

SCRUTINY BOARD (HOUSING AND REGENERATION)

TUESDAY, 7TH JANUARY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor J Procter in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, D Collins, P Grahame,
M Iqbal, J Lewis, M Lyons, D Nagle,
C Towler and G Wilkinson

56 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept the following late information:

- Agenda item 11, Executive Board minutes of 18 December 2013 (Minute No. 64 refers)

The above document was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

57 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

58 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors J Cummins, S Lay and V Morgan.

Notification had been received that Councillor M Lyons was to substitute for Councillor J Cummins and Councillor J Lewis for Councillor V Morgan.

59 Minutes - 26 November 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013 be approved as a correct record.

60 Initial Budget Proposals for 2014/15

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the initial 2014/15 budget proposals relevant to the Scrutiny Board's portfolio.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

- Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environment and Housing
- Simon Criddle, Head of Finance, City Development
- Adam Brannen, Programme Manager (East and South Leeds), City Development.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concern about the speed at which savings had been achieved through restructuring the ALMOs and bringing services in-house. It was agreed to consider this at the Scrutiny Board's next meeting on 4 February 2014.
- The impact of frozen vacancies.
- Acknowledgement that agency staff and overtime should only be used as a last resort.
- Concern about loss of income arising from the closure of Quarry Hill Car Park. The Scrutiny Board requested confirmation of the sale figure for this site.
- A suggestion that referencing be included in future budget reports in relation to members of staff that had been redeployed to other departments.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the requests for further information be actioned.
- (c) That a report on progressing achieving the savings arising from the ALMO review, be presented to the Scrutiny Board at its next meeting on 4 February 2014.

(Councillor M Iqbal joined the meeting at 10.10am during the consideration of this item.)

61 East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road

The Director of City Development submitted a report which provided the Scrutiny Board with an update on the East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Adam Brannen, Programme Manager (East and South Leeds), City Development
- Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, City Development.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation that the total estimated cost for construction of the preferred route was £74.5m. Members were advised that due to the

timescales involved, the assumed inflation rate would increase the cost to around £91.5m.

- Concern about the lack of appetite from volume house builders to develop sites.
- Concern about some of the timescales identified in the report for construction of the East Leeds Orbital Road and the desire to speed up the process.
- The impact of delays on employment opportunities, housing growth and infrastructure.
- The role of the Council's framework contractor.
- Confirmation that no decisions had been taken in relation to the number of compulsory purchase orders required.
- Confirmation that the affordable housing rate was 15%. Reference was made to S106 contributions, schools and public space requirements.
- The need to ensure a suitable mix of quality housing types.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That a further report be brought back to the Scrutiny Board to consider any potential to speed up delivery of the Road, and also to consider S106 and housing mix and quality issues.

62 Recommendation Tracking - Housing Growth

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided an update of the latest progress that had been made in implementing the recommendations in relation to the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into Housing Growth.

Appended to the report was a copy of the recommendation tracking flowchart and recommendation tracking table.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, City Development.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 5 – Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.)
- Recommendation 7 – Achieved
- Recommendation 10 (1st bullet point) – Achieved
- Recommendation 10 (2nd bullet point) – Stop monitoring
- Recommendation 11 – Achieved.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board approves the status of recommendations as set out above.

(Councillor D Nagle left the meeting at 11.40am during the consideration of this item.)

63 Development of a scheme to provide kitchen appliances to tenants

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which outlined proposals to ascertain whether existing schemes met demand. The report also updated the Scrutiny Board on best practice of other local authorities in relation to furniture schemes and the benefits and risks of provision.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Lorraine Wright, Housing Services Manager (Relationship Management), Environment and Housing
- John Statham, Head of Housing Partnerships, Environment and Housing.

Members welcomed the report, although it was indicated that the Scrutiny Board's original focus was about supporting those tenants that could not afford to purchase a cooker and not general provision of kitchen appliances and associated service costs. Members discussed access to local charitable and community providers and signposting tenants to the right areas for support. It was suggested that a report be brought back to the Scrutiny Board based on the original proposal and providing information about developing the Council's links with local providers. It was proposed that a representative of one of the providers be invited to attend the meeting to assist with this.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board receives a report back on developing links with local providers to provide cookers, and that a representative of one of the providers be invited to attend the meeting to assist with this.

64 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's latest work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

Appended to the report was the current version of the Board's work programme.

Kate Arscott, Principal Scrutiny Adviser, presented the report.

The following areas of work were identified for inclusion in the Scrutiny Board's work schedule as follows:

- Review of ALMOs and progress to date
- East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road
- Report back on provision of cookers to tenants and links with local providers.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule, as amended, be approved.

65 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 4 February 2014 at 10.00am with a pre meeting at 9.30am (joint meeting with Sustainable Economy and Culture) followed at 11.00am by normal scheduled Scrutiny Board meeting.

(The meeting concluded at 12.15pm)