

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

Present: Councillor Derbyshire (Chair)  
Councillor P Mortimer (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Greenslade, Khan, Mahmood and Mrs Punter

**PDS18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**  
06/07

It was noted that Councillor Smillie had resigned as a member of this Committee.

Apologies were received from Councillor McGovern.

**PDS19 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**  
06/07

There were no disclosures of interest.

**PDS20 MINUTES**  
06/07

The minutes of the meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July were submitted and signed.

**PDS21 COLOSSEUM REVIEW PROJECT INTRODUCTION**  
06/07

The Chair described the outline project plan and explained that the Portfolio Holder, the Head of Leisure and Community Services and the Service Manager for the Colosseum would attend the next meeting on 18 September and that Members would have chance to ask questions of them. Members of the public and outside stakeholders would be invited to the meeting on 23 October.

Scope and Terms of Reference

The Chair suggested that two amendments be made to the scope and terms of reference. He felt that the word 'doubtful' within the first sentence under the heading 'why undertake this review?' was too strong and be amended to the word 'uncertain'. Members agreed with this amendment.

The Chair also felt that the word 'needs' in the first objective was too strong and suggested replacing it with 'aspirations'. Members agreed that 'needs' was too strong but that aspirations would not be appropriate either. It was suggested and agreed that 'needs' be replaced with 'desires'.

RESOLVED –

that the scope and terms of reference be amended as follows:

1. the first sentence under the heading 'Why undertake this review?' be amended to read:  
"Members understand that the Colosseum is a major Council asset that has an uncertain future because of question marks over its use and funding."
2. that the first objective be amended to read:  
"To determine the extent to which current use meets the desires of people who live in Watford."

The Chair then outlined the report introducing the research information as follows.

#### Watford Colosseum brochure

Some Members thought that the colour of the brochure was a little dull. The Chair advised Members that any comments could be made to the officers at the next meeting.

#### MORI 2006 report

The Chair said that there was very little information to be gained from the survey, although page 19, 'satisfaction with cultural and recreational services' could be useful. One Member also suggested that page 21, 'most important versus needs improving' could be useful information to consider.

#### November 2004 Consultant's report

The Chair asked Members to read through the report again before the next meeting with a view to asking questions on how the Executive had moved forward with particular regard to the four options identified. He felt that the report was focused on capital expenditure issues rather than the key issue of long-term operation and management and revenue budget.

#### Minutes from the 10 January 2005 meeting of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

One Member asked if any follow up action had been received since the resolution was passed by the Committee with regard to the four identified options. The Chair said that this question should be asked of the Portfolio Holder at the next meeting.

#### Financial information on the Colosseum

The Scrutiny Manager explained that it had been difficult to gather the financial information, but that it would be ready for the next meeting. The Chair asked that it be circulated in advance of the meeting and another Member asked that the information be clear and understandable.

RESOLVED –

that the financial information be circulated in advance of the next meeting and be in a clear and understandable format.

### Watford's Cultural Strategy

The Chair explained that the cultural strategy was currently under consultation and that the Colosseum featured only in general terms and was not specifically referred to.

### Cambridge Halls Business Plan

The Chair advised that this was background information to the visit to Cambridge. One Member asked if their financial information was available, another Member requested plans for the buildings. The Chair advised that this and further information would be collected during the visit.

### Colosseum Overview

The Chair thought that it would be useful to research the reasons why the Council opted to change the management of the Colosseum in 1994 from in-house to a contractor. Another Member said that she thought the information was incomplete and that more than one contractor had managed the Colosseum in the time mentioned.

RESOLVED –

that the Scrutiny Manager carry out further research into the reasons for out sourcing the management of the Colosseum in 1994 and other companies which held the contract.

### Current Colosseum findings

The Chair said that the further research into public opinion was still required. He explained that he would advertise the meeting on 23 October 2006 as fully as possible as stakeholders and members of the public would be invited. One Member suggested that the Area Committees could be used as a forum and that an item could be included on the newsletters. The Chair said that as much publicity as possible should be encouraged.

### Site visits

The Chair said that the Committee would visit two fully operational Council venues. Cambridge Halls was managed by an in-house team and Southampton's Guildhall was managed by outside contractors. These venues were therefore suggestions for the visits to give an insight into how they were both run. One Member suggested that a third visit could be useful to an operation run by a Trust. The Chair agreed that they would also look at a third visit. The visit to Cambridge Council was scheduled for 26 September and the Southampton visit was not yet confirmed. The Scrutiny Manager would issue details of the visits when available.

RESOLVED –

that the Scrutiny Manager identify a visit to a third Council where a Trust managed the facility and give details of all visits to Members of the Committee.

Colosseum Pricing

The Chair said that the pricing list was for information. One Member asked if a more detailed pricing structure could be obtained. The Chair said that Members would be able to ask such questions of officers at the next meeting.

Chair  
Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

The meeting began at 7.00 pm  
and finished 8.45 pm.

F-13/9 (LJ)