

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, J Dunn, P Ewens,
M Lobley, J Monaghan, B Selby and
N Taggart

82 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in Item 9 – Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes – Session 2 – (Minute No. 87) as a Member of the Aire Valley Neighbourhood Renewal Board.

(Councillor Taggart also declared a personal interest later in the meeting under Minute No. 89.)

83 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Harper and Shelbrooke.

84 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

85 Overview and Scrutiny Minutes

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held 8th January 2008 be received and noted.

86 Executive Board Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 23rd January 2008 be received and noted.

87 Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes - Session 2

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching evidence from the City Development Department on the consultation undertaken with regard to case study 2, Aire Valley Area Action Plan, as Session 2 of the Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes.

Steve Speak, Chief Strategy and Policy Officer, Richard Askham, Senior Planner and Richard Shaw, Planner, all from the City Development department, were in attendance to present the report and respond to queries

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and comments from the Board. The Chair also welcomed to the meeting Mr Peter Beaumont, Managing Director of Keyland Developments Ltd who had been involved in the consultation process.

Members questioned the officers and Mr Beaumont on various aspects of the consultation process and the content and objectives of the plan itself. The issues raised were in brief summary:

- The **complexity of consultation** undertaken in the development of the Aire Valley Area Action Plan
- That messages that came out of the consultation very early in the process only now seemed to be being addressed at a fairly late stage. A preferred option had been produced which had not addressed many of the issues raised by consultees and which was now being subjected to a more rigorous examination of costs, value, viability and feasibility prior to the submission to the Secretary of State of a plan which would have to be capable of delivery and be demonstrably sound.
- Many issues including the **odour impact** at Knostrop Waste Water Treatment Works were raised very early in the consultation under "Issues and Options", but in the view of Keyland Developments Ltd had never been satisfactorily addressed in subsequent iterations of the plan, despite having been restated at each stage.
- Whether the consultation had taken account of the previous heavy industry in the area and whether the future use of the site would be suitable for a **science park**.
- The **soundness of the consultation process**, given the low response rates – Members were advised that the Aire Valley was unique and had a range of complex issues that needed to be addressed. It had few residential properties and consultation was based on **national guidelines** that had been independently inspected. A great deal of consultation had been undertaken to engage as many individuals, businesses and organisations as possible from the evidence presented.
- Low response rates to consultation and the possibility of setting a **floor level for consultation response rates** - Officers were not supportive of such a proposal as they followed national guidance and people could not be made to respond to questionnaires or attend public meetings. In addition who would set the number of responses required.
- Recognition that the more detailed the proposals when consultation occurred, the better the response rate.
- The importance of the **quality of responses** rather than the quantity.
- The provision of **jobs for local people** and improving the skills level - consultation with the Learning and Skills Council and in particular the need to consult with the proposed new Leeds College.
- **Access** to the area, including using the canal system and the provision of an additional road bridge.

Members were advised that a representative from Caddick Developments Ltd had offered to attend the March meeting of the Board at 1.00pm to give evidence.

The Chair thanked Mr Beaumont and the officers for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report of the Director of City Development on the consultation undertaken with regard to the Aire Valley Area Action plan be noted.
- (b) That the time of the Board meeting on 18th March 2008 be changed to accommodate the attendance of a representative from Caddick Developments Ltd.
- (c) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser take account of Members' comments as above and include them in the Board's final report and recommendations.

(Note: Councillor Taggart arrived at 10.35am during the consideration of this item and Councillor Ewens left the meeting at 10.55am at the conclusion of this item.)

88 Shared Spaces - Outcome of Consultation on the Street Design Guide

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching a report from the City Development Department on the outcome of the consultation on shared spaces in the new Street Design Guide, in order to determine whether further scrutiny was required. This was following a request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers to the Board at its October meeting concerning the Department's proposals to expand the use of shared space between vehicles and pedestrians.

Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer and Mike Darwin, Head of Highways Development Services, both from City Development, were in attendance to present the report and respond to queries and comments from the Board.

The Chair invited from the public gallery Mr Keith Spellman, Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers, Mr Barry Naylor of the National Federation of the Blind and Mrs Mary Naylor to speak, who reiterated the reasons for their request for scrutiny.

Officers reported that they had met with the organisations at today's meeting and other groups representing the blind, partially sighted and other disabled people who had expressed concern at the department's proposals. It was reiterated that shared space could be in the form of shared surface, shared area or home zones.

General support for the concerns outlined by the above organisations was expressed by the Board. In brief summary the following issues were discussed:

- That this was a **national issue** – Members were advised that Officers would consult with **Core Cities** and other relevant parties and continue discussions with representatives of these groups.
- The pressure to create **shared space areas**.
- **High density housing developments** with little parking provision.

- **The problem of car parking**, particularly on **pavements** and **lack of enforcement**.
- Tackling the problem of **parking on grass verges**.
- **Enforcement of 20mph zones** and safety issues for pedestrians on **shared spaces**.
- **20mph zones** – Officers were requested to provide a report for the Board's next meeting on Portsmouth's experiences introducing 20mph zones.
- The accuracy of **accident statistics** concerning shared spaces.
- The **Kirkstall Forge development** and the proposed shared spaces – Members were advised that dedicated pedestrian facilities would be provided in the shared areas for this scheme.

Officers considered that further work needed to be undertaken in the context of best practice and emerging studies on this issue, before they could determine any final advice on shared spaces to be included within the draft street design guide. However, in the meantime, the Council would follow the home zone guidance as attached to the main report.

With regard to the request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers into the expansion of the use of shared spaces, Members agreed that a watching brief would be held on this subject. However it was appreciated that as it was unlikely that this work would be completed before the new Municipal year, that the recommendation to support the request for scrutiny would have to be passed on to the successor Board.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report of the Director of City Development on the outcome of the consultation on shared spaces in the draft Street Design Guide be noted.
- (b) That the recommendation to support the request for scrutiny into the expansion of shared spaces be passed onto the successor Scrutiny Board for consideration in the new Municipal year.
- (c) That a report be submitted to the Board's March meeting on 20mph zones and how they had been introduced in Portsmouth.

(Note1: Councillor Dunn left the meeting at 11.25am during the consideration of this item.)

(Note 2: At the end of this item, the meeting was adjourned for ten minutes and reconvened at 11.45am.)

89 The Local Economic Impact of Students at Leeds' Two Universities

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching a report from the Director of City Development on the Local Economic Impact of Students at Leeds' Two Universities.

Chris Tebbutt, Economic Policy Manager, City Development presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments. He was accompanied by Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer. The Chair also welcomed to the meeting Ms Sara Gill, Community Officer from Leeds University Union.

In brief summary the main issues discussed were:

- The review of **tuition fees** - the possible impact on student numbers and subsequent risks to the economy of the city.
- The **figures** as outlined in para 3.0 of the report – Members were advised that the figures quantified only the economic **benefits** and did not take account of the **costs** to the city as a result of attracting students, for example the costs of extra policing, highways issues, closures of schools etc. Members requested further information on these costs.
- The loss of **Council Tax** to the city of approximately £8.5m per year.
- The location of **graduate employment**.
- Paying off **student debt** and possible advice from the Debt Management Steering Group.
- The need to develop **environmental industries** in Leeds.
- The **economic impact of overseas students** to the Leeds economy – Members requested further information on this.
- Student liaison with **Metro** and **First Bus**, the **supermarkets** and the **Credit Union**.

The Chair thanked the Officers and Ms Gill for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report of the Director of City Development be noted.
- (b) That further information be provided to a future meeting of the Board on:
 - (i) the impact to the Leeds economy of overseas students and
 - (ii) the indirect economic impact of students on the city.

(Note1: Councillor Taggart declared a personal interest in this item as a Life Member and an Honorary Life Member of Leeds University Union.)

(Note 2: Councillor Selby left the meeting at 12.25pm at the conclusion of this item.)

90 Performance Report Quarter 3 2007/08

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report which outlined the key performance issues considered to be of corporate significance for the City Development Directorate and the key areas of under performance as at the end of Quarter 3 (1st October to 31st December 2007).

Paul Maney, Head of Performance Management, City Development and Ben Grabham, Performance and Quality Manager, City Services, attended the meeting to present the report and respond to questions from the Board. They were accompanied by Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer.

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The Board were advised that the indicators that were performing less well, but which were improving, were:

- **BV215a** - the average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault which was under the control of the local authority.
- **BV215b** – the average number of days taken to repair a street lighting fault which was under the control of a Distribution Network Operator (DNO).
- **BV204** - the number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications, as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications. With reference to the first sentence of para 4.2 of the report, it was noted that this should read, 'In the last quarter, 33% of appeal decisions were not in the Council's favour . . .'
- **BV109** – the percentage of planning applications determined in line with the development control targets.

Members were advised that, with regard to **BV215b**, the DNO (in this case **Yorkshire Electricity Distribution plc**), would not face penalties for missing this target.

Following concerns raised by Members and with a view to a possible scrutiny inquiry, the Board made a request for a report from the Chief Planning Officer regarding the **management and capacity of the enforcement section** of the planning department, and in particular their ability to take effective enforcement action when breaches of planning conditions were reported.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and Quarter 3 performance information be noted.
- (b) That a report be submitted to the March meeting of the Board on the management and capacity of the enforcement section of the planning department, and in particular their ability to take effective enforcement action when breaches of planning conditions were reported.

(Note: Councillor Taggart left the meeting at 12.30pm during the consideration of this item. Councillor Lobley left the meeting at 12.35pm at the conclusion of this item, thereby rendering the remainder of the meeting inquorate.)

91 Budgetary Issues and Considerations

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching the report to the Executive Board 'Developing the Financial Plan 2008-2013', which was considered on 19 December 2007.

Ed Mylan, Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy and Simon Criddle, Head of Finance, both City Development, attended the meeting to outline the implications of the report in more detail as it related to the remit of the Board and address any specific questions. They were accompanied by Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted.

92 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the Board's current Work Programme together with a relevant extract of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st February to 31st May 2008.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser made reference to several additions to the work programme that arose during the meeting:

- A report from the Chief Planning Officer to the March meeting of the Board regarding the **management and capacity of the enforcement section** of the planning department, and in particular their ability to take effective enforcement action when breaches of planning conditions were reported.
- A report to the March meeting of the Board on **20mph zones** and how they had been introduced in Portsmouth.
- Further information to the Board on the impact to the Leeds economy of **overseas students** and the **indirect economic impact** of students on the city.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above additions, the current Board's Work Programme be received and noted.

93 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday 18th March at a time to be determined by the Board.

The meeting concluded at 12.35pm.