

# ITEM 6 a

## Revenue Budget - Council Cabinet Response

This is the relevant extract from the report to Council on 2 March 2009.

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| <b>General Fund Revenue Budget and Council Tax<br/>2009/10</b> |
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## Appendix 10

### **Recommendations of the Community and Climate Change Commissions.**

The reference numbers relate to the entries in the summary document provided to members on 13 January 2009.

#### **S56 Opening of New Energy Shop including additional staff.**

##### **Recommendation 1**

That Council Cabinet reconsider the proposal to open an energy shop.

##### **Reasons for recommendation:**

Two to five years ago city centre shop front premises would have a clear merit in raising awareness amongst the Derby public about the issues of climate change and the practical steps householders could take to reduce their carbon foot print and save on domestic fuel bills. However, the Commission cannot see the benefit in such an initiative in 2009. Energy saving light bulbs etc are available in all high street retailers and the out-of-town supermarkets. Furthermore, understanding of the issues has advanced across the population. £70,000 is a considerable amount of public money and in the very tight budgetary circumstances facing the Council could be used to better effect.

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| <b>Cabinet response:</b> Cabinet agrees that the opening of an energy shop will now not take place and the £70,000 earmarked to this service will be diverted to support the running of the new Climate Change Team. |
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#### **S54 – Bereavement Services - additional £10 increase above planned increases.**

##### **Recommendation 2**

That the proposed £10 increase on the cost of cremations should instead be an increase on the cost of burials.

**Reasons for recommendation:**

Charges for bereavement services has been a controversial subject in previous budgets and been the cause of scrutiny commission comments. Respective costs versus - fees mean that cremation charges are used to subsidise burials. The Commission is concerned that the choice of cremation should once again be proposed as an income generation measure and further extend the cross-subsidy.

**Cabinet response:** We agree to give this due consideration.

**D47 – Two Licensing Officers required to address the backlog of Houses in Multiple Occupation**

**Recommendation 3**

That Council Cabinet proceed with the proposal.

**Reasons for recommendation:**

The proposed increase in staff resources for a two year period is a welcome response to the concerns aired by Commission members. While the issue of licensing appears to be essentially regulatory, behind is the real issue of health and safety (eg fire precautions) for often vulnerable tenants.

**Cabinet response:** We agree to proceed with this proposal.

**Budget Process**

**Recommendation 4**

- a. That the concept of pre-budget scrutiny introduced in 2008 should be repeated in future budget cycles and held at the earliest point when sufficient information is available for scrutiny commissions to make informed observations, and
- b. To note that an extra meeting of the Community Commission be organised in the autumn to facilitate such pre-budget scrutiny.

**Reasons for recommendation**

- a. Generally, Members considered that the innovation of autumn pre-budget scrutiny has assisted the contribution of scrutiny to the budget setting process and wish to see it repeated with improvements in light of the 2008 experience. The key issue is getting the balance between timing and the amount of information right.
- b. The Community Commission did not have a timetabled meeting so its

members attended a meeting of the Climate Change Commission which had other business to transact. In the future a free-standing meeting of the Community Commission needs to be held. A distinct feature of the Community Commission is that as well as the standard revenue and capital budgets it also has to consider the Housing Revenue Account (sensitive because of the long term budget repercussions) plus Rents and Service Charges (sensitive because of the direct impact on every Derby Homes tenant).

**Cabinet response:** Agree that the concept of pre budget scrutiny introduced in 2008, should be repeated in future budget cycles and held at the earliest point when sufficient information is available for scrutiny commissions to make informed observations. The Cabinet's intention is to engage the Scrutiny Management Commission in a base budget review process as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2009.