

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, R Downes,
R Harington, M Lobley, T Murray, A Ogilvie,
D Schofield and S Smith

78 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the January meeting of the Scrutiny Board (City Development).

79 Late Items

The Chair agreed to accept a copy of the appendix relating to the terms of reference of the inquiry to review the method by which planning applications are publicised and community involvement takes place as supplementary information (Agenda Item 7) (Minute 83 refers). The document was not available at the time of the agenda despatch.

80 Declaration of Interests

The following personal interest was declared:-

Councillor R Downes in his capacity as Chair of the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority (Agenda Items 7 and 8) (Minutes 83 and 84 refer)

81 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S Armitage, T Grayshon and G Wilkinson.

82 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th December 2009 be approved as a correct record.

83 Session 1 Inquiry to review the method by which planning applications are publicised and community involvement takes place

Referring to Minute 53 of the meeting held on 13th October 2009, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report in relation to Session 1 of the Board's inquiry to review the method by which planning applications were publicised and community involvement takes place.

The purpose of the report was to cover background information in relation to the following specific issues:-

- the statutory requirements for consultation and notification within the planning system, including appeals

- types of comments that can be considered
- Statement of Community Involvement.
- current methods used for publicising applications in Leeds
- proposed changes to consultation and notification methods highlighted in the Killian Pretty review, a Government review conducted in 2008 which looked at the planning system identifying ways it could be improved further by reducing bureaucracy and making the system more responsive and customer focused

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- a) Terms of reference – Inquiry to review the method by which planning applications are publicised and community involvement takes place
- b) Report of the Chief Planning Officer – Inquiry to review the method by which planning applications are publicised and community involvement takes place
- c) Leaflet on a Protocol for pre-application discussions with local communities and Ward members
- d) Leaflet on Planning pre-application advise charter

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Councillor C Campbell, Chair of Plans Panel (West)
 Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, City Development
 Martin Sellens, Head of Planning Services, City Development
 Helen Cerroti, Development Project Manager, City Development

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification as to whether Plans Panels had canvassed developers/members of the public to ascertain whether or not they were receiving a good or bad service
(The Development Project Manager responded and informed the meeting that survey's had been undertaken in 2007 and 2008 with a positive feedback received on both occasions)
- Planning applications on line and the fact that 30% of constituents do not have access to a computer
- clarification of the role, responsibilities, reporting arrangements and location of Community Planners who work in two Area Committee's, and whether or not they have been successful since their implementation
(The Head of Planning Services responded and outlined the current arrangements. The Chair of Plans Panel (West) informed the meeting that

within the North West (Inner) area, the introduction of a Community Planner had made a significant difference and improvement in relation to monitoring planning policy)

- the Public Access System which allowed planning applications to be searched online and details of the new service where details of applications in a pre-specified area are proactively emailed each week to people who register for the alerting system. Members indicated that they would like this facility on a ward by ward basis, to assist them with their caseloads.

(The Development Project Manager responded and outlined the current protocol behind the Public Access system. The Board noted and welcomed that officers would investigate the possibility of introducing this service on a ward by ward basis)

- details of the project which was underway to encourage community and interest groups to sign up for the Planning Alert System.
- the decision by Communities and Local Government (CLG) that the statutory requirement to publish certain planning applications in newspapers will remain
- consultation arrangements and the possibility of advertising in local free weekly papers

(The Chief Planning Officer and the Head of Planning Services responded and outlined the current consultation arrangements, which included Metro on major schemes. The Board noted that Planning Services were currently reviewing the current protocol for newspaper advertising)

- a view expressed that those people who purchased the Yorkshire Post/Yorkshire Evening Post were more likely to have a 'quality interest' in the planning process, unlike readers of the Council Newspaper
- clarification of the principles behind lamp post advertising

(The Chief Planning Officer and the Head of Planning Services responded and outlined the current protocol in relation to lamp post advertising and site notices. The Board specifically noted that a tag system for site notices had now been implemented which was a vast improvement on the previous system)

- clarification of the protocol in relation to how the location of sites were described on site notices, particularly where roads cross boundaries of areas

(The Head of Planning Services responded and outlined the current protocol. The Board specifically noted that the department checked both the applicants description and site notices and try to be specific in an attempt to avoid any errors)

- clarification if Planning Services inspected maps when determining which residents to notify on particular applications

(The Head of Planning Services responded and confirmed that map based analysis was used when determining who to notify)

- the language used in some of the appeal notification letters and the need to make these easy to understand
- the length of Plans Panel meetings and whether they were working better

(The Chair of Plans Panel (West) and the Chief Planning Officer responded and outlined the progress that had been made. It was noted

that shorter meetings were now the norm and that considerable changes had been introduced, overseen by a Joint Member Officer Working Group. Plans Panel meetings were very important as the showcase for the Planning Service in the city)

- the importance of training of Members who sit on Panels, but also for Ward Members on planning related subjects
- the need for witnesses/organisations to be identified for Session 2 of the Board's Inquiry

(The Development Project Manager responded and stated that, subject to further discussions with the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser, the following witnesses/organisations had been identified to give evidence:-

Charles Johnson – Kirkstall Forge Developer

Councillor G Hall – Parish Town Councillor

Councillor J Thornton – Parish Town Councillor

Two residents - from the Community Engagement perspective

A Planning Aid representative)

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That the Board's Principal Scrutiny Advisor be requested to include the above specific issues and recommendations within it's final report.
- c) That, subject to further discussions between the Chief Planning Officer and the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser, the following witnesses and organisations be identified to assist the Board with their deliberations in relation to Session 2 of the inquiry due to be considered at the next meeting on 9th February 2010:-
 - Charles Johnson – Kirkstall Forge Developer
 - Councillor G Hall – Parish Town Councillor
 - Councillor J Thornton – Parish Town Councillor
 - Two residents - from the Community Engagement perspective
 - A Planning Aid representative

(Councillor C Beverley left meeting at 10.25am during discussions of this item)

84 City Centre Transport Review Update

Referring to Minute 64 of the meeting held on 10th November 2009, the Director of City Development submitted a report on progress in relation to a review of City Centre Transport.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of work in progress to review and prepare a future transport strategy for Leeds city centre, including the examination of future options for the road network and use of road space.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- a) Leeds City Centre Strategic Road Network identifying the key traffic routes

- b) Leeds City Centre Strategic Road Network identifying future stress points

The following officers were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Jean Dent, Director of City Development
Dave Gilson, Head of Transport Policy, City Development
Andrew Hall, Transport Strategy Manager, City Development

Prior to discussing the report, the Chair welcomed Jean Dent, Director of City Development to the Board meeting.

The Director of City Development reported that after forty years service with the Council, she would be retiring from the post in July 2010 and had given official notification to terminate her contract.

The Chair, on behalf of Board Members, conveyed his congratulations and wished her well on her forthcoming retirement.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- Pedestrianisation of the Business district
(The Head of Transport Policy responded and commented on the current difficulties in relation to progressing this issues not least private parking rights)
- the fact that 25% of the traffic in the city centre was through traffic with no destination in the centre
- the dangers of making the city centre loop too large
- the need to try and avoid redirecting traffic through Holbeck Urban Village with any proposals that were put forward by Highways
- the need for any city centre scheme to address car parking provision at Leeds City station for business and public use
- implications in changing the current Public Transport Box
- clarification of the progress made in relation to Greenspace around the Sovereign Street area and on the current situation concerning cyclists accessing the cycling point at the station
(The Director of City Development responded and confirmed that work was ongoing for a City Centre park in Sovereign Street. The Transport Strategy Manager commented on the cycle point proposed for the city station and the need for direct access to it. The Board noted that officers were currently reviewing this matter)
- clarification of the composition of the cross party Transport Strategy Group
- the need for the Inner Ring Road Stage 7 to be included on the Tele-Atlas digital mapping and navigation satellite system
(The Head of Transport Policy responded and acknowledged this issue. He agreed to report back on progress)

- the need for further signage on Globe Road/Bridgewater Place directing traffic to the Royal Armouries

In concluding, the Transport Strategy Manager circulated a copy of a document entitled 'Number of vehicles – Central cordon 24 hour' showing inbound/outbound figures for the period January 07 to October 09 for the information/comment of the meeting.

Whilst the document showed a general reduction in the number of vehicles, a query arose on the figures and the Transport Strategy Manager agreed to seek an explanation or submit a revised copy to Members via the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser seek clarification from the Transport Strategy Officer regarding the data provided and advise Members accordingly.

85 City Development Directorate: 2009/10 Budget - Update Report

The Director of City Development submitted a report on the Budget Position Statement for 2009/10.

The following officers were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Jean Dent, Director of City Development
 Graham Fisher, Principal Finance Manager, Resources
 Mohammed Afzal, Principal Finance Manager, Resources

In addition to the above report, the Director of City Development provided the meeting with a brief resume of the current budget pressures and aspirations facing the department with specific reference to the front line service areas.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification of the current sickness levels within the City Development department
(The Director of City Development responded and informed the meeting that the average sickness figure was 9½ days.)
- clarification if the department operated a staff suggestion scheme and whether or not they encouraged staff to make suggestions on either saving money or raising money e.g. rental monies received from advertising hoardings and the need for the Board to be supplied with more information around staff suggestion schemes
(The Director of City Development responded and confirmed that the department did operate a very successful staff suggestion scheme and that they did encourage staff to bring forward ideas in relation to finding savings. Such cases were recognised at the Staff Award Schemes and incorporated within Finance Action Plans and

- disseminated to budget holders and Heads of Services on a monthly basis)*

 - that revenue might be improved if the department staggered the days on which our five paid to enter Museums are open as they all are currently closed on a Monday
(The Director of City Development responded and outlined the historical reasons behind the Monday closure. However she agreed to raise this as an issue with her Departmental Management team)
 - clarification of whether any service areas within City Development have seen an increase in their budget projections
(The Director of City Development responded and confirmed that income in the majority of service areas within City Development was either static or down on budget forecasts. The Board specifically noted that 107 staff had now left the department since 2008/09 resulting in a net reduction as the posts been not been filled on the structure but that staff turnover was low resulting in services not meeting their vacancy factor)

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

86 Leeds 2012 Olympic Project

The Director of City Development submitted a report on the Leeds 2012 Olympic Project.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- a) Leeds 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Project – Draft Projects Management Structure
- b) Terms of Reference, Leeds 2012 Olympics Project Board

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Councillor J Procter, Executive Board Member for Leisure
 Jean Dent, Director of City Development
 Richard Mond, Chief Recreation Officer, City Development
 Peter Smith, Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, City Development

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification of progress in relation to implementing the Sporting Legacy action plan as developed by the Leeds 2012 Olympic Legacy Framework
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded and informed the meeting that the action plan was now available on the website, www.leedsgold.co.uk.)

- clarification of the mechanisms in place to encourage teams to come to Leeds as the base for their preparations for London 2012
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded and circulated a copy of a brochure entitled 'Gateway to Gold – Leeds Olympic and Paralympic training facilities' produced by the Yorkshire Committee for the 2012 Games for the information/comment of the meeting. The Board noted and welcomed that to date formal agreements were now signed off with Serbia (all sports) and the Netherlands for swimming)
- the need for the Leeds 2012 Olympics to promote and encourage teams to train in Leeds using any advantages the city had such as direct access routes between Leeds and London and direct flights to Schiphol etc
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded and confirmed that the Leeds 2012 Olympics Project Board were currently promoting the city to a number of countries and highlighting the advantages of a base for London 2012 in Leeds. They were also promoting Leeds to Commonwealth countries as a possible base for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and for other major events in the UK and Europe)
- clarification of the type of detail that what would be contained in other glossy brochures offering training facilities for the London 2012 Olympic Games in other core cities i.e. Sheffield and Manchester
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded that the main differences would be their use of facilities that were used to host major international sports events with large spectator numbers)
- clarification of the 'The Inspire Programme Initiative' and Leeds projects within the Cultural Olympiad
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded and stated that the Inspire Programme recognised specific projects set up to help engage people with the London Games. Projects can be awarded the Inspired By mark that uses the London 2012 brand. The Project Manager also outlined the success of 'Leeds Canvas', a project where visual and performing arts groups will work together and 'Don't Just Sit There' which aims to tackle issues arising from sedentary lifestyles. Both have received regional funding from the Legacy Trust)
- the need for the Board to be supplied with a copy of the Performance Indicators agreed by the Leeds 2012 Olympics Project Board used to measure progress and the overall success of the project and to also receive a update on progress in approximately three to six months time
(The Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games responded and agreed to forward a copy of the Performance Indicators to the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser for dissemination to Board Members and to also prepare a progress report to the Board in three to six months time)
- clarification of the approximate number of countries that Leeds was hoping to attract in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games

(The Executive Member for Leisure responded and confirmed that this was a complex issue with much more work to be undertaken in the coming months ahead. The Project Officer for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games referred to the huge interest expressed in relation to the facilities available in the Leeds Aquatics Centre at the John Charles Centre for Sport. It was hoped that 500 athletes would be staying in Leeds for 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games)

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That, in conjunction with the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser, the Project Manager for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be requested to forward a copy of the Performance Indicators agreed by the Leeds 2012 Project Board used to measure progress and the overall success of the project for dissemination to Board Members for their information/retention.
- c) That a further progress report on the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be submitted to this Board in three to six months time.

(Councillor M Lobley left the meeting at 11.55am during discussions of the above item)

(Councillor T Murray left the meeting at 12 noon during discussions of the above meeting)

87 Work Programme

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 January 2010 to 30th April 2010 and the Executive Board Minutes of 9th December 2009 were also attached to the report.

In addition to the above documents, Councillor D Schofield expressed his concern at the high cost of basic road repairs and of the suggestion that there were very few contractors doing this work. In concluding, he stated that the work was very rarely inspected by the Council when the job has been completed..

The Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser responded and agreed to contact the Acting Head of Highway Services with a view to providing a short report on this issue.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That the Executive Board minutes of 9th December 2009 and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st January 2010 to 30th April 2010 be noted.
- c) That the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to update the work programme to incorporate those updates requested at today's meeting.

88 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 9th February 2010 at 10.00am (Pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30am).

(The meeting concluded at 12.10pm)