

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS)

THURSDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor S Smith in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, P Davey, G Driver,
J Dunn, C Fox, A Hussain, M Lyons and
J Matthews

19 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lyons declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9, Session 1 Inquiry on the Integrated Transport Strategies for Leeds and the Wider Region – Transport Governance Discussion and Options Paper, due to his position on the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority. Minute No. 24 refers.

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8, City Region Employment and Skills Board, due to his position on the Corporation Board of Leeds College of Building. Minute No. 23 refers.

20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Pryke, Robinson and Shelbrooke.

21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

22 City Region Governance Arrangements

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) updated the Board on progress made by the City Region Partnership designated a Forerunner City Region by the Government to develop Forerunner proposals which would bring a range of freedoms and flexibilities to the City Region. Specific reference was made to the fact that for the first time local authorities would be able to determine local priorities and direct resources to improve skills which is currently determined by Government and implemented by the Regional Development Agency.

The Chair welcomed Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer Leeds Initiative and Partnerships and Rob Norreys, Head of Regional Policy to the meeting.

It was reported that negotiations regarding the Forerunner proposals were still on going and there was due to be a further meeting with Civil Servants on the 21st or 23rd October and a Ministerial meeting on 3rd November 2009 at

which the agreement would be signed and then publicly launched at the City Region Summit scheduled for the 27th November 2009 in Harrogate. Officers stressed that once the Forerunner measures were agreed it was likely that some elements of the existing City Region Governance Model may need to be amended in order that the Government can be satisfied that decisions made by the City Region are transparent and accountable.

It was considered appropriate for scrutiny to undertake a review of the City Governance Model once the Forerunner agreement was in place.

Members expressed interest in scrutiny of the Leeds City Region / Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Housing and Regeneration Joint Board to ensure robust mechanisms are in place to ensure Leeds is able to contribute and influence investment decisions taken by the Joint Board. The mechanisms need to be put in place by early 2010. The Chair agreed to speak to the relevant Executive Board Member and or the Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) on this issue.

Reference was made to the Board's first session of its Inquiry into the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority and how this ties in to the Forerunner proposals along with the creation of an Employment and Skills Board which is the subject of a report later in the meeting today.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Democratic arrangements, proportionality and concerns that Members were not accountable at a local level. It was reported that all decisions taken on behalf of the City Region were made by the City Regions Leader's Board which consisted of the Leaders of the authorities which made up the Leeds City Region. The Leader's Board was supported by thematic panels, which were chaired by local authority Leaders. The panels did not necessarily have representation from all authorities within the Leeds City Region and performed an advisory role to the Leaders Board.
- Scrutiny Arrangements of the Leeds City Region – some scrutiny had taken place at a local level and it was recognised, particularly in light of the Forerunner proposals, that scrutiny arrangements needed to be put in place at a City Region level.
- Reporting arrangements and the fact that decisions taken by the City Region Leader's Board are generally not reported to the Council's Executive Board or to the Party Groups.
- Access to information, and that all City Regions Leaders Board meeting information was publicly available on the internet.
- Representation and the fact that the majority opposition party in Leeds does not have a representative on the City Region Leaders Board
- Housing issues and Homes And Communities Agency (HCA) investments. Under the Forerunner proposals the Board was informed of considerations towards the establishment of a Leeds City Region/HCA Housing and Regeneration Board which would oversee

the distribution of investment across the region. It was reported that this Board would comprise of Member representatives from City Region local authorities, the HCA, Yorkshire Forward and Government as a minimum. Further discussion in relation to housing included links with other plans and strategies such as the EASEL project.

- Secretariat support to the City Region which is provided by Leeds who have a responsibility to all the local authorities forming the Leeds City Region and the potential for a conflict of interest in the same officers advising this Board. It was accepted that this needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That a further report be brought to the Board on City Region Governance Arrangements with particular reference to addressing the democratic deficit and proportionality issues discussed
- (2) That the Chair discuss with the relevant Executive Board Member and the Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) the proposal that this Board undertake scrutiny of the Leeds City Region / Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Housing and Regeneration Joint Board to ensure the robustness of the mechanisms put in place that enable Leeds to have the opportunity to contribute and influence investment decisions taken by the Joint Board.

23 City Region Employment and Skills Board

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) informed the Board of the development of an Employment and Skills Board (ESB) for the City Region.

James Flanagan, Project Manager – Regional Policy Team and Rob Norreys, Head of Regional Policy were in attendance for this item.

It was reported that skill levels were below the national average across the City Region and this needed to be addressed to close the productivity gap and to assist with moving out of the current recession. The current City Region MAA set out the position for skills and there was currently a limited influence of how investment was made at a City Region level. The development of an ESB had formed part of the submission for Forerunner status and Members were informed of progress to date. The Chief Executive of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council had been confirmed as the lead officer in the development of the ESB and draft guidance had been prepared by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). Other partners involved would include Yorkshire Forward, the Successor Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and Job Centre Plus.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Concern regarding local opportunities for skills and training and the closure of local centres.
- Too much emphasis on skills training aimed at the higher level and not meeting local needs.
- It was reported that the ESB would give more opportunity to meet local demands across the City Region.
- There was a need to match skills provision with requirements for moving the local economy forward.
- The ESB would be pivotal in directing funding across the City Region.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the timescale for the establishment of the City Region ESB with strategy-setting powers be noted.
- (2) That update reports be provided to this Board on a regular basis.

24 Session 1 Inquiry on the Integrated Transport Strategies for Leeds and the Wider Region - Transport Governance Discussion and Options Paper

The report of the Director of City Development asked the Board to consider options on the formation of appropriate transport governance arrangements for the City Region and West Yorkshire.

The Chair welcomed Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer – Highways and Transportation to the meeting.

Members attention was brought to issues surrounding the establishment of the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority and proposed governance arrangements and also to the Atkins report on proposals for transport governance.

The Board discussed proposed amendments to Membership as outlined in the Atkins report. Concern was expressed regarding the recommendation that current Membership should be reduced and the effect that this would have on local representation and on proportionality.

Further issues discussed included the following:

- Scrutiny arrangements – concern was expressed that it had been proposed that scrutiny should be carried out by previous members of the transport authority as it was felt that this was may not prove objective enough.
- Regulation of public transport and the fact that operators only provide services on profitable routes resulting in many areas having few or no bus services as Metro's resources are limited in being able to subsidise non profitable routes.

- The Atkins Report – it was agreed to circulate copies of this to the Board.
- Veto powers of Members – it was felt that individual Members should not have veto powers.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That it be agreed in principal to recommend that an Executive Board of the WYITA should comprise of 8 Members, taken from the overall membership of 22 which should be retained and this be included in the Board's final report and recommendations.
- (2) That session two of the Inquiry be held on 7th January 2010 to include details of the project plan for taking forward the Leeds City Region partnership and the West Yorkshire Governance arrangements

Councillor Fox declared a personal interest in this item due to his position with the West Yorkshire Transport Authority.

(Councillor Dunn left the meeting at 11.30 a.m. during the discussion on this item).

25 Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development asked the Board to consider as part of the consultation process, a paper setting out the work the Leeds Initiative will undertake to develop the new Vision for Leeds. A report of the Chief Officer Leeds Initiative and Partnerships which outlined the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 was appended to the report.

Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer, Leeds Initiative and Partnerships, Martin Dean, Deputy Director, Leeds Initiative and Sally Corcoran, Strategic Communications Manager were in attendance for this item.

Members attention was brought to the following issues:

- Main differences highlighted from the previous Vision for Leeds – a response to the current economic climate and the consequent effects; environmental issues including climate change.
- Progress to date and the different stages of the process – it was reported that Web 2.0 technology was been used as part of the consultation process and web forums and a Twitter site were available for public input.
- How the Vision for Leeds supported and interacted with other plans such as the Leeds Strategic Plan and Local Development Framework.
- It was planned to publish the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 following the May 2010 elections.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Engagement with the business sector – sessions had been planned with the business community and key business organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Institution of Directors and Federation of Small Businesses would be involved.
- Perceptions of the City Centre being an unsafe place to visit on a night time – discussions focussed on planning issues, marketing and promotion of the City Centre and planned events.
- Local area plans and visions and how these could be incorporated in the Vision for Leeds.
- Opportunity for the Board to reconsider the Vision for Leeds as it developed and links to other Scrutiny Boards.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That an update report be brought to the Board in early 2010.

(Councillors Davey and Hussain left the meeting at 12.15 p.m. during the discussion of this item).

26 Planning Documents from Partner Organisations

Further to the request of the Board at its September meeting, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed planning documents from partner organisations.

The following documents were attached to the report:

- Extract from the Leeds Partnerships Foundation Trust Annual Plan
- Extract from the NHS Leeds Operational Plan
- Extract from the METRO Corporate Plan
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Leeds District Plan
- Yorkshire Forward Corporate Plan – Executive Summary

Members welcomed the partner organisations planning documents, and it was suggested that Yorkshire Forward be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That Yorkshire Forward be invited to a future meeting of the Board. to talk about schemes funded by them in the City Region and how they are determined and prioritised
- (3) That the Director of City Development submit a paper to the meeting in (2) above detailing the schemes in Leeds which are funded or part funded by Yorkshire Forward and broken down on a ward by ward basis indicating the schemes and the funding involved

27 Work Programme

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Thursday, 5th November, 2009

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which outlined the Board's current Work Programme. Appended to the report were the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions and the latest Executive Board minutes.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the Work Programme be amended in line with earlier discussion during the meeting.

28 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 5th November 2009 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting at 9.30 a.m.)