

City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Town Hall, Durham, on Tuesday, 30 May 2006 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Pape (in the Chair)
and Councillors, Cummings, Freeman, Hopgood, Howarth, Robinson, Simmons, Simpson and Wolstenholme.

Also Present: Councillors: Colledge, Cowper, Kellett, Kinghorn, Lightley, Marsden, Pitts, Smith, Southwell, Stoddart, Thomson and Young

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crathorne, Dickie and Walton

58. MINUTES

Subject to the amendment set out below, the Minutes of the Meeting of 18th April, 2006, were confirmed as a correct record.

At Minute No. 605. Chairman's Remarks, the second paragraph, final sentence was to be amended from;

"After some discussion Members were undecided as to whether to pursue this at the present time."

to

"After some discussion, Members agreed with the proposed Members Online pilot scheme and that those Members who wished to 'opt-in' to the scheme could do so accordingly."

59. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman briefly informed Members as regards the new Scrutiny Handbook that had been produced. This document was produced in line with IDeA recommendations, and was brought to Members attention for information.

60. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan, which was effective from 1st June, 2006, and Councillor Howarth informed Members that she was still awaiting a response from the Head of Housing Services regarding the Supporting People/Value Improvement Programme.

61. DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS SINCE LAST MEETING

Councillor Howarth requested further information on Portfolio Decision No.24 relating to any timescales associated with this business.

A copy of the schedule indicating the decisions taken by Portfolio Holders since the last Meeting is attached at Appendix A.

62. CABINET DECISIONS 17th May, 2006

The Cabinet report had been noted and there were no items on which the Committee wished to comment.

63. REPORT OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

Environment Scrutiny Panel had been tasked with Scrutinising the subject of Fly-Tipping within the City of Durham area. A copy of the report had been circulated to Members.

Resolved: That the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

64. VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS FROM SCRUTINY PANELS

The Chairmen of the various Scrutiny Panels gave verbal reports on the progress of their respective Scrutiny topics for the information of Members.

65. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM – REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC SCRUTINY PANEL

Economic Scrutiny Panel had been tasked with Scrutinising the subject of SRB6. A copy of the report was circulated to Members at the meeting as a supplementary item. Members noted that there was insufficient time at the meeting to give due attention to the report and wished for more time to consider the report.

Resolved: That the consideration of the report be deferred to the next Scrutiny Committee.

66. ALLOCATION TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY

The undermentioned topic had been accepted as a suitable topic for Scrutiny at the November 2005 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

- G.P. Provision Review

It was agreed that the review of topic be allocated to the Economic Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

Meeting terminated at 5.50 p.m.

Chairman

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
30 May 2006
DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO MEMBERS

No	Portfolio Member	Nature of Decision	Date
1	Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Heaton, tenant of 6 Elm Avenue, Brandon enquiring whether the Council would consider granting vehicular access across council owned land to the front of the property. Mr Heaton wishes to utilise an area of his front garden for off-street parking. Recommend approval subject to conditions outlined	4.4.06
2	Councillor Reynolds	Application received from 3E Consulting engineers/Koru Property Services on behalf of St Cuthbert's Hospice enquiring whether the Council would grant an Easement at land at Merry Oaks Playing Field, Durham to enable foul sewer connection Recommend approval of application subject to conditions outlined	5.4.06
3	Councillor Reynolds	Application to purchase land adjacent to 2 Robson Crescent Bowburn received from M Taylor of the above address for use as off street parking and private domestic garden. Recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined.	5.4.06
4	Councillor Wynn	Sign-off the purchase of an on-line Credit Card authorisation system for the Gala Theatre & Cinema for which there is only one supplier. Recommend the purchase of VESPAY authorisation system and related hardware, as recommended by Ticket.com, at an approximate cost of £9,000	7.4.06
5	Councillor Southwell	Application for approval for adaptation to the home of a Disabled Person at a cost of £4,741 for curved stairlift. Recommend approval of adaptation	5.4.06
6	Councillor Southwell	Application for approval to the home of a disabled person at a cost of £5,087.62p Recommend adaptation of ground floor shower/toilet facility	5.4.06
7	Councillor Southwell	Application in respect of a Home Loss payment of £3400 as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her home (Ref 297). Recommend that payment be made to applicant	10.4.06
8	Councillor Southwell	Application in respect of a Disturbance payment of £1000 as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her One Bedroom Bungalow. Recommend that payment be made to applicant	10.4.06

9	Councillor Wynn	Housing Stock Revaluation – engagement of District Valuer’s office to revalue HRA assets for inclusion in 2005/06 Statement of Accounts. Recommend District Valuation Office be engaged to revalue HRA assets, Contract Procedure Rules be waived under CPR 5.1(g), Rolling programme of revaluation be undertaken with 20% of assets being re-valued per year, commencing 2006/07	10.4.06
10	Councillor Southwell & Councillor Wynn	Application in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 296). Recommend payment after deduction of outstanding rent arrears of £618.08	10.4.06
11	Councillor Southwell	Application in respect of a Disturbance payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his one bedroom bungalow. (Ref 296) Recommend payment of £1000 be made to applicant	10.4.06
12	Councillor Southwell	Application in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 298) Recommend payment of £3400 be made to applicant	10.4.06.
13	Councillor Rae	Approval of SRB6 Improving the Heart of the Villages Grant re Ushaw Moor Post Office in the sum of £645.00	13.3.06
14	Councillor Rae	Approval of SRB6 Improving the Heart of the Villages Grant re Brandon Junior School in the sum of £562.50 and Kelloe Community Partnership – Three Triangles in the sum of £3,000.00	13.3.06
15	Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Cairns, owner of Durham Bikes, Units 5 & 6 Co-op Buildings, Esh Winning, enquiring whether the Council would consider selling an area of land to the rear of the property. This is to enable remedial works to the building which allegedly suffers from damp due to poor drainage, to prevent vandalism & additional car parking. Recommend Option 1 of 3 options i.e. the offer of purchase of 1 metre strip of land for maintenance and fencing only. Applicant to seek planning consent and bear the Council’s legal costs and surveyor’s fees	12.4.06
16	Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Potter of 34 Hopper Place, Newton Hall enquiring whether the Council would consider selling him land adjacent to his property for use as a garden. Recommend the application be refused	13.4.06
17	Councillor Holland	Application received from Miriam Johansen T/A Bluesky Developments (North East) Ltd for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £500.00 Recommend approval of grant of £500 to applicant	13.4.06

18	Councillor Rae	Application received from Michael Cook T/A Cooks Ceramics for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £500.00. Recommend approval of grant of £500 to applicant	13.4.06
19	Councillor Holland	Application received from Kevin Robinson T/A K & N News for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £500.00 Recommend approval of grant of £500 to applicant	19.4.06
20	Councillor Southwell	Application received in respect of a Disturbance payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his One Bedroom Bungalow (Ref 298) Recommend approval of a payment of £1,000 be made to the applicant	12.4.06
21	Councillor Southwell	Granting of tenancies at Long Acres Gilesgate. In the absence of any formal tenancy agreements by the residents of 7,9 and 11 Long Acres and the issue of maintenance of a tree upon the land occupied by the resident of no. 7 Long Acre it is recommended that the City Council approaches the residents of Nos 7,9,11 Long Acres and propose they enter into a new tenancy agreement on terms for a standard garden tenancy and subject to an economic rent of £25 per annum and the occupiers being responsible for all future maintenance of the sites. If the tenants of the sites do not agree to this course of action, appropriate steps should be taken to terminate their existing forms of occupation and the sites be reinstated as appropriate.	3.5.06
22	Councillor Southwell	Application to lease land at 14 Pear Lea Brandon. The Council has previously granted a garden licence to a Mr White formerly of 14 Pear Lea Brandon at a licence fee of £80 per annum. Mr White has vacated the property and the same has been purchased by Mr Herbert of 2 South View Sacriston and intends to rent out the same on the open market and wishes to utilise the same area of land for garden purposes. Recommended to grant an appropriate annual garden licence to the new owners of 14 Pear Lea.	2.5.06
23	Councillor Southwell	Application received in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 295). The amount due is in the sum of £3400 which is set by the Government as a compensation payment. Recommended that the payment of £3400 be made.	28.4.06

24	Councillor Holland	<p>Application to appoint a specific Consultant to carry out four briefs on key sites in the City Centre namely:- Market Place North Road and Bus Station Elvet Bridge and Old Elvet Gilesgate Roundabout</p> <p>The briefs will allow a full Tender to be carried out to commission a Design Team in the future. This commission has been funded under the Visioning project via County Durham Economic Partnership and One NorthEast. The City Council will contribute £3k, Durham County Council £3k and the CDEP remainder to a total of £30k. Recommended that David Lock Associates who have been working on the visioning since 2003 and the Heart of the City project prior to that be appointed to this commission under Section 5.1 of the Constitution due to their skills and knowledge that are unique at this time.</p>	24.4.06
25	Councillor Reynolds	Confirmation of attendance to seminar on City Regions and Beyond organised by the LGA in London by Councillor Southwell on 5 June 2006	4.5.06
26	Councillor Holland	<p>Application received in relation to Durham City Enterprise Grants for the following applicants - awarded Dave Laing –operating as Driving Instructor - £500 Peter Russell T/A Steamrail IT Solutions - £500</p>	4.5.06
27	Councillor Holland	<p>Application received for Durham City Enterprise Grants for the following applicants – awarded Chris Kinder T/a CK Technical Services - £500 Thomas Punshon T/A Durham City Building & Property Maintenance - £500</p>	4.5.06
28	Councillor Jackson	To consider granting a temporary extension to the City Council's contracts with JW Wood, Chartered Surveyors for provision of valuation services pending formal consideration by Cabinet of a longer term extension. Recommended that the present contracts with JW Wood for Right to Buy and non-Right to Buy property valuation services be extended for a 4 month period commencing 1 May 2006, the Director of Legal and Administration Services to report formally to Cabinet on 28 June 2006 for further consideration of the matter.	5.5.06
29	Councillor Southwell	Application received in respect of Disturbance Payments as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 295) Recommended that a payment of £1000 be made as he was displaced from a one bedroom bungalow	28.4.06

30	Councillor Woods	Application to use Council land at the Racecourse Durham City by Fire Services National Benevolent Fund for an event they have planned to take place on Saturday 3 June from 8am to 8pm. Recommended that the event go ahead subject to the applicant indemnifying the council for any loss whatsoever which may arise as a result of the event.	4.4.06
31	Councillor Holland	Request of release of restrictive covenant on Unit 2B Bowburn North Industrial Estate relating to the use of land previously owned by City of Durham Council. Recommended release of restrictive covenant relating to the use of land.	9.5.06
32	Councillor Reynolds	Application to purchase land to the rear of 9 Dominion Road Brandon from Mr Rome of 9 Dominion Road for use as garden land only. Recommended that the application be refused.	11.5.06
33	Councillor Reynolds	Application to purchase land to the rear of 28 Lowland Road Brandon from Mr Dixon of 28 Lowland Road who currently leases the land for garden use only. Recommended that the application be refused.	11.5.06
34	Councillor Southwell	Lease dated 3 May 2001 Three Rivers Housing Association Ltd occupies small parcel of council land to the rear of Rose Cottage to partly accommodate a garage within the rear garden of that property. The Lease is due to expire on 20 June 2006 and the Association has indicated that they wish to extend the Lease for a further period. Instructions from technical officers in this regard. Recommended that subject to comments to approve the granting of a further 5 year lease to the Three Rivers Housing Association Ltd for a continued use for garage purposes.	13.5.06
35	Councillor Woods	Authorisation of temporary closure of the B6291 from the junction of the Avenue to the C67 in a northerly direction of the Front Street to the junction of Coxhoe amenities site on Saturday 8 July 2006 between the hours of 9.45 and 10.45 for the purpose of a procession. Recommended that an order be made in accordance with the Section 21 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 authorising the temporary closure.	17.5.06
36	Councillor Woods	Authorisation of temporary closure of the A177 from the Cooperage to Bowburn Post Office Bow Street and Bede Terrace South on Saturday 8 July 2006 between the hours of 8.40 am and 9.10 am for the purpose of a procession.. Recommended that an order be made in accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 authorising the temporary closure.	17.5.06