

DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING 26TH NOVEMBER 2007

Present – Councillors Mrs. Brierley (Chairman), A. S. Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Critchley, Darvesh, Dennis, Gradwell, Hall, Hornby, J Rothwell, Scowcroft, D Wilkinson and Woodward.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Adia	- Executive Member for Development
Councillor Zaman	- Executive Member for Regeneration
Mrs S Crossley	- Assistant Director – Adult Services
Mr K Davies	- Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr J Smethurst	- Chief Housing and Regeneration Officer
Mr M Kelly	- Chief Economic Strategy Officer
Mr. A. Walker	- Head of Enterprise, Employment and Skills
Mr T Hill	- Chief Planning Officer
Mr T Crossley	- Strategic Finance Manager
Mr A Seera	- Corporate Policy Officer
Mr I D Mulholland	- Scrutiny Team Leader

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of

Councillors Bashir – Ismail and Chadwick.

Councillor Mrs. Brierley in the Chair

36. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 8th October 2007 be signed as a correct record.

37. DECISION MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report detailing the progress of decisions previously taken by this Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

38. PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT

The minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Member for Development held on 22nd October 2007 and 19th November 2007 were submitted.

Further to minute 44, Development and Regeneration – Strategic Resource Options, Members asked for further details in respect of the proposed budget re-directions regarding assisting Bolton at Home in gaining access to properties to undertake gas safety inspections.

In respect of Clare Court Development Brief as set out in the Decision Monitoring Appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November, 2007, Members discussed the need to keep ward Members informed of developments.

In conclusion, Members sought information in respect of the cost of the Bolton at Home Awards event being held in the Albert Halls on 26th November, 2007.

Resolved – (i) That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

(ii) That the Director of Development and Regeneration be asked to notify Members of this Committee of further information in respect of the proposed budget re-direction regarding assisting Bolton at Home in gaining access to properties to undertake gas safety inspections.

(iii) That the Director of Development and Regeneration be asked to inform Members of the cost of the Bolton at Home Award event held in the Albert Halls.

39. PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

The minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Member for Regeneration held on 22nd October 2007 and 19th November 2007 were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

40. PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

The minutes of the proceedings of the joint meeting of the Executive Members for Regeneration and Corporate Strategy and Finance held on 1st October, 2007 were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive Members be noted.

41. EXTRACTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE

An extract of the proceedings of the meeting of the Executive held on 29th October, 2007 relating to the Bolton Town Centre Pool and the Church Wharf Compulsory Purchase Powers were submitted.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

**42. PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT AND
REGENERATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS**

The proceedings of the joint meeting of the Housing and Development and Regeneration Policy Development Groups held on 8th October 2007 were submitted.

Resolved – That the proceedings of the meeting be noted.

**43. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY
DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The proceedings of the meeting of the Development and Regeneration Policy Development Group held on 12th November 2007 were submitted.

Resolved – That the proceedings of the meeting be noted.

**44. PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS OF THE HOUSING
POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The proceedings of meetings of the Housing Policy Development Group held on 5th November 2007 and 12th November 2007 were submitted.

Further to minute, 15, Service Charge Policy, Members discussed the supply of the digital television service to tenants in Bolton and associated educational issues. Also referred to was the break down of service charges such as caretaking and cleaning and supply of the digital television service which enabled tenants to have a clear understanding of what they were paying for.

Resolved – That the proceedings of the meetings be noted.

45. WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2008

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which outlined the Committee's Work Programme for the 2007/2008 Municipal Year, which was updated on a rolling basis.

Resolved – That the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

46. THE WORKSHOP UNIT ON NEWPORT STREET

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report and Mr. Andrew Walker and Mr. Martin Kelly gave a presentation detailing how the Development and Regeneration Department had made use of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to establish, The Workshop, on Newport Street, Bolton as a tool to engage priority groups and assist clients into employment.

By way of background information, the report explained that central to the newly developed Community Strategy and Bolton Plan were the twin priorities of achieving prosperity and bridging the gap. It was clear from the pace and extent of physical regeneration within the Borough, that forecasts of over 10,000 net additional jobs in the economy, were becoming a reality. The task now was to maximise the potential for local people to benefit from this growth specifically those from communities and demographic groups who had, in the past, found it hard to engage with the labour market.

Members were advised that within Bolton the single largest group of people who were of working age but not actively being encouraged to seek employment were those on Incapacity Benefit. Approximately 17,000 people locally were in this position. Work by the Department of Work and Pensions was focussed on stemming the on-flow of new claimants and working actively with those moving onto Incapacity Benefit and those who had been on benefit for less than 6 months. It was also a facet of the problem that often Incapacity Benefit claimants, particularly those who had been out of work for

prolonged periods, often found the transition to working life hard and gave up on jobs within the first few weeks.

Another area of disparity within employment performance was around the levels of economic participation between differing ethnic groups.

The scale and extent of many of these issues was reliant upon the application of mainstream resources from major agencies such as Job Centre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council in terms of addressing skills barriers. The role of the Council had been to lead and inform these partners at a local level and to use pump –priming investment from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and DWP's Disadvantaged Areas Fund to pilot complementary provision. In order to co-ordinate this activity, the Bolton Employment Task Group was formed as a sub-group of the Economic Partnership in order to oversee and commission new initiatives.

Members were informed that based on the evidence of pilots it became evident that a town centre retail base was an ideal venue to attract priority client groups included within the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The property at Newport Street was secured on the basis of its ideal location, space and confidential consulting rooms and its full Disability Discrimination Act access provision.

The report concluded by indicating The Workshop's initial performance including the fact that 165 people on long term Incapacity Benefit had now found sustained work.

Members in their deliberations referred to the follow matters :-

- (a) connections with the Probation Service;
- (b) the future tracking of individuals. It was indicted that this was difficult as individuals could often be very mobile after gaining successful employment again;
- (c) the importance of pre-recruitment training;

- (d) the focus of Job Centre Plus on the first 12 weeks of unemployment;
- (e) future resources. It was explained that post NRF Funding it was hoped that funding could be mainstreamed;
- (f) the overall good participation from target NRF areas but the low participation of four of them. It was explained that the process was LAA driven and discussions were being undertaken with Bolton at Home to address this issue;
- (g) support for employers in taking on these individuals. Members were advised that confidence building work was undertaken with the individuals. Work jointly with the employer and the individual to iron out potential problem issues was also undertaken. A proper induction was also important; and
- (h) the meeting of employment targets.

Resolved – (i) That Messrs Walker and Kelly be thanked for their informative report and presentation.

(ii) That an update on the progress of the Job Work Shop be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

47. BUDGET, EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE MONITOR/DASHBOARD – QUARTER 2

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which identified the revenue and capital outturns and the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for the second quarter of 2007/2008. Also included in this report was the overview of the Department's Dashboard which identified the Department's performance in the second quarter of 2007/2008.

Members in their deliberations discussed the following matters:

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- (a) The availability of the East Bolton Regeneration Evaluation report;
- (b) In respect of the major variances since the original budget was set, Members sought clarification in terms of a shortfall of £26,000 regarding caravan site and various premises costs. It was indicated that the reason for this was due to there being a significant reduction of illegal encampments and associated income in Bolton; and
- (c) In terms of the Capital Programme, Little Bolton THI was referred to as it was in the project at risk category. Members were informed that the commitment of most of the property owners had now been secured and progress should start to be made. Also mentioned was Dawes Street Skate Park . Members enquired whether spending was actually within budget. It was explained that spending was within budget and the loss of car park income from the site had been factored into the budget.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm.and finished at 7.30pm)