

SCRUTINY BOARD (CENTRAL AND CORPORATE)

MONDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor M Dobson in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, J Bale, S Bentley,
J Dowson, P Ewens, M Hamilton, V Kendall
and B Selby

43 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Lowe and Wadsworth declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item, 7 – Review of Called-In Decision – Review of Capital Programme 2008 – 2012 due to their respective positions as Directors with the West North West ALMO and East North East ALMO (Minute No. 46 refers), and were advised to leave the meeting due to their prejudicial interests.

Councillor Dowson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item, 7 – Review of Called-In Decision – Review of Capital Programme 2008 due to her position on the East North East ALMO Area Panel (Minute No. 46 refers).

44 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chastney, Lowe and Wadsworth.

45 Call - In of a Decision - Briefing Paper

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding the procedural aspects of the Call-In process.

Members were advised that the options available to the Board in respect of this particular called-in decision were:-

Option 1 – Release the decision for implementation. Having reviewed the decision, the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate) could decide to release it for implementation. If this option was chosen, the decision would be released for immediate implementation and the decision could not be called-in again.

Option 2 – Recommend that the decision be reconsidered. Having reviewed the decision, the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate) recommend to the Executive Board that the decision be reconsidered. If the Scrutiny Board (Central and Corporate) chose this option, a report would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Board. The Executive Board would reconsider their decision and would publish the

outcome of their deliberations within the minutes of that meeting. The decision could not be called-in again whether or not it was varied.

RESOLVED – That the report outlining the Call-In procedures be noted.

46 Review of Called - In Decision - Review of Capital Programme 2008 - 2012

The report of the Head of Member Development presented the background papers to the Executive Board decision on the Review of Capital Programme 2008 – 2012 made on 8 October 2008 which had been subsequently called in. The decision taken was as follows:

Capital Programme Update 2008 – 2012

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing an updated position on the 2008 – 2012 Capital Programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) *That the adjustments to capital programme expenditure and resources as detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved.*
- (b) *That the Strategic Development Fund be sub-divided into 3 investment areas as set out in section 4 of the report.*

The decision had been called in for review by Councillors R Lewis, M Lyons, L Mulherin, A Ogilvie and J Dunn on the following grounds:

- That clarification was sought on the amount of money being transferred from the HRA in appendix A to the general fund was affordable and would not adversely impact on the ALMOs programs and plans.
- That information was sought on what consultation had taken place with the ALMO Chief Executives and Board Members.

In response to the call-in notice, the following had been invited to the meeting:

Councillor Richard Lewis
Councillor Les Carter
Alan Gay, Director of Resources
Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environment and Neighbourhoods
Paul Langford, Chief Housing Services Officer
Maureen Taylor, Chief Officer Financial Development

Councillor Lewis was invited to address the Board and give further information on the call in request. He raised the following points:

- Overall effect on the housing decency programme.
- The consultation process before the Executive Board decision and the involvement of the ALMOs in any consultation.
- A shortfall in the decency budget for the West North West Homes ALMO.

- Potential implications if proposed PFI schemes in relation to housing do not go ahead.
- There had been no reference to future funding required to maintain decency standards.

In response to the concerns behind the call-in of the Executive Board decision, the following responses were given:

- The forecast for capital receipts had fallen considerably and there was a need to address a gap in the Council's capital programme.
- It had been concluded that there was a surplus of resources across the ALMOs.
- The investment needs of the West North West ALMO were still under review.
- Further to concern regarding future funds to maintain decency standards, it was reported that there would be ongoing discussion between the Council and the ALMOs regarding this. This would also be affected by the continuing review of legislation from Central Government and the HRA review.
- There had been ongoing negotiations with the ALMOs since the beginning of the year.
- Other areas within the Council had seen pressure on their capital budgets.

In brief summary, the following issues were discussed in relation to the called-in decision:

- Concern regarding the lack of consultation with and representation from the ALMOs.
- Capital needs elsewhere across the Council.
- Housing inspections – it was reported that this had been completed in Aire Valley and results were awaited for East North East and West North West ALMOs.

Councillor Lewis was given opportunity to respond and informed the Board that it was still not felt that enough information had been given for the decision of the Executive Board to be implemented. He also raised a concern that a reduction in the sale of properties would mean more properties would have to be upgraded and maintained to meet decency standards.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

47 Outcome of Call - In

Following consideration of evidence presented to them and the options available to them as outlined in Minute No 46, a proposal was made that the Board should move that Option 2 – Recommend that the decision be reconsidered be resolved. This proposal was voted against. A further

proposal was made that the Board should move that Option 1 – Release the decision for implementation be resolved and the Board voted in favour of this.

RESOLVED – That the decision of the Executive Board in relation to the Review of the Capital Programme 2008-2012 be immediately released for implementation.