

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 21ST APRIL, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, R Harington,
A Hussain, J Jarosz, G Wilkinson,
J Matthews and A Ogilvie

105 Declaration of Interests

No Member declarations of interests were made.

106 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barker, Gettings, R Procter and Lobley.

107 Minutes of Last Meeting

Members had been circulated with a revised **Minute No. 101** incorporating suggested amendments to four particular paragraphs to read now as below:

‘The Executive Board Member referred to some of these pressures including the state of the national economy, falling income as a consequence of fewer planning applications being submitted and falling visitor numbers at our sports centres. He referred specifically to LSP-TP1E – a Leeds Strategic Plan Partnership Agreed indicator which relates to new customers on low incomes accessing credit union services.’

‘Attention was also drawn to LSP-EE1A – a Leeds Strategic Plan Partnership Agreed indicator (support the establishment of 550 new businesses). The Director informed the meeting that there was a lack of clarity in these figures and referred Members to LEGI1 which gave a more accurate assessment of the number of new businesses that had been created.

Some Members expressed the view that perhaps some of the targets were not stretching the department enough. In response, the Director informed the meeting that targets were reviewed regularly and some were agreed with government and some with partners.

Members asked about Climate Change and specifically the carbon reduction targets and the Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement explained the complex nature of NI 185, a Leeds Strategic Plan Government Agreed indicator, and outlined the progress being made.’

RESOLVED - That subject to the above amendments to Minute No. 101, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

108 Update on the Management and Capacity of the Planning Compliance Service

The Chief Planning Officer submitted a report providing Members with a further update on the actions being taken to implement changes to improve the process management and increase the capacity of the planning enforcement service. This follows a report to the Scrutiny Board (City Development) on 22nd April 2008 and an update report on 18th November 2008.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Martin Sellens, Head of Planning Services and Jim Wigginton, Planning Compliance Manager, both City Development, to present the report and respond to queries and comments from the Board.

Information on **prosecution outcomes for Quarter 4** were reported to the Board. A **cutting from a national planning magazine**, which highlighted a successful outcome on an enforcement notice aimed at blocking the conversion of two houses in Leeds into flats for temporary accommodation for homeless people, was also circulated.

Officers expanded on the reasons why particular cases were chosen for inclusion in the **two monthly key enforcement case list reports** to Members and advised that it was intended to include **complaints referred from Parish Councillors** in the next report.

In brief summary, Members asked questions on:

- **Staffing levels**, the high **levels of expertise** required and the **recruitment process**.
- The reason for the **increase in the number of complaints received in Quarter 3**.
- What controls were available to stop **breaches of planning condition**, in particular unauthorised demolition of property.
- The possibility of giving more **publicity** to successful prosecutions, in particular in the LCC newspaper 'About Leeds'.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the update report be noted.
- (b) That an further update report be brought to a future meeting of the successor Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year.

109 Inquiry on Residents Parking Schemes

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report advising Members of the decision of the Executive Board to this Board's recommendations, following its inquiry into residents parking schemes.

Attached was the joint report of the Chief Environmental Services Officer and the Director of City Development to the Executive Board on 1st April 2009, which presented the proposed responses to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (City Development).

The Board noted that the Executive Board resolved “That the response of the Director of City Development and the Chief Environmental Services Officer to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (City Development) be noted and that, for the reasons now stated, no action be taken by officers to implement these recommendations.”

The Chair advised that he had attended the 1st April 2009 Executive Board to support the Scrutiny Board (City Development)’s recommendations, but unfortunately the Executive Board decided not to approve the recommendations.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the joint report of the Chief Environmental Services Officer and the Director of City Development be noted.
- (b) That the decision of the Executive Board be noted.

110 Annual Report 2008/2009

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting the draft of the Scrutiny Board (City Development)’s contribution to the Scrutiny Boards’ Annual Report.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser informed Members that the Scrutiny Boards’ Annual Report would be submitted to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Scrutiny Board (City Development)’s contribution to the composite Annual Report be approved.
- (b) That it be noted, that in order to ensure that each of the Scrutiny Boards’ Annual Reports followed the same order and layout, that it might be necessary to make changes when the final document was published, although the content of the report would not change.

111 Work Programme, Executive Board Minutes and Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing Members with a copy of the Board’s current Work Programme. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st April to 31st July 2009 and the Executive Board Minutes of 4th March and 1st April 2009 were also attached to the report.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser advised Members that as this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the work programme only contained items for today’s meeting. However, also listed were those issues identified by

Members as areas for Scrutiny, but which due to time constraints had not been addressed. Members agreed that these should be referred to the successor Board in the new municipal year and that more visits and follow up visits to the City Varieties and Grand Theatre in particular should take place.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Executive Board Minutes of 4th March and 1st April 2009 and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st April to 31st July 2009 be noted.
- (b) That the outstanding issues listed on the work programme be referred to the successor Scrutiny Board in the next municipal year.

The Chair thanked Members and officers for their attendance throughout the year and the meeting concluded at 10.50am.