

City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Town Hall, Durham, on Monday, 13th November, 2006, at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Pape (in the Chair) and Councillors: Crathorne, Hopgood, Howarth, Moderate, Simmons and Simpson

Also Present: Councillors Cowper, Kellett, Lodge, Marsden, Smith, Stoddart, Turnbull and Wynn

354. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cummings, Robinson, Walton and Wolstenholme

355. MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of 29th August, 2006 and 2nd October, 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

N.B. Councillor Lodge expressed concern regarding the recent increase in the cost of the Swimming Pool development and queried why, at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, when the Portfolio Holder for Finance had been in attendance, the Committee had not been informed of the likely increase.

The Committee also requested further clarification from the Portfolio Holder as to the nature and membership of the regular meetings being held in relation to the progress of the project.

356. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman advised Members of an upcoming initial meeting of The County Durham (Leading Members) Scrutiny Network which he and Councillor Howarth would be attending on behalf of the City of Durham and advised that information from the Meeting would be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a Scrutiny workshop was scheduled to be held on 23rd November, 2006, as part of the general Member Development Programme. The Chairman encouraged Members to attend the workshop if they were able to do so.

357. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan, which was effective from 1st November, 2006.

Councillor Howarth noted the item on the Forward Plan relating to the Improvement of Parks and Open Spaces (Considering the need for investment in parks to achieve Green Flag Status) and wished to know whether this item would have relevance to the Scrutiny undertaken by the Community Services Scrutiny Panel on the topic – Playing Pitch Strategy.

The item was scheduled for the next forward plan and it was agreed that Councillor Howarth, as Chairman of the Community Services Scrutiny Panel, would be informed accordingly in due course.

358. DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS SINCE LAST MEETING

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

Members queried several of the decisions and were advised that clarification would be sought and Members would be advised accordingly.

In relation to decision No.23, Members requested that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure, attend the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, to advise Members more fully on this project.

359. CABINET DECISIONS 1st NOVEMBER, 2006

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

360. 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.

361. SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY

Two suggested topics for Scrutiny had been received:

- Staff Attitude Survey

Following its Scrutiny of Sickness Absence, it had been a recommendation of the Policy Scrutiny Committee, in October, 2005, that a further Staff Attitude Survey be carried out. During the recent review of the Scrutiny, the Head of HR had indicated that a further Survey would be carried out, possibly at the end of this year, or the beginning of next.

The Committee agreed that as a follow up to the previous Scrutiny, the Policy Scrutiny Panel should be advised when the Survey was to take place and would subsequently scrutinise the results. The Head of HR to be informed accordingly.

- Graveyards Maintained by the City Council

Members noted that there were a number of issues which needed clarification in relation to this subject and agreed that it was a suitable subject for Scrutiny.

Provisionally it was agreed that the subject would be allocated to the Community Services Scrutiny Panel, however this would be dependant upon the ongoing workload of the Panel.

362. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members had no further business to discuss.

Meeting terminated at 6.05 p.m.

Chairman

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 November 2006
DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO MEMBERS

Portfolio Member	Nature of Decision	Date
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Turnbull of 15 Fir Avenue, Brandon enquiring whether the Council would consider selling to him land to the rear of his property for use as garden. Mr Turnbull would be willing to lease the land if he were not permitted to purchase. Recommend that the application be refused	21.9.06
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Luckin of Calamander Developments enquiring if the Council would consider granting right of easement over Council land. Calamander Developments are currently employed extending the Travel Lodge and require a grant of easement to accommodate a gas pipeline Recommend that the application be approved	25.9.06
Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home. There are no outstanding rent arrears (Ref 304) Recommend the payment of £4,000 to the applicant as this is the amount set by the Government.	26.9.06
Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Disturbance payment as a result of the Council Compulsorily displacing the applicant from his one Bedroom Bungalow (Ref 304) Recommend that a payment of £1,000 be made to the applicant	26.9.06
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Derek Stephens Associates Architectural Consultancy acting on behalf of Mr Dixon of Browney House, Browney enquiring if the Council would consider selling 537 square metres or thereabouts of land adjacent to Browney House for access to his premises which are to be developed. Recommend that the application be refused	3.10.06
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr & Mrs Murray of 75 Park House Gardens, Sherburn Village enquiring if the Council would consider allowing them to lease land adjacent to their property for garden use for their 5 year old child who was run over recently. Mr & Mrs Murray's have no rear garden. Recommend the lease of land to Mr & Mrs Murray	5.10.06
Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Home Loss Payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 306) Recommend a payment of £4,000 be made to the applicant	4.10.06
Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Disturbance Payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 305) Recommend that fixed payment of £1,000 be made to the applicant.	4.10.06

Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 305) Recommend a payment of £4,000 be made to the applicant	4.10.06
Councillor Thomson	Application has been received for a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from his home (Ref 309) Recommend a payment of £4,000 be made to the applicant	4.10.06
Councillor Thomson	Application has been received for a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her home (Ref 308) Recommend a payment of £4,000 be made to the applicant	4.10.06
Councillor Thomson	Application has been received in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her home (Ref 307) Recommend a payment of £4,000 be made to the applicant	4.10.06
Councillor Jackson	Permission to enter into contracts to secure a Christmas Lighting Scheme for the City Centre, and the waiver of Contract Procedure Rules to allow this to happen Recommend the waiving of Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Section 5.1(e) to allow the contract with Centredesign to be extended, and in support of this allow contracts to be entered into with HCL to supply the eyebolts for mounting the new scheme, and with Durham County Council to secure the power supply to the extended scheme as all three parties have specific knowledge and skill in relation to the lighting scheme in Durham	11 10.06
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr S Norris of Ridding Cottage, Esh Winning, Durham enquiring as to whether the Council would grant vehicular access over land adjacent to his property in order to gain access to his property to enable off-street parking within his curtilage. Recommend that the application be approved	12.10.06
Councillor Holland	Application received for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £2,000 as below:- Judith Garbutt t/a Largo Creative - £500 Geoff Reed t/a Amoeba Plastics & Manufacturing Ltd - £500 Dan Rackman t/a Vimuse Technologies Ltd - £500 Jason Ellison t/a In Home Therapy - £500 Recommend approval of grant to all 4 applicants	19.10.06
Councillor Holland	Application received for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £500 from Leigh Callaghan t/a Tiny Talk/North Tees Recommend approval of grant	19.10.06
Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Brett Bros Developments Ltd to purchase No. 41 Aldridge Court, Ushaw Moor Recommend that No. 41 Aldridge Court, Ushaw Moor be offered for sale to Brett Bros Developments Ltd on terms to be agreed by the Council Valuer and that conditions of	4.10.06

	sale require Brett to modernise this dwelling for onward disposal for owner occupation	
Councillor Holland	Application for Durham City Enterprise Grant of £2,000 divided as follows: Alan Wary t/a Rubber Duck Lt - £500 Andrew Hopper t/a Ash Fencing & Design - £500 Fiona Ward t/a Ward Lambert - £500 Joo-Lee Stock t/a Forte Productions - £500 Approved relevant grants.	
Councillor Reynolds	In consultation with Local Ward Members for the Brancepeth Langley Moor and Meadowfield Ward on site at West View Meadowfield on 13 October 2006 to consider an application by residents of 3,4 and 5 West View Meadowfield to acquire land at the rear of those properties for garden extensions. Recommended that the applications to purchase additional land at the rear of 3,4 and 5 West View Meadowfield be refused and that the land be retained for potential estate remodelling.	30.9.06
Councillor Reynolds	An application has been received from Persimmon Homes enquiring whether the Council would consider selling to them land adjoining 1-3 Welby Drive Ushaw Moor Durham as this area of land has been included as garden land with the properties sold by the Developer upon completion of the site and the Developer wishes to formalise the situation with the City Council. The use would be garden use only as is the current use at this time. Recommended that the application be approved.	30.10.06
Councillor Southwell	Application for financial assistance received from Relate North East being a voluntary organisation which provides counselling services to families couples and young people. There is a counselling centre in the grounds of County Hospital where local people in need are reached. A specific budget of £420 exists within the 2006/7 budgets in anticipation of a request for funding from Relate North East. Recommended to donate £420 for the financial year 2006/7.	26.10.06
Councillor Reynolds	Attendance of Councillor Wynn to attend HSE seminar on Ministerial Taskforce for Health Safety and Productivity on 1 November 2006 at Aldwark Manor York. No cost.	30.10.06
Councillor Woods	The Big Lottery Fund has allocated £200,000 to the City of Durham Council for play projects. Applications must be submitted by March 2007 backed up by a Childrens Play Strategy. The specialist in producing a play strategy is a not for profit organisation called 4 Children. They have quoted £10,000 to produce the strategy which can be funded from existing budgets within Community Development and Environment & Leisure. In view of the specialist nature of this work it is recommended that approval is given to the appointment of 4 Children to undertake this work under contract procedure rule 5.1.	31.10.06
Councillor Reynolds	An application has been received from Mrs Mayhew of 1 St Lawrence Road Pitlington enquiring whether the council would consider leasing to her land to the side of her property. Ms Mayhew intends to use the land for	30.10.06

	garden only. Ward Councillors were in disagreement though the Local Ward Member did think the application should be allowed to go ahead. It was recommended that the application be refused. The Leader has disagreed with the recommendation.	
Councillor Rae	Application received for a Durham City Enterprise Grant of £2,000 split as follows:- Martin Pilgrim t/A M & D Garden & Exterior Property Maintenance - £500 Christopher Ankers t/A Creative Cable Solutions - £500 David Pallister t/A DMP Decoration - £500 Paul O'Connelly t/a Action Re-Play Centre Ltd - £500 Recommend approval of grant	25.10.06