

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT)

WEDNESDAY, 19TH JULY, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, C Campbell,
N Dawson, P Gruen, D Ragan, E Taylor,
C Towler and P Wadsworth

10 Late Items

The following late information was submitted to the Board:

- Agenda item 7- Executive Board report in relation to Grenfell Tower (17th July).

The supplementary information has been provided to all members of the Scrutiny Board and published on the Council's website.

11 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Board was informed that Grace Ellinor had recently been successful in securing a new post within the Housing Growth team. The Board thanked Grace for all of her support over recent months and wished her the best for the future.

12 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests declared at the meeting.

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Cllr A Ogilvie.

14 Minutes - 21 June 2017

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2017 be approved as a correct record.

15 Grenfell Towers

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report in relation to Grenfell Tower.

The following were in attendance:

- Martin Farrington, Director of City Development
- Tim Hill, Chief Planning Officer
- David Pickles, Head of Service Building Control

The key areas for discussion were:

- Introduction & overview of key issues contained within the recent Executive Board Report concerning Grenfell Tower in relation to the Council's Social Housing portfolio and emergency response.
- Detail in relation to the recent audit undertaken on high-rise buildings within the city to identify use of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) panels used for cladding.
- The partnership work undertaken with the Fire Service
- Detail surrounding the five high rise buildings in Leeds which have failed fire cladding tests- Sky Plaza, Waterloo Court, Waterside Apartments, Park Plaza hotel and Concept Place.
- Reassurance was sought regarding the resource capacity of the Building Control team and their ability to provide an emergency response at pace if needed.
- Clarity was sought surrounding the role of external Approved Inspectors and the extent to which they are independent from property developers.
- The issue of de-regulation and the perceived need for Government to promptly review the Building Control and tighten regulations in order to ensure robust inspection, clarity and minimise future risk.
- The possibility of Local Authorities becoming the mandatory Building Control regulator for buildings of a significant scale and size in order to ensure both accountability and consistency in future approaches.
- Clarification was sought surrounding the recording process for Building regulation inspection reports both internally and externally. The board was advised that internal records are kept by the Local Authority for 15 years. The Local Authority is not accountable for the records of other independent inspectors.
- The need for Approved Inspectors to be regulated in order to ensure efficiency and best practice.
- Clarity was provided regarding the need to meet regulated safety standards in the production of the individual components that are utilised in the construction of high-rise buildings. The acknowledgement that there is a need for testing when multiple components are used in constructing an element of a building.
- Clarity was sought regarding the definition of 'high-rise' buildings.
- Clarity was sought surrounding current legislation in relation to the implementation of sprinkler systems.

RESOLVED-

- a) The Scrutiny Board recommended that a submission is made to Government to address points around the strengthening of building regulations, who regulates the regulator and if Local Authorities should have the power to regulate all buildings over certain heights.
- b) Noted the information contained within the report to Executive Board on 17th July 2017.

16 Draft Terms of Reference - Scrutiny Inquiry into Sustainable Development

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which sets out the draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into Sustainable Development.

The following were in attendance:

- Tim Hill, Chief Planning Officer
- David Feeney, Head of Strategic Planning

The key areas for discussion were:

- An introduction and overview of definitions surrounding Sustainable development and consideration towards current legislation and challenges facing the planning sector.
- The extent to which having no specific development is more advantageous than allowing poor development within the city.
- Reassurance was sought surrounding the accuracy of housing delivery target figures contained within the Core Strategy.
- The need to ensure that elements of sustainability are factored into discussions and decisions surrounding planning applications more strongly.
- The difficulty for planners to make arguments concerning social sustainability more tangible than those in relation to environmental and economic benefits.
- Clarity was sought regarding the opportunity to introduce Supplementary Planning Documents in relation to Air Quality in order to address air quality diminutions on large sites.

RESOLVED-

- a) That the Terms of Reference for the Board's Inquiry into Sustainable Development be approved.
- b) That the Board notes that the Terms of Reference may include additional information during the inquiry should the Board identify any further scope or request further witnesses or evidence.

17 Directors Response - Scrutiny Inquiry 'Advancing Bus Service Provision'

The Director of City Development and the Director of Transport Services (WYCA) submitted a report which details their response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (City Development) following the inquiry into Advancing Bus Service Provision.

The following were in attendance:

-Andrew Hall, Head of Transportation

The key areas for discussion were:

- Confirmation that all recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board are accepted.
- The relationship between local bus services and congestion in the city. Clarity was sought surrounding major areas congestion and the potential implementation of practical solutions.
- The need to ensure that the impact of the Bus Inquiry is measured against relevant success criteria.
- The need to ensure that Bus Operator's enhance their responsiveness and accountability in local communities.
- The exploration of powers stated in the recently passed Bus Act to introduce local opportunities, such as Franchising, in order to increase local control of Bus Services.
- Concern was raised surrounding the East Leeds Orbital Road (ELOR) in relation to the enlargement of bus lay-bys.

RESOLVED-

- a) Noted the response to the recommendations;
- b) Endorsed the approach outlined within the report; and
- c) Identified that progress, impact and outcomes be reported to the Scrutiny Board as part of the recommendation tracking process.
- d) The tracking of Scrutiny Recommendations will be scheduled into the work programme for February 2018. With an earlier report to be scheduled with specific regard to the strategic congestion alleviation plan for Leeds and progress on the ELOR.

18 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which detailed the Scrutiny Board's draft work programme for the current municipal year.

Sandra Pentelow, Principal Scrutiny Adviser was in attendance to respond to members questions.

The draft Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure & Investment) work schedule for 2017/18 was appended to the report.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The structure of the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year and the time framework for the inquiry.

RESOLVED- The Scrutiny Board noted the content of the report and agreed the work programme.

19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be on Wednesday 27th September at 10:30am, with a pre-meeting at 10am.

The meeting concluded at 12:20pm.