new process requires NHS Trusts to make public declarations on the extent to which they meet the core standards. It also provides opportunity for the overview and scrutiny committees to make statements on local health bodies on the extent to which they meet the core standards. The Commission prepared its comments based on its scrutiny of health bodies for the draft statements in October 2005 on the Central and Greater Derby Primary Care Trusts, Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Derbyshire Mental Health Trust.

◆ Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06

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| 4 June 2005 |
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Co-option of Members to the Commission – The Commission recommended Council to re-appoint 4 co-optees.

Modernising the Fostering Service – The Commission considered draft proposals in relation to foster care allowances.

Developing the Use of Performance Eye – The Commission resolved that the Chair and Vice Chair decide which issues will be discussed at full meetings.

Objectives and Work Planning for 2005/6 – The Commission resolved to continue the review of Children Looked After Services.

Update from the Patient and Public Involvement Forum Members – Members received a verbal update from Philip Johnston and Sir Michael Raymond on the activities on the Public and Patient Involvement Forums.

25 July 2005

NHS Dental Services – The Commission received a presentation which gave an overview of dental health services locally and asked the Health Authority to consult the Commission on the fluoridation issue at the appropriate time.

Complaints – The Commission considered the Social Services Complaints and Representations annual report.

NHS Travel Cost Scheme – Members considered a leaflet that had been produced by the Health Trusts regarding the NHS Travel Cost Scheme to ensure that patients were aware of this scheme.

GP retirements – The Commission considered the action being taken in response to a planned GP retirement.

Performance Monitoring Fourth Quarter 2004/05 – The Commission resolved to monitor 20 of the Performance Assessment Framework Indicators each quarter.

Work Programme 2005/06 – Members agreed to prioritise the review of children looked after services, and as a second topic review extra care village – the alternative to traditional residential homes for elderly people, plus various reports to future meetings.

Update from the Patient and Public Involvement Forum Members – The Commission received an oral update.

3 October 2005

Planning for Change – The Commission thanked representatives of the PCT for providing a detailed presentation on probable service changes.

Performance Monitoring First Quarter 2005/06 – Members received a presentation on what the indicators represented and how they might usefully be utilised by the Commission.

Review of Children Looked After Services –The Commission agreed revised terms of reference.

Updates from the Patient and Public Forums – were given by co-opted members.

Financial Implications of Abolishing Care Charges and Impact On Other Elements of the Service – The Commission asked that the Director of Finance inform the Commission of any trends appearing in the new service in the Budget Review Report and to receive a further report in six months time.

Statement from the Commission to the Healthcare Commission on Health Bodies – Agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair produce a draft statement for Members circulation to the Commission.

28 November 2005

Reconfiguration of Mental Health Services –The Commission recommended that the Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust i) establishes an effective patient and public involvement strategy and presents it to the Commission ii) discusses any proposal for service change with the Commission at an early stage in order to agree whether or not the proposal is considered to be substantial.

Further Integration of Specialist Mental Health Services in Derbyshire – Response from Consultation – The Commission requested that the numbers of Compulsory Admissions be monitored.

Second Quarter Performance Monitoring – The Commission received a report detailing the second quarter figures.

16 January 2006

Revenue Budget Review – The Commission considered the Draft Revenue Budget 2006/07 and which detailed the implications for Adults Services. It resolved to ask the Cabinet to review the proposals for an upper limit of £20,500 savings an elderly person would be allowed to access free Home Care services, as the Social Care and Health Commission did not feel that this represented a fair method of funding Home Care.

Review of the Options for the Reorganisation of the Primary Care Trusts in Derby and Derbyshire – The Government was seeking to reconfigure PCTs, SHAs and Ambulance Trusts nationally to provide a patient led service and deliver at least 15% savings in management costs. There were effectively two options for the reconfiguration of the PCT's to reduce from 8 PCT's to either two, one covering the city and one covering the county, or just one for the whole of Derbyshire. The Commission resolved to undertake a detailed review of the options for Derby and use the Commission's research budget to conduct a public consultation exercise.

Reconfiguration of GP Surgeries – The Commission noted the action being taken by the Central and Greater Derby Primary Care Trusts in response to the planned retirement of Dr J M S Paul.

Second Quarter Performance Monitoring – The commission received a report detailing the second quarter performance monitoring information and noted that there was little change in the figures.

Update from the Patients and Public Forums Members – The Commission received an oral update

27 February 2006

Derbyshire Mental Health Trust – The Commission received a presentation from the Derbyshire Mental Health Trust on its approach to patient and public involvement with examples based on services in the city.

Best Value Review of Home Care – the Commission considered and noted the Best Value Review report.

Third Quarter Performance Monitoring 2005/06 – The commission received a report detailing the third quarter performance monitoring information.

Children and Young People's Plan – Local authorities are expected to produce an annual plan for delivering services to children and young people in their respective areas. The Commission considered the plan prepared by the Young People's Partnership.

3 April

3.7 Corporate Parenting Joint Sub Commission

Derby has approximately 370 children looked after by the City Council placed in various settings such as foster care and Children's Homes. The Corporate Parenting Joint Sub Commission consists of members from the Education and Social Care and Health Commissions and is chaired by Councillor Anne MacDonald. The Sub Commission meets four times a year to consider issues that help make the Council become a good corporate parent. To further its aim the Sub Commission routinely considers issues around health and welfare, education, accommodation of the young people in care. The Sub Commission also acts akin to the former Social Services Committee and considers reports under Regulation 33 of the Children's Housing Regulations 2001 and the Adoption Agency Regulations reports.

The Sub Commission monitors a statistical information report on looked after children at each of its scheduled meeting. This report provides the statistical evidence on the progress made towards meeting the council's priorities of improving children and young people prospects and improving their life chances. The report also covers information on the educational and health outcomes of the young people, stability of placements and also statistics on employment and training of care leavers.

Government guidance requires councils to put in place arrangements to have the health needs of the children looked after met, act as an advocate on their behalf and to ensure they receive the health services they need. The Sub Commission considered a progress report on health promotion of children looked after and learnt that the Trent Strategic Health Authority was leading on the identifying and collecting of key data on these children in the region. This should help us to compare the health needs of Derby's children looked after against others in the region and further improve their health.

Children looked after are often wrongly linked to crime and anti-social behaviour activities even though the vast majority of them behave sensibly and are not involved in these activities. The Commission considered a report on work carried out by the Social Services Department and the Community Safety Partnership to prevent and reduce offending within this vulnerable and priority group.

Young people have a stake in our society and can make valuable contributions in the discussion to improve our community. They are also best placed to tell us of their needs and should to be involved in planning their care. The Commission considered a report from the Participation Officer on a range of activities to increase children/young people's involvement in local decision-making. This included the work being carried with the two reference groups, Kids In Care In Kontrol – KICK group which is for young people aged 13 years and above, and the Connector group for children aged 12 years and below. Not only have young people been involved in the development of their individual care plans but they have also assisted in the recruitment and selection of the workers for the Advocacy project and provided questions for recruitment of social workers.

◆ **Items Scrutinised by the Commission During 2005/06**

27 APRIL 2005

The Education of Children Looked After (Gatsby Project) – The Sub-Commission considered the progress of the Gatsby Project and requested i) that further details of the study on children’s motivations be brought to a future meeting, ii) during the 2006/07 budget setting process priority be given to the educational needs of Children Looked After and iii) Cabinet explore other funding to meet the shortfall when the grant from the Gatsby Foundation expires in October 2006.

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered details of progress in improving children and young people’s prospects and the life chances for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.

Adoption Agency Report – The Sub-Commission considered a yearly update on Derby City Adoption Agency and asked for more information on the targets of the Adoption Agency.

26 JULY 2005

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered statistical information on children looked after.

Fostering Service Report – The Sub-Commission considered the Fostering Service and agreed to track key indicators of performance.

Promoting the Health of Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered a report on promoting the health of children looked after and agreed to consider the health of children looked after as a possible topic review for the Social Care and Health Commission.

Reducing Offending by Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered a joint report from the Director of Social Services and Director of Community Safety Partnership.

6 SEPTEMBER 2005

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered further statistical information.

Participation and Consultation of Children and Young People – The Sub-Commission considered a report that identified the work undertaken since October 2004.

Inspection and Management Visits to Children's Homes – The Sub-Commission noted that significant progress had been made at the Children's Homes.

6 DECEMBER 2005

Statistical Information on Children Looked After – The Sub-Commission considered further statistical information.

Aspire – Leaving Care Service – Members considered a report and a video presentation on Aspire, the leaving care service

Future Work Programme – Members considered items for future work of the Commission

4. Public Involvement in Scrutiny

Previous Annual Reports have referred to public involvement as being one of the keys to good scrutiny. That fully accords with two of the CfPS's four principles of effective scrutiny:

- making an impact on the delivery of public services
- enabling the voice and concerns of the public

as both require public engagement to give the scrutiny process validity. For example, it would be meaningless to review on-street controlled parking in residential areas without finding out the views of the residents affected.

Involving the public is also relevant to the other two CfPS principles

- being carried out by practitioners who own and lead the scrutiny role
- providing 'critical friend' challenge

as that helps the Council to demonstrate its own value of being open, transparent and honest in everything we do.

However, the reality is that attendance of any member of the Derby public at the scheduled commission meetings is rare. A similar story applies to focussed scrutiny and to topic review meetings. Significant numbers have only been present when a controversial decision is being scrutinised – for example the service cut backs to manage down overspends in the Mental Health Trust.

On a more positive note, the views of members of the Derby public have been gathered in other ways. The Council website invited a choice to be expressed between two alternative proposals for the merger of the Derbyshire Constabulary with neighbouring forces.

The proposed Primary Care Trust mergers, discussed in detail in the section Scrutiny of External Organisations, involved a survey of 4,000 Derby households and resulted in a statistically valid response which influenced the Social Care and Health Commission's conclusions. Direct evidence was also taken from activists in the four Patient and Public Involvement Forums.

Local Democracy Week 2005

The Overview and Scrutiny Coordination team organised and ran the 'Your City – Your Voice' event at which young people of Derby were given the opportunity to quiz Councillors on issues that concern them.

The objectives of the event were to:

- Make City councillors aware of the issues which are important to young people in Derby
- Give Derby's young people the opportunity to hear the views of their City

councillors

- Provide young people in Derby with a 'democratic experience' where they could comment on and challenge the views of elected members.

Seven councillors, representing all of the political parties took part in the panel game, in which they faced questions posed by teams of young people over a series of rounds, the member with the lowest score in each round was 'evicted' from the dias. At the end of the last round the teams voted for a winner from the two councillors who remained.



Eight teams took part in the event and included groups from two of the City's schools. The other entrants were teams from young people's community groups in the city and the Youth Forum.

A member of the Youth Parliament presented Councillor Evonne Berry with a certificate as winner of the overall event. However the

contribution of all the councillors who took part was also recognised and a good time seems to have been had by all involved.

Of note, was that the questions posed by the young people were not known to the panel members beforehand. The two-hour event, which started at 5.30pm, was webcast using the Council Chamber's camera and sound system.

Following the evening, copies of the event were burnt onto DVD and sent to all the teams along with a feedback form. Of the responses received all said that they would take part in a similar event in the future. Other comments included:

“It was well organised and fun. There was a good amount of information sent out before hand and it was easy to talk through any concerns with the organisers”

“Good representation from political parties, good use of technology – webcast etc”

This event involved one of the first uses of the webcasting facility for by the co-ordination team, which may safely be predicted to develop as a method to engage the public in scrutiny activity. For the future it should be possible to invite viewers to e-mail questions to a witness and at the end of a session to comment on the evidence given.

