

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

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GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present:

	Councillor J Windle	(Chair)
Councillor	S Boyle	Councillor B Rice
"	C Cupit	" C Tite
"	A Powell	

Also Present

Grant Galloway – Assistant Director – Property and Estates
Julian Cosgrove – Economic Development and Growth Manager
Matt Broughton – Commercial Property and Developments Manager
Sue Broadhead – Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Sarah Cottam – Governance Officer

294 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor W Lilleyman.

295 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at this meeting.

296 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 4 August 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

297 Scrutiny Review – Vacant Land

The Committee considered a scene setting presentation on 'Vacant Land'. Grant Galloway, Assistant Director – Property and Estates was in attendance.

An Asset Management Group had been in effect for six months and the purpose of the Group was to pick up property issues, staff in estates department reported direct to the Group with recommendations. The Group consisted of representatives from different departments throughout the Council. The Assistant Director – Property and Estates advised the Committee that the Asset Management Group was working well but ultimately they needed a Member steer on the direction the Council wished to take.

The Council needed to be proactively looking at the assets in the Council's ownership. At present Tibbalds were appointed to bring forward projects based on what the Council instructed on particular sites, whether it be for income or growth.

The Company provided their expertise and experience which ranged from initial feasibility through to implementation. North East Derbyshire had a mixture of sites of different sizes and owned ransom strips of land which provided access to development sites.

The Committee were advised that the next meeting of the Asset Management Group would be taking place in October. The Group had met three times to date and it was felt important that a mechanism was put in place to ensure different stakeholders could feed into the Group.

It was seen as a good idea to include the planners on the Group, who could update on current developments throughout the District. A comprehensive list for members could then be compiled to aid in the planning for different sites.

It was advised that the Asset Management Group at Bolsover had been in operation for sometime and worked very successfully.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Assistant Director – Property and Estates for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the scene setting presentation be noted by the Committee.
- (2) That the project plan and timetable be agreed.
(Members/Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

298 Scrutiny Review – Vacant Land Interviews

The Committee carried out interviews as part of its review into 'Vacant Land'.

Julian Cosgrove, Economic Development and Growth Manager

- (1) What long term objectives do we have for effective asset management within the Authority.

The Committee were advised that he was a consultee on the draft Asset Management Strategy. The Economic Development and Growth Manager sat on the Housing, Planning and Economic Development Group, but had recently requested inclusion on the Asset Management Group.

- (2) How do land assets support our wider corporate objectives and strategies including for urban extension

The Economic Development and Growth Manager advised the Committee that he had recently met with the Asset Management Group to discuss the Council's assets.

- (3) How do we measure progress and performance against the asset management plan

The Committee were advised that only the draft Asset Management Plan had been viewed, but was unsure if this had been adopted by the Council. The Economic Growth Team were currently researching the future economy to see where we needed to be and to look forward to understand what was emerging. The Team were looking at advance manufacturing to see if we had the accommodation for this in the district. At present North East Derbyshire was unable to meet the requests from international companies wanting a base in the country as there was nothing to offer in terms of employment land. All business enquiries were coming through the Sheffield City Region (LEP).

- (4) Is there an integrated departmental and corporate approach to the management of land assets

Yes there was. He felt It would be helpful if the Asset Management Groups plans linked in with the Growth Strategy.

- (5) What other information systems do we have to help informed decision making and planning

There were various systems available. Bryan Harrison, Senior Regeneration Officer and Urban Designer, used the GIS system from which maps were available that showed all land in Council ownership. The Economic Development and Growth Manager was happy to share any maps with the Committee if required.

- (6) What progress has been made on the production of an up-to-date Asset Management database

The Economic Development and Growth Manager was not aware of progress and advised that a database was not readily available at the moment.

- (7) How do we determine whether land we own is for disposal, development or retention

Any disposal, development or retention of land should link in with the Asset Management Strategy and follow what was set out in the Strategy.

- (8) How are our decisions on use of land linked to our corporate plan

This was dependent on the Asset Management Strategy and whether it be for profit or growth purposes.

- (9) Do we involve local members or Parish Councils in identifying land that could be used by the Council say, for housing

Yes, discussions were held with parishes and updates were provided to the parish members. The Economic Development and Growth Manager advised the Committee that you couldn't beat local knowledge, a month's time could be saved on developing sites through liaising with parishes and local residents.

- (10) What are the main barriers in the Authority to the identifying of available land and/or the disposal of land

He felt that there were no barriers in identifying land or disposing of land, it was just about unlocking potential sites.

- (11) How well is the Disposals and Acquisitions Policy working

The Disposals and Acquisitions Policy was working well and strategically.

- (12) If we dispose, develop or retain land how is this linked to the Disposal and Acquisition Policy

The Disposal and Acquisition Policy sets out the reasons for disposing, developing or retaining land and it was understood to work well.

- (13) What costs are involved in keeping land we own, do any generate income

The Economic Development and Growth Manager was not aware of any cost involvement in keeping land in Council ownership and he wasn't aware of any income generation.

- (14) What is the net cost of our garages after rental and other costs have been deducted

The Economic Development and Growth Manager was not aware of the costs of garages after rental or any other associated costs.

- (15) How do we avoid the mass sell-off of land assets to private developers and are there alternative ways to generate income

Mass sell off of land assets to private developers was avoided by the link to the Asset Management Plan.

- (16) How can new social housing be locked into a new local plan in light of the planning legislation changes

Question not applicable.

- (17) How can we benefit from the example of other councils provision of affordable housing and the information systems they use for asset management

Question not applicable.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Economic Development and Growth Manager for attending the meeting.

Matt Broughton, Commercial Property and Developments Manager

- (1) What long term objectives do we have for effective asset management within the Authority.

The Commercial Property and Developments Manager advised the Committee that over the long term having the appropriate assets to deliver sites for the Council, the good utilisation of our assets and to achieve good value for money whilst working in consultation with Members.

- (2) How do land assets support our wider corporate objectives and strategies including for Urban extension

It was strongly recommended that sites should not only be disposed of as they could be a good investment to the Council. Sites were identified through SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) and were controlled through Planning Policy. The Council had achieved good things by purchasing land, for example the Avenue site, this, in his opinion would not have been remediated if still in the ownership of CPL.

- (3) How do we measure progress and performance against the asset management plan

The Asset Management Plan had not yet been formally adopted, but the Commercial Property and Developments Manager was keen to get this in place. Action Plans were set out in the Asset Management Plan on what was to be delivered this would be fed into the Departmental Service Plan targets. These were then recorded on the PERFORM System, from which Managers would report on progress against this.

- (4) Is there an integrated departmental and corporate approach to the management of land assets

It had been recognised that different departments had different drivers for sites and this could cause conflicts. The Asset Management Group provided a good

setting for officers to discuss the issues and resolve any conflicts. The Asset Management Group was still in its infancy and had only met two to three times so far.

- (5) What other information systems do we have to help informed decision making and planning

The Corporate Asset Plan helped the Council make informed decisions when looking at options for sites. Through the Corporate Asset Plan, condition surveys would be carried out. Knowing what level of investment was needed for individual sites would help the Council decide what the best option would be. Most recently, the Holmewood depot had been discussed at the Asset Management Group and after a condition survey was carried out the depot was put up for sale.

- (6) What progress has been made on the production of an up-to-date Asset Management database

An electronic database was required for Asset Management, this had been proposed in the Asset Management plan, and would be put in place once the Strategy was adopted.

- (7) How do we determine whether land we own is for disposal, development or retention

The Committee were advised that each site was determined on a case by case basis. It was felt that a Member steer would be useful when looking at what the aims for each site were. The Commercial Property and Development Manager would look to Economic Development colleagues to advise on where the growth was in the District.

- (8) How are our decisions on use of land linked to our corporate plan

The Commercial Property and Development Manager advised the Committee that the Council's decision on the use of land significantly impacted on service delivery. The Mill Lane relocation had a big impact on services. It was felt that the biggest tool for the Council was being in control of land.

- (9) Do we involve local members or Parish Councils in identifying of land that could be used by the Council say for housing

Yes, local members and parish councillors were involved on a site by site basis. Conversations would be had with Councillors, Police, Fire Services etc where necessary.

- (10) What are the main barriers in the Authority to the identifying available land and/or the disposal of land

Conflicting department drivers could be a barrier but these would hopefully be discussed at the Asset Management Group.

- (11) How well is the Disposals and Acquisitions Policy working

The Commercial Property and Development Manager advised the Committee that the Disposals and Acquisition Policy was a useful tool when writing reports and ensured everything aligned with the Policy. The Policy was a safeguard for the Council if it was ever scrutinised over its actions.

- (12) If we dispose, develop or retain land how is this linked to the Disposal and Acquisition Policy

The Committee were advised that the Council had not completed on anything through the Policy at present. It was advised that the sale of Saltergate was currently going through the Disposal and Acquisition Policy.

- (13) What costs are involved in keeping land we own, do we generate income

The Council needed to be realistic on the costs involved with keeping land in Council ownership. Costs would include management fees, security and fly-tipping.

- (14) What is the net cost of our garages after rental and other costs have been deducted

The Commercial Property and Developments Manager was not aware of the net cost of garages after rental and any other associated costs.

- (15) How do we avoid the mass sell-off of land assets to private developers and are there alternative ways to generate income

The Council would only sell off what was approved by members. There was no overall clear direction and this was done on a site by site basis.

- (16) How can new social housing be locked into a new local plan in light of the planning legislation changes

The Commercial Property and Development Manager wasn't aware as this was a Planning issue.

- (17) How can we benefit from the example of other councils provision of affordable housing and the information systems they use for asset management

The Uniform system was used for lease management. The Commercial Property and Development Manager advised the Committee that Uniform could be utilised for all Asset Management Work. However, a balance had to be struck between how much resource to use for that purpose and the value you get from it. North East Derbyshire had invested heavily into the Uniform software.

Councillor C Tite left the meeting at this point.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Commercial Property and Developments Manager for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the responses gathered as part of the Scrutiny Review into 'Vacant Land' be noted.

(Members/Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

299 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 38

The Committee considered the List of Key Decisions – Issue No 38 which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions – Issue No 38 be noted.

(Governance)

300 Work Programme

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2015-16 which set out the items that the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2015-16 be noted.

(Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

301 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items to be considered at the meeting.

302 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 24 November 2015 at 10.00 am in Chamber 1.