

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH) - CONSULTATIVE MEETING

THURSDAY, 22ND JULY, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, K Dye, J Goddard,
A Hussain, L Martin, M Shahzad,
N Sharpe, J Taylor and P Wadsworth

10 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

11 Notes

RECOMMENDED – That the notes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

12 Co-Opted Members

The report of the Head of Democratic Services referred to the provision made within the Council's Constitution for the appointment of co-opted members to Scrutiny Boards.

The Chair informed the Board that it had not previously been procedure to have Co-opted Members and that this should continue unless it was felt that there was a particular Inquiry or Agenda Item that would require some outside input.

RECOMMENDED – That the report be noted.

13 City and District Centres

The report of the Director of City Development informed the Board of the progress that had been made regarding work looking into the future of city and local centres.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member
- Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer, Culture & Economy
- Fiona Bolam, Head of Economic Policy
- Vanessa Smith, Policy Officer

The Board received a presentation: The Future of City & Local Centres: Update on Policy & Research.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Surveys during the research period had been conducted on-line due to the lockdown.
- It had not yet been determined how resources would be priorities between the city centre and local centres.
- The use of the city centre as a more inclusive area rather than a focus on retail and spending. This was particularly important for young people.
- Provision of green and open spaces within the city centre.
- How could car use be deterred?
- Concern that the study had not covered all areas particularly the larger social housing areas without local centres. It was reported that there had been a focus on the city and town centres and did miss some of the smaller centres.
- Although the survey had indicated that bus usage would not reach pre-pandemic levels, it was stressed that this was based on public opinion at the height of the lockdown and may not reflect what actually happens.
- The surveys would be repeated to reflect the changing situation.
- This work had started before the Levelling Up Fund had commenced. It was hoped that the work carried out so far would help to shape any bids to the Levelling Up funds.

RECOMMENDED – That the report and discussion be noted.

14 Employment and Skills

The report of the Director of City Development highlighted the Council's work in the process of refreshing the Talent & Skills Plan. The current plan was published in 2017 and needed to be brought up to date to respond to national and regional policy changes as well as the city's post covid economic recovery and changing labour market trends.

Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer, Culture and Economy gave the Board a short presentation.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- There were now thirteen anchor organisations and these included Leeds based organisations and some who operated on a national basis. There had been involvement with private sector partners and this would be reviewed. An update could be provided to the Board later.

- Devolution deal – an update could be provided in relation to employment and skills at a later date.
- It was proposed to run a workshop to study data with regards to what was happening with the labour market in Leeds.
- Leeds was the major economic centre of West Yorkshire and the wider area and did attract people from further afield for employment.
- Data had now been collected at a local ward level and further information could be provided to the Board later in the year.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

15 Local Plan Update

The report of the Director of City Development informed the Board of the proposed scope for the Local Plan Update, namely a focus on new or revised planning policy to help further address the climate emergency. On this basis, Members are provided with the consultation documents and requested to provide their comments on the Plan.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member
- Adam Harvatt, Group Manager, Policy & Plans

The Board received a presentation on the Leeds Local Plan Update: Scoping Consultation 2021. The consultation would finish on 13 September 2021 and highlighted the main topics for discussion:

- Carbon Reduction
- Flood Risk
- Green Infrastructure
- Place Making
- Sustainable Infrastructure

In response to comments and questions from Members, the following was discussed:

- Concern that many of the issues were aspirational and would not be able to be mandated or enforced through the planning process. It was reported that where these issues could be demonstrated to be viable and deliverable, further work could be undertaken with the development industry and be enshrined within future policy.
- The National Planning Policy Framework was a key part of the planning process and local policy had to be in accordance with national guidance and any changes to this.
- How can policy and guidance influence individual choice.
- Car parking standards – better designed places with sustainable transport links give a positive choice. Car parking would be covered in a separate transport consultation.

- The need to demonstrate that zero carbon development can be viable.

RECOMMENDED – That the report and discussion be noted.

16 Work Programme

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report detailing the Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Reference was made to the two requests for scrutiny that had been submitted. It was proposed that an additional meeting be arranged for early September to consider the referral in the name of Cllr Robinson.

It was noted that a further request had been made via the Chair by Tim McSharry. The Chair noted that the Executive Member is due to meet with Tim and a number of colleagues to discuss their concerns and it was therefore agreed that a view would be taken as to whether the matter be progressed by scrutiny once the outcome of that meeting was understood.

Members were also informed that the draft terms of reference for the Road Safety Inquiry which would commence in September had been prepared.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the report and work schedule be noted.
- (2) That an additional meeting be arranged in early September to consider the referral for Scrutiny from Councillor Robinson.

17 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board was due to be held on Wednesday, 29 September 2021 at 10.30 a.m. Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.15 a.m.