

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE REGENERATION SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD ON MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2009

Present: Councillor Mrs E M Connor (Chair)
Councillors S Bishop, Mrs S Forster,
Mrs B A Sloan, D J Taylor-Gooby and
C Walker

Apologies: Councillors D Raine and A J Holmes

1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 5 January 2009, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 13 January 2009, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

3 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

4 **FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Chair reported that this item had been withdrawn.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 **SERVICE UNIT PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

(i) **Regeneration and Partnerships**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Partnerships which provided information on the performance of the Regeneration and Partnerships Unit, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained that the service continued to manage and facilitate large infrastructure investment and development projects including the East Durham Link Road, Hawthorn Business Park, Seaham and Murton Colliery sites, the North Dock and the Media Village. Work on the East Durham Link Road leading to Hawthorn Business Park had progressed well and was complete. The works to provide services to the site was now underway and was scheduled for completion in April 2009. The Business Park would provide space for 2000 jobs over the next 10 years.

The developers for the Media Village were trying to attract major names into the scheme and highway improvement works on the roundabout at the A19 were to take place before 2010. Work would commence the following year to ensure the infrastructure was fully in place.

The Peterlee Masterplan had been subject to an Economic Appraisal and a subsequent exercise to establish a potential delivery programme for the next 15–20 years. The feasibility work relating to Peterlee and the Coalfield Housing that had been undertaken to date had been used as the basis of the expression of interest for the housing Growth Point bid to government to cover the sub region.

Seaham North Dock had secured its funding package and detailed designs for the provision of a workshop, pontoons and dock gates were complete. The scheme would be out to tender in February and arrangements to establish a Community Interest Company to drive the project forward and manage the working marina, post completion were now being progressed.

The land had now been acquired for the Media Village on the Strategic Reserve site south of Seaham and would accommodate up to 2000 new jobs. It was hoped that this would start on site in the next financial year.

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained that the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder for Horden was now being wound up and some of the staff would be accommodated in the North Peterlee pathfinder. Discussions between the Pathfinder and the PCT were ongoing with regard to retaining a scaled down office and meeting facility within the building from 2009-10 onwards.

A Member referred to the regeneration of Peterlee, the Growth Point bid and the need to have representation after April. He commented that Peterlee Town Council should also be involved as a partner.

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained that the issue and the merits of continuing the panel had been debated at the Peterlee Regeneration Member Panel. Representations were to be made to the new authority for it to be included in its governance structures. Durham County Council was fully signed up to the Growth Point bid and would continue to deliver the objectives of the schemes.

A Member referred to bus shelters in Princess Road and explained that a replacement had still not been erected. The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that the repair, maintenance and renewal of bus shelters had been considered previously by the Resources Scrutiny Committee and he would request an update.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his report.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Support Manager obtain an update on the repair, maintenance and renewal of bus shelters.

(ii) **Asset and Property Management**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Asset and Property Management which provided Members with performance information in relation to the Asset and Property Management section, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Asset and Property Manager explained that £150,000 had been invested in Peterlee Leisure Centre in new lighting for the sports hall and the contract for retiling the pool.

The non-operational estate comprised properties/land that was not used for the direct delivery of services but retained for investment and social purposes. The target set for capital receipts from disposals during 2008/9 was £6,455,844. Two significant sites had been lost as developers were not prepared to commit to the housing market in the current economic climate. To date, £256,000 had been received in capital receipts. £1m was expected for the second phase at Edenhill and terms had been agreed with Modus for the North Blunts site. The capital programme needed to be reprofiled and managed accordingly.

The Head of Asset and Property Management explained that facilities management projects to track urgent work identified as a consequence of condition survey reports from IPF had been identified and works commissioned to ensure they were addressed. The Asset Management Programme was dependant on additional resources to release current staff and critical to achieve corporate objectives. Arrears within the non-operational state had fallen since February 2008 from £32,489 – £10,396 and the unit was working with the Finance unit to recover those outstanding monies.

The Head of Asset and Property Management explained that RTB valuations had seen a massive downturn and there had only been 24 in the 6 month period compared to 150 in the peak.

A Member referred to Peterlee Leisure Centre and from April that free swimming would be provided for the over 60's and under 16's. He felt that consideration should be given to building a new leisure centre. The Head of Asset and Property Management explained that Leisure Connections had built some new leisure centres and had expressed an interest as part of the Peterlee master planning process.

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that Leisure Connections Annual Report was to be considered by District Council on 5 March and all queries regarding the leisure centre could be raised at that time.

A Member queried the progress with the North Blunts site. The Head of Asset and Property Management explained that Modus was interested in the site although it was owned by Durham County Council and the District Council held a small ransom stripe. Terms had been agreed with Modus when a planning enquiry had been received regarding the college site. Modus had requested an exclusivity arrangement which gave them the confidence to invest and bring forward a planning application. Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrison's were interested in the site and once the exclusivity agreement was signed, Modus would pursue the final occupier. This was a flagship site and the District Council wanted a good quality development therefore had requested that any plans be signed off before the sale was completed. The current economic climate had been discussed and Modus had assured Officers that supermarkets were the only projects that banks were investing in.

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A Member commented that a traffic impact survey should be carried out before a new supermarket was built as there was only one entry and exit to Asda and was very busy especially at peak times. The Head of Asset and Property Management explained that a Traffic Impact Assessment was a requirement of the planning permission.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his report.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

JC/MA/com regen/090101
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