

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

15TH JUNE, 2012

A MEETING of the REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the MANSION HOUSE, DONCASTER on FRIDAY 15TH JUNE, 2012 at 10.A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Tony Revill

Councillors Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Ted Kitchen, David Nevett and Paul Wray.

Also in Attendance:

Councillors Austen White, Joe Blackham (for Minute No's 4 – 8) and Eva Hughes (for Minute No's 4 – 7)

Peter Davies, Mayor of Doncaster: Cabinet Member for Development; Transport; Equalities and Cohesion; Change Agenda (for Minute No. 8)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from the Vice-Chair, Councillor Richard Cooper-Holmes, Councillors Bob Ford, Deborah Hutchinson, Ken Keegan, Yvonne Woodcock and GMB Invitee Paul O'Brien.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, the Chair, Councillor Tony Revill and Councillor David Nevett declared a personal interest in Minute No. 9, 'St Leger Homes of Doncaster Quarterly Monitoring Report – Quarter 4, 2012/12', by virtue of being a private landlord. In addition, Councillors Austen White and Eva Hughes, who were in attendance at the meeting but were not Members of the Panel, also declared an interest in the same item.

ACTION

All to note

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2012 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2012.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2012 and the extraordinary meeting held on 27th March 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

There were no public statements made at the meeting.

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – NEXT STEPS (SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES, NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY)

The Panel received a report that provided information and sought Members' comments on:-

- The proposed approach for consultation on the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD);
- The draft process for dealing with Neighbourhood planning and the proposed prioritisation of support for those areas identified within the Core Strategy as being suitable for most growth; and
- The ongoing work to consider whether a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be progressed this year or whether it should not be progressed but kept under review.

In addition, Members were asked to confirm that the summary of issues outlined in the report were an accurate reflection of the issues raised at the Overview and Scrutiny workshops which were held on 26th March and 28th May to update Members on progress with the Sites and Policies DPD, Neighbourhood Planning and CIL.

Following introduction of the report from Steve Butler, Planning Policy Manager: Natural Environment, the Chair invited comments from the Panel.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

The 'Key' on the sample map circulated at the meeting, made reference to un-developable sites. This was clarified as sites that had been identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that could potentially be developed but there were obstacles in the way, for example,

green space could be developed but this would be subjected to policy issues.

In respect of the consultation process, the Panel was pleased to note the information provided on the sample map circulated at the meeting but asked whether maps of other areas could be made available to Ward Councillors.

Members were advised that some meetings had already taken place with Ward Members and Area Managers to highlight the potential housing and employment sites within each Ward, drawing on the information from the SHLAA and Employment Land Review. Members were advised that further meetings with Members at Ward level would take place as part of the consultation planned for over the summer and larger copies of the plans would be made available. A request was made to make copies of the plans available to all Ward Members prior to the consultation document being considered at Full Council in July.

Steve Butler/
Jeremy
Johnson

One Member raised concern in respect of the lack of consultation and dialogue within the 4 renewal towns, including Moorends, as it was felt that those deprived areas would benefit from more thorough dialogue. Whilst it was acknowledged that some dialogue had taken place in some communities, it was noted that this had been in respect of the Strategic Housing preferred schemes and did not take account of the views of local residents. It was suggested that Council Officers did not understand the geography of the area as some land within the footprint of Moorends had been wrongly identified as being in the Countryside Policy Area. It was also suggested that in order to allow the development of Moorends, there would need to be development on greenfield sites. It was further suggested that Moorends wished to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and dialogue should be undertaken with the Town and Parish Councils to consider options for the use of derelict sites in the area and ensure that any plans would be reflective of the needs of the community.

Officers explained that the consultation process would be undertaken over a period of time probably commencing in September, and would initially focus on the Doncaster Main Urban Area and the 6 Principal towns together with the 2 potential Growth Towns. He added that there were a number of site issues around the Moorends area and Officers had offered to attend Town and Parish Council meetings to discuss those issues with Councillors and members of the communities would be given the opportunity to put their views and opinions forward.

Members looked forward to the consultation and were pleased to note the indicative summary of proposed map layers to be included within the Sites and Policies DPD but raised concern over the uncertainty of the inclusion of existing authorised and unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Chair advised Members that an extraordinary meeting of the Panel would be held shortly to consider all the issues surrounding Gypsy and Traveller needs. It was noted that the Mayor would also attend that meeting.

Members questioned whether those villages that had already completed a village plan would still be required to complete a Neighbourhood Plan. The Planning Policy Manager stated that it depended on the complexity of the individual village plans and whether they focused on how planning applications would be determined. If they did, then the plans would have to go through due process in order to carry weight. However, he added that the evidence obtained to produce the village plan could be utilised to back up the formal Neighbourhood Plan.

In connection with the Community Infrastructure Levy, Members were advised that this would partially replace Section 106 agreements and some of the local control that such agreements provided would be reduced. It was felt that proceeding with a CIL consultation at this stage may be premature and unlikely to offer benefits until property market viability improved. It was therefore suggested that property markets should be monitored and re-evaluated on an annual basis.

To conclude the discussion, Members reiterated the comment made at the workshops in connection with progressing the delivery of the Bentley Moor Lane site, stating that this area should not be forgotten in any future proposals.

Jeremy
Johnson

RESOLVED that the Panel note

- (1) the proposed approach for consultation on the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document;
- (2) the draft process for dealing with Neighbourhood planning and the proposed prioritisation of support for those areas identified within the Core Strategy as being suitable for most growth;
- (3) the ongoing work to consider Community Infrastructure Levy; and
- (4) confirm that the summary of issues raised at the workshops and set out at paragraph 35 of the report, is an accurate record.

All to note

8. VERBAL REPORT FROM PETER DAVIES, MAYOR OF DONCASTER – CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT; TRANSPORT, EQUALITIES AND COHESION, AND THE COUNCIL'S CHANGE AGENDA

Peter Davies, Mayor of Doncaster updated the Panel on the key priorities and challenges within his Portfolio which included the following:

1. **To take advantage of the hard won commitment to the White Rose Way, FARRRS and Inland Port schemes, to drive forward the Doncaster economy.**

The Mayor stated that he wanted Doncaster to be a place where entrepreneurs and developers are keen to be. Whilst continuing the Authority's membership of the South Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Mayor added that he wanted the town to look outwards to the North, East and South, developing close relations with the City of York, the Humber Ports, East Yorkshire and Bassetlaw.

- FARRRS (Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme): The Mayor reported that progress had been made on all key processes. Planning permission had been granted on the 12th June. The land Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Road Order would be made on the 8th June. The tenders had been evaluated and a preferred main contractor had been selected and the appointment would be made next week. The funding agreements with the developers were at an advanced stage and Heads of Terms would be agreed imminently to enable the Council to move to full financial agreement securing £36.5 m. This would enable the £18m Regional Growth Fund due diligence process to be completed in July. Subject to timely completion of the above, the Mayor stated that work on site was planned to start in August 2012.
- White Rose Way Phase1: the scheme commenced on 6th June 11 and good progress had being made despite the setback at Christmas where only 1 of the 6 bridge beams had been lifted into place during the Christmas Rail Blockade due to exceptionally adverse weather. However due to hard work and the partnership working with Network Rail, work was completed by the end of January and the scheme was back on track.

- WRW phase 2: funding had been fully secured with an additional £10M from the Department of Transport (DfT) and £5M from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Work commenced on the 1st April and it was anticipated that all works would be completed by July 2013.
 - Inland Port: the Mayor explained that this was a project representing an investment of £250m which would create 6 million sq ft of logistics units and thousands of jobs. The developers were about to submit reserved matters details to Planning and work was expected on site in Autumn 2012.
 - £3billion Don Valley Power project is one of the leading UK contenders to become a demonstration site for Carbon Capture and Storage technology. It had already secured £180 M Euros funding. Work was expected to commence on site in 2015 once further national and European funding had been secured.
 - The Council's Business and Commerce team had created 149 businesses and over 600 jobs this year.
 - The Mayor stated he had started exploring mutually beneficial economic opportunities with Hull, Bassetlaw and York and staff were currently working with York to try and help Doncaster residents access employment opportunities in York that were currently difficult to recruit to, due to the cost of living in York. He added that, having worked with Sheffield City Region and Local Enterprise Partnership, those colleagues now recognised Doncaster as a key player given the strength of projects it had in the pipeline.
- 2. (a) Continue to improve education and skills in Doncaster which are crucial to a successful economy. Better education will also contribute to a decline in anti-social behaviour and other undesirable activities among young people.**
- (b) Encourage the growth of academies.**
- Members noted that a new Work Skill Group including private and public sector to focus on skills issues within Doncaster had been established. The Work and Skills Group was Chaired by Nigel Brewster who is the private sector LEP lead for Skills and had representatives from a range of private sector businesses as well as public sector agencies. The aim of the group was to ensure

that skills and training was employer demand led and that local people could therefore gain the skills that employers needed.

- The Mayor advised that good progress was been made with two new academies - DeWarrene and Outwood. The Council had recently presented at the biggest national conference on Education Building Projects in London as Doncaster were now seen as national leaders in this field.

3. Raise housing standards for local families and ensure the return to a building rate that will ensure that there are enough homes to suit all requirements.

- The Mayor informed the Panel that the Empty Homes target for 2011/12 was for Doncaster Council to bring back into use 166 empty properties. The actual number achieved was 237 properties brought back into use.
- The Affordable Homes target for 2011/12 was for Doncaster Council to deliver 180 affordable homes. The actual achieved was 193 affordable homes delivered. Doncaster was delivering new affordable housing at one of the fastest rates compared to others, therefore Doncaster was narrowing the gap between itself and other local authorities.

4. (a) Get the balance of public and private transport right, for a borough with a unique pattern of journey needs and exceptional connections to the rest of the country.

(b) Try to amend the usage of the Bus Corridor.

- The Panel was advised that changes had already been introduced to remove a number of under used bus lanes and to allow private hire vehicles to use all the existing bus lanes. Officers had investigated the possibility of changing a further 2 existing bus lanes from full time to peak time only, these changes would be implemented this summer.
- For North Bridge, Traffic Regulation Orders had been advertised and following consideration of objections, the order had been made, however there remained a risk of challenge from the operators over the next 5 weeks. Subject to progress, the scheme to support the order would be complete by the end of October and the changes to open up the outbound lane to all traffic would come into force.

5. Continue to promote Doncaster as a tourist destination. The development of an 11 day St. Leger Festival with the oldest classic race in the world as its culmination is a real success story.

- Work was well underway to make this year's St Leger Festival the best yet.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Park, with its 13 lions and 2 Siberian Tigers, was a tremendous addition to Doncaster's already superb, tourist offer.
- The Council was working with the Battle of Britain Heritage Society to bring a unique Battle of Britain War memorial to Doncaster.

6. Regenerate Doncaster's town centres, including within Doncaster itself, special emphasis on the Markets and Waterdale areas. Make all our shopping attractions car-friendly areas.

- The Mayor stated that Doncaster was already the 4th most successful regenerating town centre in the country.
- All elements of the Civic and Cultural Quarter (Civic Office, Civic Square and New Performance Venue) were being delivered on time and within Budget
- Doncaster Market won Best Market in Britain in 2011 and had just won Britain's Favorite Market in 2012.
- Discussions were now ongoing in respect of the Waterdale redevelopment scheme after many years of decline.

7. Continue to protect the environment from developers, decay and architectural vandalism. Prevent urban sprawl, while allowing beneficial development, preferably on brownfield sites.

- Members were reminded that the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy went through its examination in public at the end of last year. The LDF Core Strategy was found sound by the Planning Inspectorate and adopted by full Council in May 2012. Work on the sites and allocations policy was now commencing with consultation with stakeholders due to commence in Summer 2012.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for his update and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Following a suggestion that the Corn Exchange could be utilised for entertainment, the Mayor felt that this was a good idea and the Director of Regeneration and Development confirmed that consideration was being given to how to make better use of the Corn Exchange.

Director of
Regeneration
and
Environment

In response to a Member's comment that there was land available at Bentley Moor Lane that would be suitable for development and that consideration should be given to bringing all the Council's depots together under one roof on this site and selling off the sites currently occupied by the depots which would generate income for the Council, the Director of Regeneration and Development responded that the Council was currently undertaking a review of the Council's depots.

The Mayor acknowledged that development had been primarily focused in the South of the Borough and parts of the East and it was now time to concentrate on the North. He agreed that there were prime sites in the North for commercial and residential development and discussions were ongoing to develop a plan for the North. He stated that once further information was available in this regard, this would be communicated to Members.

Director of
Regeneration
and
Environment

Responding to a Member's question in respect of achieving University Status for Doncaster College, the Mayor commented that good progress had been made following the arrival of the previous Principal, John Taylor and the current Principal, George Trow, and the Mayor felt that now was the time to start to reconsider this issue.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the presentation and Members' comments be noted.

All to note

9. ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 4, 2011/12

The Panel received a report that informed Members of the latest St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) performance information. The report highlighted the main areas of performance at the end of 2011/12 that were either off target or of concern.

During a discussion on the number of empty business premises, one Member asked whether the Council had given consideration to a scheme undertaken by Sheffield Council which allows artists and designers to display their art in empty shop windows in an attempt to prevent the area looking run

Director of
Regeneration
and
Environment.

down. The Director of Regeneration and Environment advised the Panel that the Council was considering a similar scheme and he agreed to find out how this was progressing.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Members note the Quarter 4 performance information; and
- 2) Members note the actions to deal with performance issues.

All to note

10. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORKPLAN REPORT – 2012/13

The Panel received a report which provided an update on its last meeting held on 5th March 2012 and sought approval of the workplan for 2012/13 which took account of issues considered at the informal work planning meeting held on 22nd May 2012.

Members were reminded that the three key areas that the Panel agreed to focus on were as follows

- Environmental Strategy 2012/13
- The Housing Market Function in Doncaster (Economic Model of Housing Systems)
- Work and Skills

The Scrutiny Consultant suggested that an informal meeting of the Panel could be arranged to enable Members to consider which areas of the Housing Market Function in Doncaster they would wish to focus on. The Director of Regeneration and Environment agreed to produce a discussion paper to assist in this regard.

Scrutiny Consultant

Director of Regeneration and Environment

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would identify the dates when Cabinet Members would be invited to future meetings of the Panel, with the option that Members could submit a request to the Chair or Vice Chair if they wished Cabinet Members to attend a specific meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Panel ensure the work plan takes account of best principles of Scrutiny work-planning guidance shown in Appendix A of the report;
- 2) the Panel note the feedback from the work-planning meeting which was held on the 22nd May 2012 and outlined in Appendix B of the report;

All to note

- 3) the Panel approve its work plan for 2012/13 which takes account of issues considered at the informal work planning meeting held on the 22nd May 2012 as featured in Appendix B and C of the report;
- 4) the Scrutiny Consultant liaise with the Director of Regeneration and Environment with a view to producing a discussion paper in respect of the Housing Market Function in Doncaster for consideration at an informal meeting of the Panel on a date to be confirmed;
- 5) the Panel note that the work plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Panel to include any relevant correspondence, updates, new issues and resources available to meet additional requests;
- 6) the Panel agree to monitor progress against the work-plan at each formal meeting and to agree how often recommendations put forward to the Executive should be monitored;
- 7) the Chair and Vice Chair identify any occasions when it would specifically wish the Executive to attend its meetings and when it would wish to present its recommendations to the Cabinet;
- 8) the Panel note the correspondence received following its meeting held on 5th March 2012 in Appendix D and E;
- 9) the Panel note the Action Points from Enterprising Doncaster Board Meeting 2nd March 2012 in Appendix F;
- 10) the Panel agree the Terms of Reference of a working group for the current municipal year to make recommendations to the Executive regarding policy development work for a Council Environmental Strategy in Appendix G and
- 11) the Panel notes the appointment of the Environmental Strategy Working Group as follows:

Councillor Nuala Fennelly
Councillor Monty Cuthbert
Councillor Yvonne Woodcock
Paul O'Brien (GMB)
Paul Smillie (Unite)

- 12) the Panel notes the appointment of the Chair, Councillor Tony Revill onto both the LDF Project Board and Enterprising Doncaster Board and that verbal updates will be provided to the Panel as appropriate.