

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS)

MONDAY, 23RD JUNE, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, C Campbell, G Driver,
C Fox, R Harington, V Kendall, J Lewis,
R Pryke, A Shelbrooke and L Yeadon

1 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Shelbrooke, Yeadon and Pryke declared personal interests in Agenda Item 3, Input to Work Programme 2008/09, due to their respective positions with the University of Leeds, Royal Mencap Society and the Regional Flood Defence Committee. Minute no. 3 refers.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Murray.

3 Input to Work Programme 2008/09

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided information and guidance to the Board on developing the work programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year. Documents appended to the report included the Draft Memorandum of the Local Area Agreement, the Leeds Strategic Plan and the Council Business Plan 2008-11.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Councillor Richard Brett, Leader of the Council
- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
- Martin Dean, Deputy Director, Leeds Initiative

The following issues were discussed in relation to the Board's potential Work Programme and areas of interest:

- Beacon Status – it was reported that the Council had been awarded Beacon Status for Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements. James Rogers explained the selection criteria for achieving Beacon Status and reported that funding was available in those areas that had achieved Beacon Status to share best practice with other Local Authorities.
- Flooding – It was reported that a Scrutiny Commission had previously investigated flooding in Leeds and the Scrutiny Board (City Development) had carried out work in this area. Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water had

implemented flood defence works at Wykebeck and major work was due to take place on defences for the River Aire. Flood defence works had also been carried out at Kirkstall and Allerton Bywater.

- Housing developments.
- James Rogers informed the Board of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and how it changed the role of the Authority in terms of partnership working. It sought to put Elected Members at the forefront of partnership activity and reinforced the way that the Local Area Agreements would be delivered. The Act also imposed a duty on partners to co-operate and proposed mechanisms to ensure that partners would participate in scrutiny inquiries.
- Councillor Brett addressed the Board. He referred to the large number of partnership organisations the Council was involved with and the scope that it provided for the Board. Many of the partnerships that the Council was involved with were relatively new or under development and he felt that the Board could play an influential role in the shaping of these partnerships. He also highlighted the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as key partners in building stronger communities.
- Small businesses – Members suggested that the Board consider an inquiry into Small Businesses. It was reported that a range of organisations supported small businesses, both in the City and across the region.
- University fees - it was reported that the Scrutiny Board (City Development) had previously considered the impact of students on the economy of Leeds and this had briefly covered fees.
- Development of Skills and Training – who was responsible for the delivery of these? This was felt to be a major issue for the city.
- The role of regional partnerships including the Leeds City Region, Association of West Yorkshire Authorities and Yorkshire Forward. The Leeds City Region list of priorities included Transport, Housing, Innovation and Skills.
- European City ambitions – it was reported that there were difficulties in comparing European cities due to varying characteristics and geography. The Leeds Initiative had set up the Going up a League Board whose aims were to drive forward outcomes which met Leeds' aim to become a successful European City. In relation to this Members discussed issues including the provision of an Arena and lack of late night public transport to and from the city.
- Increased responsibilities to the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations and how these work in partnership with the Council.
- The future of regional bodies and their roles.
- Interactivity between partners of all levels in Leeds and on a regional basis.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion with officers and the Leader of the Council be used to inform the development and approval of the Board's Work Programme.

4 Determine Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which contained information on determining the Board's Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year. Also attached to the report was information on Inquiry Selection Criteria.

Members discussed issues raised with officers and the Leader of the Council and made the following suggestions for inclusion to the Work Programme:

- Establish a working group to consider Small Businesses.
- To consider requesting a report from the Regional Housing Partnership pending discussion with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods.
- Transport – It was reported that the Chief Executive would be attending the next meeting when this issue could be discussed.
- To invite the Chief Executive and Chair of the Leeds Initiative's Narrowing the Gap Executive to a meeting with a view to presenting half yearly/quarterly reports to update the Board.
- To receive a report on the review of the Leeds Strategic Plan – progress update.
- To establish a Skills Working Group.
- To draft terms of reference into an inquiry regarding the Role of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.

RESOLVED –

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1) That the issues raised be included in the Board's Work Programme for 2008/09.

2) That the Board establish a Small Business Working Group comprising Cllrs Atha, Bentley and Kendall to identify if an inquiry was appropriate and if so to draw up suitable terms of reference for consideration by the Board

3) That the Board establish a Skills Working Group comprising Cllrs Bentley, Driver, and Yeadon to determine if an inquiry would be appropriate and draw up suitable terms of reference for consideration by the Board

4) That an inquiry be undertaken on the Voluntary and Community Faith sector and that terms of reference be submitted to the Board's next meeting for consideration.

5 Date and Times of Future Meetings

RESOLVED –

That the dates and times of meetings of the Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships) for the 2008/09 Municipal Year be held as follows:

Monday, 21 July 2008

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 21st July, 2008

Thursday, 25 September 2008
Thursday, 23 October 2008
Thursday, 20 November 2008
Wednesday, 17 December 2008
Thursday, 15 January 2009
Thursday, 26 February 2009
Thursday, 26 March 2009
Thursday, 30 April 2009

All at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meetings at 9.30 a.m.)