

Joint Plans Panel

Thursday, 14th November, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor N Taggart in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, J Bentley,
C Campbell, A Castle, D Congreve, C Fox,
R Grahame, P Gruen, M Harland, J Harper,
G Latty, T Leadley, J Lewis, C Macniven,
J McKenna, E Nash, J Procter, P Truswell
and G Wilkinson

15 Election of the Chair

RESOLVED – That Councillor N Taggart be elected Chair for the meeting.

16 Late Items

There were no late items as such, however a revised report had been issued for Agenda Item 8 – Officer Member Communication Protocol.

17 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

18 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Coulson, J Cummins, C Gruen, S Hamilton, G Latty, K Mitchell, A McKenna, C Towler, J Walker and R Wood.

19 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

20 Half Year Performance Report

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented performance information for Quarters 1 and 2, April to September 2013.

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- The last 6 months had been characterised by an increase in the number of applications and increased workloads. This had seen a significant rise in application fees.
- Improvement in performance for the completion of major applications.
- Increased interest in PAS land.
- Significant improvement in appeals.

- Plan Panel workloads – The City Plans Panel had a high workload, following a review by General Purposes Committee it had been agreed to continue with current arrangements.
- Workload issues – it was hoped to recruit two temporary principal planning officers and there was also a need to increase enforcement staff.

In response to Members comments and questions, Members discussed the possibility of increasing the regularity of the City Plans Panel. Members also discussed whether certain applications such as supermarkets could be dealt with at area panels. Further discussion focussed on the use of pre-application presentations and position statements.

RESOLVED –

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

21 Officer Member Communication Protocol

The report of the Chief Planning Officer referred to the previous recommendation following the review of plans panel arrangements to develop an officer-member communication protocol which would provide a framework for Ward Member involvement in the planning process.

It was recognised for the need to consult Ward Members and to achieve a constant approach across planning. The protocol set out a framework for engagement with Ward Members throughout the planning process. Members were asked to approve the protocol with a review in six months.

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

- How to deliver within existing resources – reference was made to the Area Committee funded Community Planner in Inner North West Leeds.
- Benefits to Plans Panels.
- Use of consultative committees – these could be time consuming but had led to better dialogue and a significant impact on major schemes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the protocol be noted and approved.
- (2) That the protocol be reviewed in six months time to ascertain its effectiveness.

22 Core Strategy Examination Update

The report of the Chief Planning Officer provided a brief update on the examination of the Core Strategy which commenced on 7 October 2013.

Issues highlighted from the report included the following:

- Hearing sessions had been held at various locations throughout the city.
- Attention was brought to amendments to the strategy. These were detailed in appendices to the report.

- Affordable housing.
- Provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

It was reported that there would be a further report to Executive Board in December 2013.

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

- Areas of land that were considered a flood risk.
- The housing target for Leeds.
- Gypsy and Traveller sites and provision – it would be attempted to locate potential sites through the site allocation process.
- Policy in relation to the provision of affordable housing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

23 Constructive Conservation Workshop for Plans Panel Members

The report of the Chief Planning Officer informed Members of an offer from English Heritage to host a workshop on Constructive Conservation.

Members discussed potential methods of workshop delivery and would be consulted on dates.

RESOLVED – That the offer from English Heritage around the theme of Constructive Construction be accepted.

24 Housing Design Quality

The report of the Chief Planning Officer provided a summary of the workshop event with major house builders and recommended receipt of a further report of the formal findings and principles – future outcome of the workshop and asked Members to consider the possibility of recognition by Leeds City Council in its role as planning authority.

It was reported that 11 Members had participated in the event along with developers and a summary of the workshops was presented.

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

- Missed opportunity to get across the role of Ward Members in the planning process.
- Lack of opportunity to discuss the design of houses.
- There could have been more senior representation from the development industry.
- Involvement of land owners and agents.

It was reported that findings of the workshops would be followed up with developers. Further discussion focussed on the need to get things right now to deliver the quality housing needed for Leeds and to enable better and faster decision making.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that Joint Plans Panel receive the formally agreed findings of the workshop and considers formal endorsement as local good practice guidance.

25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.