

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

INQUIRY INTO THE EAST AND SOUTH EAST LEEDS (EASEL) REGENERATION SCHEME

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The overall aim of the EASEL regeneration project is to create sustainable mixed communities in eastern and south eastern parts of the city. The two fundamental objectives of the project are to make East and South East Leeds a place that people want to live and work and to tackle existing deprivation and overcome the negative perceptions of the area. To achieve this, the headline objectives for the EASEL Regeneration Plan are as follows:

- Creating affordable, attractive and high quality mixed tenure housing;
- Increasing housing choice for existing residents and attracting new higher income residents to achieve a desired and sustainable housing market;
- Investing in new and existing assets to transform the image and attractiveness of the area, realising the potential of its high quality green spaces;
- Creating lively, busy centres for new neighbourhoods with good schools and local services;
- Solving the underlying social and economic problems of the area focusing on improving attainment and skills, reducing crime and blight and promoting employment and enterprise;
- Capitalising on existing public and private sector investment opportunities in schools, hospitals, and the neighbouring Aire Valley.

1.2 The project has been designed in a series of inter-connected phases, which involves the development of packages of land for housing, green space, leisure, commercial and other uses. The first phase of the project, based around the development of eight sites in Gipton and Seacroft, will be a direct land transaction contracted using a strategic development agreement. The subsequent phases represent approximately eighty five percent of the project and will be delivered through a joint venture company.

1.3 The EASEL regeneration project has been underway since Executive Board gave approval to procure a partner to regenerate the EASEL area in January 2004. In July 2006, the Executive Board approved the offer from Bellway plc for the sale of the phase one sites subject to resolution of site development costs. Executive Board approval of this phase was also subject to satisfactory progress being made on the proposed joint venture partnership. Since January 2004, the Executive

Board has received numerous progress reports and continues to monitor the developments of the EASEL project.

- 1.4 However, in February 2008, the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) received a request for a Scrutiny inquiry to be undertaken into the EASEL regeneration project following concerns that there had been delays in progress with the project and that people living in the EASEL area were not being kept informed of what was happening. In consideration of this request, the Board agreed to conduct an inquiry which focuses around the process arrangements in place for the EASEL project and explores the opportunities available to the Council and its partners for communicating effectively about the project with all the key stakeholders, and particularly the people living in the EASEL area. It was noted that the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is also conducting work around the governance arrangements of the EASEL project. The Scrutiny Board therefore does not wish to duplicate the work of the Committee.
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Board is keen to explore the future role of Scrutiny in reviewing the progress of the EASEL regeneration project and recognised that this inquiry would need to be continued in the new 2009/2010 municipal year.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- Details of the master planning programme for the EASEL project, with particular reference to housing densities and other regeneration outcomes;
 - The relationship of EASEL to the Aire Valley Regeneration Scheme;
 - Details of consultations carried out with the people living in the EASEL area and opportunities available for improving communications with key stakeholders, including the public, in future;
 - The potential role of Scrutiny in reviewing the progress of the EASEL regeneration scheme.

3.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

- 3.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.4 the views of the relevant Director and Executive Member have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these Terms of Reference. Full details are available on request to the Scrutiny Support Unit.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 4.1 The Inquiry will take place over a number of sessions. These sessions will involve working group meetings which will provide flexibility for the

Board to gather and consider evidence that will aid the discussions during the public Board meetings.

- 4.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change and will inevitably continue into the 2009/10 municipal year.

5.0 Submission of evidence

- 5.1 Dates for any working group meetings and/or site visits are to be arranged.

5.2 Session one – Scrutiny Board Meeting (11th May 2009)

To consider an initial report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods setting out the background to the EASEL regeneration project, including a project timeline.

5.3 Session two – Scrutiny Board Meeting (July 2009 - date to be confirmed)

To consider evidence in relation to the following areas:

- The master planning programme for the EASEL project, with particular reference to housing densities and other regeneration outcomes;
- The relationship of EASEL to the Aire Valley Regeneration Scheme.

5.4 Session three – Scrutiny Board Meeting (September/October 2009 - date to be confirmed)

To consider evidence in relation to the following areas:

- Consultations carried out with the people living in the EASEL area and opportunities available for improving communications with key stakeholders, including the public, in future;
- The potential role of Scrutiny in reviewing the progress of the EASEL regeneration scheme.

5.5 Session four – Scrutiny Board Meeting (November/December 2009 – date to be confirmed)

- To agree final report

6.0 Witnesses

- 6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing
Chief Regeneration Officer
Head of East Projects Office
Senior Project Manager, EASEL, Regeneration Team
Representative(s) from Bellways plc
Consultation provider (once contracted)

7.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements

- 7.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 7.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.

8.0 Measures of success

- 8.1 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.