



COUNCIL CABINET
8 February 2005

Report of the Scrutiny Management Commission

Draft Revenue Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Cabinet consider the recommendations (as shown in Appendix 2) made by the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions in respect of the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2007/08.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 31 January 2005 the Scrutiny Management Commission considered those aspects of the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2007/08 that fell within the remit of the Commission.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Management Commission also considered the reports on the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2006/07 that had been made to it by the Community Regeneration, Culture and Prosperity, Education, Planning and Environment and Social Care and Health Commissions.
- 2.3 Councillor Maurice Burgess, the Leader of the Council, Ray Cowlshaw, the Chief Executive, and Paul Dransfield, the Director of Finance attended the Commission meeting and responded to Commission members' questions about the draft Revenue Budget.

Issue(s)

- 2.4 The Scrutiny Management Commission, members expressed their concerns about the growing problem of graffiti in the City. There was discussion about the possibility of using some of the unallocated public priority funds to address the graffiti problem. The Leader of the Council told Commission members that Council Cabinet would consider the views of the Commission on this matter.
- 2.5 Commission members also expressed concern about the provision of parking for residents of Derby and it was suggested that Council Cabinet should consider this when setting the budget.

2.6 The recommendations made in respect of the draft Revenue Budget by each of the other five Overview and Scrutiny Commissions were considered in turn by the Scrutiny Management Commission.

Conclusions of the Commission

2.7 The Commission agreed to recommend that Council Cabinet consider the issues of graffiti and car parking provision when setting the budget and asked that, as a matter of urgency, the Planning and Environment Commission be provided with a report detailing the actions that would be taken to address these issues.

2.8 In respect of the recommendations made by the other five Commissions in relation to the draft Revenue budget, the Scrutiny Management Commission came to the following conclusions:

a) Community Regeneration Commission

The Scrutiny Management Commission agreed with Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Community Regeneration Commission but in respect of Recommendation 2 considered that it would be more appropriate if the £70,000 were made available from a revenue source other than the public priorities fund.

b) Culture and Prosperity Commission

The Scrutiny Management Commission agreed with Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the Culture and Prosperity Commission. Members also recommended that the reference to the possible closure of the Chaddesden Park Paddling Pool be deleted from the Commercial Services Budget list of 'Further service budget proposals and strategy to meet them'.

c) Education Commission

The Scrutiny Management Commission agreed with the Education Commission's recommendation.

e) Planning and Environment Commission

The Scrutiny Management Commission agreed with the seven recommendations proposed by the Planning and Environment Commission.

f) Social Care and Health Commission

The Scrutiny Management Commission agreed with the four recommendations proposed by the Social Care and Health Commission.

Recommendations of the Commission

2.9 The recommendations of all the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions to Council Cabinet in respect of the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2007/08 are summarised in Appendix 2 of this report.

Reasons for Commission's Recommendations

2.10 The reasons for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's recommendations are listed in Appendix 2 of this report.

For more information contact:	David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Background papers - None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The financial implications of the Commissions' recommendations are as detailed in the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2007/08 and in the Commissions' reports to the Scrutiny Management Commission.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. Adoption of some of the Commissions' recommendations will have personnel implications but these cannot be quantified by the Commissions in the time available.

Equalities impact

4. The recommendations

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. The Council's Revenue Budget relates to all the Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change.

Appendix 2

Recommendations made to Council Cabinet on the draft Revenue Budget 2005/06-2007/08 by the Scrutiny Management, Community Regeneration, Culture and Prosperity, Education, Planning and Environment and Social Care and health Commissions.

Note: The inserts in italics are the comments that were made by the Scrutiny Management Commission about some of the Commissions' recommendations.

Scrutiny Management Commission	
<p>Recommendation 1 The Commission agreed to recommend that Council Cabinet consider the issues of graffiti and car parking provision when setting the budget and asked that, as a matter of urgency, the Planning and Environment Commission be provided with a report explaining detailing the actions that would be taken to address these issues.</p>	<p>Reason 1 Commission members were concerned that there was a response to the increasing level of graffiti in the City. Commission members also considered that there was an issue about car parking provision that needed to be addressed.</p>
Community Regeneration Commission	
<p>Recommendation 1 In addition to the £100k extra proposed for the Community Safety Partnership, partly to maintain the current burglary reduction scheme, a further £100k should be provided from the public priorities fund, or elsewhere, to expand the number of houses receiving target hardening measures from 110 homes per month to 190 per month.</p>	<p>Reasons 1 The present level of funding allows about 1,300 households to benefit from target hardening measures per year. The Commission welcome the Cabinet's proposal provide £100k to the Community Safety Partnership partly to ensure the current level of service continues. Recommendation 1 would allow over 900 <i>extra</i> households to also benefit. This was the first preference of the public for service enhancement. Apart from the direct benefit to those additional 900 individuals or families there is also the dividend that the Council will have been seen to have listened to and responded to public opinion.</p>

<p>Recommendation 2 £70k should be provided from the public priorities fund, or elsewhere, to unfreeze and fill the two vacant Area Panel Managers post.</p>	<p>Reasons 2 With regard to Recommendation 2, Area Panels were instituted locally as part of the new governance arrangements adopted following the Local Government Act 2000. They provide a direct link between the Council and the citizenry and have proved popular with the public and elected members. The intention had been to have one Panel Manager for each Area Panel.</p> <p><i>Scrutiny Management Commission suggested that it would be more appropriate if the £70,000 were made available from a revenue source other than the public priorities fund.</i></p>
---	--

Culture and Prosperity Commission

<p>Recommendation 1 To seek the views of the Social Care and Health Commission on the potential health impact on the local community of stopping the funding of the Normanton Park sports zone officer.</p>	<p>Reasons 1 The Commission was concerned about the potential health impact on the local community of stopping the funding of the Normanton Park sports zone officer.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 To provide the Culture and Prosperity Commission with details of usage, location and the associated costs of any playgrounds, sporting facilities or other recreational areas in the City considered for closure and receive the Commission's subsequent comments.</p>	<p>Reasons 2 By a majority decision the Commission considered that Council Cabinet should not approve the closure of any sports, recreational or play facilities without first considering the comments of the Culture and Prosperity Commission.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 To allocate some of the £700k 2005/06 public priority fund to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Make provision for facilities where needed in the City for street sports such as hockey and skating. ii. Allocate £5k to counteract the inflationary effects on the book fund for which no provision has been made. iii. Provide a £20k grant fund for organisations that benefit all sections of the community by promoting arts and cultural activities across the City. 	<p>Reasons 3 To address areas where the Commission is aware that there are currently deficiencies or a lack of provision.</p> <p><i>Members also recommended that the reference to the possible closure of the Chaddesden Park Paddling Pool be deleted from the Commercial Services Budget list of 'Further service budget proposals and strategy to meet them'.</i></p>

Education Commission	
<p>Recommendation 1. By a majority decision the Commission recommended that for the year 2005/06 the central education budgets efficiency savings should be limited to 2.5%.</p>	<p>Reasons 1 Members were of the opinion that the below average size of the LEA placed a heavy burden on staff and that it did not have the capacity to meet challenges in the future. Members were of the view that by reducing the efficiencies for 2005/06 from £918,000 to £550,000 it might be possible for the authority to reduce some of the pressures on staff.</p>
Planning and Environment Commission	
<p>Recommendation 1 That £70,000 of the unallocated Public Priorities Fund should be allocated to cover the operating costs of the Proof of Age card scheme during the 12 month period April 2005 to March 2006.</p>	<p>Reasons 1 The Proof of Age card scheme has the potential to significantly reduce the purchase of age restricted items by underage customers and thereby to reduce the problems resulting from such purchases. Much excellent work has been done so far in this field by the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division and this will be lost if funding ceases in March 2005.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 That city centre car parking charges be increased to the levels set out in Appendix 10 on page 129 of the draft Revenue Budget with the proviso that the increase in income, over and above that which would have been received had the car parking charges in Appendix 9 on page 128 been imposed, is used to fund improvements in public transport in Derby.</p>	<p>Reasons 2 Implementation of the recommendation will make available an estimated £74,000 that can be used to address known public priorities by funding improvements in public transport.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 That £8,000 of the unallocated Public Priorities Fund should be contributed to the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society.</p>	<p>Reasons 3 There is no provision in the draft Revenue Budget for the Council to continue to support the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society. Restoration of the canal will bring boats back into Derby, and is planned to create a 12.5 mile linear park suitable for many activities such as walking, fishing, cycling and horse riding.</p>

<p>Recommendation 4 The Council should continue to participate in Britain in Bloom.</p>	<p>Reasons 4 The Commission considered that participation in Britain in Bloom has a beneficial effect on the economic diversity and viability of the City.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 The draft Revenue Budget should be amended to include funding to implement the recommendations made by the Planning and Environment Commission as a consequence of their review of the Council's Tree Management Policy and the recommendations made by the Commission for improvements to the Parks Service.</p>	<p>Reasons 5 For the reasons given in the Commission's reports on its review of the Tree Management Policy and to improve the service delivered to the public.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 The Commission recommends that reducing the number of grass cuts from 15 to 12 per year should not be considered as a further service budget proposal.</p>	<p>Reasons 6 Reducing the number of cuts per year would reduce the level of public satisfaction with the service.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 The Commission recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crematorium charges should be increased by a maximum of 4% • Burial charges should be increased by a maximum of 10% • The cost of Cemeteries Grounds Maintenance (£274,000 per year) should be examined to see whether there are ways in which it can be reduced 	<p>Reasons 7 Commission members did not consider it reasonable to introduce an 11.7% increase in cremation charges when this side of the Bereavement Service was already making a significant profit. It was recognised that the Burials side of the Bereavement service was operating at a significant loss, but Members considered that this should be tackled by increasing burial charges and by seeing whether it was possible to reduce the cost of Grounds Maintenance.</p>

Social Care and Health Commission

Recommendation 1

The Commission supports the Council in its aim to reduce the number Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements and recommends that the Council Cabinet develops a clear commissioning strategy for the next three years to obtain best value

Reasons 1

The Commission supports the Cabinet in its aim to reduce the number of placements with IFA's. However, based on the current rate of reduction it is estimated that there are still likely to be around 30 placements by March 07 and it will be some time before these are reduced to zero, if we achieve them at all. Since the all the current IFA placements are spot purchased and these can be significantly more expensive than negotiating a longer term arrangements, it is recommended that the Cabinet develops a commissioning strategy for the purchasing placements from the IFA's to obtain better value for money, whilst it continues to reduce the numbers.

Recommendation 2

The Council Cabinet reviews its strategy for reducing the number of looked after children as the current strategy is not progressing fast enough and poses a potential risk on the budget

Reasons 2

The number of looked after children declined steadily from a high of 523 in 1996/97 to 388 in 2001/02 and has remained around 385 since. These figures are higher than the average for comparable authorities, although their averages are beginning to edge closer to Derby's. As the budget is based on the expectation that the number of looked after children will continue to decrease further, if this was not achieved, it will begin to increase pressure on the children's and family budget. It is recommended that the Cabinet review its strategy for reducing the number of looked after children.

Recommendation 3

The Council Cabinet closely monitors the impact of budgetary pressures on Social Services budgets resulting from possible decommissioning of services within Supporting People.

Reasons 3

The Draft Revenue Budget identifies budgetary pressures on the Supporting People budget managed by the Policy Directorate. Since Supporting People works closely with social services, any changes resulting from decommissioning of its services will have a knock on affect on social services. The Commission

	<p>recommends that the Council Cabinet monitor the impact on Social Service resulting from the pressures on Supporting People budgets.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 Apart from monitoring the ten key threshold indicators, the Commission will also track and scrutinise the following indicators from the performance eye, which are in response to the service and financial strategy for social services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) AO/B11 Intensive homecare as a proportion of intensive home and residential care 2) AO/B12 Cost of intensive social care for adults 3) AO/B13 Unit cost of residential and nursing care for older people 4) AO/B17 Unit cost homecare for adults 5) AO/C32 Older people (aged 65 or over) helped to live at home 6) AO/D55 Acceptable waiting times for assessments 7) CF/B10 Unit cost of foster care 8) CF/B8 Cost of services for children looked after 9) CF/L1 Children looked after per 1000 population 10) CF/L1 Percentage of looked after children in residential care 	<p>Reasons 4 Members were asked to identify aspects of the budget, which they could track and scrutinise using the performance eye. It is considered that the Commission will continue to monitor the ten key threshold indicators, which could affect the annual social services ratings and also ten additional indicators to reflect the strategic objectives for the Social Services Department.</p>