

Time commenced - 6.00pm
Time finished - 7.30pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 20 APRIL 2004

Present: Councillor Smalley (Chair)
Councillors Bayliss, Bolton, Brown, F Hussain, Jones, Lowe
Repton, Travis and Wynn

97/03 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graves and Latham.

98/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

99/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

100/03 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Items For Discussion

101/03 Topic Review on Over-lapping Areas of Control and Management

Rob Davison, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer, updated the Commission on the progress made on the Topic Review. It was noted that about half of the necessary information on the first review area – procurement - had been gathered and that it would not be appropriate to draw conclusions until all the information was available. The Commission were also asked to note that, following consultation with the leading members, social services and education had been included in the circulation of the questionnaire.

Resolved to note the report.

102/03 Combined City Council and European Parliament Election - 10 June 2004 - All Postal Voting Pilot

All members of the Council had been invited to attend for this item.

Michael Foote, Director of Corporate Services, introduced the item and stressed the significant challenge that the all-postal elections would bring. Of the forty authorities in the East Midlands that were part of the postal ballot, Derby was one of only six authorities that had both European and local elections. Steve Dunning, Assistant Director, Democratic Services, gave a detailed update on the all-postal voting pilot for the combined local and European Parliament elections for the East Midlands on 10 June 2004. The Elections Pilots Bill had been passed on 1 April 2004 and the latest draft Pilots Order, dated 19 April 2004, had included provision for the by-election in Boulton Ward.

Rather than producing a leaflet for all households to explain the procedure, the Electoral Commission had now decided to only fund the production of a poll card with information about the postal election. The poll card was slightly larger than those used for previous elections. The Council would have no control over the layout or wording used on the poll card. It was agreed that copies of the poll card wording should be sent to all members. In addition to the poll card, the Electoral Commission and the Council would have publicity campaigns.

As in previous elections, the declaration of identity would need to be signed and witnessed. Guidance given to Agents indicated that suspicion might be aroused if one person witnessed multiple declarations, and therefore, candidates were not encouraged to be witnesses for more than immediate friends and family. Guidance would be issued to Social Services staff on how they could assist service users.

In response to a question from Councillor Roberts, Kate Owen, Democratic Services Manager, undertook to advise him on whether there was provision for sending ballot papers abroad.

The new legislation would require the Council to provide, on request to candidates and agents, details of who had returned ballot packs. No details would be given on which ballot papers had been returned or whether or not they were valid. This information would be entered from barcodes on return envelopes. It was stressed that although the barcode was linked to the elector number, it wasn't possible to see the two together.

All ballot papers would be delivered by 28 May and all had to be returned by 10 pm on 10 June. Papers needed to be returned by post or to an Assistance and Delivery Point. It was explained that whilst the Council could have up to three Assistance and Delivery Points, only one would be funded by the Government. For this reason it was proposed to have just one point, in the City Centre.

Following discussions at the Disabled People's Advisory Committee, the Council would strive to send officers to meetings of Disability Direct and Derby Deaf Association, during the election period so that assistance could be given to their members. Should

other disabled groups request this service, officers would do their best to meet demand with the limited resources available. It was noted that anybody who needed assistance could request a home visit by officers. Clear guidelines on staff security would be prepared

All returned ballot papers would be manned 24 hours a day for security. Derby Pointer responses relating to voting methods were circulated at the meeting.

Resolved to:

- 1. to note the report.**
- 2. to send every member of the Council a copy of the poll card wording that would be used.**

103/03 Scrutiny Events 2004

Kate Owen, Democratic Services Manager, introduced a report which recommended repeating the training held for new members and the external scrutiny event. Councillor Bayliss commented that the external event, scheduled for November would provide a good opportunity to market the interactive training aid.

Resolved:

- 1. to hold a training event early in the new council year.**
- 2. to hold an inter-authority event in November 2004.**

104/03 Disposal of Land (Forward Plan Reference 193/02)

Following a request from Councillor Wynn, the Commission considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services on the disposal of land. Attached to the report were details of major disposals where there were anticipated receipts within the next year, future receipts and possible future surplus properties.

In response to questions, Michael Foote, Director of Corporate Services, explained that the long term future of the Rycote Centre would be determined by Council Cabinet. He also explained that the sale of the Full Street site was expected shortly.

Resolved to note the report.

105/03 Progress on the Interactive Training Aid

David Romaine, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer, demonstrated the Interactive Training Aid prototype to the Commission. The Aid gave guidance on doing reviews, how to choose witnesses and how to get evidence from interviews. A further £15,000 was needed to complete the project. It hadn't been possible to attract any outside funding, but this would continue to be explored along with the possibility of using money from the Council's pump priming fund. If neither were available, it was

proposed to use the Commission's research budget. It was reported that Derby appeared to be the only authority preparing such an aid.

Resolved:

1. **to note the report and approve the further development of the interactive training aid for Overview and Scrutiny.**
2. **to make funds available to complete the development of the training aid from the Commission's research budget.**

106/03 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

Resolved that the Commission should consider updating the Council's Best Value Review Programme at its next meeting.

Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

107/03 Service Access Review

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services on the Service Access Review that had been referred by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 6 April 2004.

It was noted that the Customer Service's Champion would not be nominated until after the elections, but that the role currently came within Councillor P Hickson's portfolio.

Councillor Smalley asked that the costings of each recommendation be included before the report was considered by Council Cabinet.

Resolved to ask Council Cabinet to consider the Service Access Review only when it has costings on the recommendations.

MINUTES END