

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, B Gettings,
R Harington, A Hussain, M Loble,
G Wilkinson and A Ogilvie

97 Declaration of Interests

No Member declarations of interests were made.

98 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Jarosz, R Procter, N Taggart, A Barker and J Matthews.

99 Minutes of Last Meeting

Referring to Minute 92, Roundhay Park mansion update, it was reported that a site visit to Roundhay Park mansion would be arranged once Dine had completed the renovation work.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

100 Current 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 March to 30th June 2009 and the Executive Board Minutes of 13th February 2009 were also attached to the report.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the report.

Members noted the current work programme for the next meeting to be held on 21st April 2009.

Reference was made by the Chair that he was no longer receiving the six weekly reports on priority enforcement cases that was introduced in the new year. He agreed to make inquiries in this regard and report back to the Board.

The Chair asked the Board if they had any suggestions on items the Board may wish to consider for the next municipal year.

The following items were suggested:

- Use of school car parks and safety issues.
- Traffic pinch points.
- City Varieties update report.
- Arena Design and the importance of producing an iconic building that people want to visit.
- Climate change.
- Departmental activities and briefings.
- Shared space update.
- Post Offices and initiatives that can be taken to make them more viable.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the report and work programme be approved
- (ii) That the successor Scrutiny Board be asked to consider the issues detailed above when developing its work programme for 2009/2010.

Note: Councillor A Hussain joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

101 Performance Report Quarter 3 2008/09

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report presenting for the Board the key areas of under performance at the end of Quarter 3 (1st October to 31st December 2008).

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor Andrew Carter, Executive Member for Development and Regeneration and Jean Dent, Director of City Development and Paul Maney, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement, City Development.

The Director presented the report and summarised progress on a wide range of indicators which were the responsibility of the City Development department. These responsibilities include environmental and transport matters, economic and leisure activities. Members were advised that some of the indicators are national indicators, others are indicators within the Council's own Strategic Plan, and a number are local indicators set by the department. The Director pointed out that generally performance and the quality of data was good and that the department was moving in the right direction in virtually all of these indicators.

However, the Director informed the meeting that there were concerns around the economy, falling revenue and increasing pressure on budgets.

The Executive Board Member referred to some of these pressures including the state of the national economy, falling income as a consequence of fewer planning applications being submitted and falling visitor numbers at our sports centres. He referred specifically to LSP-TP1E – a Leeds Strategic Plan Partnership Agreed indicator which relates to new customers on low incomes accessing credit union services.

It was stressed that the indicators around worklessness were obviously very challenging due a substantial increase in the number of people on benefits in the city in the last few months.

Attention was also drawn to LSP-EE1A – a Leeds Strategic Plan Partnership Agreed indicator (support the establishment of 550 new businesses). The Director informed the meeting that there was a lack of clarity in these figures and referred Members to LEGI1 which gave a more accurate assessment of the number of new businesses that had been created.

Some Members expressed the view that perhaps some of the targets were not stretching the department enough. In response, the Director informed the meeting that targets were reviewed regularly and some were agreed with government and some with partners.

Members asked about Climate Change and specifically the carbon reduction targets and the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement explained the complex nature of NI 185, a Leeds Strategic Plan Government Agreed indicator, and outlined the progress being made.

Members commented on or made reference to a number of indicators including:

- Business Plan/LSP – NI185/NI 188.
- Leeds Strategic Plan Partnership - LSP-EE1A.
- LSP-CU1A(I) – Number of physical visits to Libraries.
- NI 157 - Process of major Planning Applications.
- NI 8 – Adult Participation in sport and active recreation.
- LSP-TP1E – Low incomes accessing Credit Unions.
- LSP-TR1B(I) – Local bus passenger journeys.
- NI 151 – Employment Rate.
- NI 157 – Processing of minor Planning applications.
- LEGI1/LEGI2/LEGI3 – Establishment or relocation of new businesses in deprived areas.
- LEGI4i/LEGI4ii – The Creation of 1,100 jobs.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and Officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the content of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That with regard LSP-TP1E, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser obtain a copy of the Department of Works and Pensions definition of "low incomes" and circulate it to all Members of the Board.

102 Cycling Strategy and Plans

The Director of City Development submitted a report on the development of a cycling strategy and plans to develop the role of cycling within the city.

The Chair welcomed Andrew Hall, Transport Strategy Manager, City Development, to the meeting to present the report and respond to Members' queries and comments.

In brief a number of issues were discussed including:

- The results of the City's cycling bid.
- Partnerships and stakeholders – how and when do the Council ask what the cyclists need?
- Future plans for the inclusion of the Ring Road in the Cycling Strategy Plans.
- Cycling on pavements – whether there were any byelaws enforced on people using footpaths for cycling.

Members under this item also raised the following issues

- Notices that say 'new traffic signals ahead' – how long should they stay up for. Members pointed out that some of these notices were still insitu after several years.
- Excessive street furniture/superfluous signage - The Board requested a report to be submitted to the next meeting from Traffic Management on this issue.

The Chair thanked the officer for his attendance.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That a further progress report on the cycling strategy be submitted to a future meeting of this Board.
- (c) That a report be submitted to the April Board meeting regarding excessive street furniture and superfluous signage.

103 Sustainable Communities Act

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding an invitation by the Secretary of State to local authorities to submit proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act. The deadline for the submission of proposals was 31st July 2009.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Dylan Griffiths, Project Manager (Policy), Executive Support, who presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In brief summary, the main issues discussed were:

- The need to consult with Parish Councils, Area Committees and Community Forums.

In response, the officer indicated that he had already contacted Parish Council's for their views and they would be approaching Area Committees and Community Forums.

The following proposals were suggested made under the Sustainable Communities Act:

- Highways Department - 30 mile an hour repeat signs.
- Planning – the adoption of village design statements.

The Chair thanked the officer for her attendance.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report and the comments made above be noted.
- (ii) That Members of the Board submit any further suggestions they might wish to make directly by email to the Policy Unit.

104 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday 21st April 2009 at 10.00am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30am.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and announced that the meeting was closed at 12 noon.