

## SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY, 15TH JULY, 2008

**PRESENT:** Councillor R Pryke in the Chair

Councillors A Barker, C Beverley,  
A Hussain, J Jarosz, M Lobley, J Matthews,  
A Ogilvie, R Procter, N Taggart and  
G Wilkinson

### 21 Declaration of Interests

No Member declarations of interest were made.

### 22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Harington and Gettings.

### 23 Minutes of Last Meetings

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and of the Call-In meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 24 Input to the Work Programme 2008/09 - Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing Members with information and guidance to assist the Board in developing its work programme for 2008/09 in the particular areas of **culture and leisure**.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor John Procter, Executive Board Member with portfolio responsibility for Leisure, Jean Dent, Director City Development, Martin Farrington, Acting Chief Recreation Officer and Catherine Blanshard, Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer, to speak on current issues in culture and leisure and to respond to questions from the Board. Paul Maney, Head of Performance Management was also in attendance.

The Executive Board Member with portfolio responsibility for leisure and the Director summarised the key activities, priorities and challenges facing the department for the year ahead. Particular reference was made to the continued pressures on the budget in culture and leisure, reduced funding streams, rising heating costs, the economic down turn and the proposals not to proceed with the Sports Trust.

Members commented on and sought further clarification on particular issues for possible inclusion in the Board's future work programme. These included:

- **Cross border activity** – the extent to which Leeds City Council was providing services to non-residents and that Leeds as a focal point for visitors helped to generate income.
- **Tennis** provision in Leeds, particularly for the young – the need to publicise the recent decision to abolish charges and a view that more needed to be done to promote tennis. It was reported that a similar argument could be put for all other sporting activities whose popularity changed on a regular basis.
- **Swimming** provision and the funding implications and impact of the Government's proposal to provide free swimming to 2012.
- **On-line booking** of services - It was reported that, whilst a number of services could be booked on-line e.g. 90% of Grand Theatre bookings for some shows done on-line, the complexity of the service and charging arrangements was hindering progress and consideration was being given to finding ways to simplify these.
- The over subscription and competition for places at **swimming classes in Wetherby**.
- Improving the **visitor experience** at sports centres.
- **Arts Grants** provision: an outstanding issue from the previous Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure) – Members requested information on the allocation and administration of this grant.
- **The Sports Trust** – Members requested more information on the proposals not to proceed with the Trust and the likely effects. Members were advised that a report would be presented to the Executive Board later in the week recommending that the Council did not proceed with the Sports Trust at this moment in time.
- **Sports Centres** – Members were advised of the challenges faced by the Council to improve facilities at sports centres, in particular to encourage more customers and to make them more **fuel efficient**. It was pointed out that a quarter of all customers attending Leeds City Council sports centres either don't pay or pay a reduced rate.
- The **Carriage Works Theatre** – seating, sight lines and the heating. It was stated that this development had been extremely successful and popular and that income generation had exceeded expectations, but there was recognition of the issues referred to, particularly the amount of legroom and comfort of the seating.
- **Pudsey Leisure Centre** – A Member expressed concern at the level of cleaning at this Leisure Centre and the appropriate officer agreed to investigate.
- **Parks and Greenspace Strategy** – Members requested an update on this strategy.
- **Parish Councils** and their relationship with the Planning Unit.

The Chair thanked Officers for attending. The Board agreed to consider Agenda Item 7(b) 'Determine Work Programme 2008/09' at the end of the meeting under Agenda Item 10 'Current Work Programme' (Minute No. 27 refers).

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That information on the Arts Grant be circulated to Members of the Board.
- (c) That information on the Sports Trust submitted to the Executive Board on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008 be circulated to Members of this Board.
- (d) That a report on the Parks and Greenspace Strategy be submitted to the Board at a future meeting.

**25 Request for Scrutiny regarding Delays in Adding Paths to the Council's Definitive Map as Rights of Way**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing Members with information on a request for scrutiny which had been made by Shadwell Parish Council concerning **alleged delays in getting paths added to the Council's definitive map as rights of way.**

The Chair welcomed Parish Councillor Robert Dyson to the meeting to explain in more detail the concerns of Shadwell Parish Council.

Martin Farrington, Chief Recreation Officer and Joanne Clough, Countryside and Access Manager were in attendance to respond to questions from the Board.

Councillor Dyson informed the Board that there were two issues: one relating to a footpath close to a property which the new owner of the property had closed, claiming it was on private land. The other issue related to an existing permissive footpath on some land belonging to Leeds City Council. In both instances the Parish Council had applied to Leeds City Council for these footpaths to be placed on the definitive map but were told that there would be between an 8 and 10 year delay in dealing with the applications. It was considered that this delay would be detrimental to any application succeeding and the Parish Council was therefore requesting that scrutiny look into the resources committed to this area.

The Chair reminded the meeting that the Scrutiny Board did not have executive powers to make any decision on this matter and could only make recommendations.

The Chief Recreation Officer informed the meeting that the intention was to submit a formal report on the issues to the September meeting of the Board. Members therefore agreed that any decision on holding a scrutiny inquiry should be deferred until the September meeting.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the report and request for scrutiny by Shadwell Parish Council be noted.

- (b) That the decision on whether further scrutiny would be appropriate be deferred until the September meeting of the Board when a report from the City Development Department would be submitted.

(Note: Councillor Taggart arrived at 11.05am during the consideration of this item and Councillors Wilkinson and Ogilvie left the meeting at 11.15am at the conclusion of this item.)

## **26 Inquiry on Residents Parking Schemes - Draft Terms of Reference**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching the draft terms of reference for an inquiry on residents parking schemes which the Board had agreed to carry out at its last meeting.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the report. In attendance to respond to queries and comments from the Board were Howard Claxton, Traffic Engineering Manager, City Development Department, and Graham Wilson, Head of Enforcement, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department.

The Chair informed the Board that he had asked the Principal Scrutiny Adviser to write to Members of the Council on residents parking schemes under Session 2 of the inquiry.

Members discussed the Terms of Reference. It was agreed that under Session 1, the report of the Director of City Development include reference to possible abuse of resident parking schemes.

With regard to queries on the **Blue Badge scheme**, as this did not form part of the inquiry into residents parking, it was agreed that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser would write to Social Services requesting information on the scheme and would forward this information separately to Members.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser stated that the issue of parking charges was not relevant to this inquiry and was the responsibility of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods).

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Terms of Reference for the inquiry on residents parking schemes be agreed.
- (b) That information on the Blue Badge Scheme be provided to Members of the Board.

## **27 Current Work Programme**

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report providing Members with a copy of the Board's current Work Programme. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and the Executive Board minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were also attached to the report.

At this point in the meeting the Board, as previously decided (see Minute No. 24), agreed to consider Agenda Item 7(b) 'Determine Work Programme 2008/09'.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the current Board's Work Programme be received and noted.
- (b) That an update report on the **Parks and Greenspace Strategy** be considered at the Board's September 2008 meeting.
- (c) That **visits** to various venues be included as part of the Board's Work Programme.
- (d) That a report from the City Development Department on alleged delays in getting paths added to the Council's definitive map as **rights of way** be considered at the September 2008 meeting of the Board.

At this point in the meeting, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser read a **Press Release** provided on behalf of the Board regarding the introduction of residents parking schemes. The Board agreed to release the Press statement.

**28 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at 10.00am with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30am.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am.