

MINUTES of the SPECIAL MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held at Civic Offices, Civic Way,
Swadlincote on 27th November 2003
at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Mrs. Mead (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Bell, Carroll, Dunn, Isham, Jones, Lane, Lauro, Mulgrew, Murphy, Pabla, Richards, Shepherd, Southern, Stone, Whyman, M.B.E. and Wilkins.

Conservative Group

Councillor Bale (Chair) and Councillors Atkin, Bladen, Ford, Mrs. Hall, Harrison, Mrs. Hood, Hood, Lemmon, Nalty, Mrs. Renwick, Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Wheeler.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Harrington, Southerd and Taylor (Labour Group) and Councillors Martin and Shaw (Conservative Group).

CL/84. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair outlined his various visits since the last Meeting, which included delivering meals on wheels in Aston-on-Trent on 13th November, a Thanksgiving Service at Derby Cathedral in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen on 14th November, a Festival of Remembrance Concert at Gedling on 15th November, the Switching-on of Christmas lights at No. 40 Bells End Road, Walton-on-Trent on 17th November, tree planting in Findern on 18th November and a Craft Fair at Woodville Junior School on 21st November. He had also been involved with the Marie Curie Bulb Planting in Eureka Park, Swadlincote, attended the Remembrance Day Parade and sampled Indian Cuisine at the Mumbai Blue Restaurant, Egginton on 23rd November.

Future events included the Switch-on of the Swadlincote Christmas Lights on 28th November 2003, a Charity Last Night at the Proms Concert at Gresley Old Hall on 6th February 2004, the Civic Dinner on 20th March 2004, a Caribbean Charity Evening on 7th May 2004 and the Charity Golf Competition on 21st May 2004.

CL/85. **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader referred to the forthcoming budget process and advised that the Council's anticipated worst scenario had reflected a settlement of an increase of 2.7%. Accordingly, it was disappointing to receive only 2.2%, i.e. less than the anticipated worst scenario and it was therefore necessary to plan accordingly. It was hoped that this would not affect the level of Council Tax to any great extent but at the present time, it was unsure whether the Council would receive the expected sum of £467,000 relating to revenues and

the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that no further information on this was currently available.

The Leader advised that he had recently attended a meeting with Business Link and it had now been determined that the Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce would be merged with the Northern Derbyshire Chamber and would be known as the Derbyshire Chamber with effect from 1st December 2003. The Chamber would be based primarily in the Chesterfield office but the Derby office would remain open for business. Business Link Derbyshire would be linked to the new Chamber with effect from 31st March 2004.

CL/86. **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – SUBMISSION**

It was reported that the Council was required to make a submission to the Audit Commission by 3rd December 2003 containing the following items:-

- A short document describing the general context in which the Council operated and the key challenges and opportunities that it faced.
- The Corporate Assessment.
- Thematic reviews of 'Balancing Housing Markets', 'Decent Homes' and 'Managing Public Space'.
- A self-scoring summary of key strengths and weaknesses.
- A summarised initial Improvement Plan.

Members considered the submission containing the above items, the development of which had been managed by the CPA Working Panel and incorporated views expressed by internal and external stakeholders, as well as the Peer Challenge. It was noted that there were still some issues to be addressed concerning final proof-reading and minor presentation matters and in view of the deadline for the submission, it was recommended that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to approve any further changes.

The Leader expressed his gratitude to all Members of the CPA Working Panel for their contributions towards the development of the submission and in particular, paid tribute to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Policy and Best Value Manager for their efforts, together with those of the other staff involved in the process. These comments were reiterated by the Leader of the Conservative Group.

RESOLVED:-

That the submission to the Audit Commission be approved and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to agree any further changes to the final submission.

CL/87. **SOUTH DERBYSHIRE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – CONSULTATION ON THE PROJECT BRIEF FOR THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

It was reported that a 'Project Brief' for the Community Strategy had been approved for consultation purposes at the Annual General Meeting of the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership (SDLSP). The Project Brief discussed the arrangements for developing and agreeing the Community Strategy for the District, together with several key issues that required

further investigation. Responses on the Project Brief were due to be submitted by 1st December 2003.

The Brief outlined the purpose and scope of the Community Strategy, its key components and the relationships to other operational plans and strategies at national, regional and local levels. It was recognised that a review of such strategies would be integral to the development of the Community Strategy for the District. The Brief then outlined the arrangement for its preparation and an indicative timetable detailing the key milestones. Finally, the document indicated several themes and key issues which may have relevance. This list was no means exhaustive and consultation was to follow to identify and pinpoint those appropriate issues not addressed in existing plans and strategies.

There would be financial and staffing implications associated with the Council's support of the SDLSP. Whilst these could not be quantified in detail at this stage, initial indications had revealed that these could be accommodated within existing budgets.

Councillor Lemmon advised that the brief had been supported at a PCT Board Meeting on 26th November 2003.

RESOLVED:-

That the Project Brief be broadly supported.

(Councillor Dunn left the Meeting at 6.40 p.m.)

CL/88. **EAST MIDLANDS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – DRAFT REPORT**

It was reported that the Council had been invited to comment on the draft report in connection with the Economic Development Strategy for East Midlands International Airport (EMIA), which had been commissioned by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and East Midlands International Airport Limited.

The draft report had been commissioned following recommendations in an earlier Midlands Study concerning the future of air transport, that EMDA and its regional partners should develop and implement an economic development strategy for EMIA, aligned to an integrated transport strategy. The executive summary had been circulated to Members.

In July 2003, EMDA had commissioned York Aviation to prepare an economic development strategy for EMIA. The terms of reference for the strategy were to inform thinking on the development and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy in the context of the wider economic impacts of EMDA, and to identify the opportunities and potential constraints associated with the project growth of EMIA. The main recommendations of the report were as follows:-

- (a) Six key drivers of the EMIA Economic Development Strategy were recognised as labour supply, surface transport access, logistics, investment/international trade, supply chains and inbound tourism.

- (b) The report suggested that the EMIA Economic Development Strategy required a simple and transparent implementation framework that would facilitate the engagement of airport-related companies with the process and provide a more effective basis for ensuring that actions were taken forward and results achieved.
- (c) York Aviation had recommended that an Airport Employment Forum be established, employing an Employment Manager, to assist and co-ordinate the implementation of employment and skills opportunities and possibly supply chain initiatives.
- (d) The Airport Action Group should be the ‘guardian’ of the EMIA Economic Development Strategy to organise, manage and co-ordinate the interface between airport-related companies and the regional economic development infrastructure, and take responsibility for strategic actions such as surface transport access and the development of airport-related activities off-site.

The report specifically concentrated on economic issues and did not consider environmental or social impacts of an expansion. However, the Chief Executive referred to a recent statement by the Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling, pledging that the environmental impact of East Midlands Airport would be considered before any decision on whether it could expand.

Members welcomed the economic considerations and hoped that the area would prosper from these.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the East Midlands Development Agency be advised that the Council is broadly in favour of the Economic Development Strategy but would wish to see the environmental issues progressed alongside it and is reassured by the recent comments of the Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling.***
- (2) That the Council hopes that South Derbyshire will benefit from any new opportunities and jobs mentioned in the study.***

(Councillor Whyman declared a personal interest in this item as the Chair of the East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Committee.)

CL/89. **LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**

Members were reminded that the Council’s accounts had been approved at the Council Meeting on 14th August 2003 and the audit of these accounts was now nearing completion. In line with previous years, the Chief Finance Officer was required to provide a letter of representation to the external auditors, indicating whether there were any significant events that had occurred after the end of the accounting period (31st March 2002) that would materially affect the accounts for 2002/03. Following consultation with the Monitoring Officer to ensure that one planning matter fell within this category, this was now covered in the proposed letter. It was understood that there were no other post balance sheet items that fell within the scope of the letter, which was considered by Members.

RESOLVED:-

That the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to sign the letter of representation.

M.J.P. BALE

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.