

REGENERATION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

Panel Members Present Councillor D. Pitt (Chair)
Councillor I. Azam
Councillor D. Coughlan
Councillor S. Coughlan
Councillor L. Harrison
Councillor I. Shires

Officers Present Mark Lavender – Head of Strategic Regeneration
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

01/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors D. Anson, M. Ahmed and B. Tweddle.

02/10 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

03/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

04/10 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2010, copies having been previously circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

05/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Panel discussed and planned their work programme for the year ahead. To assist in this process Members considered existing intelligence, the outcome of a recent scrutiny survey, a range of suggestions (annexed), and the latest edition of the forward plan (tabled).

The Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer highlighted findings relevant to the Panel from the 2010/11 budget consultation, the Place Survey and from the scrutiny and performance panel work programme survey.

The Chair directed Members through the work programme suggestions contained within the agenda papers. Members approved the suggested items as set out and made the following comments:

Economic Development

A paper listing the top eight economic challenges for Walsall was circulated (annexed). Members noted these challenges and made links with the suggested items in their agendas. It was agreed that a number of items should be grouped under a heading such as, 'economic development', as there were key strategic links across topics

Members were keen to discuss issues with partners.

The Head of Strategic Regeneration illustrated some of the changes likely to be implemented following the election and the potential for impacting on Walsall, one such example, was the proposed winding up of Advantage West Midlands (AWM). This would present both opportunities and challenges for local authorities, who were likely to be expected to fill the gaps left by AWM, yet the structures and resources planned are yet to be known.

He added that the Councils Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) had been reduced by almost £1m in the last round of cuts. These savings had been identified and at this time no further cuts were expected against the programme, where WNF funding money was worth in the region of £18m.

Energy Efficiency in the Home

Members noted that there was a policy on energy efficiency in the Joint Core Strategy.

Asset Management

As part of this item Members wished to consider the scope for handing assets to community groups.

Value for Money Review

Members requested that suggestions for value for money reviews were brought to their next meeting.

Forward Plan

The Panel considered the latest version of the Forward Plan (annexed).

Members agreed to review progress with the Walsall Gigaport development following the Government proposal to dissolve the schemes sponsor AWM.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

- 1. the following items be added to the Panels work programme for 2010/11:**

- a) New Deal for Communities Succession Strategy;
- b) Regional and sub-regional infrastructure;
- c) Void properties;
- d) Local economic assessment;
- e) Energy efficiency in the home;
- f) New Walsall town centre;
- g) Housing allocation policy;
- h) Housing strategy 2011-2014
- i) Walsall Gigaport;
- j) Asset Management 2010;
- k) Economic Update, including:
 - i. Working Neighbourhoods Fund;
 - ii. Local Enterprise Development;
 - iii. Think Walsall;
 - iv. Business;
 - v. Tackling worklessness;

2. suggestions for potential value for money reviews be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

06/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 26 July 2010.

The meeting closed at 6.46 p.m.

Signed:

Date: