

ITEM 4

Time commenced - 18:03

Time finished – 19:31

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

31 January 2012

Present: Councillor Higginbottom (Chair)
Councillors Dhindsa, Harwood, Keith, F Khan and
Roberts

Councillor Roberts was absent for minute numbers 56/11 to 61/11 inclusive and part of minute number 62/11.

56/11 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

57/11 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

58/11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

59/11 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

60/11 Call-in

There were no items.

61/11 Councillor Call for Action

There were no items.

Items for Discussion

62/11 Castleward Urban Village: Progress Report

The commission received a report from the Head of Regeneration Projects and the Development Officer, on behalf of the Chief Executive. The officers anticipated that development would commence in late summer 2012, following the submission of a planning application in March. It was reported that the project was designed to create a sustainable urban village of around 800 homes, schools, community facilities and open spaces, together with a boulevard link between the railway station and the city centre. The officers were investigating the possibility of providing offset car parking. It was acknowledged that the scheme would generate housing that attracted council tax and the New Homes Bonus Scheme. It was envisaged that the income generated would mitigate any loss of income previously yielded by car parking. It was reported that car parking produced £360 000 revenue per year.

The officers estimated that the project would generate 800 jobs throughout the process. The commission was informed that the project would progress in five phased developments, across ten years. The project was designed to ensure that, if necessary, each phase could operate in isolation. This allowed for a flexible system which was capable of responding to market sales trends. The first phase was considered as financially viable. The viability of the remaining phases would be monitored.

The commission was informed that local businesses would be assisted with their relocation plans. The highways network would be altered during the first phase of development to serve the needs of the entire development. This would minimise future disruption.

The officers explained that the boulevard comprised part of the phase one plans. The boulevard was designed to incorporate pedestrian access, refresh the image of the area and create a link between the city centre and the railway station. Highways officers were investigating the possibility of linking the Castleward development to the Arboretum, London Road and Bass' Recreation Ground. The Regeneration Officers explained that the viability of the link was not their main concern, rather it was wider a council initiative, which could potentially tie in with the Castleward project. There was scope for public consultation in relation to the types of public art which could be displayed on the boulevard. The commission suggested that the designers could examine industries which were historically associated with the city and link them to the art displayed on the boulevard. It was reported that existing trees would be removed during development and replaced along the boulevard. Consideration would be given to the types of trees appropriate to the area.

The officers reassured the commission that both they and the developer were engaging in a constant dialogue with the Liversage Trust. The officers explained that they recognised the importance of the trust and were sensitive to its needs. The commission discussed the effectiveness of the recent public consultation and questioned whether the feedback had been analysed. It was reported that officers

were in the process of conducting the analysis and a briefing had been scheduled. The commission requested that the officers distribute a précis of the consultation analysis to members of the commission as soon as was practicable.

The commission noted that the proposal included plans for the construction of a school. The officers confirmed that this was intended as part of the second phase of development but would depend on how many houses were built and the resulting need that they created.

Resolved to:

- 1. note the report; and**
- 2. request that the Head of Regeneration Projects and the Development Officer distribute a précis of the public consultation analysis to members of the Scrutiny Management Commission.**

63/11 Maximising Benefits to the Local Economy from Derby City Council Procurement Expenditure

The commission received a report from the Strategic Director of Resources. The report identified early actions which would be taken to ensure that the 'local' and 'social' impact of sourcing decisions would be considered when procuring contracts, whilst maintaining compliance with European Union and United Kingdom procurement regulations. The requirement to balance this need with the council's obligation to obtain best value was also discussed.

The Head of Procurement advised the commission that the proposed initiatives were designed to increase awareness amongst potential suppliers and guide them to bid effectively. Working within the current legislative framework, the Head of Procurement intended to strengthen links with bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce or the voluntary sector and formalise training arrangements. It was hoped that provision of dedicated training on bidding would improve awareness among local businesses.

The commission recognised the importance of adhering to procurement regulations and ensuring that the initiatives did not operate to specify a preferred supplier. The commission understood that the officers were obliged to comply with the council's overarching mandate to act in the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Head of Procurement informed the commission that the initiatives were focused on businesses in Derby and Derbyshire but officers were mindful of the distinction between local manufactures and local distributors who merely operated as outlets for national businesses.

The commission referred to section 4.7 of the report, namely the roll out of corporate procurement cards and questioned whether significant safeguards would be implemented to prevent fraudulent activity. The Head of Procurement reassured the commission that the cards were intended to address low value purchases only and that principles of use would be developed prior to distribution. The officer was

confident that appropriate control of the cards could be achieved through proper procedures, together with training and monitoring.

The Head of Procurement informed the commission that officers intended to explore procurement category strategies before the end of March. The wording of existing documentation would be examined and if necessary, amended to reflect the initiatives. A meeting was scheduled with Derbyshire Community Action and future similar meetings were expected. Officers would begin by looking at existing procurements but it was hoped that adoption of the initiatives would cause them to become standard practice.

Resolved to note the report.

64/11 Scrutiny of items considered by the Council Cabinet not included in the Forward Plan

There were no items.

65/11 Forward Plan

The commission noted the contents of the January and February Forward Plans. The commission was disappointed that the proposed upgrade of Kings Chambers, Beaufort Business Centre and Shot Tower Corner, reference number 44/11, did not include consultation with members.

The commission expressed discontent in relation to the approval of the cleaning and caretaking business case, reference number 56/11. The Director of Planning and Facilities Management and the Head of Facilities Management presented a report to the commission at a previous meeting. The commission noted that inaccuracies had been identified in the research undertaken by external consultants. Although minded to support option 1, the commission recommended that a tendering exercise was undertaken by officers, to test the market and obtain accurate information regarding potential savings. Following this recommendation, the commission had not received any feedback from either the officers or the Council Cabinet.

The Head of Democratic Service advised the commission that it was possible for Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chairs to attend Council Cabinet meetings and request permission to speak on commission recommendations.

Resolved to:

- 1. note the January and February Forward Plans; and**
- 2. request an update in relation to the cleaning and caretaking business case from the relevant officer.**

66/11 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items.

67/11 Response of the Council Cabinet to Commission's
Recommendations

There were no items.

MINUTES END