

SOUTH (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor K Bruce in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, J Dunn, J Elliott,
D Nagle, K Renshaw and S Varley

Apologies Councillor R Finnigan, B Gettings,
S Golton, T Leadley and
L Mulherin

18 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Mulherin, S Golton, R Finnigan, B Gettings and T Leadley.

As there was not a Member from the Morley North Ward present, it was advised that the meeting was not quorate and any decisions made would have to be ratified at the next meeting of the Area Committee. Should any decision need implementation before then, it would have to be progressed through the officer delegation process.

20 Minutes - 15 July 2013

RECOMMENDED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

21 Open Forum

In accordance with Paragraphs 6.24 and 6.25 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules, the Chair allowed a period of up to 10 minutes for members of the public to make representations or to ask questions on matters within the terms of reference of the Area Committee. On this occasion there were no members of the public in attendance.

22 Deputation to South (Outer) Area Committee: Site Allocation Plan - Sites 3081A/3081B (Ardsley & Robin Hood)

The Area Committee received a deputation from residents of Middleton Lane and Middleton Avenue, Rothwell regarding concerns over Site Allocation Plan Sites 3081/A and 3081B.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting to present the deputation:

Minutes approved at the meeting
held 21 October 2013

- Leon Inglis (spokesperson)
- Steve Lunn
- Steve Pritchard
- Steve Plumpton
- Diane Freeman

The deputation had been brought due to strong objections to development proposals at the allocated sites and it was felt that any proposals for housing should be rejected. Issues highlighted included the following:

- Infrastructure issues – Mr Inglis had been a Middleton Lane resident for over ten years and had not been able to register with a local dentist; has to wait 2 weeks for doctors' appointments and had not been able to find a place in a local school for his son.
- To increase the local population by another 1,000 residents would place more pressure on an already stressed infrastructure.
- There were already traffic problems in the area and proposed developments would bring in approximately 600 additional vehicles. This would cause added danger to pedestrians and the turning into Middleton Lane was already hazardous and deaths had occurred.
- When the land was advertised for sale, the agent's brochure marketed it as 'highly productive grade II agricultural land which was easily cultivated for cropping'. It was felt ludicrous in the current monetary situation to lose highly productive land for housing. The land had been bought solely for profit with no regard for agricultural use nor the history of the land.
- Concern regarding the loss of habitat for wildlife and damage to the ecosystem.
- It was believed there was a covenant on the land restricting it to farming use.
- It was felt that there were more suitable sites for development across the city including unused industrial and commercial areas.
- Concern that any development could cause problems with flooding to existing housing.

It was reported that those bringing the deputation had only been informed of the consultation period regarding the site allocations two days prior to the closing date and that the information was difficult to understand and respond to. It was felt that there was no transparency with this planning application and there needed to be a review on how residents are informed about planning. This particular area is semi-rural, does not have internet access, has residents who are physically unable to leave their homes and documents were not understandable without officers available to explain. The timing of the consultation also fell over a holiday period.

Members supported the deputation and raised concerns regarding the consultation and felt more should have been done across the City and particularly at a local community level.

RECOMMENDED – That the deputation be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

23 High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2

The report of the Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation, provided information and an update to the Area Committee on the Government's proposals for Phase 2 of the High Speed Rail (HS2) project extending the route to Leeds and connecting to the East Coast Main Line.

Andrew Hall, Acting Head of Transport Policy presented the report.

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- The branch of the HS2 line connecting Birmingham to Leeds was anticipated for completion on 2033.
- There had been no consultation prior to the announcement of HS2 in January – there had since been meetings with Senior Councillors, Ward Councillors whose constituents were affected and the MP for the Elmete Constituency.
- Areas of Leeds that would be affected by the route – Woodlesford and Swillington.
- The Exceptional Hardship Scheme consultation – the Council had submitted a formal response to this.
- Local events that were due to be held as part of the consultation.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- The line would divide at Woodlesford which would effectively create a large rail junction.
- Concern was expressed regarding various issues relating to the HS2 proposal, these included the following:
 - The need for more consultation
 - That alternative routes be considered.
 - How to get more appropriate compensation for those affected.
 - That local residents will become trapped in unsalable properties.
- Further discussion focussed on the reported escalating costs of the scheme and capacity of the railways.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the current position with regard to the Government's high speed rail Phase 2 proposals and formal consultation for HS2 Phase 2 be noted.
- (3) That the Council's previous submission to the Government's Phase 2 Exceptional Hardship Scheme consultation and the intention to provide

a formal City Council response to the formal scheme consultation be noted.

24 Update on Welfare Benefit Changes

The report of the Chief Officer, Welfare and Benefits provided an update of the impact of the welfare reforms at both a citywide and ward level basis and also provided information on arrangements that had been put in place to support tenants.

Dave Roberts, Financial Inclusion Strategy Manager and Jason Kirk, Aire Valley Homes were in attendance for this item.

Dave Roberts informed Members of the High Cost Lenders Action Plan as part of the impact of welfare reform and examples of borrowing from pay day lenders were given. As part of the plan, work was taking place with groups across the city to tackle high cost lending and Leeds City Council had recently blocked access to pay day lenders websites through their computers. In response to this Members discussed whether more could be done by Government to prevent people using pay day lenders and the need to regulate rates as in other countries. Use of the Credit Union was also discussed.

Jason Kirk reported on work being carried out by Aire Valley Homes. There were approximately 1,700 homes affected by welfare reform and a recent survey had shown that tenants did not always receive the necessary financial and debt advice. It was aimed to direct people to available benefits and approximately 985 of the 1,700 affected had already been visited. Further challenges were to come with the introduction of the universal credit.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- The housing exchange scheme.
- The local welfare support scheme and financial support available from DWP over two years.
- Assisting those without internet access for benefit claims.
- Low take up of free school meals.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the information about the impact of welfare reforms be noted.
- (2) That the information about the campaign against high cost lenders and the contribution to options for locality based events and initiatives to support the campaign be noted.
- (3) That the work ongoing in the locality on response to welfare changes be noted.

25 A Summary of Key Work

The report of the Area Leader – South East Leeds presented an update on the key work taking place within the Outer South Leeds area not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Aretha Hanson, Area Officer presented the report.

Members attention was brought to the following issues:

- Members were asked to agree the South Outer Area Committee Business Plan 2013/14.
- Children and Young People's Working Group – 2 mini breezes had been held in Ardsley & Robin Hood and Morley.
- The Area Committee was requested to give the Activities Fund Steering Group the authority to make decisions on allocating funds.
- Transfer of the Rose Lund Community Centre
- Morley Empty Shops Fund – There was scope for an additional two grants.
- City Wide Asset Review
- Community Learning
- Community Safety
- International Day of Older Persons
- Morley Town Centre Management Board – amended constitution regarding the Chair

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the 2013/14 South Outer Area Committee Business Plan be agreed.

26 Wellbeing Budget Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) provided Members with the following:

- Details of the Wellbeing Budget position.
- An update on both the revenue and capital elements of the Wellbeing budget.
- Details of the Activities Fund budget.
- Details of revenue funding for consideration and approval.
- Details of revenue projects agreed to date which link to the priorities and actions in the Area Committee Business Plan.
- The current position of the Small Grants Budget.

Aretha Hanson, Area Officer presented the report.

Members were also asked to consider whether to divide the Activities Fund allocation equally by ward or based on population. It was suggested that a

decision on this be deferred to the next meeting due to the meeting not being quorate.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the position of the Wellbeing Revenue budget be noted.
- (3) That the revenue projects already agreed be noted.
- (4) That the capital position outlined be noted.
- (5) That the Activities Fund position be noted.
- (6) That the following projects be recommended for approval:
 - Rothwell Competitive Music Festival 2014 - £2,000
 - Rothwell Christmas Fayre 2013 - £884.95
 - Operation Flame Bonfire Initiative - £1,063.76
- (7) That the small grants position be noted.

27 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 21 October 2013 at 4.00 p.m. Meeting to be held at Thorpe Primary School.