

Joint Plans Panel

Thursday, 11th September, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor J McKenna in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, B Anderson,
D Blackburn, C Campbell, A Castle,
R Charlwood, B Cleasby, R Grahame,
P Gruen, S Hamilton, M Harland,
M Ingham, G Latty, T Leadley, M Lyons,
S McKenna, E Nash, J Procter, K Ritchie,
B Selby, C Towler, F Venner, N Walshaw
and R Wood

1 Election of the Chair

RESOLVED – That Councillor J McKenna be elected as Chair for the meeting.

2 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of a disclosable pecuniary interest.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Bentley, M Coulson, R Finnigan, C Gruen, J Lewis, C Macniven, K Mitchell, R Procter and P Truswell

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 Core Strategy Update

It was reported that the Inspectors recommendations had now been received on the Core Strategy. The strategy had been found to be sound but still required some modification. It was due to be submitted to the September meeting of the Executive Board for further consideration before referral to Full Council in November 2014. Key issues included housing, employment and retail land.

Thanks were expressed to all those who had been involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy.

6 Leeds Standard

The report of the Chief Planning Officer referred to the development of a new Leeds Housing Standard.

It was reported that the Leeds Standard would be important in the way that future applications were dealt with particularly with regard to the quality of schemes. It was

proposed to hold a training session for Plans Panel Members on both the Leeds Standard and Core Strategy.

The Leeds Standard would be considered at the September meeting of the Executive Board and reference was made to the Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) Inquiry.

Further issues highlighted in relation to the Leeds Standard included the following:

- Variation and clarification to existing policy documents.
- Work carried out with Scrutiny and the house building industry.
- Application of the Leeds Standard to council house building.
- Guidance in relation to room sizes and sustainability. There were proposals from the Government in relation to a code for sustainability and building regulations would be used to ensure adequate room sizes.

In response to Members comments and questions, discussion included the following:

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- 7 End of Year Performance Report 2013-14 and Update on Quarter 1, 2014-15**
- The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented performance information for 2013-14 and quarter one, 2014-15.

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- There were currently over 1,000 applications including 144 major schemes.
- Decisions made at Plans Panel meetings – following the introduction of the three weekly cycle for City Plans Panel, meeting times had been reduced. There had also been a low proportion of decisions that were contrary to officer recommendations.
- An increase in planning fees income.
- Review of development management.
- Restructure of the enforcement service.
- Increase in the number of applications considered at the pre-application stage.
- Introduction of the planning guarantee – applications to be completed within 26 weeks. If this was not achieved then planning fees would be returned.
- Significant improvement for major applications.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Enforcement issues and work with other agencies regarding enforcement.
- Staff absence.
- Involvement of Members in the construction of Section 106 agreements.
- Involvement of Ward Members with pre-application developments.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a further performance report be received in 6 months.

8 Planning Service Review

The report of the Chief Planning Officer described the review of Planning Services recently undertaken by Ove Arup and Partners Limited (Arup). The review had been completed and the service was now about to embark on the implementation stage. The report described the next steps, reporting and governance arrangements in the implementation stage.

Members' attention was brought to the main areas of focus that were outlined in the report and the steps towards implementation. It was concluded that there was sufficient resource for current workloads but further growth would see the need for more resources.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9 Planning Enforcement - Stop Notices and Temporary Stop Notices

The report of the Chief Planning Officer informed Joint Plans Panel of the scope and powers available through the use of Temporary Stop Notices and Stop Notices and the implications of their use in planning enforcement. Appendices to the report showed the number of notices served in Leeds and in comparison to Core Cities and other West Yorkshire Authorities.

It was reported that Temporary Stop Notices were more frequently used than Stop Notices and were a useful tool where there had been a breach of planning conditions. Reference was made to recent cases across the City and Members gave their support and encouragement for the use of enforcement action where appropriate.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10 Member Training

The report of the Chief Planning Officer reflected on the training opportunities for Members in 2013-14 and provided a look ahead for Member training in 2014-15.

Issues highlighted included the following:

- Future training would include adoption of the core strategy, Community Infrastructure Levy and viability.
- Members would have opportunity to shadow a planning officer through the duration of a planning application.
- It was proposed to visit completed sites.
- Training would be tailored for both new and experienced Panel Members

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11 Buildings at Risk

The report of the Chief Planning Officer informed the Joint Plans Panel of buildings at risk and the efforts that are being made to address this issue by securing emergency repairs and securing new uses.

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- There had been a successful bid to English Heritage for funding towards a pilot to carry out a survey of the whole City.
- Buildings that had been converted and were no longer on the at risk register.
- It was estimated that there would be double the number of buildings on the risk register following the survey and a further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Plans Panel.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Woodlea Mansion was on the Buildings at Risk register.
- A full list of the buildings on the register was requested.
- Stank Hall Barn – there were two other buildings on the site also on the at risk register. It was felt the location of the building could be a barrier in enabling the re-use.
- York Road Baths – it was recognised that urgent repairs were needed to the roof.
- White Cloth Hall – funding had been offered from Heritage Lottery Funds and English Heritage. Negotiations were underway with the owner of the building to secure an agreement to develop a feasible end use, lease the building and carry out its restoration.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the report be noted, particularly that work was progressing towards reducing the number of buildings at risk in the city.
- (2) That the findings of the pilot Buildings at Risk Survey be reported to the Derelict and Nuisance Sites Steering Group.

12 Delivering Employment & Skills Opportunities through the Council's Planning Function

The report of the Chief Officer, Employment and Skills provided information on the outputs delivered through employment and skills obligations delivered as a result of the Section 106 planning agreements agreed by Plans Panels.

13 Date and Time of Next Meeting