REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL
5th February, 2010

Present:- Councillor Boyes (in the Chair); Councillors Gosling, Swift and Turner. Councillors Smith (Cabinet Member, Economic Development, Planning & Transportation), R. S. Russell (Cabinet Member for Streetpride) and St. John (Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport) at the invitation of the Chair; together with Co-opted Members:- Mr. B. Walker. Councillor Pickering, Chair of Planning Board, at the discretion of the Chair in view of aspects impacting on the administration of Planning and effects on service.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilding, N. Hamilton, Whysall, and Co-optees Mrs. J. Williams and Parish Councillor, Mr. T. Kelsey

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

113. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the press or the public.

114. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 13TH JANUARY, 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny panel held on 13th January, 2010.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

115. COMMUNICATIONS

The following items were reported:-

(i) Winter maintenance

A verbal update was given by Bob Stock, Streetpride Principal Network Engineer, on winter maintenance operations since 13th January, 2010, which detailed the following:-

- commencement of a thaw
- dropping stock levels
- receipt of additional supplies from the Salt Union, Lincolnshire and Kent County Councils
- current stock level
- usage during w/c 1st February
- national supply of salt
- recommendations from the Salt Cell re: reduced level of use
- effectiveness of mixing salt and git
- weather forecasts of a further period of cold and snow showers
- requests for salt bins and approval for Parish and Town Councils to purchase and maintain

- damage to the highway; funding of the cost to repair
- programme of extensive urgent repairs
- no Government response to the need to repair the roads

A questions and answers session ensued and the following issues were discussed:-

- accuracy and confidence in the weather predictions
- periods of prolonged snow and freezing weather in the past i.e. 10 years ago
- supplies in the Yorkshire and Humberside region
- advantages of a Salt Barn
- impact on the LAA target about condition of principal roads
- condition of roads in general; costs and timescale to repair
- offer to Parish and Town Councils to purchase salt/grit bins
- provision and maintenance of salt/grit bins in aged persons' complexes
- gritting at the crematorium
- the need to review the Service Level Agreement with Neighbourhoods
- possible Scrutiny review, or pilot project in the North of the borough
- efforts of the Teams involved in winter maintenance

Resolved:- (1) That the Panel's thanks again be conveyed to all staff involved in the winter maintenance activity.

(2) That the Panel receives a further update at the April meeting.

(ii) New Cultural Accommodation

Further to Minute No. 111 of the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel held on 13th January, 2010, Karl Battersby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, gave a verbal update in respect of the provision of new cultural accommodation within the town centre.

Reference was made to the forthcoming scrutiny review of the Image and Perception of Rotherham and the relevance of good cultural facilities.

It was reported that since the last meeting further work had been done in respect of progressing the Civic site. The next step would involve decisions about the cultural accommodation and where to move the library and arts centre.

Scoping work was currently being done on a range of options, timescales and anticipated budgets. This work included assessing premises throughout the town centre which were currently empty and could be brought back into use.

It was reported that it was proposed to present all the information to

Elected Members shortly.

Current activity was being focussed on the Civic site and it was noted that the building of the new office accommodation had commenced on the Guest and Chrimes site.

A questions and answers session ensued and the following issues were discussed:-

- provision of parking for the public
- ideal town centre locations
- cost associated with adaptations to town centre premises
- future use of Doncaster Gate
- revenue and capital budgets
- initiatives in Imperial Building for artists and exhibitions
- success of the FreeBee bus initiative
- links to the refurbishment of the railway station

Resolved:- (1) That the Strategic Director be thanked for the informative update.

(2) That this Scrutiny Panel continues to receive regular updates.

116. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER, 2009

Karl Batterby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, introduced Nichola Strettan, Finance Manager, Environment and Development Services.

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Strategic Director, Environment and Development Services, detailing performance against the revenue budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate as at the end of December 2009 and providing a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2009/10 financial year.

The following issues were highlighted and discussed:-

- overspend position as at the end of December, 2009
- measures being taken within the Directorate to achieve, as near as possible, a balanced budget at year end
- current pressures:- under recovery of income due to reduced number of planning applications; additional repairs and maintenance costs; financial position re: Clifton Park Restoration Project; shortfall in parking income; winter maintenance; agency and consultancy spend; South Yorkshire Archives

Resolved:- That the current position and measures being taken to contain the budget be noted.

117. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held as follows:-

- 4th January, 2010
- 15th January, 2010

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

118. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STREETPRIDE

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Streetpride held on 4th January, 2010.

Reference was made to the congestion and other problems associated with large out of town retail developments and what measures could be taken to alleviate those problems.

The Strategic Director referred to a part of the South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan – LUTI – Land Use and Transport Integration which aimed to locate development in places with the best transport links.

Resolved: (1) That the contents of the minutes be noted.

(2) That a presentation on LUTI be given to a future meeting.

119. MINUTES OF JOINT MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBERS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION AND STREETPRIDE

Consideration was given to the minutes of joint meetings of the Cabinet Members for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation and Streetpride held as follows:-

- 4th January, 2010
- 15th January, 2010

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

120. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet

Member for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation held as follows:-

- 15th December, 2009
- 4th January, 2010
- 15th January, 2010

Reference was made to the Town Centre Business Vitality Scheme and the link to the scrutiny review on the Image and Perception of Rotherham.

Resolved:- That the contents of the minutes be noted.

121. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services and Sport held as follows:-

- 15th December, 2009
- 5th January, 2010
- 19th January, 2010

Reference was made to:-

- Minute No. F47 Library Strategy Proposal – public consultation:- telephone surveys portending to be being carried out by or on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that this was an issue for Trading Standards to follow up.

- Minute No. F57 Grange Park Golf Club:- success of the partnership with Grange Park Golf Club

- Minute No. F62 Boston Castle HLF Grant Offer:- The Panel welcomed the offer of Heritage Lottery Fund grant for Boston Castle.

Resolved:- That the contents of the remaining minutes be noted.

122. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A

to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (financial/business affairs).

123. BUDGET UPDATE

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director, Environment and Development, assisted by a PowerPoint presentation, addressed the Panel in respect of Rotherham's budget 2010/2011 and Beyond.

The presentation covered:-

- proposals for savings and investments
- original funding gap and revised gap
- comparisons of Council's spending e.g. on children's services, ranked when compared with other councils
- Environment (including Neighbourhood Services)
- Planning and Transport services:- ranked when compared with other councils
- Social Care for Adults:- ranked when compared with other councils
- Cross-cutting savings proposals to bridge the budget gap
- range of savings and investments by Directorate
- specific savings and investments
- summary position as at 26th January, 2010

Members of the Panel commented on:-

- accuracy of the inflation figure
- impact of the receipt of planning fees for large scale developments
- impact of recent Government announcement re: free social care
- impact of the Personalisation agenda
- value for money of joint South Yorkshire services e.g. Police; Archives

It was reported that a further presentation would be made to the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee on 19th February, 2010.

Resolved:- That the content of the presentation be noted.