

SCRUTINY BOARD (DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor B Cleasby in the Chair

Councillors P Davey, D Hollingsworth,
G Latty, R Lewis, M Lobley, A Lowe,
A Millard and A Ogilvie

26 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of Interest received at this point in the meeting, however see under Item 10 (Minute No. 31) later in the meeting.

27 Minutes of Last Meeting

Regarding Minute No.22 Members' Questions on the lessons learned over the Telecoms Mast on Rawdon Billing, the Chair drew attention to the officer's reply in the bullet points on page 4 of the agenda. Concern was expressed that a similar situation happened again in Otley, despite procedures having been updated to minimise the risk, and it was felt that further questions should be asked.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2006 be approved as a correct record.

28 Executive Board Minutes

Regarding Minute No. 67, it was confirmed that the issue of parking in town and district centres was included in the Board's Work Programme for April 2007.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 20th September 2006 be noted.

29 Overview and Scrutiny Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th September 2006 be noted.

30 Sustainable Design and Construction and Sustainability Assessments

The Head of Sustainable Development, Dr Tom Knowland, from the Development Department, had submitted a report providing background information on how sustainable development issues were being addressed in Leeds.

Dr Knowland was in attendance to present the report and introduced Helen Sargant and Mia Davison from consultants EDAW who gave a PowerPoint

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presentation on EDAW's work on preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD would replace and update the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance which provided guidance to developers to encourage more sustainable buildings through the use of sustainable design and construction. EDAW had also been commissioned to prepare a simplified version of the guidance suitable for minor planning applications, including small householder applications and guidance for developers on how to prepare a sustainability assessment for major developments.

It was explained that the timetable had been revised since the report had been written. It was now envisaged that receiving feedback on the draft Sustainable Design and Construction SPD would be completed by 10th October, the draft Householder's Guide would be completed by mid November and the draft Developers Assessment SPD completed by the end of November. The final draft SPDs would be completed by December 2006 after which time they would be subject to formal consultation prior to ratification.

The Chair thanked officers and the consultants for the presentation and invited questions and comments from the Board.

In summary the issues clarified were:

- That the SPD would not influence planning decisions in terms of location, but once a planning application had been granted, it would seek to optimise the sustainability of the development.
- That it was recognised that the future targets as set out in the SPD should be updated regularly to take account of regular technological advances.
- That other local authorities were setting their own targets for renewables, for example green roof and grey water requirements.
- That at this stage the SPD was just guidance and needed to be dovetailed in with other policies.
- The use of specific technology was not being prescribed to developers, as technology was changing so quickly.
- With regard to the ever increasing use of water, climate change and the overloading of the drainage system, it was confirmed that the SPD referred to wider efficiency and grey water use to reduce demand and the adoption of sustainable urban drainage techniques to reduce run-off.
- That the responsibilities of both the local authorities and developers were being mapped out.
- That spatial issues of flooding were not covered in the SPD but were covered in the Area Action Plans.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) To note the contents of the three guidance documents being prepared by the consultants and the revised project timetable.
- (c) That the presentation from consultants EDAW be received and noted.
- (d) That a further update on the project be received at a future meeting of the Board.

(Note: At this point, the Chair adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes and the meeting reconvened at 11.00am.)

31 Request for Scrutiny Regarding the Former Blackgates School at Tingley

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which introduced a request for Scrutiny made by Mr Paul Cockcroft, a Leeds resident, relating to the disposal of the former Blackgates School at Tingley. The request had been submitted following a deputation to Council on 19th July 2006 and the decision of the Executive Board, at its meeting on 16th August 2006, to agree to the original plans by the Development Department for the disposal of the former school.

Copies of the request for Scrutiny, the deputation and the report from the Director of Development to the Executive Board on 16th August 2006, were attached to the report.

Councillor Lewis made a declaration of personal interest at this point in the meeting as he had been involved in the original decision of the Executive Board, as a substitute at the Board meeting, to dispose of the school.

The Chair welcomed Mr Cockcroft to the meeting, and ascertained that he was community safety representative for Shancara Court, which is next to the former school site. Mr Cockcroft outlined the request for scrutiny in further detail.

The Chair then requested Chris Gomersall, Head of Property Services, and Edward Rowland, Principal Surveyor, both from the Development Department, to respond to questions from the Board. Supporting evidence was circulated by officers to the Board.

In summary the main issues raised by Members were:

- Access to the site from the A650 Bradford Road and the cul-de-sac at Shancara Court
- The ransom strip
- The one independent valuation of the asset
- That the information on the valuation should have been provided to Members prior to the meeting
- The timetable of events
- The review of primary schools and when the decision was taken to close Blackgates School
- Access to the caretakers house
- Consultation with Ward Members
- Predicted vehicular movements
- Whether best consideration had been achieved

The Board took into account the responses of officers and the information supplied by Mr Cockcroft, and in particular his interpretation of an email

between highways and a property services officer that an alternative proposal could be the conversion of the existing school building to 12 to 15 flats on the site, with the entrance through the former school gates. It was subsequently agreed that further Scrutiny was required in this matter.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) –

- (a) That the resident's application for further Scrutiny of this matter be approved.
- (b) That the attached report from the Director of Development be noted.
- (c) That this matter be referred for further Scrutiny and that a report be submitted by the Development Department at the November meeting of the Board responding to Members' concerns.

(Note: Councillor Lowe left the meeting at 11.25am during the discussion of the above item but before the vote.)

32 Request for Scrutiny Regarding the Former Drighlington Junior School

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which introduced a request for Scrutiny made by Drighlington Parish Council/Drighlington Conservation Group, relating to the disposal of the former Drighlington Primary School. The request had been submitted following a deputation to Council on 19th July 2006 regarding the question of ownership and the lack of consultation on the disposal of the school and land and the decisions made at the Executive Board on 16th August 2006 which were listed in the report.

Copies of the request for Scrutiny, the deputation and the report from the Director of Development to the Executive Board on 16th August 2006, were attached to the report.

The Chair welcomed Councillor James Durning, Parish Councillor for Drighlington, who outlined in further detail the request for scrutiny. Councillor Durning was accompanied to the meeting by the Chair of Drighlington Parish Council Janet Scholes, and by fellow Parish Councillors Vicky Felton and Christine Day.

The Chair then requested Chris Gomersall, Head of Property Services, Sean Smith, Project Manager both from the Development Department and Pat Kelly, Section Head Property and Finance from Legal and Democratic Services, to respond to questions from the Board on the two main grievances of the Drighlington Parish Councillors, namely the legal ownership of the asset and the lack of consultation over its disposal.

Regarding ownership, it was ascertained that, although the property was not registered at the HM Land Registry, the school was owned by Leeds City Council. The representatives from Drighlington Parish Council were prepared to accept LCC ownership, although it was pointed out that in the report to the Executive Board on 16th August 2006, it stated in paragraph 7.1 that the

Council had registered its legal interest in the ownership of the land with the Land Registry, although this was found now not to be the case.

Regarding the second issue and after hearing evidence from officers, the Board felt that there had been a breakdown in communication between the Development Department, Ward and Parish Councillors which resulted in insufficient consultation taking place. Councillor McArdle, LCC Ward Member for Morley North, joined the meeting and expressed his dissatisfaction at the lack of consultation and how difficult it was to obtain information from officers generally across the Council.

A vote was taken by Members and it was agreed unanimously to reject further scrutiny of this issue. However, it was felt that the Board's concern about the Department's reliance on Ward Councillors forwarding information to Parish Councillors, rather than doing this direct, should be conveyed to the relevant senior officers.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) –

- (a) That the request for Scrutiny from Drighlington Parish Council/ Drighlington Conservation Group be noted.
- (b) That the attached report from the Director of Development be noted.
- (c) That no further Scrutiny be required on this particular matter.
- (d) With regard to the consultation process concerning the disposal of property assets in general, that the Board's concern regarding the Department's reliance on Ward Councillors forwarding information to Parish Councillors be conveyed to the relevant senior officers and that it be recommended in future that the Development Department consult directly with Parish Councils.

(Note: Councillor Lewis left the meeting at 12.00 noon during the discussion of the above item but before the vote.)

(Note: Councillor Lobley left the meeting at 12.05pm at the end of this item and after the vote.)

33 London 2012 Olympic Games

A joint report from the Leeds Initiative and Director of Learning and Leisure was submitted to the Board which briefed Members on Yorkshire preparations for the London 2012 Olympics, reported on the work to date of the Leeds Olympic/Paralympic Task Group and outlined Leeds' proposals to ensure that its residents and businesses benefited fully from this event.

The Chair welcomed Councillor John Procter, Executive Member for Leisure, to the meeting to speak on this item, along with officers Dinah Clark, Programme Manager within Leeds Initiative and Peter Smith, Principal Officer Sport Development, from Learning and Leisure.

Part of a promotional DVD of the London 2012 Olympic Games was played at the meeting, then the Chair invited questions and comments from the Board.

In summary the issues discussed were:

- The activities of the Leeds Olympic/Paralympic Task Group.
- The benefits for the region and in particular for Leeds.
- That the venues for each sporting event had already been determined.
- Attracting training camps to the regions rather than abroad.
- That it was unlikely that there would be funding available to hold events in the regions.
- The excellent sporting facilities available in Leeds.
- Whether tourists would be attracted to Leeds as a result of the Olympics.
- Using 2012 as a major vehicle to increase physical activity in Leeds.
- Using 2012 to increase the concept of volunteering within Leeds.

The Chair applauded the work of the task group and thanked Councillor Procter and officers for attending the meeting.

At the Chair's request, officers then briefly updated the Board on the events arranged over the next 18 months as part of Celebrate Leeds 2007. The Board was also notified that there was further information available on the internet on the Leeds Initiative website.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the work to date of the Leeds Olympic/Paralympic Task Group be endorsed.
- (c) That the proposed appointment by Leeds City Council and Leeds Initiative of a dedicated resource to progress this project be noted.
- (d) That an update report be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

(Note: Councillor Davey left the meeting at 12.35pm during the course of the above discussions but before the recommendations were agreed.)

34 Climate Change

The Director of Development submitted a report summarising the latest evidence for climate change, the role that Local Government could play in dealing with the threat and Leeds' contribution to combating climate change. Leeds City Council's proposals to develop a climate change strategy and action plan were included in the Appendices to the report.

Dr Tom Knowland, Head of Sustainable Development, from the Development Department, was in attendance to present the report and respond to Members' queries and comments. He reported that it was hoped that the DVD of Al Gore's recent documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth' would be screened at lunch time on Council Day in January. A set of stills in book form, taken from the documentary, were circulated to Members of the Board for information.

The report was enthusiastically supported by the Board.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the timetable to produce a climate change strategy and action plan be noted.
- (c) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Development).

35 Progress of Water Asset Management Working Group

The Director of Development submitted a report at the request of the Board, updating Members on the progress of the Water Asset Management Working Group (WAMWG) which was set up following a report to Executive Board in March 2005 on a series of flooding incidents affecting houses in Leeds in August 2004.

Richard Davies, Head of Risk and Emergency Planning, Corporate Services Department and David Sellers, Principal Engineer, Development Department, were in attendance to present the report and respond to Members' queries and comments.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work and progress of the WAMWG to date be noted.
- (b) That the on-going work of the WAMWG be supported.

36 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and member Development submitted a report on the Board's Work Programme, together with the Forward Plan of Key Decisions pertaining to this Board's Terms of Reference covering the period 1st October 2006 to 31st January 2007 for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.
- (b) That scrutiny of the disposal of the former Blackgates School at Tingley be added to the Board's Work Programme for November 2006.
- (c) That the new Chief Planning and Development Officer be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

37 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21st November 2006 at 10.00am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30am.

The meeting concluded at 12.55pm.

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on 21st November 2006