

SCRUTINY BOARD (RESOURCES AND COUNCIL SERVICES)

WEDNESDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, A Blackburn,
B Chastney, R Grahame, J Hardy,
C Macniven, J Matthews, V Morgan,
M Robinson and R Wood

44 Declarations of Interest

None were received

45 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bentley, JL Carter, Dawson and Lowe.

Councillors Akhtar, Matthews Morgan and Robinson were in attendance as substitutes.

46 Call - In Decision - Briefing Paper

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development informed Members of the Call In arrangements in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the options of action available to the Board. It was reported that the following options were available to the Board:

- Release the decision for implementation
- Recommend that the decision be reconsidered
- Recommend that the decision be reconsidered and refer the matter to full Council if recommendation not accepted

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the procedures adopted as detailed within the report.

47 Call In - Beckett Park Building, Foxcroft Close, Leeds, LS6 3NT - Internal Refurbishment Works

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the background papers to a decision which had been Called In, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The decision was a Delegated Decision Notice of the Chief Officer Financial Development regarding the release of capital expenditure for internal refurbishment works at the Beckett Park building.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Councillor S Bentley – Signatory to the Call In
- Councillor J Illingworth - Signatory to the Call In
- Maureen Taylor - Chief Officer Financial Development
- Gary Milner – Head of 14 -19 Strategy, Children's Services
- Denise Finch, Project Manager, Children's Services
- Christine Addison, Acting Chief Asset Management Officer
- Paul Quarmby – Service Project Manager – City Development
- Iain Priest – Capital Finance Officer – Children's Services

Councillor Illingworth and Councillor Bentley outlined the reasons for the Call In of the decision. These included the following:

- The lack of detail in the report in terms of alternative locations considered and the lack of evidence within the report to support the statement that Beckett Park Primary School was the ideal location for Vine
- the lack of early and appropriate local ward member involvement and consultation
- The lack of robust administrative processes which would alert decision makers if adequate consultation with members had not taken place
- An opportunity to raise a more fundamental question regarding capital schemes, the decision making process and where accountability lies.

In response to the concerns raised, Officers present raised the following issues:

- Acknowledgment that Member consultation had been inadequate on this occasion
- Acknowledgment of the lack of detail in relation to option appraisals within the delegated decision report
- Reiteration that the Beckett Park scheme offered the best solution

Councillor Illingworth and Councillor Bentley were invited to summarise the reasons for calling in the decision. In doing so, they stated that had they been offered adequate detail, within the delegated decision report, of the option appraisal undertaken, resulting in Beckett Park being chosen, and had there been sufficient Member involvement and consultation then it would have been likely that this decision would not have been Called In. However, the opportunity to raise the wider issue of delegated decisions, capital schemes and accountability was welcomed.

Members were asked to consider the options available to them.

(Councillor A Blackburn joined the meeting during this item at 10.20am)

48 Outcome of Call In

It was agreed unanimously by the Board that the decision be released for implementation.

It was similarly agreed that a working group of the Scrutiny Board be established to look at the issues raised in terms of the way in which delegated decisions in relation to capital schemes are made, the point at which decisions are published and decision makers accountable and the level of Member consultation during the decision making process.

RESOLVED – (i) to release the decision for implementation.
(ii) to establish a scrutiny working group

49 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 5th December 2011 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting at 9.30 a.m. for all Board Members.