

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

TUESDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 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 B Urry

22 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business to consider. However the Chair agreed to accept the following item as supplementary information:

Draft terms of reference for Scrutiny Inquiry on Employment and Skills
(agenda item 8) (Minute 27 refers)

23 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

However, during consideration of the item entitled Scrutiny Inquiry – Asset Management, Councillor Urry drew the Board's attention to a family interest in a farmers' market held on council land (minute 26 refers).

24 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

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

25 Minutes - 22 July 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

26 Scrutiny Inquiry - Asset Management

The Board conducted the second 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
- Dale Lynch, Project Manager, Asset Management
- Councillor Caroline Gruen, Ward Member for Bramley
- Pat McGeever, Chief Executive, Health for All
- Steve Hume, Chief Officer Resources & Strategy, Adult Social Care
- Bryan Machin, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access, Citizens & Communities

The Board noted apologies from Councillor P Grahame, Chair of the Resources and Council Services Board, who was unable to join the Board for this session of the inquiry.

Councillor Caroline Gruen gave an account of the asset management work being undertaken in Bramley, and also related experience from the Community Asset Transfer of Bramley Baths.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The development of a clear vision by local councillors which would bring together a range of accessible co-located services based at the local shopping centre in Bramley; acknowledgement that a rationalisation of local assets would be required to support this; and ongoing discussions with officers and the centre to bring about achievable solutions.
- The experience of Community Asset Transfer at Bramley Baths, including pump priming costs; long-term capital requirement; achieving revenue stability through an imaginative and tailored offer to customers; the sharing of experience with others interested in this route; and the future potential of Community Asset Transfers in Leeds.
- The authority wide review of Community Centres, including issues with lettings policies, and the position of community owned or managed centres.
- A suggestion that a 5 year asset plan for each ward would be helpful, and that it should also take account of non-council owned community buildings
- Acknowledgement that local members must be willing to address the issue of 'sacred cows' in reviewing local assets
- A desire to make the council's assets work better without losing service delivery capacity
- The availability of some funding streams to non-council occupiers, for example the Mary Portas funding

Pat McGeever discussed the role of the third sector in relation to current and future asset management issues

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The services delivered by Health for All from 5 community premises, largely in south Leeds
- The good working relationship with asset management
- Various types of tenure for council property and the implications of different models for third sector organisations and sustainability
- The role of third sector commissioned services which can pay rent as anchor tenants for premises
- A preference in some quarters for transfer of the asset management responsibility for a building in return for a peppercorn rent, and the implications of this in relation to the requirement for the council to seek market value for its property
- The availability of some funding streams to the third sector which the council would not be able to access, including some European funding

- Community aspirations for places to go, people to meet and something to do
- The possibility of co-locating council staff in third sector buildings in appropriate circumstances
- Work being done with Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) to scope the future involvement of the third sector in partnership working and the locality asset mapping project
- The potential role of the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in relation to third sector sustainability and asset management issues

Steve Hume and Bryan Machin outlined details of the integration of health and social care teams at a neighbourhood level, focusing on the asset management implications of the service change programme.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Initial plans for the integration of health and adult social care services to be delivered from 13 neighbourhood bases
- Once the teams have been designed, a longer term rationalisation of assets will take place, seeking to maximise the use of those buildings that are retained and enabling staff to work more efficiently and effectively in the community
- A shift to more personalised care in people's homes leading to a more mobile workforce and less office space requirement
- The majority of savings would take the form of capital receipts, although there would also be some reduction in running costs, especially as less efficient buildings were released
- Explanation that the neighbourhoods were based on GP practice areas, in order to co-ordinate services from a range of practitioners to the same client group
- Financial support from the CCGs for the project
- A commitment to develop future protocols around charging between the council and health for occupation of space
- Some concern about the IT requirements and costs for sharing of information between professional groups

Lee Hemsworth outlined the community hub pilot work and some of the emerging asset management issues.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The community hub pilot project, looking to bring together the right mix of services for each community, across the council and its partners, to serve more people better
- Integrated services reflecting the increasingly complex nature of people's needs when they access services
- Early successes in rationalising the use of space and the potential for further savings, particularly in relation to children's centres and housing offices
- Co-location with partners including the police and Job Centre services

- The need to understand the best locations for local people to access services and the development of 'pop up' delivery to help meet some localised need
- The need to be aware of transport costs for customers if services are provided from fewer locations, and the role of pop ups in helping to address this concern
- Developing communication around pop up provision as the services develop
- The proposed extension of community hubs across the city
- The future role of Community Committees in shaping local provision
- The development of charging protocols between partners for space occupied

Ben Middleton presented a report from asset management which provided the additional information requested by the Board at the previous session of the inquiry.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- An acknowledgement of more work to be done in relation to the clarification of circumstances where market value or peppercorn rentals may be appropriate, and the potential role of Community Asset Transfers.
- Highlighting that the list of surplus and void buildings was reducing
- A commitment to the careful and planned disposal of property in order to avoid creating eyesore vacant sites
- Concerns raised at North East Plans Panel regarding developers profiteering from council asset sales and how best to minimise this
- The need for more schools; national rules around the allocation of council assets for free schools; and the disposal of former school sites
- The return of some properties to social housing
- The Scrutiny Board's wish to review progress with the proposed work set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report, on under used leased buildings and buildings that would be ideal for other opportunities, given the potential to contribute to the target savings

Members were invited to comment on the draft Asset Management Plan, prior to submission to the Executive Board for approval.

In addition to the issues raised in earlier discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Support for the Plan generally as a sound overview
- Strong support for the corporate landlord proposals
- Commitment from the Scrutiny Board to review progress in delivering the Plan

It was agreed that a summary of the Board's comments on the draft Asset Management Plan would be produced by the Principal Scrutiny Adviser for presentation to the Executive Board alongside the draft Plan.

The Board concluded the session by considering how it wished to proceed with the inquiry.

RESOLVED – That the Board would monitor the progress of the asset management rationalisation programme on a regular basis, initially in six months' time.

(Councillor Wadsworth joined the meeting at 1.40pm and the following members left the meeting during discussion of this item: Councillor Hussain at 2.45; Cllr McKenna at 2.50; Councillor Selby at 3.25; and Councillor Wadsworth at 3.30.)

27 Draft Terms of Reference - Scrutiny Inquiry on Employment

RESOLVED – That the terms of reference for the Board's inquiry on employment and skills be approved.

28 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 noted that a second working group meeting on the Grand Theatre would be required in December.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the work schedule be agreed, subject to the addition of a meeting of the Grand Theatre working group in December;
- b) That a representative of the Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board and a representative of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board be invited to participate in the Board's forthcoming work in relation to sport and active lifestyles; and
- c) That a representative from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board be invited to participate in the Board's planned scrutiny of district heating.

29 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21 October at 1.30pm (a pre-meeting will start at 1.00pm for Board members.)

(The meeting finished at 3.40pm)