

City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Studio, Gala Theatre, on Thursday, 13th September, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Hopgood (in the Chair)
and Councillors Colledge, Howarth, McDonnell, Mitchell, Moderate, Robinson, Simpson, Wilkes and Wolstenholme.

Also Present: Councillors Lodge, D. Smith, Turnbull and van Zwanenberg.

227. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Walton.

228. MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of 26th July, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

229. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Councillor Mitchell had asked (via email) for more information relating to a Portfolio Holder Decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Regeneration Councillor van Zwanenberg. Councillor van Zwanenberg was in attendance at the Meeting to give a verbal response. The Chair agreed that Councillor van Zwanenberg give his response to the Committee at the beginning of the meeting so he could then fulfil a prior engagement.

Councillor van Zwanenberg informed the Committee that the reasoning behind Portfolio Holder Decision had been to maintain effective business continuity. If the services of the original author of the Sustainability Appraisal could not have been secured then it was likely that the whole process would have had to be re-started.

The Chair requested that the full text of Councillor van Zwanenberg's response be given to Councillor Mitchell.

Note: *Councillor van Zwanenberg left the meeting 5.40 p.m.*

230. CABINET DECISIONS – 5 September 2007

The Committee were advised that all Scrutiny reports that had been sent to Cabinet with the exception of the Policy Scrutiny Panel's Report on Working with Parish Councils which had been deferred pending the outcome of LGR were accepted. These reports were the first to test the new Scrutiny/Cabinet reporting procedure and Scrutiny Panel Chairs would await formal responses from the relevant Portfolio Holders within the agreed time limit.

Note: *Councillor Mitchell joined the meeting 5.44 p.m.*

Members expressed concern that questions had not been allowed at the Cabinet Presentation on the Swimming Pool and requested that copies of the presentation slides be made available to Members of the Committee. Members requested that a further update be given to December Cabinet. The Committee also expressed concern that Bluestone, the original contractor, had been taken over but Members had not been informed of this.

231. VERBAL REPORTS OF PANEL CHAIRS

An update was given by each Panel Chair on the progress of their Panel business.

232. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan No. 64, which was effective from 3rd September, 2007, and had no comments to make.

233. 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.

Councillor Howarth referred to Portfolio Decision number 7 and asked if the Committee could receive confirmation on where the other sites are located.

Councillor Robinson referred to Portfolio Decision number 8 and asked if the decision could be clarified.

It was agreed that responses would be requested to be forwarded direct to Councillors Howarth and Robinson.

234. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were advised that subsequent to a previous request by Councillor Mitchell an update on the Town Hall refurbishments would be given at the October meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that a Scrutiny topic suggestion had been received, to scrutinise CCTV coverage within the City Centre. The Committee agreed to accept this suggestion and allocated the topic to Economic Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Wilkes asked that the percentage of Scrutiny Panel recommendations that have been implemented be reflected in the Annual Report.

A new set of performance figures had been included in the 2006/2007 Annual Report and it was the intention that further performance figures be developed.

Meeting terminated at 6.10 p.m.

Chairman