

Time commenced - 6.00 pm  
Time finished - 8.00 pm

## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 19 APRIL 2005

Present: Councillor Troup (in the Chair)  
Councillors Ahern, Bayliss, P Berry, Graves, Hussain, Jones,  
Latham, Lowe, MacDonald, Redfern, Repton, Smalley and Travis.

### 90/04 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

### 91/04 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items. The Chair welcomed Cherry Hayes, who had been appointed Overview and Scrutiny Team Administrator.

### 92/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 93/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 84/04 – First paragraph – delete “the Council to set up” - as this appeared twice.

Second paragraph – to say “getting more for the same resources or getting more for less”.

To delete from the fourth paragraph “she felt a regional agenda was the way forward”.

In minute 84/04 – second resolution to replace ‘ak’ with ‘ask’

### 94/04 Call-In

There had been no call-in of a decision.

## Items for Discussion

### 95/04 Review of Children Looked-After Services

The Commission considered a report from the Social Care and Health Commission which stated that the Commission had resolved at their January meeting to conduct a

review of Children Looked After Services, where 'Looked After' meant all of the children and young people who were looked after by a Local Authority, in accordance with the Children's Act 1989. Children's Services had been subject to a number of inspections by the Commission for Social Care Inspection over recent years, including the inspection of fostering service, adoption service, residential children's unit and the children's services. Member's felt that undertaking a detailed review of the Children Looked After Services, could further strengthen this statutory service. The draft terms of reference for a review were set out in the report.

Councillor P Berry suggested that before the Commission commenced a review, it should make sure that there was no overlap and the work it was proposing was not already been done elsewhere. He said that there had already been a number of reviews of aspects of this topic and he thought that the Council knew most of the answers.

Councillor Hussain told the Commission that Children Looked After Services was a matter that was of concern to many senior officers of the Council. He said that Derby seemed to be out of line with other similar local authorities, as it had a high number of looked after children and was incurring higher costs. The Social Care and Health Commission wanted to take a holistic view and look at the reasons for differences. He was not aware of any other reviews that had been done on this. He confirmed that the terms of reference for the review had been agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 18 April 2005, with the addition of one extra bullet point "to evaluate the evidence and make recommendations to Council Cabinet". The Cabinet member for Social Care and Youth had attended the January meeting of that Commission and supported the Commission in its review of looked after children's services, but had not been involved in drawing up the terms of reference.

**Resolved to approve the review of Children Looked After Services as the next topic review by the Social Care and Health Commission.**

## 96/04 Energy Policy for Buildings

The Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services, which stated that the Council's energy policy was written in the early 1990's and was well out of date. A new policy had been written to reflect the Government and European Union's targets for reducing energy consumption and current good practice. The Council's aim was to reduce consumption, wastage and carbon dioxide pollution by more than the EU target of 1.5% each year. This would be done in a number of ways which were detailed in the policy. Chris Edwards, Assistant Director, Property Services, said that for 2005/06 a fund of £120,000 had been made available for management/energy saving projects.

Councillor Travis welcomed the proposals contained in the policy and hoped that the Council would take every opportunity of obtaining additional funding. Councillor Graves also welcomed the policy, but expressed concern about the difficulties of allocating energy costs to difficult budget heads and of reducing energy consumption in the Council's older buildings. Councillor Redfern asked whether any energy savings would contribute to the Gershon Review. Chris Edwards confirmed that they would.

The Chair pointed out that paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 of the policy document only referred to new buildings and to necessary maintenance work and major refurbishment work. He suggested that any scheme with potential payback should be pursued. Chris Edwards confirmed that the policy would be amended to reflect this point. He subsequently proposed that the policy should be amended to include the following additional wording at the beginning of item 1.5 “the Council will actively seek to identify and implement as a priority low cost energy saving measures that have a quick return on investment.”

**Resolved to recommend Council Cabinet to approve the energy policy, subject to the proposed amendment above.**

## 97/04 Draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

The Chair reminded members that at the meeting on 22 March 2005 it was agreed to defer setting the Overview and Scrutiny objectives for the annual report until after the recommendations of this Commission’s topic review on the Council’s Scrutiny structure had been agreed.

Councillor Bayliss proposed that the four topic review recommendations that had been agreed by the Working Group at its meeting on 12 April should be adopted as the annual report objectives.

### **Resolved**

**1. To set the following objectives for Overview and Scrutiny for the coming year, as follows:**

**i) the engagement between Council Cabinet and the Scrutiny Commissions should be improved.**

**ii) commissions should increase their involvement in Scrutiny by reducing the emphasis currently placed on topic reviews and giving more attention to Scrutiny.**

**iii) the Commissions should review their work processes with a view to improving outcomes and the linkages to Council priorities.**

**iv) 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.**

**2. To recommend Council to accept the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions for 2004/05.**

## 98/04 Draft Report on the Review of Scrutiny

The Chair reminded members that the objective was to decide on recommendations for inclusion in the report on the Commission’s topic review of the Council’s Overview and

Scrutiny function. He said that the working group, which had been established at the previous meeting, had met on 12 April 2005 and had been able to agree on four recommendations based on recommendations contained in the IDEA report on the Cabinet/Scrutiny workshop on 22 January 2005.

The working group had been unable to agree on a structure for Overview and Scrutiny.

The Commission considered the following papers:

- a) a report on the outcomes of the meeting of the Review of Scrutiny Working Group held on 12 April 2005.
- b) a report of the Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Management Commission containing the proposals of the Labour Group.
- c) a report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission containing the proposals of the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups.
- d) a report of the Director of Corporate Services setting out revised legal implications for the report submitted to the Commission meeting on 22 March 2005.
- e) a report of the Leader and Deputy Leader to be submitted to the Council Cabinet on 26 April 2005, on the structure of Overview and Scrutiny.

## **Resolved**

- 1. To make the following recommendations on the topic review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function:**
  - a) The engagement between Council Cabinet and Scrutiny Commissions should be improved.**
  - b) Commissions should increase their involvement in scrutiny by reducing the emphasis currently placed on topic reviews and giving more attention to scrutiny.**
  - c) Commissions should review their work processes with a view to improving outcomes and the linkages to Council priorities.**
  - d) 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.**
  - e)
    - i) The number of commissions should be reduced from six to four and that the structure should broadly follow that of option 3b in the Review report.**
    - ii) In order to promote better relations with Cabinet, the split in functions between Commissions should follow Option 3 in the Cabinet paper dated 26 April 2005, which links each commission with two Cabinet portfolios.**

**2. Subject to paragraph (1) to recommend Council to approve the Scrutiny Management Commission's report on the review of Derby City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Function.**

(The resolutions in paragraph (e) were passed on the casting vote of the Chair. Councillors Ahern, Bayliss, Graves, Hussain, MacDonald, Redfern, and Repton asked that their votes against these resolutions be recorded. A motion to approve the Labour Group's proposals was lost on the casting vote of the Chair. Councillors Ahern, Bayliss, Graves, Hussain, MacDonald, Redfern and Repton asked that their votes in favour of the motion be recorded.)

## 99/04 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Commission considered the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for May 2005 and requested that when time permits the following items be considered by the Commission at the appropriate time:

Internal Audit Plan 2005/06  
Disposal of land at 126 Osmaston Road  
Wood Road / Wayfaring Road development site

It was also agreed that after the new Forward Plan had been received there would be value in members individually raising possible items for discussion with the relevant co-ordination officer.

MINUTES END