

SCRUTINY BOARD (HOUSING AND REGENERATION)

TUESDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor J Procter in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, D Collins, J Cummins,
M Iqbal, V Morgan, D Nagle and
G Wilkinson

Mr G Hall – Co-opted Member

70 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the December meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration).

71 Late Item

There were no formal late items of business to consider, however the Chair agreed to accept the following as supplementary information:-

- Executive Board - Minutes of a Meeting held on 12th December 2012 - Appendix 3 refers (Agenda Item 10) (Minute 79 refers)

The document was not available at the time of the agenda despatch, but subsequently made available to the public on the Council's website.

72 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary and other interests declared at the meeting.

73 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors P Grahame, S Lay and C Towler.

74 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2012 be approved as a correct record.

75 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a) Brownfield Sites (Minute 67 refers)

The Chair referred to the above issue and reported that he would be meeting shortly with Mr Alan Gay, Director of Resources and Acting Deputy Chief Executive on the Board's recommendation that all officers owning development land or prospective development land in the City of Leeds or shares in companies involved in its development of such land should be required to register their interests in a register held by the Chief Executive's Office which was open to the public on demand.

It was agreed to invite Mr Gay to the next meeting on 29th January 2013 to update the Board on progress in implementing this recommendation.

76 Regeneration Staffing Position

Referring to Minute 66 of the meeting held on 27th November 2012, the Director of City Development submitted a report on the staffing position in relation to the Regeneration Unit of the City Development Directorate.

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:

- Mr Martin Farrington, Director, City Development
- Mr Adam Brannen, Programme Manager, City Development

The Director of City Development highlighted the rationale behind the recent decision to move the Regeneration Division to the City Development Directorate. He stated that he was anxious to develop much closer working relationships and operational efficiencies with other services in his Directorate including asset management, planning, highways and economic development.

In summary, specific reference was made to a number of issues including:

- The concerns expressed that the reduced staffing levels within the Regeneration Division could affect the progress in relation to the development of Brownfield sites in the city
(The Director of City Development responded and indicated that there had been no substantive changes to staffing levels in recent months and that bringing forward brownfield sites for redevelopment was a priority. He made reference to EASEL and the current economic climate and the consequential need to have a mix of housing developers in East Leeds that would share the risk. He reported that he would be taking a report to the Executive Board in January 2013 on a revised strategy for delivering Brownfield sites in the light of current market conditions, including EASEL)
- Clarification of the current staffing levels within the Regeneration Unit
(The Programme Manager responded and informed the meeting that with flexible working arrangements there were currently 23.8 Fte posts within the Regeneration Division)

RESOLVED-

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That the Director of City Development submit a report on the revised strategy for delivering brownfield sites in the city including those in East and South East Leeds (EASEL) for consideration at either the January/February 2013 Board meeting.

77 Former Residential Properties Utilised for Non-Residential/Community Office Purposes

Referring to Minute 38 of the meeting held on 25th September 2012, the Chief Officer Statutory Housing submitted a report updating Member on progress in relation to a piece of work undertaken to assess the number of residential Council properties which are being used for non-residential, community or office purposes.

Appended to the report was a copy of a list of properties being used for non-residential, community or office purposes for the information/comment of the meeting.

Mr John Statham, Head of Housing Partnerships, Environment and Neighbourhoods was in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In summary, specific reference was made to a number of issues including:

- To note that since the initial report on this issue the number of residential properties being used for office/community/non-residential purposes had increased from 49 to 55 units. It was suggested that a further property should be added to the list known as Gipton Access Point, Coldcotes Drive and that one and two Lakeland Court and 7 Queensview be removed from the list as they were no longer potential residential properties having been made into communal areas or too small
(The Head of Housing Partnerships agreed to action these)
- The view that officers should be contacting appropriate lease holders now with a view to identifying alternative suitable premises in order to bring as many premises back into residential use and not wait until the leases are due to expire
(The Head of Housing Partnerships responded and supported this approach wherever possible)

RESOLVED-That the contents of the report and appendices be noted and welcomed.

(Councillor M Iqbal joined the meeting at 10.40am during discussions of the above item)

78 Quarter 2 Performance Report 2012/13

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)/ Directors of Environment and Neighbourhoods and City Development submitted a report summarising the performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city related to Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Appendix 1– Performance Reports for 2012/13 Quarter 2 City Priority Plan Priorities relevant to the Board
- Appendix 2 – Directorate Priorities and Indicators

The following representatives were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

- Mr Paul Maney, Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance, City Development
- Ms Maggie Gjessing, Housing Investment Manager, City Development
- Mr George Munson, Energy and Climate Change Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods

The Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance introduced the report and outlined key areas of good performance and highlighted the specific challenges brought out in the report.

The Housing Investment Manager updated the meeting and referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and stated that within the allocated timeframe, a revised year end target of 400 not 500 new affordable homes would be met. She added further that the department did produce a forecast for the year which was as accurate as they could make it, but it was partially dependent on market led activity and partially on the housing association programmes which were agreed over the comprehensive spending review period (2011-15) for delivery.

In summary, specific reference was made to a number of issues including:

- Clarification if the department had undertaken a unit cost analysis for installing Solar PV panels on 10,000 Council homes as opposed to the delivering the Wrap Up Leeds scheme
(The Energy and Climate Change Manager responded and confirmed that work had been undertaken in this area. It was considered on balance because of changes in Government subsidies that it was currently more cost effective to improve insulation in the home and other measures rather than install solar panel)
- Clarification of the subsidy changes for Solar panels and their maintenance
- The concerns expressed about the slowness of affordable housing completions and that the information submitted to the Board in this regard was inaccurate
(The Head of Strategic Planning Policy and Performance responded and outlined the report clearance procedures which had resulted in the information contained within the report being out of date)
- The concern that the Council does not insist that draft Heads of Terms for Section 106 agreements were submitted with an applicant's planning application
(The Head of Strategic Planning Policy and Performance responded and agreed to follow up this issue with the Chief Planning Officer)

RESOLVED –That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

79 Work Schedule

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the current municipal year.

Appended to the report was a copy of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:

- Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) Work Schedule for 2012/2013 Municipal Year (Appendix 1 refers)
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions – 10th September 2012 - 3rd December 2012 (Appendix 2 refers)
- Executive Board – Minutes of a Meeting held on 12th December 2012 (Appendix 3 refers)

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser, Scrutiny Support presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments.

RESOLVED -

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That the Executive Board minutes and Forward Plan be noted.
- c) That the work schedule be approved as now outlined.

80 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 29th January 2013 at 10.00am in the Civic Hall, Leeds (Pre meeting for Board Members at 9.30am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.20pm)