
MEETING	ECONOMIC & CITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	20 NOVEMBER 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS SEMLYEN (CHAIR), BARNES, BURTON, D'AGORNE, POTTER, RUNCIMAN, STEWARD (SUBSTITUTE FOR COUNCILLOR WATT) AND HODGSON (SUBSTITUTE FOR COUNCILLOR RICHES)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS RICHES & WATT

26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, other than those listed on the standing declarations of interest attached to the agenda, that they might have had in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Hodgson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 (Update on Implementation of Recommendations Arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review) as he had carried out work for York Continental Market.

Councillor Potter declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 (2012/13 Finance and Performance Monitor 2 Report) as a member of York Wheels. She took no part in discussion during this item.

Councillor Runciman declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 (Draft Final Report- E-Planning Facilities) as a member of New Earswick and Wigginton Parish Council.

No other interests were declared.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 September 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. A further registration to speak, which had not been registered with the Democracy Officer before the meeting, was permitted by the Chair.

Mr Jennings a representative of Dringhouses & Woodthorpe Planning Panel spoke regarding Agenda Item 5) (Draft Final Report- E-Planning Facilities). He referred to the need for a suitable venue to made available, with appropriate IT equipment, that Planning Panels could use on a regular basis to access E-Planning. He also stated that there was a need for training for Planning Panel members, in order to be up to date with current and future legislation.

Andy Chase a representative from Micklegate Planning Panel also spoke on Agenda Item 5. He commented that the feedback that he had received from other Planning Panels suggested that the transition to E-Planning had not been smooth. He highlighted that concerns had been raised about the accessibility of planning documents on the Public Access Website, in particular that each document relating to a specific application had to be downloaded separately rather than all in a pack. He also felt that it would be convenient for Planning Panels to meet at West Offices. However, he also felt that there a paper archive copy of documents associated with each planning application should be available.

He had concerns about room hire, in particular the use of local libraries and the new Council HQ and their access hours. He also highlighted that there were further costs to purchasing equipment for Planning Panels and Parish Councils, such as maintenance and insurance costs.

29. ATTENDANCE OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES.

Members received a report from the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services which outlined the work taking place in the Housing aspect of her portfolio and its links to Council priorities.

Members raised a number of concerns with the Cabinet Member which included;

- What was being done to reduce the waiting list for Council housing, given that there appeared to be a significant increase in numbers on the list since July?
- Whether people had been encouraged to move from the Council housing waiting list on to a private housing list.
- Whether the amount of affordable homes available and in development was sufficient to house York residents.

In response to these questions, the Cabinet Member stated that private landlords were being encouraged by the YorHomes agency to take on residents who paid lower rents. She also stated that a downsizing programme would be launched and it would seek to promote residents being housed in more suitably sized accommodation.

The Cabinet Member also responded that those on the Council housing waiting list were being encouraged to move to private properties where possible, and that landlords in the city had been participating in a scheme to take on those residents on benefits as tenants in their properties.

In relation to the development of affordable homes, the Cabinet Member referred to a recent Housing Summit that had been held with a number of major developers.

Some Members asked the Cabinet Member about the Accreditation Scheme which hoped to raise standards in the Privately Rented Sector.

Members were informed that the Accreditation for Residential Landlords was currently voluntary, and then it was hoped to make it compulsory for Residential Landlords to be accredited.

It was also noted that the Student Unions from both of the Universities would only promote rented properties from Landlords with accredited status.
The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for her attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON: In order to update the Committee on the Housing aspect of the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services' portfolio.

30. DRAFT FINAL REPORT - E-PLANNING FACILITIES REVIEW.

Members considered a report which set out the findings and recommendations from the E-Planning Facilities Review. It asked them to endorse the recommendations arising from the review prior to them being presented to the Cabinet for consideration.

In response to points raised by the speakers under Public Participation, Members were informed that they could make a recommendation regarding the timeliness of uploading documents associated with planning applications online. Some Members felt that information such as when documents would be visible online and when additional information had been added on to the website, would be particularly important.

Members felt that there were exceptions when printed copies of information that would normally be only accessible online could be produced; such as when very large applications were considered. Some Members felt that with these types of application a set number of documents could be printed off to be shared amongst interested parties. Some suggested that the copies of documents held by Planning Officers could be archived at the central library.

Further discussion ensued between Members and Officers about public access and transparency. Some Members pointed out that if a person currently viewed a planning application in the Council Offices, then they had the opportunity to ask the Planning Officer questions.

They were concerned however, if these documents were kept at public libraries, the library staff might not be able to answer specific questions related to the application.

Some Members felt that room hire at West Offices and through the library service should be free or at a very low cost. Other Members agreed with this suggestion and expressed the opinion that as Planning Panels and Parish Councils were voluntary, they should not be charged or charged as little as possible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that the Chair of the Task Group, in conjunction with the Scrutiny Officer, amend the recommendations and report to reflect the discussions at today's meeting prior to it being presented to Cabinet

REASON: To complete this scrutiny review.

31. SECOND QUARTER FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITOR REPORT 2012/13.

Members considered a report which provided details of the 2012/13 latest position for both finance and performance in City & Environmental Services (excluding Highways, Fleet and Waste), Economic Development and Housing Services.

Members questioned Officers on the following issues;

- What measures were in place to combat an overspend of £439k in the Housing Services General Fund?
- In regards to car parking income, had a review taken place into whether income could be raised by changing fees for the type of stay?
- Were disabled facilities considered by the City Team in the Reinvigorate York project?

In response to a question about an overspend in the Housing General Fund, Officers responded that savings in the Crime and Stronger Communities area would help to reduce the overspend.

Officers reported that fees for car parks nearer the city were higher but that car parking charges did not make a large percentage of the Strategic Planning and Transport budget.

Officers also confirmed that the Reinvigorate York project would include a range of businesses who would investigate access.

Discussion took place between Members and Officers regarding the City Team. Officers explained that the team was a Retail Strategy group. This was chaired by the Leader of the Council and that its membership was made up of city retailers, other Members and Officers. It was felt that the City Team should report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Leader include in his next report to this Committee information around the City Team.

REASON: To update the committee of the latest finance and performance position.

32. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE NEWGATE MARKET SCRUTINY REVIEW.

Members received a report which provided them with an update on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review.

Discussion took place between Members and Officers about rental charges for market stalls being frozen for three years. It was reported that a period of three years had been suggested to consider whether the charges had encouraged more interest in the market, and that after this Officers would look at increasing charges. Further discussion took place in relation to future changes to footstreet hours, and it was suggested that the market could possibly stay open for longer.

Some Members felt that the review should be signed off, but that a future report be considered by the Committee in relation to how monies from the Economic Infrastructure Fund (EIF) had made an impact on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from the review. It was suggested that a future report could be considered in a year, which then would also analyse footfall figures.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the report be noted.
 - (ii) That the outstanding recommendations arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review be formally signed off as complete.
 - (iii) That an update report on Newgate Market be received in a year's time as to the success of improvements at the market, the EIF bid and information around footfall.

REASON: In order to update the Committee on developments in the market following the Scrutiny Review.

33. PROGRESS REPORT - LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS.

Members considered a report which provided them with an update on progress with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that York belongs to: Leeds City Region and York/North Yorkshire/East Riding.

Officers circulated copies of the York/North Yorkshire/East Riding LEP Local Plan and the Leeds City Region City Deal. These papers were attached to the agenda, which was republished online following the meeting.

Officers highlighted some points from the Local Plan and City Deal. They stated that the North Yorkshire LEP Local Plan mentioned inward investment but did not clarify on which activities it would proactively encourage and which activities it would carry out through other partners.

In response to the Leeds City Region City Deal, they questioned the devolution of powers through the idea of a Combined Authority and raised concerns about levels of accountability. This was because, if approved, the Combined Authority would have its own fundraising powers.

Members asked a series of questions to Officers these included;

- If LEPs were in competition with one another?
- What was the timescale for York to decide whether to remain in both LEPs
- If there were sufficient resources to be part of both the North Yorkshire/York/East Riding LEP as well as the Leeds City Region?
- How aspirational was the North Yorkshire LEP?

Officers reported to Members, that in some areas such as inward investment the LEPs were potentially in competition but in others their work was complementary. It was stated that the North Yorkshire LEP was smaller in scope but that the Leeds City Region had a larger capacity in terms of staff and resources. They suggested it would be more advantageous for York to remain with the LEP with a more holistic approach.

They informed Members that there was not a timetable for responses and implementation regarding which LEP to remain with. It was noted that further information needed to be gained from both LEPs as to the levels of public accountability they would have.

Members felt that further information, such as the results from the government review into LEPs and outcome data from both LEPs, be provided by the Officers early in 2013 so that the Council could understand the value added by the two respective LEPs. Members suggested there was a case, based on the comparison information to be provided for deciding now whether two LEP membership was in the Council's interest rather than waiting to see whether the recommendation in the Heseltine report "No Stone Unturned" proposing that no local authority should belong to more than one LEP was implemented.

Members also requested that Committee be involved in consultation on our future role LEP role and also the detail of the City Deal before a decision was made at Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and;

- (i) A further report be considered at a future meeting on the achievements of both LEPs on the economic performance of York's economy. This report should provide sufficient information to generate a discussion on the benefits of LEP membership.
- (ii) That a progress report be received on City Deal proposals prior to Cabinet consideration.

REASON: To keep the Committee up to date with the work of the LEPs.

34. INTERIM REPORT - YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW.

Members considered a report which provided them with a brief overview of the work that had been undertaken by the Youth Unemployment Task Group.

Comments from Members in relation to the report included;

- That it was very difficult for young people aged to claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), until the age of 18.
- Whether the Council could provide incentives around transport, to help young people into work, such as discounted bus fares.

Officers informed Members that there was a correlation between deprivation and youth unemployment and that trigger points for unemployment often happened at an early stage of life. They stated that Officers in Education were analysing what these points could be, and how to help young people overcome them.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON: To progress this scrutiny review.

35. WORK PLAN 2012/13.

Members considered the Committee's updated workplan for the municipal year 2012-13.

It was noted that the Final Report on the Youth Unemployment Scrutiny Review would now be considered at a later meeting of the Committee.

Some Members expressed concerns about the timetabling of the Scoping Report on How can Local Shopping Centres Contribute to the Wider Economic Wellbeing of their Community. They asked the Scrutiny Officer to look into what was already happening around this.

Members suggested that the title of the report to be discussed at the Committee's next meeting be amended to "Scoping Report-*Assessing External Funding*" rather than European Regional Development Funding.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the work plan be noted subject to the following additions be noted ¹;
 - (ii) That as part of the Leader's next report to the Committee he include information on the City Team.
 - (iii) That an update report on Newgate Market be received in a year's time as to the success of improvements at the market, the EIF bid and information around footfall.

REASON: To progress the work of the Committee.

Action Required

1. To update the Committee's work plan.

TW

Councillor Semlyen, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.50 pm].