
MEETING	ECONOMIC & CITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	24 JANUARY 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS RICHES (CHAIR), BURTON, LEVENE, MCILVEEN (SUBSTITUTE FOR COUNCILLOR SEMYLEN), HYMAN, STEWARD (SUBSTITUTE FOR COUNCILLOR WATT), D'AGORNE AND POTTER
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS SEMYLEN & WATT

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests, other than the standing declarations that they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 December 2011 be agreed as a correct record.

37. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

38. REPORT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES (HOUSING ASPECT OF THE PORTFOLIO)

Members received a report from the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services on the Housing aspect of her portfolio.

Questions from Members to the Cabinet Member focused on a number of issues such as;

- The numbers of Empty Homes in the city.
- Cost for supply of electricity to travellers pitches on the Osbaldwick site.
- Under-occupancy rates in Council owned properties.
- The localization of Council Tax Benefits.

In response to the questions raised by the Committee, the Cabinet Member reported that the number of long term empty homes (over 6 months) in the city had dropped from 381 to 183 there were a number of reasons for this; from proactive work undertaken by the Housing Team and a steady rate of members of the public reporting empty properties to the Council. One Member stated that the Council could only investigate empty homes if they were causing a nuisance.

Regarding electricity supply to travellers pitches, Officers reported that capacity problems had been encountered on the Osbaldwick site, and this had led to the hire of a generator at a significant cost. The Committee were informed about the previous method of electricity being supplied to the Local Authority who would then sell this on to travellers for use on their pitches. It was reported that new electricity suppliers had installed individual supplies and that the relationship was now a direct one between the electricity suppliers and the travellers.

In relation to under occupancy rates, the Council had worked in partnership with a number of Housing Associations to develop a downsizing scheme which had been very successful. One Member suggested that a future stumbling block to such schemes could be the higher rent levels for those looking to downsize and move into Housing Association properties.

In response to some Members' concern about Council Tax Benefits, Officers stated that they would circulate information provided to the Cabinet to the Committee.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Cabinet Member for her report and 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

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

Members received a report which updated them with information on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review.

Officers gave an update on implementation of recommendations from the review, but prefaced this by informing Members that the processes for dealing with the recommendations were long term.

Members were informed that as a result of the recommendations raised by the scrutiny review;

- A second compactor had been installed in order to reduce cardboard waste produced in the market.
- In regards to unauthorised parking that a traffic permit scheme was in the process of development.
- That later opening hours for the market had been trialled over the Christmas period (to coincide with those of the adjacent Festive Fayre in Parliament Street) brought only limited success and would need more 'buy in' from traders if it was to be repeated.

Some Members felt that the format for Officer updates were not practical and suggested that a summary report be produced at a later date.

Officers suggested to Members, that they could bring back an progress report to the Committee in September.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the report be noted.
 - (ii) That a progress report be brought to the Committee's September 2012 meeting.

REASON: To raise awareness of those recommendations which have still to be implemented.

40. SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Members received a report which provided them with an overview and update in relation to the major development and planning proposals at present.

Officers informed Members that unfortunately the report needed to be updated and informed Members that they would circulate a newer version after the meeting.

Questions from Members to Officers on the report included;

- If a planning application is received at Germany Beck, what could be the start date for development on the site.
- The timescale for access road construction from the A19 on to the Germany Beck site.
- Who would benefit from Section 106 monies provided by the developers of housing on the former Terry's site.

It was reported that an application for family housing at Germany Beck was likely to be received by April 2012. Developers were also hoping to be granted potential financial support from the government towards the cost of the access road construction, which would could take between six and nine months to build.

In response to a question about the use of Section 106 money, Officers informed the Committee that the contributions would be used on junction improvements and also donated to local schools.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON: To raise awareness of major developments and planning applications in the city.

41. UPDATE ON MAJOR TRANSPORT INITIATIVES & ISSUES ARISING FROM THEM

Members received a report which provided them with an overview and updated them in relation to major transport initiatives in the city which were currently progressed.

Questions from Members to Officers included;

- If contracts for road improvements included penalties for late completion by contractors.
- Where the University cycle routes were being routed and if Field Lane would still be considered.
- Whether further information could be provided on the proposed new cycle route from Rawcliffe to the University via Clifton Moor.
- The coverage of 20 mph speed limit zones in the city and outlying areas.

In response to a question about the routing of University cycle routes, Officers replied that proposals were currently in development which took into account comments that had already been received but a cycle route was still being considered for Field Lane.

In response to a question about the coverage of 20 mph speed limits in the city and outlying areas, it was reported that as it was a manifesto commitment, Officers were pursuing the implementation of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas (subject to consultation). A policy was in development that would make it clear which roads were being considered. Officers stated that there had been some potential problems had been identified in trialling this in some of the village locations with the ability to able to reduce speeds and enforce them.

Members felt that the success of speed limits often needed to be accompanied by a change in attitudes. It was noted that if

current speed limits were not complied with, residents might question the usefulness of 20 mph zones.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON: To keep the Committee up to date with progress.

42. WORK PLAN 2012

Members considered a report which presented them with the Committee's work plan for the forthcoming year.

Firstly , It was reported that the current scrutiny review on 'Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector' was currently on hold until further information on the 'Green Deal' was available. A more detailed report on why this had been postponed and what the next steps might be would be presented to the Committee at their March 2012 meeting.

Secondly, two suggestions emerged from discussion on other potential topics for scrutiny reviews, these were a topic related to Youth Unemployment and a topic on Economic Development and the role of Science City York.

In relation to Youth Unemployment, it was suggested that Members might wish to focus on how the Council worked with partners to maximise employment opportunities for young people in the city.

In relation to a topic on the role of Science City York's role in Economic Development, Members felt that more encouragement work needed to be done to attract people to York in order to maintain its status as a Science City.

It was suggested by the Scrutiny Officer that an extra meeting of the Committee be scheduled for the end of March or the start of April in order to consider further information in order to select which of the above two topics to progress to review.

RESOLVED: (i) That the work plan be noted.

(ii) That an additional meeting be added to the work plan and scheduled for late

March or early April in order to examine the suggested scrutiny review topics.¹

- (iii) That two sixth monthly update reports on Major Developments within the City of York Council and Major Transport Initiatives and Issues arising from them be added to the work plan.²
- (iv) That an update report on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Newgate Market Scrutiny Review be considered by the Committee at either their September or October meeting.³

REASON: To keep the Committee's work plan up to date.

Action Required

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| 1. To organise an additional meeting. | JB |
| 2. To update the Committee's Work Plan | TW |
| 3. To update the Committee's Work Plan | TW |

Councillor J Riches, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.35 pm].