

REGENERATION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

Panel Members Present Councillor D. Pitt (Chair)
Councillor D. Anson
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul
Councillor K. Phillips
Councillor K. Sears

Portfolio Holders Present Councillor A. Andrew - Regeneration

Officers Present Mike Tichford – Assistant Director – Regeneration
Akshay Parikh – Chief Operating Officer, Walsall
Regeneration Company
Andrea Potts – Head of Housing
Mark Lavender – Head of Strategic Regeneration
Debbie Parkes – Housing Strategy and Partnerships
Manager
Chris Knowles – Lead Accountant
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

60/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor L. Harrison

61/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

62/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

63/09 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2010, copies having been previously circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

64/09 WALSALL REGENERATION COMPANY – THE WAY FORWARD

The Panel received a presentation (annexed) from Akshay Parikh, Chief Operating Officer at Walsall Regeneration Company (WRC) on the way forward for the Company and its key projects during 2010.

The Chief Operating Officer highlighted the key achievements of the WRC so far, its priorities and focus for 2010 and key milestones for the next 12 months.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- Members were assured that the WRC plans were co-ordinated and linked with wider local and regional plans and strategies. The Panel requested a map showing how WRC projects were linked together.
- It was noted that work was required to attract people to the town centre and that Walsall lacked a unique selling point. One quick win that could attract people to the town centre would be to improve standards of cleanliness around the town centre.
- There were nine members on the WRC board. Two private sector representatives were currently being recruited.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. the Panel consider the delivery plan for the New Walsall Town Centre Regeneration Framework at a future meeting;

and;

2. Members be provided with a further details on how regeneration projects being delivered by the Walsall Regeneration Company are strategically linked.

65/09 WALSALL'S 'SINGLE CONVERSATION' AND LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The Panel considered the draft Cabinet report which describes the 'Single Conversation' process and Walsall's draft Local Investment Plan (LIP) for comments and recommendations before being considered for approval by Cabinet.

The Head of Housing explained that the LIP was an overarching plan setting out Walsall's needs for investment which had been drafted in consultation with local and regional partners. The development of a LIP was a requirement from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The LIP was based around 4 key themes that align with the Sustainable Community Strategy and had six spatial priorities.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- Members noted the proliferation of flats and apartments in the borough and identified the need to restrict the numbers of these types of properties moving forward.
- There was only a small student population living in private rented accommodation locally.
- The Panel noted the need for new housing to be developed with the needs of the elderly population in mind due to the projected growth of older

people that was expected in the next few years.

- There was often tension with developers to secure the right mixture of tenure of housing developments.
- Members felt that the regeneration of the local canal network should be a priority and considered investigating this in more detail in the next municipal year. The development of the canal on the Waterfront site was noted.

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1. the Local Investment Plan be supported;**
- 2. Members welcome the identification in the Local Investment Plan of a reduced need for flats/apartments and the need to develop lifetime housing to meet the needs of the boroughs ageing population;**

and;
- 3. the Panel consider investigating the regeneration opportunities for canals in 2010/11.**

66/09 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING – 2009/10 THIRD FORECAST

The Panel were informed about the predicated revenue and capital outturn position for 2009/10 based on quarter 3 performance for services within their remit.

The Lead Accountant explained that, following the use of earmarked reserves and implementation of an action plan to reduce spending, a £89,000 revenue under spend was currently being predicted. An under spend of £8.2m was predicted for capital projects as commencement of many large projects had slipped backwards.

67/09 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 AND FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered their work programme and the latest version of the Forward Plan (tabled).

68/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 22 April 2010.

The meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.

Signed:

Date: