

## **REGENERATION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Thursday 19 June 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

**Panel Members present** Councillor D. Pitt (Chair)  
Councillor T. Ansell  
Councillor D. Anson  
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul  
Councillor B. Tweddle  
Councillor I. Shires  
Councillor K. Sears  
Councillor A. Underhill

**Portfolio holders present** Councillor Andrew - Regeneration

**Officers present** Tim Johnson – Executive Director – Regeneration  
Mike Tichford – Assistant Director – Regeneration  
Steve Lewis – Head of Delivery and Development  
Mark Lavender – Head of Strategic Regeneration  
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

**Other Attendees** Karen Sands – Market Traders Association

### **01/08 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor S. Coughlan.

### **02/08 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

### **03/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Item</b>
B. Tweddle	Prejudicial	8 – ‘Markets’
B. Tweddle	Personal	5 – ‘Forward Plan’
I. Shires	Personal	5 & 7 – ‘Forward Plan’ and ‘Work Programme 2008/09’

Councillor Sears declared his intention to leave the meeting during item 8 ‘Markets’ in order to prevent a situation of pre-consideration occurring when considering markets applications on the Licensing and Safety Committee.

### **04/08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS**

Craig Goodall informed Members that the last meeting of the Panel had considered two items without the required quorum set out in the Constitution. This resulted in the remaining Members present to make suggested resolutions for approval by the Panel at this meeting.

The Panel considered and approved the suggested resolutions.

## **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2008, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

(annexed)

### **05/08 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

The panel noted the training opportunities as outlined by Craig Goodall.

(annexed)

### **06/08 FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan as at 6 June 2008 was submitted.

(annexed)

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- 62/08 – ‘Walsall Housing Group – proposed changes to group structure’ - Members were advised the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel had noted this issue and it was to be included in their work programme. Members requested that the issue to added to their own work programme so that they could consider the issue from a strategic regeneration point of view.
- 55/08 – ‘Housing Moratorium on employment land’ – Tim Johnson advised the Panel that this item would be removed from the Forward Plan in the near future. However the issue of balancing land for either employment or housing was pertinent. These issues would be picked up as part of the Joint Core Strategy development. The Panel requested that they consider the Joint Core Strategy with a focus on land use.
- 33/08 – ‘Procurement of a new residual waste treatment plant’ – Members were advised that this issue was within the remit of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel. Councillor Anson requested feedback on the Panels considerations.
- Members discussed the need to consider strategic transportation issues as part of their remit and referred to the successful working group project resulting in the ‘Rail Service and Facilities Improvement Plan’. Tim Johnson reported that the production of this document had created dialogue with Network Rail. It was agreed that a copy of the report be sent to the new Members on the Panel.

## **Resolved**

**That:**

- a) the proposed changes at Walsall Housing Group be considered from a strategic regeneration point of view;**
- b) consideration of the Joint Core Strategy focus on the requirement to balance land needs between employment and housing;**

c) Councillor D. Anson to receive feedback on the considerations of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel on waste management issues;

and;

d) Councillor B. Douglas-Maul, B. Tweddle, K. Sears and A. Underhill be sent a copy of the Rail Services and Facilities Improvement Plan.

#### 07/08 WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

The Panel considered issues to add to their work programme for 2008/09.

Members considered the suggested carry over items as contained within the report.

The following are the principle points of the ensuing discussion:

#### **Markets and St. Matthews Quarter Working Group**

Members agreed to continue with the Markets Working Group and establish a new working group to consider the wider St. Matthews Quarter development on its conclusion. Councillors D. Pitt (Lead Member), D. Anson and A. Underhill were appointed to the working group with meetings remaining open to all Members.

#### **Affordable Housing Working Group**

It was agreed to continue this joint working group with the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel. Councillors D. Pitt and I. Shires agreed to continue as the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel representatives with an invitation extended to Councillor S. Coughlan.

#### **City Strategy**

Tim Johnson advised Members that this strategy linked with the wider theme of worklessness.

#### **Regional Economic Strategy**

Mark Lavender advised the Panel that Advantage West Midlands had been tasked with completing the Regional Economic Strategy by autumn 2009. By 2010 an integrated Regional Economic Strategy was required that took into account spatial aspects such as land use and transport.

The Walsall Economic Assessment would be used as part of the evidence base to inform the Regional Economic Strategy.

#### **New Deal for Communities – Exit Strategy**

Members felt that it was vital that the exit strategy for the New Deal for Communities scheme was considered to ensure the long term sustainability of the project.

Tim Johnson assured Members that work had begun on a succession strategy for the New Deal scheme.

Councillor Andrew welcomed the involvement of the Panel with this issue.

### **Area Based Grant**

The Panel requested that consideration of the Area Based Grant (ABG) be focused on Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF).

The links with WNF, City Strategy and worklessness were noted.

### **Joint Core Strategy and Local Development Framework**

Members reiterated their earlier desire to consider the Joint Core Strategy with a focus on balancing the land needs for employment and housing.

### **Local Area Agreement**

The Chairman explained that public bodies such as the Centre for Public Scrutiny placed an emphasis on considering high profile targets such as the Local Area Agreement (LAA). It was important that the Panel monitored overall progress with achieving the LAA as well as selecting items for its work programme that matched the LAA priorities.

### **Urban Regeneration Company**

Mike Tichford reported that a local review of the Urban Regeneration Company (URC) had taken place and it was desirable that a formal review took place which was something that Members could participate in.

Members requested that the URC be invited to a meeting of the Panel to inform them of the URC achievements and projects that they were involved in across the borough.

Councillor Andrew suggested that the Panel may want to consider the views of Advantage West Midlands towards the URC. He added that the URC had been very successful in attracting business interest in Walsall over and above that which would have been the possibilities of the Council alone.

### **Child Poverty**

In response to a question the Chairman explained that a child was deemed to live in poverty if the household income was less than 60% of the national average. He reminded Members that the proportion of children living in poverty was an LAA target.

It was agreed that this was an issue that could be picked up through the Panels wider work.

In view of ensuring that enough time was given to the significant items during the year the Panel asked the Chairman to work with Officers to prioritise the Panels work programme and report back to the next meeting.

**Resolved**

**That:**

- a) the following items be added to the work programme for 2008/09:
- i. **Markets Working Group;**
  - ii. **Regional Economic Strategy;**
  - iii. **Joint Core Strategy;**
  - iv. **New Deal for Communities – Exit Strategy;**
  - v. **Affordable Housing Working Group with the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel;**
  - vi. **St. Matthews Quarter Working Group on conclusion of the Markets Working Group;**
  - vii. **Urban Regeneration Company achievements and work programme.**
- b) **Councillor D. Pitt (Lead Member), D. Anson and A. Underhill be appointed to the Markets Working Group with meetings open to all Panel Members;**
- c) **Councillor D. Pitt, I. Shires and S. Coughlan be appointed as the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel Members on the Affordable Housing Working Group subject to Councillor S. Coughlan confirming that he wishes to join the working group;**
- d) **Peter Cromer from the Urban Regeneration Company (URC) be invited to present the achievements and work programme of the URC to the Panel;**
- and;
- e) **the Chairman prioritises the Panels work programme with Officers and reports the conclusions to the Panel on 31 July 2008.**

*Councillors D. Anson, B. Tweddle and K. Sears left the meeting before the consideration of the next item.*

## **08/08 MARKETS**

The Panel considered recommendations from the last meeting of the Markets Working Group (MWG).

Steve Lewis informed the meeting that the MWG had met to consider three key areas on 17 June 2008. They were:

- a) Temporary Relocation Plan
- b) New Charging Policy
- c) Future Management Options

The MWG had made a series of recommendations relating to each of the three issues which were circulated on the evening along with a copy of the draft temporary relocation plan.

(annexed)

Steve Lewis explained that the piece of work concerning the future management options was ongoing. It was hoped that this could be considered further at the next meeting of the Panel.

### **Temporary Relocation Plan**

Steve Lewis reported that the draft temporary relocation plan had been developed in consultation with the Market Traders Association (MTA) and other key partners such as emergency services.

The plan outlined 84 stalls with congressional areas. The location of the Sister Dora statue and the fountain required the relocated market to be located on The Bridge, Bradford Street, High Street and Park Street.

The MWG had requested that stalls 29 and 30 on the temporary relocation plan be denoted as flexible stalls which would be required to make way for displays and festive activities such as the display of the town centre Christmas tree.

Karen Sands reported that it was the intention at the current time to not occupy stalls 29 and 30 to leave this space open for community activities.

It was noted the MWG recommended that a high level of cleanliness be maintained at all times.

A Member expressed concern about the temporary relocation to The Bridge. He felt that there may be reluctance on behalf of the traders to relocate to a new site once they had settled on The Bridge whilst the new market was constructed.

Karen Sands reported that a new cleaning regime was to be implemented on The Bridge. For example the end of day clear up was to begin earlier than it does at present.

A Member commented that the Council should follow the example of markets in Europe with demountable stalls and high pressure water cleaning facilities.

### **New Charging Policy**

The Chairman explained that a new charging policy was required to remove the high variance of prices that were paid by traders at the current time.

In response to a question Mark Lavender explained that currently traders were paying between £16-£70 a day for their pitches due to a variety of factors. These factors were to be removed by relocating to The Bridge and the introduction of transparent rates.

The Chairman explained that the MWG had been presented with two options for the new pricing policy and had chosen the one preferred by the MTA.

A Member was concerned about the possibility of empty stalls in the heart of the town centre.

Karen Sands informed Members that many existing traders would be taking on additional stalls to maintain the same level of trading space as they did on the current site. The majority of traders would see their rents increase by £100 a week because of this.

Karen Sands reported that a meeting between traders and the Council was taking place next week. She commented that Members were welcome to come along and participate in the work taking place.

A Member suggested the possibility of the Panel considering improvements to other markets in the borough.

Councillor Andrew thanked the Panel and the MWG for the hard work that had been undertaken throughout its consideration of the future of Walsall Market. He explained that he felt the MWG was a good example of successful scrutiny in action.

### **Resolved**

**That the following recommendations be submitted to Cabinet on 16 July 2008:**

- a) the principles of the draft Walsall Market temporary relocation plan be supported;**
- b) stalls 29 and 30 on the draft temporary relocation plan be given a secondary pitch so that their primary location can be utilised for community activities and displays as and when desired. When no community activities or displays are taking place stalls 29 and 30 can occupy the pitch indicated on the draft temporary relocation plan;**
- c) a high level of cleanliness be maintained at all times on the temporary location site;**
- d) that the following rental prices per market stall be introduced for a period of one year:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Price</b>
Monday	£30.00
Tuesday	£35.00
Wednesday	£30.00
Friday	£35.00
Saturday	£40.00

- e) the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel review the success or otherwise of the new rental prices after they have been in operation for one year;**
- f) a daily £5 rental concession during January, February and March be granted to those traders who reach a minimum level of attendance for the first year of trading at the new temporary location**

- g) Cabinet be asked to consider delegating authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration the ability to implement discounts for future years trading based on an assessment of market considerations at that time;**
  - h) the minimum level of attendance to receive the rental concessions during January, February and March be agreed by the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director for Regeneration;**
  - i) annual inflationary rises or reductions in the rental prices for market stalls to be negotiated each year between the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director for Regeneration with the Market Traders Association;**
  - j) when considering inflationary rises or reductions in the rental prices for market stalls the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director for Regeneration must take into account inflation in the retail sector rather than any other inflationary measure;**
- and;**
- k) the future management options for the new relocated market, in principle agreed to be in Lower Hall Lane, be considered at a future meeting of the Markets Working Group.**

#### **09/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 31 July 2008.

In closing the meeting the Chairman thanked Steve Lewis for all the hard work and support that he provided to the Panel and its working groups during his time at the Council and wished him luck with his emigration.

The meeting terminated at 7.52 pm.

Chair:

Date: