



BRIEFING NOTE

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE – 7th FEBRUARY 2007.

SCRUTINY BOARD 3 QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT (OCT – DEC)

As a result of the Council Diary and Christmas holidays the Board only held two formal meetings, plus a Member Seminar during this quarter.

High Street / City Centre Street Cleansing

The recent refurbishment of High Street with a new pavement surface product has been an issue of particular interest for the Board. This material is attractive and durable and when excavated can be recycled on site after works are completed. The Board were keen to learn more about the cleaning regime for this surface and to follow up on the re-instatement of some of High Street following work by contractors. A site visit with CVOne operatives followed and the Board have requested further investigations into a number of City Centre street cleansing issues.

Commercial Property Portfolio Review

The Board has closely followed this Review and officers presented the second phase to the October meeting. Following a lively discussion between Members the Board endorsed the findings of the Review, which included disposal of under-performing assets. At the meeting City Development officers agreed that they would present the final draft of property specific information to the Board at the appropriate time.

Planning Services

The Board recently convened a seminar for all elected members to discuss perceived problems with the Planning Service. This was intended to commence a Scrutiny Review to investigate any potential improvements that could be made particularly to the customer service aspects of the Service. The seminar was well attended and proposed the Review Group consider the following major areas of investigation:

- Identifying the connections between different legislation relating particularly to the Planning Service, Building Control and Licensing
- Customer access and ease of use of the service (liaison / forums etc)
- Developing an appropriate and responsive enforcement regime that considered the knowledge of the participants
- Improving opportunities for Member involvement in reviewing and formulating planning policy
- Improving Member Training, both for those who do and do not sit as Planning Committee Members to facilitate a greater understanding of what can be achieved

Traffic Management Act

The Board received a presentation on the current preparations taking place for the introduction of Urban Traffic Management Control. This will allow for officers to monitor activity on all major highways in the City and respond accordingly.

Waste Strategy

The Board was recently briefed on the current work being undertaken by City Services officers on developing a new Municipal Waste Strategy. This document will develop the Council's plans on collecting and disposing of all of the various waste streams emanating from the City. The Board has recently conducted a site visit of the Energy from Waste Plant operated by Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company. The Plant remains one of the most efficient and well-managed facilities of its type, however inevitably as environmental expectations continue to be increased and the plant ages its life span is limited. The Board are shortly to consider whether or not to visit a more modern Energy from Waste plant recently opened by Hampshire County Council.

Current Work Programme Issues

(a) IKEA

The Board's involvement in the developing Waste Strategy will span longer than the current civic year and will be an issue for some time to come. Additionally the Board are intending shortly to hold a meeting to consider the preparedness of the City for the opening of the new IKEA store. Various plans are in place for improvements to the highways infrastructure around the site, as well as changes to the street scene in the Corporation Street / Victoria Road area, however the Board are keen to ensure that all that is possible is being done to ensure that this development is a success.

(b) Ricoh Arena

The Board remain committed to seeking improvements in the transport and travel arrangements for major non-football events at the Ricoh Arena. The summer concerts were a great success last year, however the Board are keen to ensure that lessons were learnt from the various transport and travel problems associated with these events.

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