

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 13TH JANUARY, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, B Gettings,
R Harington, A Hussain, J Jarosz,
M Lobley, R Procter, N Taggart, A Barker,
J Matthews and A Ogilvie

79 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest, however Councillor Matthews, in the interests of transparency indicated that he was a member of the North West (Inner) Area Committee which had previously discussed the report referred to in Agenda Item 8 'A660 Corridor Transport Issues' and which had referred the Design and Cost Report dated 24th November 2008 to the Scrutiny Board (City Development) for discussion. In order to avoid any perception of predetermination, Councillor Matthews also stated that he would maintain an open mind and listen to the arguments afresh.

80 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Wilkinson.

81 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

82 Leeds Strategic Plan Performance Report for Quarter 2 2008/09

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report providing Members with an update on the revised approach to performance reporting and accountability arrangements for the Leeds Strategic and Council Business Plans and providing a performance report by exception (ie red and amber) on the progress against improvement priorities relevant to the Board at Quarter 2, 2008/09.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Jean Dent, Director of City Development, Paul Maney, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement, City Development and Heather Pinches, Performance Manager, Planning, Policy and Improvement, Executive Support. Gary Bartlett, Chief Highways Officer, City Development, joined the meeting to respond to specific queries from the Board.

The Director presented the report and summarised progress against the improvement priorities relevant to this Board. In particular it was

emphasised that out of the Director's 13 improvement priorities, 8 were green, 5 were amber and none were red.

Attention was drawn to the one **Culture** Improvement Priority rated amber: CU-1a 'Enable more people to become involved in sport and culture by providing better quality and wider ranging activities and facilities'. The Board was advised that since the data had been collated, the 'Active People' survey had indicated an impressive 7% increase in participation in sport and recreation (the target being 1%). As a result, Leeds had risen nationally from 208th to 16th place and the status of this Improvement Priority would now change to green.

It was also reported that progress had been made against the only amber status improvement priority within the **Environment theme** (ENV-1b 'Reduce emissions from public sector buildings, operations and service delivery and encourage others to do so'). However, as this data was being collected for the first time, the Department was being cautious in its assessment as at present it was still seeking to establish the base line.

With regard to **Enterprise and Economy**, Members were advised that a close watch on the current green status of the data would be required, as these figures would be affected by the slow down in the economy.

With regard to **Transport**, the Director referred to the three improvement priorities which were amber. Of specific concern were firstly the effects of rising energy costs, specifically for street lighting, on the Council's budget and the initiatives being taken to lessen the impact. And secondly the fact that the Council continued to work with Metro to help them improve the figures on public transport services in Leeds, for which they have the lead responsibility.

Members then sought information from Officers on the following issues relating to the performance figures in Appendix 2 to the report:

- **Culture** –
 - Level of use of leisure centres.
 - The reason for the increase in people participating in sport and active recreation.
- **Environment** –
 - Progress on the climate change strategy.
 - Campaigns to encourage staff to reduce emissions in Council buildings.
- **Learning** –
 - Whether the Government takes into account external influences which affected skill levels.
 - Data availability and monitoring relating to young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) who spend six months on benefits and two weeks on a course and then go back to receiving benefits again.

- Working within the Local Area Agreement and Multiple Area Agreement.
- The enhancement of higher level skill levels and raising the expectations of young people.
- **Transport –**
 - The reason for the regional target for congestion being lower than the base line.
 - Enhancing cycling and walking as alternatives to car use and encouraging increased use of public transport.
 - Verge hardening and the flagging of gardens and their link to flooding.
 - Accessing Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) funding and road charging.
 - Whether there were any plans to restrict car parking in the city centre.
 - Whether the Council's vision for transport needed to be more creative and aspirational.
 - The response rate of the transport survey.
 - The appropriateness of providing more multi-storey car parks in the city centre.
 - The expansion of Park and Ride facilities on rail and bus routes.
 - The recent increases in bus and rail fares and the current inability of the Council to influence these.
 - The effect of increased oil prices on the Council's maintenance and highways improvement programme.

Members then requested information from Officers on some general issues and specific issues relating to performance indicators listed in Appendix 3 to the report. These were in summary:

- **Street cleansing** and who was responsible for this in the city centre and the major arterial routes.
- Whether there was any follow up on Local Indicators **LEGI1, 2, 3, 4i and 4ii** (Local Enterprise Growth Initiatives).
- Local Indicator **LEGI4i** and the definition of deprived communities.
- Progress on meeting targets for Local Indicators **LKI 215A and B** relating to street lighting repairs. The Director referred briefly to the replacement street lighting programme and the industrial action which had taken place by Yorkshire Electricity Distribution Ltd (YEDL) which connects the new street lighting installed by Southern Electric Contracting (SEC) (Private Finance Initiative) to the mains supply.
- Whether the targets were demanding enough.

The Chair thanked Officers for attending and requested that they convey the Board's thanks to all the staff in the Department for this work.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the department respond directly to:
 - Councillor Harington on whether motorcycles were allowed to be parked in cycle racks.
 - Councillor Barker's request for a meeting on LEGI.

- Councillor Lobley in order to provide additional information on NI167 congestion and average journey times.
- Councillor Pryke regarding Wards covered by LEGI schemes.

(Note: Councillor Taggart joined the meeting at 10.25 during the consideration of this item.)

83 **A660 Corridor Transport Issues**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching the Design and Cost Report to the Chief Highways Officer and Director of Resources dated 24th November 2008 entitled 'A660 Woodhouse Lane/Clarendon Road, Woodhouse Proposed Inbound Bus/Cycle Lane and Junction Improvement Measures' referred by the North West (Inner) Area Committee to this Scrutiny Board for discussion. Also attached were the Delegated Decision Notification of 2nd December 2008, the report of the Director of City Development to the North West (Inner) Area Committee of 18th December 2008 'A660 Corridor Transport Issues' and an extract from the Minutes of the North West (Inner) Area Committee of 18th December 2008.

The Chair advised the meeting that the Scrutiny Board (City Development) did not have any executive powers to agree to or to stop any decisions made under the officer delegation scheme, Executive Board or the Council. However, the Board could express their opinions on the issues and these might or might not be taken into account by the decision makers, who were in this instance the Executive Board Member for City Development and Officers under delegated powers.

The Chair then welcomed to the meeting Councillor Monaghan, Chair of North West (Inner) Area Committee, Gary Bartlett, Chief Highways Officer, City Development, Andrew Hall, Transport Strategy Manager, City Development and Helen Franklin, Acting Head of Highways Services, City Development.

The **Chief Highways Officer** referred Members to the Design and Cost report of 24th November 2008, and explained why he had come to the decision to **revoke the original decision**. The reasons were firstly that the extent and depth of the opposition to the scheme had not previously been released and therefore had not been fully appreciated by officers. Indeed the extent and depth of the opposition to the scheme had only become apparent to himself in conversation with the Chair of the North West (Inner) Area Committee after the report had been written, the decision taken and then called-in. Secondly, he was notified that due to a genuine misunderstanding it was incorrectly reported in the report that the Area Committee had been fully consulted. In fact the matter had been considered by an informal Transport Sub Committee established by the Area Committee but not serviced by the Central and Corporate Governance Unit. The decision was revoked therefore in terms of the accuracy of the report and the need for the officer Joint Highways Board to be aware of all of the facts.

Members were advised that the current position was that the proposals for the 1st phase of the A660 corridor were continuing to be reviewed, that discussions were taking place with Ward members and that no final decision had been taken on this.

The **Transport Strategy Manager** then outlined the background to the A660 corridor scheme and in particular the proposals for the Woodhouse Lane/Clarendon Road junction, which was the first phase of the scheme. The Officer clarified how the need to widen the A660 had come about due to the knock on effect of the necessity to introduce pedestrian facilities at this junction and to improve the substandard bus stop at this location.

The **Chair of the North West (Inner) Area Committee** then addressed the Board. He advised the Board that the Officer decision had been called-in but the Call-in meeting had been cancelled when the Chief Highways Officer revoked the decision. He then outlined the concerns of the North West (Inner) Area Committee to, not only the first stage of the scheme itself, but also the accuracy of the Design and Cost Report of 24th November 2008.

Firstly clearly there had been many more **objections** received than indicated in the report, particularly on the proposals to widen Woodhouse Lane which would involve the removal and relaying of existing Yorkstone flagstones, trees and grass verges, when this junction was not the most congested part of the A660 corridor.

Secondly, the Area Committee had also not been **consulted** as stated in the Design and Cost Report: the Area Committee Transport Sub-Group had met to discuss the issues but the North West (Inner) Area Committee itself had not been due to meet until 18th December 2008, two weeks after the delegated decision had been authorised. The Area Committee was clear that there was no malicious intent on the part of Officers, but rather there had been miscommunication between the parties and a genuine misunderstanding. The Area Committee were concerned that this should not happen again.

Thirdly, the Area Committee were of the opinion that the **bigger picture** needed to be looked at with regard to transport issues on this corridor: encouraging more cycling, walking and use of public transport, rather than increasing capacity.

Officers then responded to various questions and comments made by the Board on the following issues:

- Officers were not able to confirm whether the previously proposed **Supertram scheme** would have involved impinging on green space or used existing roadways in this area.
- Officers confirmed that different **rules on consultation** were not applied to different areas of the city.
- Officers could not confirm whether the option to convert one of the car lanes to a bus lane, and therefore remove the necessity to widen the road on the inbound dual carriageway, had ever been considered and **modelled**.

- The Chief Highways Officer confirmed that it was normal procedure to consult with local residents and businesses as referred to in para 3.2.5 of the Design and Cost Report and that this report was seeking funding to take the proposals to **full public consultation**. Members expressed their concern that £135,000 had been authorised for further consultation work on a scheme which there had already been massive public opposition to.
- The Chief Highways Officer suggested the **setting of the proposals in the context of proposals for the whole A660 Corridor** might be a better way forward that needed further consideration.
- The Chief Highways Officer pointed out that the Joint Highways and Transport Board reviewed and approved many reports each month. Of great importance to the Chief Highways Officer were the comments in the reports relating to **feedback from Members** and the public. Unfortunately, responses from Members were often low. The Chief Highways Officer had asked for this to be reviewed but would welcome comments from the Board how this situation could be improved.
- Officers confirmed that the junction in question would become a **pinch point** when the **new pedestrian facilities** had been installed.
- Officers confirmed that Councillor A Carter, the **Executive Board Member** for Development, had been informed that the decision was to be reviewed.
- The Chief Highways Officer advised that Officers would **take fully into account the strong feedback** to this scheme that had been received and that all options would be reconsidered very carefully, but he could not give assurances that these proposals would not appear again.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser advised the Board on **the process** in terms of the Board progressing this matter. He also advised that Members would be able to again **call-in** any future decision on this scheme.

As previously agreed, the Board then allowed **Mr Tony Green**, a member of the public, to address the Board. Mr Green made the following points to the Board:

- Congratulated the Board on the content and quality of the discussion.
- The Chief Highways Officer's suggestion that the public would be consulted on the whole corridor in order to understand the relationship of this particular proposal to the larger consideration, was welcomed.
- He hoped that Elected Members would listen to the public and make well informed decisions on their behalf.
- He was of the opinion that improvements to the corridor should be embraced but that the 100yds of road in question would not make any difference to congestion further up the A660.
- He warned that in some instances there would be no alternative to demolition.
- He also warned that road widening schemes attracted more vehicles, resulting in more congestion and the reappearance of the problems.

The Chair thanked witnesses, Officers and members of the public for attending.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development and the departmental reports on this matter be noted.
- (b) That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development prepare a draft Statement and recommendations for consideration at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board (City Development).

(Note: Councillors R Procter and A Hussain left the meeting at 11.25am and 12.10 respectively during the consideration of this item.)

84 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing Members with a copy of the Board's current Work Programme. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st January to 30th April 2009 and the Executive Board Minutes of 3rd December 2008 were also attached to the report.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser advised the Board that the Work Programme revealed the **slippage** on some of the reports planned for the January meeting.

Members discussed various additional items for inclusion on the Work Programme and information for circulation. These were in summary:

- A visit to the Roundhay Park **Mansion House** with a short update report on the developments to the next meeting of the Board.
- A report for information on the proposed **city centre park**.
- The report on the Review of the City Centre Loop to include information on the **Inner Ring Road extension**.
- The Chair to remind the Director of City Development to provide information on **cycle and motorcycle parking**.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That, subject to the above comments and additions, the Work Programme be agreed.

85 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday 10th February 2009 at 10.00am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30am.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.