

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

THURSDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors D Atkinson, S Bentley, G Hyde,
M Lobley, M Lyons, J Matthews, V Morgan,
M Robinson and B Anderson

1 **Chairs Opening Remarks**

Councillor Rafique opened the meeting by welcoming all present to this; the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture). Short introductions were made.

2 **Late Items**

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda however Members were in receipt of documents relating to the City Priority Plan due to be considered by Executive Board on 22 June 2011 for reference (minute 6 refers).

3 **Declarations of Interest**

The following Member declared a personal interest for the purpose of Section 81 (3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor M Lobley – declared a personal interest in any discussions on the construction of Leeds Arena as the Chair of Re’new Leeds - a regeneration charity – during consideration of the priorities and work programme for the Board (minute 6 refers)

4 **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Cohen. The Board welcomed Councillor B Anderson as his substitute.

5 **Changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to Scrutiny**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a report setting out the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Board for the forthcoming year and highlighting the amendments recently made to the Council’s Constitution and approved at Annual Council on 26th May 2011 in respect of the work of Scrutiny Boards.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report and the amendments made to the Council’s Constitution.

6 **Sources of work and areas of Priority for the Scrutiny Board**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Management introduced a report providing information and guidance on potential sources of work and priority areas within the remit of the Boards’ Terms of Reference.

Appended to the report were copies of the Terms of Reference, minutes of the Executive Board meeting held 18th May 2011 and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions July – October 2011 to enable discussions.

The Board welcomed the following to the meeting
Councillor R Lewis - Executive Member, City Development;
Councillor A Ogilvie - Executive Member, Leisure
Mr M Farrington - Acting Director, City Development
Mr P Maney - Head of Strategic Planning, Policy & Performance, City Development

Councillor R Lewis and Mr M Farrington highlighted issues from within the development portfolio for the Board to consider:

- The need to take a strategic view of city centre development including the impact of the credit crunch and those sites left undeveloped
- Connectivity of the City and new developments with the suburbs and the balance between vehicle/pedestrian movement around the city
- Development of the flood alleviation scheme

(Councillor D Atkinson joined the meeting at this point)

The Board discussed the following issues

Local employment

- Measures available and currently used to ensure developers encouraged local employment, skills and apprenticeships
- Concern that new developments in Leeds brought more commuters from across West Yorkshire, rather than employment for Leeds citizens

Transport infrastructure

- Concern generally about the existing transport infrastructure throughout the city. The west and north west areas of Leeds were identified as areas not well served by an effective highway network.
- The proposed location for the high speed rail terminus. Members advocated development of a fully integrated transport interchange in the City centre
- The need to establish a fall-back position for transport improvement should the NGT bid fail to consider how to support continuous development without the NGT scheme

Future Development

- Measures to encourage high quality developments which provide high quality green space
- The impact of residential development in the green belt in terms of added stress on the transport infrastructure and quality of life generally
- Broadband connectivity issues for small businesses. Members noted that Mr Farrington would provide Councillor Robinson with a copy of the city region broadband project

(Councillor Matthews withdrew from the meeting for a short time at this point)

- The need to take an overview of the Leeds retail and culture offer and to establish proposals to support those parts of the city centre left empty when retail development shifts emphasis
- Measures to prevent developments stagnating
- Reduction of CO2 emissions and what LCC could do in terms of leading by example through utilising renewable energy and goods within its own buildings, thus encouraging developers to do the same
- Role of the night time economy and the infrastructure needed to support it.

Councillor Ogilvie addressed the Board and highlighted the following issues for the Boards' consideration from within the culture portfolio

- How to engage young people with the city's sporting and cultural events. To consider the success of the current approach and evaluate whether this approach could be developed
- Establishment of a bowling pitch strategy
- Consideration of the economic and social benefits brought to the city by hosting cultural/sporting and recreation events

The Board further discussed:

- How to build on the substantial physical improvements made to the city's cultural infrastructure
- What support LCC could provide young people who sought to create their own events
- The city's history of provision of concerts and music entertainment
- The role of Area Committees in providing funds for local youth groups and events

RESOLVED – Members noted the information contained within the report and the contents of the discussions and

- a) Confirmed the following six areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming Municipal Year
 - a. Employment and training
 - b. The north/south divide in the city and the links with employment opportunities
 - c. Transport links around and through the City, with particular reference to the north and north-west areas.
 - d. How to engage young people with the cultural/sporting events in the city, including an evaluation of the current methodology and consideration of its development
 - e. A strategy for the City's bowling pitches
 - f. The economic and social benefits brought to the city by cultural, sporting and recreation events, including consideration of the development of toolkit to publicise the benefits

- b) Authorised the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up Inquiry Terms of Reference for subsequent approval by the Board

7 **Work Schedule**

The Head of Scrutiny & Member Development submitted a draft work programme for the Board for the 2011/12 Municipal Year including a schedule which referred to the four main priority themes already identified in the Boards' Terms of Reference.

Having regard to the six priority areas for Scrutiny already identified in previous discussions (minute 6a refers above), Members noted the resources required to create terms of reference for those diverse areas of scrutiny and considered scheduling those issues for consideration throughout the year.

(Councillor Atkinson withdrew from the meeting at this point)

RESOLVED – To prioritise the identified topics as follows

- a) To schedule initial papers on the topics “engaging young people” and “transport” for the July meeting
- b) To schedule an initial report on employment and training for the September meeting
- c) That officers be requested to populate the schedule with the remaining four topics

8 **Co-Opted Members**

The Head of Scrutiny & Member Development presented a report seeking Members' consideration of whether to appoint Co-optees to the Scrutiny Board or whether to call for witnesses to specific Inquiries instead.

Members recognised the value of co-optee participation however felt that the input of specialists would be more appropriate to strengthen the work of the Board in any Inquiry into a given priority due to the breadth of the remit of the Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED – Not to appoint standing co-optees to the Scrutiny Board, but to seek the input of expert witnesses, or incorporate external research studies where appropriate, to future Inquiries.

9 **Date and time of Future Meetings**

RESOLVED - To note the following arrangements:

14 July 2011

22 September 2011

20 October 2011

1 December 2011

26 January 2012

23 February 2012

22 March 2012

19 April 2012

All formal meetings commence at 10.00 am with a pre-meeting for Board Members only at 9.30 am