

MINUTES of the MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held at Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote
on 12th November 2009
at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Murray (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Bale, Bladen, Mrs. Coyle, Mrs. Farrington, Ford, Grant, Harrison, Hewlett, Mrs. Hood, Jones, Lemmon, Mrs. Patten, Mrs. Plenderleith, Roberts, Stanton, Timms, Watson, Mrs. Wheeler and Wheeler.

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Dunn, Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Lane, Lane, Mrs. Mead, Rhind, Richards, Shepherd, Southerd, Taylor, Tilley and Wilkins.

Independent/Non-Grouped Member

Councillor Pabla.

APOLOGY

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Mrs. Brown (Independent/Non-Grouped Member).

CL/63. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st October 2009 (Minutes Nos. CL/45 – CL/59) were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

CL/64. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lemmon declared a prejudicial interest in respect of the Exempt Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 19th October 2009 due to his involvement in a case.

CL/65. **PRESENTATION BY THE SCOUTS**

The Council received a presentation from Andy Austen of the Scouts, who spoke of the origins of Scouting and compared this to other organisations for younger people. He then spoke about scouting today and what it was seeking to achieve, including the contribution scouting made to the community. He explained their current difficulties in finding suitable venues and meeting the costs of transportation. Mr. Austen was thanked for the presentation.

CL/66. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had circulated extracts from his diary, giving details of recent events attended. He highlighted a number of these events and photographs were displayed to accompany the presentation. In particular, he referred to the McDonalds clean up project, Remembrance Day events, the launch of the Christmas window dressing competition and a Carol Service at Melbourne on 11th December 2009.

CL/67. **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 11, Councillor Richards had given notice of the following question:-

“Given the forthcoming bidding presentations for the outsourcing of various services, along with the present discussions and negotiations in relation to sharing services with other local authorities, how far does this lead this administration in moving towards a laissez-faire type of local authority?”

The Leader of the Council responded by advising that the authority, across both administrations, had a successful history of partnerships and procurement in the delivery of its services. The Council was currently engaged in seeking out potential opportunities and there was a process which kept Members informed and engaged in identifying beneficial methods of improving services to the public.

Councillor Richards then asked a supplementary question on the potential for job losses. The Leader responded that since 2005, the Council had had strong procurement arrangements and that job contracts were confidential.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.11, Councillor Richards had also given notice of the following question:-

“Is it your intentions as Leader of this present administration to steer this authority towards becoming a commissioning council and if so how many jobs will be transferred to the private and other public sector?”

The Leader again responded, advising that the current administration would continue to seek out opportunities for continuous improvement of the services it provided. In doing this, the Council would not cease at any time to be anything other than a good employer with regard to its workforce.

CL/68. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:-

That the Open reports of the following Committees be received and noted and any recommendations contained therein be approved and adopted, subject to any matters annotated:-

***Environmental and Development Services Committee, 8th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. EDS/19 - EDS/26)
(Minute No. EDS/22 – The Chairman of the Heritage Grants Sub-Committee expressed disappointment that the Council no longer funded this scheme, which was considered a detriment to the area's heritage. The Chairman of this Committee sympathised and hopefully, it could be addressed in the future, as presently there was not sufficient resources and there was a determination to stay within budget.)***

Finance and Management Committee (Special), 12th October 2009 (Minute No. FM/41)

Development Control Committee, 13th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. DC/70 - DC/77)

Housing and Community Services Committee, 15th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. HCS/27 - HCS/32)

Standards Committee, 19th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. SC/24 – SC/28)

***Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 20th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. OS/1 – OS/5)
(Minute No. OS/5 – It was questioned whether there had been any response from policy committees on potential items for the work programme, but it was confirmed that none had been received.)***

***Finance and Management Committee, 22nd October 2009 (Minutes Nos. FM/43 – FM/50)
(Minute No. FM/44 – It was questioned whether there was any indication of funding being provided for heritage. The Chairman spoke of this Council's record on capital investment and when the economic climate improved, a priority would be the Swadlincote Heritage Scheme.***

Minute No. FM/48 – In response to a question on the Electoral Review of South Derbyshire, it was confirmed that the 2013 projections would be provided to Members.)

Development Control Committee, 3rd November 2009 (Minutes Nos. DC/80 - DC/87)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th November 2009 (Minutes Nos. OS/6 – OS/8)

Area Forums

Swadlincote, 20th October 2009 (Minutes Nos. SA/11 – SA/18)

Melbourne, 21st October 2009 (Minutes Nos. MA/11 – MA/16)

CL/69. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

RESOLVED:-

That the sealed documents listed at Annexe “SMB1” to the Signed Minute Book, which have no specific authority, be duly authorised.

CL/70. **COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PANELS**

There were no amendments to the compositions of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Panels.

CL/71. **COMPOSITION OF SUBSTITUTE PANELS**

There were no amendments to the compositions of Substitute Panels.

CL/72. **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

There were no changes to the Council’s representatives on outside bodies.

CL/73. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PEER REVIEW**

The Council received a report, following the completion of an external peer review of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The review, undertaken by James Doble of Cherwell District Council was at no cost other than minimal expenses. It comprised the submission of documents, initial lines of enquiry and onsite discussions with a number of Members and Officers. The final review report was positive and confirmed the good progress that the Committee had made in undertaking Overview and Scrutiny at South Derbyshire. The circulated review report had been considered by Members and Officers and an action plan agreed to respond to some suggestions and recommendations arising from the peer review. A scrutiny focus session was held on 20th October, prior to the Committee’s meeting, to give Members the opportunity to consider in detail, the review document, the action plan and specific proposals arising from the review. These were detailed under the headings:-

- Format of Overview and Scrutiny reports
- Work Programme and Corporate Priorities
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny, the Councillor Call for Action and Excluded Matters
- Task Group Working

A question was submitted about the addition of areas for Scrutiny Committee reviews and these would be welcomed. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt it had achieved significant progress over the last 18 months and he recognised the support provided by the Officer responsible for this service area. Another Member considered that due to the sickness absence of this individual, the scrutiny role had not been fulfilled recently. It was confirmed that cover arrangements were now in place.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Council formally receives the Overview and Scrutiny Peer Review report.***
- (2) That Council notes the associated Action Plan formulated to meet recommendations within the Peer Review report and the proposals agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.***
- (3) That Council approves the consequential revisions that are required to the Constitution.***

CL/74. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

The Chief Executive introduced Keith Bull, the Council's new Communications Assistant.

RESOLVED:-

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated in the reports of Committees.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st October 2009 were duly received and approved.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Exempt reports of the following Committees were received and noted and any recommendations contained therein, approved and adopted:-

Finance and Management Committee (Special), 12th October 2009

Development Control Committee, 13th October 2009

Housing and Community Services Committee, 15th October 2009

Standards Committee, 19th October 2009

Finance and Management Committee, 22nd October 2009

Development Control Committee, 3rd November 2009

P. MURRAY
CHAIRMAN