
MEETING	ECONOMIC & CITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	24 JULY 2012
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS LEVENE (CHAIR), WATT (VICE-CHAIR), RICHES, BURTON, SEMLYEN, POTTER, RUNCIMAN AND D'AGORNE
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked at this point in the meeting to declare any personal, prejudicial or 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 D'Agorne declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Update Report- 'Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector Scrutiny Review held on 2 May 2012') as one of the members of the Task Group that is carrying out the review. He declared a further personal interest in the item as a member of the Tremendous York Group.

Councillor Riches declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 (Work Plan 2012-13 and Briefing Notes on Proposed Scrutiny Topics from the Scrutiny Work Planning Event held on 2 May 2012) specifically in relation to Briefing Note 9 (Reinstating the York to Beverley Rail Link) as a regular user of rail services to Hull.

Councillor Semlyen also declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 as a landlady. It was deemed that as the only decision to be made in the report was when Members might like to recommence the review, that her interest was not prejudicial. She also declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the same item as a recipient of payments for solar panels as part of the Green Deal.

No other interests were declared.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 July 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

10. VERBAL REPORT FROM AND ATTENDANCE OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL IN RELATION TO HIS FORTHCOMING CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES THAT FALL INTO THE COMMITTEE'S REMIT

The Leader of the Council attended the meeting, and gave a verbal report on his priorities and challenges for the municipal year ahead.

He informed the Committee that;

- Levels of unemployment in the city were steady, but there had been a large increase in the number of women who were unemployed in the city.
- That although York had a wide variety of private sector employers, there was still a need for further growth in this area, in order to shield the city from cuts.
- That facilities were excellent for large businesses to develop in the city, but this was not necessarily the same for medium sized businesses.
- That the New Homes Bonus, which was part funding the Park & Ride and Digital Economy would only be accessible for six years.

Some Members asked the Leader questions surrounding the levels of entrepreneurship and business start ups amongst Young People.

The Leader responded that some schools in York were analysing the number of start ups. He added that levels of entrepreneurship in Young People appeared to be lower in York than in other areas, due to the higher number of students moving on to Further Education in the city. Further to this, he added that investigations were taking place in relation to the Council providing a work programme to provide training opportunities for Young People.

It was reported that an enterprise scheme had been launched at York College but that this had a limited response from students.

It was noted that new start up businesses often encountered funding problems as they could often not secure loans due to a lack of credit history.

Further questions were put to the Leader in relation to housing in the city. It was reported that a large waiting list for social housing existed and that affordable housing had often not been built in large numbers, due to prohibitive costs. Changing classifications of existing buildings into affordable housing could not always been done, as certain properties, such as Retirement Homes could not be reclassified as affordable.

In response to a question regarding what advantages York could gain from being part of the Leeds City Region (LCR), the Leader commented that he felt that more investment needed to come from the LCR to improve transport infrastructure, as there was a larger flow of commuters from Leeds to York, rather than from York to Leeds.

The Chair thanked the Leader for his attendance and report to the Committee.

11. 2011-12 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT

Members considered a report which provided them with details of the 2011/12 forecast outturn position for both finance and performance in the City and Environmental Services Directorate.

Questions from Members to Officers included;

- What would be the further costs of the Local Development Framework (LDF) to the Council?
- What percentage of car parking services would be affected by strike action taken by Traffic Wardens?
- Whether a campaign had taken place to recruit more school crossing patrols

In response to Members' questions it was reported that;

- Funding was currently available for examination of the LDF.
- Officers felt that there would not be a significant impact on car parking services in the week of the strike
- That recruitment of school crossing patrols was difficult as it was difficult to encourage people to work in this area.

Some Members also asked questions about the impact of Park and Ride usage on other bus services in York, and requested that Officers provide Members with figures on whether there had been a detrimental impact.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REASON: To update the scrutiny committee of the final Outturn finance and performance position for 2011/12.

12. PROGRESS REPORT-LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPS)

Members received a progress report which provided them with an update on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). In particular it described the progress with the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP's review of its strategy, and details of the recently announced Leeds City Region's LEP City Deal.

In relation to the progress of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP, it was recognised that the strategy review provided an opportunity for the LEP.

This opportunity would be to review its focus and ways of working so that it would be business focused, had realistic targets and had outputs measured at a local authority level, but that it also would direct its attention at those activities that would add value, i.e. strategic issues usually spanning local authority boundaries.

Regarding the Regional City Deal, Officers felt that it represented a good and innovative outcome and was part of a process of devolving powers and responsibilities from National Government. Whilst the City Deal had been agreed between the LEP and government, a significant amount of work remained to translate the principles into actions. The transport proposals in particular, and the proposal for a new Combined Authority, required a strong York input to ensure that the city's needs were recognised.

Members felt that it would be helpful if they received further progress reports on LEPs. It was suggested that these reports could be bi-monthly.

RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted.

 (ii) That further progress update reports on LEPs, be considered by the Committee on a two monthly basis.

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

13. UPDATE REPORT- 'REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT IN THE PRIVATELY RENTED SECTOR SCRUTINY REVIEW'

Members received a report which updated them on the dormant 'Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the Privately Rented Sector' Scrutiny Review. The report proposed to Members that they might wish to decide to reschedule the work of the Task Group to late on in the calendar year to allow for more information to be available.

Following discussion, Members decided to postpone the review until further information had been obtained relating to the Leeds City Region (LCR) business case for the Green Deal.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That work on the review be postponed until a future date.

REASON: To formally update the Committee of the ongoing work and to request that they reschedule the work of the Task Group to later this year following the outcome of the business case commissioned by the LCR.

14. WORK PLAN 2012-13 AND BRIEFING NOTES ON PROPOSED SCRUTINY TOPICS FROM THE SCRUTINY WORK PLANNING EVENT HELD ON 2 MAY 2012

Members considered a report which presented them with the Committee's work plan for 2012-13. Attached to the report were ten briefing notes on Scrutiny topics that had been proposed at a Scrutiny Work Planning Event on 2 May 2012.

Briefing Note 1-Developing Packages to Help People Being Made Redundant to Start Their Own Businesses

Members felt that an update on this work in a few months was more useful than conducting a scrutiny review on the topic. They therefore requested that an item be added to their work plan for consideration in two months time and agreed to not progress this topic to review.

Briefing Note 2- How Can Local Shopping Centres Contribute to the Wider Economic Well-Being of Their Community?

Members felt that this was an important topic to look at, and suggested that one potential focus for any review could be around areas of deprivation in the city. They agreed that they should review this topic and in the first instance set up a Task Group (membership to be confirmed) to set a focus and scope the review. The Committee requested that this Task Group bring a scoping report back to the December meeting.

Briefing Note 3- Green Travel Plans

In reference to the proposed topic on Green Travel Plans, Officers spoke about the i-Travel York programme. The programme looked at how to engage and influence businesses in the city with regards to encouraging sustainable travel. Officers informed Members that a large amount of work was already being done on the programme. Some Members suggested that, as a result of this, a review should not be conducted on the topic but that an overview report on the situation be put on the Committee's work plan to be considered next municipal year.

Briefing Note 4- Renewable Energy Generation within the City of York

Regarding the topic on "Renewable Energy Generation within the City of York", some Members felt that more reports were needed on the Green Audit Process, but that this would not warrant a scrutiny review in itself. Although Officers informed Members that information on the process was already available and could be circulated to the Committee, some Members felt that a report should be written in order for it to be publicly visible. To this effect, they asked that a six monthly update on this matter be added to the Committee's work plan.

Briefing Note 5- Housing Stock-How is it Meeting the Changing Needs of a Growing Population?

Members felt strongly that a Task Group (membership to be confirmed) should be set up to review issues surrounding the topic. They asked that the Task Group do some work around focusing this review and bring a scoping report back to the December meeting of this Committee.

Briefing Note 6- City Centre Retail Health

Members felt that proposed topic on City Centre Retail Health) should not be selected as a topic for review at the present time as they could not immediately see where they could add any value.

Briefing Note 7-Local Enterprise Partnerships

In relation to the LEPs topic, Members suggested that instead it might be beneficial to look at the possibility of working alongside Scrutiny Committees in neighbouring Local Authorities to conduct joint work on this topic. Some also recommended that the Chair of the Committee could carry out some liaison work with the Chairs of these Committees. Members felt it would be more helpful to continue receiving bi-monthly progress reports on LEPs.

Briefing Note 8 – Women Working in York: Impact with Lack of Childcare or Independent Care

Councillor Douglas attended the meeting to present her submitted topic which was “Women working in York: Impact with lack of childcare or independent care”. She spoke about how there was a lack of available childcare in the evening, and that recent changes to tax credits had reduced the amount that could be used to pay for childcare. She added that those women who worked in lower paid jobs often could not pay for childcare as a result of the tax credit changes.

In response to comments from Members and Officers, she explained that she wanted to specifically focus on those women who wanted to work in the evening. It was noted that greater scoping work would be necessary, and some Members suggested that public engagement could be used in a review based on the topic. Members requested that a Task Group be set up to scope this review and a scoping report on the topic be considered at their December meeting.

Briefing Note 9- Reinstating the York to Beverley Rail Link

Some Members felt that this proposed topic was not a credible topic to look at mainly as much of the infrastructure for this route no longer existed.

Briefing Note 10- Post Development Adoption Procedure

Councillor Watt spoke about the reasons for submitting this scrutiny topic. Some Members shared his concern that there were areas of the city which still did not have adopted roads.

Officers explained to Members that it was often down to the choice of developers on whether to adopt the highway within the development, and that this often affected the costs that residents would have to pay for their properties. As a result of this, developers did not have a strong incentive to go through the process.

Following a vote, it was decided that a scrutiny review on Post Development Adoption Procedure should not be carried out.

Work Plan

In relation to the attendance of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability at the Committee's meeting on the 25 September 2011 it was requested that this be moved on the Work Plan to a potential meeting in December.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the briefing notes be noted.
 - (ii) That the work plan be noted and that the following items be added to the Committee's work plan;
 - Bi-monthly reports on the progress of LEPs.
 - A further update on information relating to the "Developing Packages to help people made redundant to start their own businesses".
 - Scoping report on "How can local shopping centres contribute to the wellbeing of society"-December meeting.
 - A six monthly update report on Renewable Energy Generation within the City of York.

- A scoping report on Housing Stock – how it is meeting the changing needs of a growing population’ to be brought to the December meeting
- A scoping report on “Women working in York: Impact with lack of childcare in the evening” to be brought to the December meeting.

RESOLVED:

To keep the Committee’s work plan up to date.¹

Action Required

1. To update the Committee's Work Plan

TW

Councillor D Levene, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].