

SCRUTINY BOARD (HOUSING AND REGENERATION)

TUESDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor J Procter in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, D Collins, J Cummins,
P Grahame, M Iqbal, V Morgan, D Nagle,
C Towler and G Wilkinson

81 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept the following late information:

- Agenda item 7, East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road – Indicative Programme for the East Leeds Orbital Road (Minute No. 85 refers)
- Agenda item 8, Progress in delivering housing on Council brownfield land (Minute No. 86 refers)
- Agenda item 9, Leeds City Council Input to Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan – Report to be considered by Executive Board on 5 March 2014 (Minute No. 87 refers)
- Agenda item 14, Work Schedule – Executive Board minutes of 14 February 2014 (Minute No. 92 refers)

The above documents were not available at the time of agenda despatch, but were subsequently made available on the Council's website.

82 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting, however in relation to agenda item 10 entitled, 'Leeds City Council's response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee investigation – The Private Rented Sector – First Report of Session 2013-14' and agenda item 11 entitled, 'Recommendation Tracking – Affordable Housing by Private Developers – the role of institutional investors', Councillor M Iqbal drew the Scrutiny Board's attention to his role as a private sector landlord. (Minute nos. 88 and 89 refer)

83 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor S Lay.

84 Minutes - 4 February 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the joint meeting and the ordinary meeting held on 4 February 2014 be approved as a correct record.

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Tuesday, 25th March, 2014

85 East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road

The Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update in response to queries raised by the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 7 January 2014 in relation to the East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Andrew Hall, Head of Transport Policy, City Development
- Phil Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, City Development
- Adam Brannen, Programme Manager (East and South Leeds), City Development.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The potential for speeding up delivery of the East Leeds Orbital Road.
- Confirmation that the tasks identified in gateway 1 of the programme were on target to be completed.
- Discussions taking place with developers to ensure a suitable mix of quality housing types.
- The need to identify opportunities within the programme where 'timesavers' could be achieved.
- A request to provide an alternative programme in the event of more favourable conditions.
- In addition, a request to provide the more detailed timetable and decision milestones in relation to the 3 road sections.
- Confirmation that the fee to Mouchel to advise on feasibility and to undertake work on behalf of the Council up to stage 1 was £200k.
- A need to ensure that S106 monies were spent directly on the affected Wards. Members were advised that the overall package would be reported to a future meeting of City Plans Panel, following Ward Member consultation.
- Challenges associated with government planning framework in relation to affordable housing.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the information outlined above be submitted to Members.

86 Progress in delivering housing on Council Brownfield Land

The Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update in response to queries raised by the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 4 February 2014 in relation to the Council's Brownfield Land Programme.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Adam Brannen, Programme Manager (East and South Leeds), City Development.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Clarification about ownership and title issues associated with some of the sites on the schedule.
- Confirmation that the Council utilised its own property services team to market sites. Auctions were used in some cases, e.g. to market smaller sites.
- Suggestion that the method of disposal be added to the schedule.
- Circulation of the schedule to all councillors for information.

The Board recommended the adoption of a model for the future based on a partnership between the council and housebuilders taking a shared risk approach to provide new housing on brownfield land.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted
- (b) That the schedule be amended to reflect the comments outlined above.
- (c) That the Director of City Development be recommended to adopt a model for the future based on a partnership between the council and housebuilders taking a shared risk approach to provide new housing on brownfield land.

87 Strategic Economic Plan

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented an update on the preparation of the Council's final submission to the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Draft comments and recommendations to Executive Board arising from the joint meeting of Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) and (Sustainable Economy and Culture) on 4 February 2014.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Tom Bridges, Chief Economic Development Officer, City Development.

Members briefly discussed the types of projects that had been proposed. The Scrutiny Board was informed that detailed project pro formas were in the

process of being appraised by the Leeds City Region Team. A Government decision on the allocation of funding was expected in July 2014. One Member queried whether details of the full plan and supporting projects could be provided to Members. The Chief Economic Development Officer undertook to provide the Scrutiny Board with information on how to obtain copies, once the final plan was submitted.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the progress made in preparing the Council's submission to the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan, be noted
- (b) That details of how to obtain copies of the full plan submission be provided to the Scrutiny Board.

88 Leeds City Council's response to House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee investigation - The Private Rented Sector - First Report of Session 2013-14

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report which provided an update on the Council's response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee's report 'The Private Rented Sector First Report of Session 2013-14' published on 18 July 2013.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Liz Cook, Chief Housing Officer, Environment and Housing
- Mark Ireland, Service Manager (Area Renewal), Environment and Housing
- Mike Brook, Service Manager (Private Sector Housing), Environment and Housing
- Maggie Gjessing, Housing Investment Manager, City Development.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Notification that the government had very recently issued a new consultation document on the private rented sector, a copy of which would be provided to Board members.
- Confirmation that there was no requirement on landlords to be members of a particular body or association. Landlords were governed by regulations outlined in the Housing Act and through the Council's licensing arrangements.
- Good practice undertaken with landlord associations.
- Confirmation that the Council had powers to issue improvement notices and prohibition orders where appropriate.
- Issues associated with vacant properties.
- Joint work undertaken with other agencies, particularly the Fire Service.
- Establishment of the Private Sector Forum.

- A suggestion that insurers be encouraged to require landlords to be part of a local accreditation scheme as a condition of insurance, as a way of driving up standards. It was agreed that this proposal would be included in the council's response to the government consultation document.

RESOLVED – That the Council's response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee's report 'The Private Rented Sector First Report of Session 2013-14' published on 18 July 2013, be noted.

(Councillor M Iqbal withdrew from the meeting at 11.40am during the consideration of this item.)

89 Recommendation Tracking - Affordable Housing by Private Developers - the role of institutional investors

The Director of City Development and Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which set out responses to the recommendations in relation to Affordable Housing by Private Developers – the role of institutional investors.

The following were in attendance:

- Liz Cook, Chief Housing Officer, Environment and Housing
- Maggie Gjessing, Housing Investment Manager, City Development.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted and that the Board continue to monitor progress against these recommendations.

90 Checks Carried out on Prospective Council Tenants

The Chief Officer (Housing Management), Housing Leeds, submitted a report which provided an overview of the 'suitability' process that was applied to applicants for council accommodation.

The following were in attendance:

- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer (Housing Management).

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

91 Annual Tenancy Visits - Outcomes

The Chief Officer (Housing Management), Housing Leeds, submitted a report which provided an update on the outcomes identified from the completed Annual Tenancy Visits.

The following were in attendance:

- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer (Housing Management).

The following information was appended to the report:

- Annual Tenancy Verification Form (amended version)
- Breakdown of performance on completed visits
- Evaluation of outcomes on key areas.

There was an acknowledgement that the data contained within the appendices would become more robust over time.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

(Councillor D Nagle withdrew from the meeting at 12.23pm during the consideration of this item.)

92 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's latest work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

Appended to the report was the current version of the Board's work programme.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be approved.

93 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 25 March 2014 at 10.00am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.25pm.)