

SCRUTINY BOARD (NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING)

WEDNESDAY, 11TH APRIL, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors D Atkinson, P Ewens,
M Rafique and D Schofield

105 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which afforded Scrutiny Board Members the opportunity to put questions to representatives of Neighbourhoods and Housing.

Stephen Boyle, Chief Regeneration Officer; Martyn Stenton, Partnerships Manager and Tracey Howard, Homeless Services Manager were in attendance to answer Members questions.

In summary, the following issues were discussed:

- Anti Social Behaviour Awards – a written response would be obtained to update Members.
- The new ALMOs now had their Boards established and Chief Executives had been appointed.
- Would land be made available for private sale where housing had been demolished in Bramley and Stanningley?
- Local Panels of the ALMOs would include all relevant Ward Members.
- There would not be a reduction in the number of Area Committees following the reduction in the number of Area Managers. This was an administration decision taken in conjunction with Senior Management as part of the Council's budget plans. It was also in line with changes to other partner organisations including the Police, PCTS and ALMOs.
- Concern was expressed regarding the high numbers of vacant student housing and further planning applications to develop more; the lack of key worker housing; homelessness; empty housing and affordable housing. Questions were asked as to how the housing strategies could address these concerns. It was reported that further to concerns regarding empty homes and student accommodation, discussions were being held with private landlords in an effort to house homeless people. It was also felt that the Empty Homes Strategy was effective, although it was recognised there were limitations on staff resources. The Empty Homes Strategy team was part funded with Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and Safer and stronger Communities funds.
- In response to questions regarding the use of vacant land, it was reported that there are a number of plans. Most proposals went through the Asset Management Group and could be set aside for use in the Council's capital programme or use for other priorities such as

affordable housing. Members were informed of examples of land that had been earmarked for affordable housing in East Leeds.

- Members were informed of preventative measures carried out by the Homeless Advice & Prevention Service. This included partnership working with Social Services, Youth Offending Team, Prison Service and Community Safety colleagues.

Officers in attendance were thanked for their attendance.

(The meeting was not quorate during Members' Questions. Councillor Schofield left the meeting at 10.07 a.m. Councillors Rafique, Atkinson and Pryke arrived at 10.07 a.m., 10.10 a.m. and 10.45 a.m. respectively, the meeting becoming quorate upon Councillor Pryke's arrival).

106 LATE ITEMS

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair admitted to the agenda two late reports – Item 10 'District Partnerships' and Item 11 'Area Delivery Plans'. The reports had not been available at the time of the agenda despatch.

107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

108 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Armitage.

109 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 7TH MARCH 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2007 be approved as a correct record.

110 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5TH MARCH 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5th March 2007 be noted.

111 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD - 9TH FEBRUARY 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 9th February 2007 be noted.

112 DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on District Partnerships and the future direction of area based partnership working following changes to structures across the Police, ALMOs and PCTs. The report also referred to membership of the District

Partnerships, priorities and progress in 2006/07 and the Area Management review.

In response to comments regarding Intensive Neighbourhood Management and encouraging local resident involvement, it was reported that in some parts of the City there were fewer difficulties engaging local residents, particularly where there were active community groups. This was often the case in some of the more affluent areas and it was recognised that there was a need to provide assistance in some of the more deprived areas and to encourage voluntary sector involvement.

The future direction of area based partnership working was discussed and it was reported that there would be a reduction in the number of targets, objectives and performance indicators. This would enable the selection of key priorities for areas and allow more measurable objectives and responsive work plans. It was also reported that the Local Area Agreement would become increasingly important and strengthen partnership working with the Local Authority given the leadership role as well as accountability for funding.

RESOLVED – That the current position regarding the District Partnerships be noted.

113 AREA DELIVERY PLANS

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report which provided Members with an overview of the Area Delivery Plans for 2006/07 and the process for preparing and agreeing the plans for 2007/08. Appended to the report were the summary of priorities and key actions for the ten Area Committees in Leeds.

RESOLVED – That the position regarding Area Delivery Plans be noted.

114 REGENERATION IN BEESTON HILL AND HOLBECK - SCRUTINY INQUIRY FINAL REPORT

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report following the recent inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck. Members were requested to formally agree the report which detailed conclusions and recommendations following the inquiry.

RESOLVED – That the Final Report for Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck be agreed.

115 DEMOS REPORT ON BRINGING IT HOME - COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES TO COUNTER-TERRORISM

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided an overview of a research report published by Demos in December 2006 entitled Bringing it Home – Community Based Approaches to Counter-Terrorism.

Issues discussed included the following:

- The recent arrest of local people in connection with the 7/7 London bombings.
- The development of a multi sector task group which would take responsibility for taking a city wide overview of cohesion related tension identification, risk assessment, avoidance and management.
- Issues faced by Muslim communities such as high levels of deprivation, discrimination and social exclusion and ways in whichj these issues could be countered.
- The increase in the non English speaking public.
- Members requested further information on the multi sector task group.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

116 ANNUAL REPORT

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a copy of the Board's draft contribution to the Annual report. The report contained a summary from the Chair and reviewed the Board's inquiries and work programme during the past year.

The Chair asked that thanks be recorded to Sharon Winfield, Principal Scrutiny Adviser and other staff who had supported the Board over the previous year.

RESOLVED – That the Board's contribution to the composite Annual Report be agreed.