

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

TUESDAY, 22ND JULY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor K Groves in the Chair

Councillors A Castle, J Chapman,
D Cohen, R Harington, A Hussain,
M Ingham, S McKenna, B Selby,
P Wadsworth and J Jarosz

14 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business to consider.

15 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

16 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Davey, with Councillor Jarosz in attendance as a substitute.

17 Minutes - 1 July 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

18 Scrutiny Inquiry - Asset Management

The Board conducted the first session of its inquiry on asset management. In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' queries were:

- Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Member for Transport & Economy
- Christine Addison, Chief Asset Management and Regeneration Officer
- Ben Middleton, Head of Asset Management

Councillor Pauleen Grahame joined the Board for this item in her role as Chair of the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board.

In introducing the report, Christine Addison highlighted the following issues:

- The areas covered by the Asset Review Programme Board, including the rationalisation programme; review of investment and commercial property; strategic partnership with council directorates; participation in the One Public Estate pilot; and ensuring capacity to deliver the asset review programme.

- The challenges associated with meeting the £5m savings target by March 2017 and the fact that difficult decisions would be required if it is to be met
- The savings due to be achieved when the Merrion House refurbishment was complete in 2017 and the potential to achieve a higher saving over a four year period than the original three year target
- The work carried out by the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board, in particular in relation to empty properties
- The development of a new draft Asset Management Plan, which would be brought to the Scrutiny Board for comment in September, before being presented to the Executive Board for approval
- The recent restructure of the service to address the lack of strategic asset management capacity
- The role of the council at the leading edge of the One Public Estate pilot projects
- Links to the third sector's role in service delivery.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The potential to make greater community use of a building in East Leeds currently used by the Table Tennis Association, and to involve the association in community activity to a greater extent (officers undertook to investigate further and report back)
- The benefits to the city of co-location of public services
- The potential to work with the NHS to meet their accommodation needs for the future
- The intention for the council to move out of leasing in property wherever possible
- Marketing of surplus properties, including the use of planning statements
- The condition of properties whilst new development is awaited
- The market for city centre office accommodation
- The brownfield land programme and the challenge associated with making many of these sites attractive to the market
- Links to the affordable housing and council house building programmes
- Methods of disposal including auction, and the varying degrees of control over short-term condition and future use of the property
- The joint venture arrangements established recently for property services
- The ward member discussions ongoing to seek to identify further savings and review community provision within localities
- Opportunities to increase property income through investment
- The role of community asset transfer and the sustainability of proposals without ongoing council support
- The fact that often the public think that eyesore buildings are council owned when this is not the case.

The Board identified the following further information to be provided at the next session of the inquiry:

- Draft Asset Management Plan
- List of properties that have been declared surplus and where there are no specific proposals for the future
- List of buildings in communities that would be ideal for other opportunities but where assistance is required to make progress
- List of under-used leased buildings
- Policy around future leases
- List of top ten properties for disposal with planning statements
- List of brownfield sites and any innovative ideas around different use that would help market the land
- Policy suggestions on Community Asset Transfer and any current proposals
- Information on any further support required to deliver the Health Campus Opportunity.

RESOLVED – That the issues raised by this session of the inquiry be noted and that the further information requested be provided at the next session of the inquiry.

19 Tour de France Legacy

The Board considered the Tour de France Legacy proposals, including a report on the cycling legacy which was presented to the Executive Board in June 2014.

In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' queries were:

- Councillor Roger Harington, Cycling champion
- Mark Allman, Head of Sport and Active Lifestyles
- Andrew Hall, Head of Transport Planning
- Cate Walker, Project Officer
- Simon Brereton, Head of Economic Policy & Sector Development.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The challenge to maximise the legacy through quickly establishing the proposed Programme Board and identifying resources to support the legacy work, and Scrutiny Board Members' concern to see this happen before momentum is lost
- Concerns about the poor capacity of the rail network to support cycling, and the proposal to raise these concerns with Network Rail and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The potential for school engagement and encouraging more children to cycle or walk to school
- Uncertainty over the status of a potential Tour de Yorkshire race in the future
- The success of the Skyride events and the very successful Temple Newsam event for schools prior to the Grand Depart

- Current progress with the cycleway in the city centre
- Tensions between cyclists and other road users
- Plans for a summer 'respect' campaign
- Progress with proposals to allow cycling in parks
- The need to identify funding for infrastructure improvements
- The wider tourism and economic legacy and the proposals for measuring and reporting on this aspect
- Links to the potential European Capital of Culture bid
- Links to the wider Yorkshire Cycling strategy and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority support for cycling
- The city's reputation for successfully hosting major events
- Engaging businesses as part of their corporate social responsibility to help increase people's access to bikes in disadvantaged areas
- The Board's desire to see tangible outcomes and community engagement across all parts of the city, particularly in areas of deprivation.

RESOLVED – That a progress report on delivery of the legacy be brought to the Board in six months' time.

20 Work Schedule

The Board received a report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which set out the latest version of the Board's work schedule.

Members agreed to make the following changes to the proposed schedule:

- That the proposed session on the cultural offer in November should take place at the full Board meeting
- That a progress report on the Tour de France Legacy be scheduled for January 2014
- That the options for a sustainable future for the Grand Theatre company be added to the work programme
- That Members would inform the Principal Scrutiny Adviser by email which working groups they wished to take part in.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be agreed, subject to the above changes.

21 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 9 September 2014 at 1.30pm (a pre-meeting will start at 1.00pm for Board members.)

(The meeting finished at 3.40pm)