

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

THURSDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, M Lyons,
P Wadsworth, M Ingham, J McKenna,
B Urry, J Marjoram and J Illingworth

86 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

87 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

88 Late Items

There were no late items submitted to the agenda.

89 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations made at this point or at any other point during the meeting.

90 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harington and Councillor Chapman.

Councillor Illingworth was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Harington.

91 Minutes - 20th December 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2012 were approved as a correct record.

92 Scrutiny Inquiry - Marketing and Promotion of the City

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which introduced the first formal session of the inquiry.

The report submitted by the Director of City Development outlined Leeds and Partners' approach and activity to attract and retain the next tranche of inward investment for the City and how Leeds City Council is working with Leeds and Partners to promote inward investment to Leeds.

In attendance to answer Member questions were:

Lurene Joseph – Chief Executive of Leeds and Partners; and
Tom Bridges – Chief Economic Development Officer.

Initially Tom Bridges briefly summarised the position of Leeds in terms of investment and job creation in the city, linking this to the work of Leeds and Partners in increasing these variables.

Subsequently Lurene Joseph informed the Board of her strategy to capitalise on Leeds' strengths and highlighted the key sectors Leeds and Partners would be focusing on, namely:

- Healthcare – Medtech;
- Digital;
- Professional Services; and
- Financial Services.

Members questioned witnesses present about the partners involved with Leeds and Partners and asked about the links that exist with other local authorities within the Leeds City Region. Members were informed about the relationships that are in place with other authorities and also about the other private and public sector organisations that Leeds and Partners work with.

Members stressed the importance that Leeds residents were given every opportunity to apply for and get jobs created in Leeds and that better relationships need to be developed between the schools and colleges and private sector employers.

It was broadly noted by Members that as much work as possible needs to be completed to ensure that Leeds capitalises on the Grand Depart of the Tour De France in 2014.

Members commented that Leeds was 10th out of 12 UK regions for inward investment in 2011. Members debated with witnesses present where it was likely that Leeds would be positioned in terms of inward investment in 5 years' time.

Comment was also made that the focus of Leeds and Partners appeared to be on large companies investing in Leeds but that consideration should be given to promoting smaller businesses at a local level. Members noted the role of City Development in this regard, and particular emphasis was given to the work with manufacturing businesses.

Members asked questions about the makeup of the Leeds and Partners Board and the choice of countries that had been focused on by Leeds and Partners to help contribute to inward investment.

Members sought clarification of the delivery horizon presented to them by the Chief Executive of Leeds and Partners and what quick wins could be achieved within Phase 1 (1-2 years).

Other sectors were also suggested to be made focal points by the Board including construction and manufacturing which are both strong sectors in Leeds. Also questions were asked about the future importance of green technology. At this point the Chief Executive of Leeds and Partners re-iterated the resource issues that she is faced with and that the areas focused on had been carefully selected due to Leeds' unique strengths in these sectors.

Members wished to know what the benefit was for each pound spent by Leeds and Partners.

The Chief Executive of Leeds and Partners offered to return to the Board to present the detailed planning that her organisation has put in place as a framework to promote Leeds. The Chair accepted this offer and suggested that a working group be set up to undertake some more detailed analysis in relation to the benefits of Leeds and Partners and the business planning they have put in place.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Chief Executive of Leeds and Partners attend a working group of the Board to assist analysis of the Leeds and Partners Business Plan.

(Councillor Wadsworth left the meeting at 11:30am during discussion of this item)

93 Request For Scrutiny - West Park Centre

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented a request for scrutiny from the North West (Inner) Area Committee. The accompanying report, presented to the Area Committee in December 2012, provided information about the temporary closure of the West Park Centre on Health and Safety grounds. It provided an update on progress since the Area Committee meeting on 14th November 2012 and outlined the action being taken by Children's Services and Corporate Property Management to mitigate the impact on users.

The Chair invited Councillors Atha and J Bentley, as members of the Area Committee, to address the Board and outline the reasons for requesting scrutiny into the closure of the West Park Centre.

Councillor Atha highlighted that the Centre had been an old school which contained a hall big enough for large groups to rehearse. It was highlighted that the Centre had previously enjoyed a large footfall and was well used by the local community and city-wide groups. It was noted that cross party

support had been obtained against the closure of the centre and that money should be invested to bring the building up to the required standards in terms of its electrical wiring.

Members debated what specifically should be scrutinised and when would be best to undertake scrutiny on this issue. It was noted that a report on the future of the West Park Centre is to be taken to the Executive Board on 15th February 2013, but it would not be feasible to conduct the inquiry prior to the decision being taken by the Executive Board on the 15th Feb. It was agreed that the Board should examine the temporary closure of the Centre in the autumn of 2012 and the deterioration of the Centre's condition leading up to that time. It was further agreed that this piece of work should be undertaken by the full Scrutiny Board, but that this should not take place prior to the decision due to be taken by the Executive Board.

A vote was taken on whether the Board should scrutinise the closure of the West Park Centre on the basis set out above. This was passed unanimously.

The Chair informed Members that any decision made by the Executive Board with regards to the West Park Centre would be open to Call In.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) That the Board examine the temporary closure of the West Park Centre in the autumn of 2012 and the deterioration of the Centre's condition leading up to that time; and
- (c) That this piece of work should be undertaken by the full Scrutiny Board, but that this should not take place prior to the decision due to be taken by the Executive Board.

94 Work Programme

The Board received a report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which considered the Board's work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Executive Board minutes and the list of Key Decisions be noted;
- (b) That the date of the April meeting be moved to 23rd April 2013; and
- (c) That the work schedule be noted.

95 Date and time of next meeting

10am, 31st January 2013.