

**SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION  
23 OCTOBER 2007**

Present: Councillor Higginbottom (Chair)  
Councillors Bayliss, Carr, Dhindsa, Ingall, Poulter and Webb

**54/07 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**55/07 Late items introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items

**56/07 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dhindsa declared a personal interest in item 59/07 as he was a member on the Derby Playhouse Board. Councillor Webb also declared a personal interest in item 59/07.

**57/07 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**58/07 Call – In**

There were no items called in.

**Items for Discussion**

**59/07 Consideration of Petition – Crisis in Community  
Theatre in Derby**

Keith Bryers presented a petition entitled ‘Crisis in Community Theatre in Derby’ to the Commission. The petition which was signed by the chairmen of 23 local amateur theatre groups asked Derby City Council to take the following actions:

- Reduce the hire charges for amateur groups at the Assembly Rooms and Guildhall, or provide grants towards meeting ever-increasing costs;
- Apply pressure on Derby Playhouse to make its Main House accessible to amateur groups at reasonable times and at an affordable hire charge.
- Honour its commitment to reconvene the Steering Group on performance

- spaces in the City to decide on a way to take forward the proposals in the Locum report;
- Actively pursue ways to ensure that Derby's last remaining traditional theatre building – The Hippodrome in Green Lane – is preserved and brought back into use as a theatre for use by amateur groups.

Commission members agreed that the petition should be referred to the Community Commission for further investigation, including looking into budgetary considerations.

It was noted that amateur groups throughout the city were actively looking for other venues to in which to perform. A previous report had recommended to Cityscape that a new theatre that could accommodate the amateur groups was built in the City but unfortunately the bid for this had failed.

The use of the former Hippodrome theatre on Green Lane had been considered by the Culture and Prosperity Commission in its review of culture in Derby and the Commission had recommended that this initiative was supported. However the Hippodrome theatre had now been acquired by a developer who had applied to have the Grade 2 Listed status removed from the building. The Commission were told that the Council's enforcement officers were aware of this and were seeking to ensure the building was properly maintained and protected.

**Resolved to refer the report to the Community Commission to request they look at the circumstances of the petition the budgetary issues relating to the support of amateur theatre in Derby. The Commission also requested that a report on the petition be made to Council Cabinet.**

## 60/07 Derby City Council's Enforcement of Dog Fouling and Dog Control Legislation

Ian Donnelly, Group Leader – Public Health, provided the Commission with an update on the way in which Environmental Health and Trading Standards is enforcing the Dog Fouling and Dog Control Legislation.

It was reported from April 2008 the police function to deal with stray dogs would cease and that all responsibility for stray dogs would pass to the local authority. The Commission was told that the officers had tried to find alternative kennels closer than the current location in Ilkeston so that the enforcement officers would spend less time travelling. It was noted that DEFRA had provided some funding which would be used to provide kennels within the City. It was hoped that these would be up and running by April 2008. The possibility of using RSPCA kennels was suggested but members were told that the RSPCA did not have sufficient spare capacity to provide for more than occasional use by the Council of their kennels.

Members were told that the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which gave enforcement officers responsibilities for dealing with animal cruelty.

Members expressed concern that there had only been four fixed penalty notices issues this year, and requested a report be brought to the January meeting on the notices served and the observations carried out in response to complaints.

Members were concerned that there had been no real change since the matter was considered in April 2007 and asked that this matter and the need for additional resources be raised with the Council Cabinet member.

**Resolved that the Cabinet Member for Enforcement be informed of the Commission's concerns about the lack of enforcement action and of the need for additional resources that would permit the Dog Warden service to operate more effectively.**

## 61/07 Network and Telephony Strategy

The Scrutiny Management Commission considered a report from the Director of Resources which provided a briefing on the Network and Telephony Strategy. It was reported that the draft telecoms and network strategy would be presented to the Council Cabinet in December. The vision for the strategy was for Derby to have a 21<sup>st</sup> century network that would support the high quality delivery of Council services. The strategy would cover data, wireless, voice, video, mobile and remote services and would cover all DCC users, shared occupancy sites, partners and shared service consortiums.

Members noted a key issue was that network and telephone strategy would need to be developed alongside the accommodation strategy to assure that all sites and partner agencies would be included.

Members welcomed to report and it was suggested that the Commission visit the QUAD building when completed.

### **Resolved**

- 1. to arrange a visit to the QUAD building;**
- 2. to note the report.**

## 62/07 Performance Eye

The Commission received a briefing on the revisions to Performance Eye and were presented with a new report format for Performance Eye which had been devised by the Performance Management Team. The Commission were pleased with the new report format. Members were concerned that there was no Commentary for some of the indicators and requested that at future meetings they should be provided with an explanation by the responsible officer if there was no Commentary for an indicator.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## 63/07 Consultation on Proposed Programme of Post Office Closures in Derby

The Scrutiny Management Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Services that set out the outcomes of the review of the proposal by Post Office Counters plc to close six post offices in Derby. Members were told that the closure programme was the subject of consultation and that the deadline for responses to be submitted to Post Office Counters was 12 November 2007.

Having considered the report members added two more recommendations to those already proposed. These were:

1. That the Wilmorton Post Office should not be closed
2. That Post Office Counters should provide the City Council with information on the commercial viability of the post offices proposed for closure in Derby.

Members also requested that the Chair of the Commission write to the Derby MPs asking them to press for a proper debate of the proposed closure programme.

#### **Resolved**

1. **to refer the Commissions recommendations as set out in the report to Council Cabinet.**
2. **that the Chair of the Commission should write to the Derby MPs asking them to press for a proper debate of the proposed closure programme.**

### 64/07 Outcomes of the Review of the Effect of Election Cycle on Voter Turnout

The Scrutiny Management Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate and Adult Services on the review of the effect of election cycle on voter turnout. The report asked members if they considered whether the possible increase in voter turnout and the potential cost saving were significant enough to merit a proposal to Council to change the electoral cycle at Derby.

Members raised concerns that the views from the Labour and Conservative groups had not been received and thought that it would be beneficial for the Commission to receive the views of all the political parties before a decision was taken. It was suggested that the Commission members obtain the views from their respective parties and report back to the next meeting.

The Commission noted the work carried out by Ellen Bird and thanked her for efforts.

**Resolved to defer the decision to the January meeting of the Commission.**

### 65/07 Consideration of the Cabinet Member's response to the Petition about Home Care Charges

The Scrutiny Management Commission considered a report from the Cabinet Member for Adult Services in response to a petition on Care in the Community.

Members raised concerns that the report did not include details of the options available or provide any financial information. It was requested that these implications should be included and that the report should be drafted in the standard format for reports to Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. .

**Resolved to request the Director of Corporate and Adult Services to provide information to the January meeting of the Commission on the options and financial implications of the Cabinet member's response and that the report should be in the standard format for reports to Overview and Scrutiny Commissions.**

**66/07 Report relating to BV 127b Robberies figures**

The Commission noted the report on Persistent and Other Priority Offenders in Derby that was provided to the Commission for information.

**Resolved to note the report.**

**67/07 Retrospective Scrutiny**

There were no items identified.

**68/07 Outcome of any meeting of the SMC working group with Derby City Partnership partners**

David Romaine reported to the Commission that a future meeting of the working group had been scheduled for Wednesday 14 November at 6.00pm.

**69/07 Council Cabinet Forward Plan**

There were no items identified.

**70/07 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission**

The Commission noted the minutes of the Council Cabinet meeting on 2 October 2007.

**71/07 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet**

There were no items.

MINUTES END