

## SCRUTINY BOARD (HOUSING AND REGENERATION)

TUESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 2014

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Procter in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, S Bentley, D Collins,  
J Cummins, M Iqbal, J Lewis, V Morgan,  
D Nagle, C Towler and G Wilkinson

### 71 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 11, Executive Board minutes of 22 January 2014 (Minute No. 79 refers)

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

### 72 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared to the meeting, however in relation to the item entitled, 'Progress in Delivering Housing on Council Brownfield Land', Councillor Gerald Wilkinson drew the Scrutiny Board's attention to his son-in-law's ownership of land at Spofforth Hill. (Minute No. 76 refers)

### 73 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Pauleen Grahame and Sandy Lay. Notification had been received that Councillor James Lewis was to substitute for Councillor Pauleen Grahame and Councillor Sue Bentley for Councillor Sandy Lay.

### 74 Minutes - 7 January 2014

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2014 be approved as a correct record.

### 75 Implementation of the Review of Housing Management Services

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on progress with the delivery of Housing Management outcomes, following a request made at the January Scrutiny Board meeting for more detailed information about actions, timescales and the delivery of associated savings.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Housing Leeds Senior Management Structure.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Board Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing.

The key areas of discussion were:

- A request that the names of officers be included within the Housing Leeds Senior Management Structure. It was agreed to circulate this information to the Scrutiny Board.
- Greater focus on improved delivery and service to tenants.
- Confirmation that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was ring fenced and any savings were included in the capital programme to deliver improvements.
- Establishment of a new Housing Advisory Board and tenant representatives.
- Clearer lines of accountability in relation to management of grounds maintenance works.
- Concern about the standard of work undertaken by some contractors and the role of Housing Managers in holding contractors to account.

**RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

## **76 Progress in Delivering Housing on Council Brownfield Land**

The Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update on the Council's Brownfield Land Programme.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Housing Investment Land Strategy – Schedule of Sites.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Board Member, Development and the Economy
- Martin Farrington, Director of City Development
- Adam Brannen, Programme Manager (East and South Leeds), City Development.

The main areas of discussion were:

- Further work needed in terms of de-risking of sites and making them more appealing to developers.

- Proposals for the site at West Park Centre.
- Concern that some of the sites identified in the schedule remained stagnant. Discussions were taking place with a range of stakeholders focussing on ways to speed up delivery.
- Challenges associated with Bramham House. It was proposed to arrange a further meeting involving the Executive Board Member, Development and the Economy and local Ward Members, to discuss options for this site.
- Confirmation that offers were being considered to develop a site at Brooklands Avenue. It was reported that this site had been marketed as a pilot for older people's housing.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board receives a further breakdown of the schedule of brownfield sites, including updated actions, at its next meeting.

(Councillor James Lewis withdrew from the meeting at 12.30pm, Councillor Sue Bentley at 12.35pm and Councillor David Nagle at 12.40pm.)

#### **77 Financial Position Statement 2013/14 - City Development and Environment and Housing Directorates**

The Director of Environment and Housing and Director of City Development submitted a joint report which provided a financial position statement of the City Development and Environment and Housing Directorates in relation to this Board's responsibilities at period 8 of the financial year 2013/14.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environment and Housing
- Simon Criddle, Head of Finance, City Development.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation of full year JNC savings of £600k from restructuring of ALMO's.
- Increase in rent arrears of £0.3m due to welfare change in connection with under occupancy.
- Confirmation that right to buy sales up to the end of November 2013 had generated sales receipts of £19.4m. In accordance with the Government's formula, Leeds City Council (LCC) was able to retain £14.2m.
- A request for information in relation to the level of sales receipts generated from 'right to buy' compared to other core cities and West Yorkshire local authorities.
- Issues in relation to some tenants receiving letters advising them that they were behind with their payments, which was due to the cycle for

processing payments. It was agreed to request an update from the Department on this issue.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted
- (b) That the request for information be provided to the Scrutiny Board.

**78 Review of performance information requirements**

The Director of Environment and Housing and Director of City Development submitted a joint report setting out a range of performance information in relation to City, Council and directorate priorities.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Table of performance measures, providing further information about the measure, the data sources and reporting arrangements, and proposed frequency of reporting.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Paul Maney, Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance, City Development
- Debra Scott, Head of Performance and Service Review, Environment and Housing.

There was a request that the table of performance measures be updated to include a key of definitions of abbreviations. Members also considered the range of performance information they wished to receive in future reports.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted
- (b) That the table of performance measures be updated to include a key of definitions of abbreviations
- (c) That all of the performance measures identified in the table be reported to the Scrutiny Board in future.

**79 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.

The following areas of work were identified for inclusion in the Scrutiny Board's work schedule as follows:

- A further breakdown of the schedule of brownfield sites, including updated actions, to be provided at the next meeting.
- Progress check to be provided at the next meeting in relation to the Scrutiny Board's formal response to the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan.

**RESOLVED** – That the work schedule, as amended, be approved.

**80 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

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

(The meeting concluded at 1.15pm.)