

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, S Bentley, D Cohen,
G Hyde, M Lyons, J Matthews, V Morgan,
C Fox and P Wadsworth

54 Chairs Opening Remarks

Councillor Rafique welcomed all present to the meeting and expressed the Boards' congratulations to Councillor Morgan who celebrated her 55th Wedding Anniversary today.

55 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda, however the Board had received a supplementary document providing budgetary information on the events provided by the Out of School Activities Team (minute 60 refers)

56 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal interests for the purpose of Section 81 (3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor Cohen – powers to promote local employment, training and skills - declared a personal interest as a representative of Tesco Stores Plc had been invited to give evidence to the Scrutiny Inquiry and he stated Tesco Stores Plc were a retail client of his business, unrelated to this Inquiry. (Minute 59 refers)

57 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Atkinson. Members also noted the changes made to the membership of the Board by Council on 22nd February 2012 and welcomed Councillors Fox and Wadsworth as new Members of the Board.

58 Minutes

Minute 48 - Councillor Cohen requested that the minutes reflect his disappointment that the relevant Director and Executive Members had not attended the meeting to present the Quarter 2 Performance report in respect of the Department of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Minute 51 - Members noted a correction required to the title of Mr M Sellens to read "Head of Planning Services".

RESOLVED – That, subject to the amendments outlined above, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2012 be agreed as a correct record

59 Session 3 - Inquiry into maximising existing powers to promote, influence and create local employment, training and opportunities around major development projects and the purchasing of services

Further to minute 51 of the meeting held 26th January 2012, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to Session 3 of the Inquiry on the proposed approach for the monitoring and review of the delivery of employment and skills obligations

Sue Wynne - Chief Officer; Employment & Skills, Philippa Toner – Senior Executive Manager, Public Private Partnership Unit and Martin Sellens, Head of Planning Services attended the meeting. In brief, officers highlighted :

- the need for implementation of the obligations to be transparently monitored and reviewed and the benefits this approach would bring
- feedback from the consultation with suppliers which showed general support for the proposed approach - if appropriate performance targets and associated remedies for non-compliance were determined prior to signing the contract and detailed in the contract documents, the process was not too bureaucratic/expensive and obligations were dealt with on a contract by contract basis
- the difference between S106 financial obligations and jobs & skills obligations and the engagement process with developers
- the Director of Resources had considered the financial implications and risk to the authority of jobs and skills obligations being formalised within the thresholds previously discussed and was supportive of the initiative.

The Board made the following comments

- S106 jobs & skills obligations should be more robustly pursued as there was concern that there appeared to be no redress if a developer did not fulfil those obligations. Members noted the response that every employment plan attached to a planning permission now contained clear targets however City Development acknowledged that measures to deal with failure to meet obligations were required
- reports to Plans Panels should include reference to the “track record” of an applicant/developer in meeting S106 obligations attached to previously approved schemes/phases of the same scheme

The Board welcomed representatives of external organisations to the Session:

Debra Hyams Tesco Stores PLC – gave evidence on the working relationship established between Tesco and the Leeds Employment Team and highlighted the following:

- LET was a useful tool for employers who needed to know local skills base
- Some new developments were developer led with the end user not being involved in the initial plans and negotiations; therefore the jobs & skills requirements may not be those the end user could fulfil
- Would welcome flexible employment and skills obligations as a target for the company to aim towards.

Janet Spencer Leeds Housing Concern – gave evidence as a representative of a charity providing housing and assistance to the most vulnerable groups. LHC had participated in the consultation undertaken by LCC and highlighted the following:

- The suggested approach would lend weight to the informal arrangements currently in place by which LHC and similar organisations provided assistance to their client group to gain education and employment through an in-house training programme and work experience for social work and health care students

Having thanked all attendees for their contributions to the Inquiry and being satisfied with the information presented; the Board made the following initial recommendations:

1. To support the production of a policy framework and charter to bring consistency in approach and enable external bodies to be clear on the Councils expectations. Consultation with stakeholders should be sufficiently undertaken to inform this process.
2. Clear guidance and information must be available and provided to those parties on which jobs and skills obligations are imposed.
3. To develop a toolkit for consistent implementation. This should also be supported by staff training. The toolkit should ensure that efficient processes are in place to ensure there is no duplication of effort by planning and procurement where both are involved in a particular venture.
4. A review of operational procedures in Planning and Procurement to ensure that there is a documented process flow which demonstrates that the Employment and Skills team have been alerted to each and every opportunity that meets defined criteria at an early stage, including pre-application meetings.
5. Ensure robust monitoring
6. Ensure pockets of best practice are identified and adopted across the Authority
7. Ensure opportunities, skills and employment are targeted to local unemployed and NEETS
8. To recommend the following thresholds –
 - a. Contracts valued at £100k and above
 - b. Developments of more than 100 residential units
 - c. Construction sites of more than 10,000 sq m
 - d. Retail developments of over 2,000m²

Additionally, Members sought further investigation of

- The appropriateness of introducing an “obligation bond”. An amount to be retained/levied should a developer not fulfil the obligations set out in a Section 106 Agreement
- Separate Scrutiny work into Section 106 financial obligations, to cover the amount of time taken for financial and non financial obligations to be met/paid and actions taken to recover and enforce obligations.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and the comments of the Board on the proposed approach to the monitoring and review of the delivery of the employment and skills obligations through the council’s procurement and planning functions as detailed above be noted

60 Session 3 - Inquiry into the engagement of young people in culture, sport and recreational activities

Further to minute 39 of the meeting held 1st December 2012 the Director of City Development submitted a report to the third Inquiry Session focussing on the involvement of young people in the development; delivery and improvement of services.

The Board withdrew to an informal meeting space to participate in a workshop attended by representatives of children and young people seeking to participate into the Inquiry

- Two pupils from Colton Primary School and Sean Flesher, Head of Parks & Countryside – outlined the schools involvement in the design and choice of equipment now installed in the new Temple Newsam play area “Physcap” and the subsequent usage of the facility
- Becky, Leeds Disability Sports Panel and Ross Bibby, Disability Sports Officer – discussed the work done to raise awareness of sports activities available to young people with disabilities
- Alison, Jessica, Helen, Becca; and Nicki Ball of LS Live – outlined the work they had done to report on events in Leeds for “radiowave” a safe social media network for young people and the media skills had acquired during a work experience placement
- Ingi, Breeze participant – described her involvement in various Breeze projects in recent years and the experiences available to young people through the Breeze Programme
- Erin and Matthew of Breeze Sports Academy – highlighted the courses available to Year 10 & 11 pupils which provided young people with experience, skills, qualifications and confidence necessary to embark on further training or careers
- Dennis Robbins from the Hunslet Club provided a history of the club and its place as one of the largest voluntary organisations in the UK to provide courses, support and activities for young people

During discussions, the attendees raised the following issues

Breeze programme:

- Breeze provided young people opportunities to participate in events they may not naturally have had access to
- Public transport to some events was an issue with expense and location of events being key factors
- Lack of awareness of “mini breeze events”

Communication

- Some events may not be marketed appropriately to the target audiences
- Use of social networks to advertise supported
- Better communication needed to explain to young people why service/event provision may be changing

- Flagship events (such as Party in the Park/Ice Cube) could be better used to advertise other events for young people
- Noted the comment that local ward councillors should attend events for young people and assist in media campaigns
- The LS radio wave group had the skills to work with the media, why not engage them to make promotional videos

Engagement -

- work experience/training in organisations suggested to encourage young peoples interest and involvement
- Involvement in the design of scheme/event can lead to greater use as the scheme designed from young persons perspective
- young people want to volunteer but that the organisers/providers needed to team up so that young people could access the events
- some provision seen as static – such as the museum – these could attract more attendees if spaces were set aside specifically to showcase young people’s work or for interactive exhibits
- some provision – such as Tropical World – required young people under 16 years to be accompanied by an adult. Consider whether this is appropriate as prohibits older teens from attending
- noted the comment that Leeds Library had recently removed its Young Peoples section

The Chair thanked all the participants for their attendance; highlighting the benefit their participation had brought to the Inquiry. Councillor Rafique stated the Board would welcome similar sessions to continue the discussions on whether improvements had been achieved.

(Councillors Akhtar and Lyons left the meeting at this point)

At the conclusion of the workshop session, the Board recommenced the formal meeting and continued discussions on the main themes arising from the discussions as being the importance of:

1. Communication and social networking, utilising appropriate and coherent methods to target audiences and choice of consultation groups
2. Young peoples involvement in scheme designs and creation of media to advertise events
3. Work experience opportunities
4. Showcases for young peoples work

(Councillor Akhtar resumed his seat and Councillor Morgan left the meeting at this point)

Having thanked officers for their contributions to the Inquiry and being satisfied with the information presented; the Board made the following initial recommendations :

1. That there should be greater collaborative working and interaction between Children’s Services (Youth Services) and City Development (Libraries, Arts &Heritage)

2. Accurate data gathering, targeting and marketing services in a much more informed way to promote engagement in areas where take up is lacking.
3. The example of “good practice” in a small proportion of the City and discussed on an Area, Cluster or Ward basis. This should be rolled out across the city to provide co-ordinated event information.
4. That every child in the city should have a Breeze Card and a proper strategy to achieve this should be developed

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the report; the discussions and the draft recommendations outlined in 1 to 4 above
- b) To endorse the vision for the future development of Breeze outlined in the submitted report, having regard to the comments made by the Board
- c) To thank the young people’s representatives for their attendance at the Inquiry and their participation in the workshop session

61 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny & Member Development submitted a copy of the Work Schedule for the 2011/12 Municipal Year which had been populated with the priority areas for scrutiny as identified at previous meetings. A copy of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held 10th February 2012 was attached for consideration along with a copy of the Forward Plan covering the period of 1 February to 31 May 2012.

The Board noted the earlier request for scrutiny of S106 financial obligations at a later date

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the Work Programme and
- b) To note any matters raised at this meeting above will be included appropriately
- c) To note the contents of the Forward Plan and the Executive Board minutes

62 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 22nd March 2012 at 10:00 am