

REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL
23rd February, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Foden, Gilding, Gosling, Swift, Turner and Councillor Jack (at the invitation of the Chair); together with Co-opted Members:- Councillor C. Jepson and Mr. B. Walker. Also present Mr. K. Jack.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ellis, N. Hamilton, Slade, Wright, and Cabinet Members Akhtar, St. John, R. S. Russell and Smith

103. TOUR OF THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK

Prior to the meeting members of the Panel had a tour of the AMP and visited TWI.

The Chair of the Panel thanked everyone for the interesting and informative tour.

104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

105. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

106. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 12TH JANUARY, 2011

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel held on 12th January, 2011.

(i) Re: Minute No. 95(1) Joint Scrutiny Review of the Council's response to the severe winter weather

It was confirmed that the Panel had been established and that this review was about to commence.

(ii) Re: Minute No. 83 - Performance Indicators – it was confirmed that the report for the Third Quarter was now available and would be sent to members of the Panel for prior consideration. The report would be included as an agenda item for the meeting of the Panel scheduled for 23rd March, 2011.

Resolved:- That the minutes be approved as a correct record, and above comments noted.

107. BENEFITS OF LOCATING AT THE AMP: REPRESENTATIVE OF AN AMP TENANT COMPANY

It was explained that the company representative had been unable to attend due to an urgent business meeting.

108. UPDATE ON THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK (AMP) AND PROSPECTS FOR THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Paul Woodcock, Director of Regeneration and Planning introduced the concept behind the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Park (AMP).

It was explained that the AMP was located in Rotherham. However it had been developed through a joint approach with Yorkshire Forward, Sheffield City Council, together with collaboration and joint working with the University of Sheffield.

The concept began approximately 10 years ago.

The vision of the AMP was to encourage high end engineering, research and innovation companies and to this end difficult decisions had been made in respect of which companies had been accepted on to the park. As an example warehousing and distribution had not been encouraged on the park. However many more interested companies had been able to locate elsewhere within the Borough on other business estates.

It was explained that the development had been enabled by Yorkshire Forward and UK Coal, with funding from the European Union European Regional Development Fund. The AMP was a Flag Ship project for the region and because of its location it was intended to be a hub to create a world class technology park and to transform the traditional manufacturing sector of the area.

Companies based at the Park were from a variety of backgrounds and were involved in many sectors, such as environmental technology, construction, aerospace, automotive, defence and medical.

What was offered at the park?

- Land
- Provision for small start up companies or larger companies wanting a smaller presence adjacent to technology providers
- The AMP Technology Centre provided:- Café, conference and meeting facilities; Hot desking; Office and workshop spaces. Currently 67% occupied – including Bromley Technologies Ltd (engineering design); Bromley PES; Fripp Design and Research; TEKS
- Evolution @ AMP:- 95,000 sq ft of industrial units – 70% of which were occupied and others in Legals.

Tenants included:-

- TWI
- Materialise – prototyping and additive manufacturing solutions.
- University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC with Boeing) – worked with Messier-Dowty to secure a major contract to supply the landing gear for the new Boeing 787 aircraft.

- Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (led by the University of Sheffield and Rolls Royce) – the centre of excellence for research and development of advanced manufacturing technologies that will deliver step change, lower cost, high integrity components to the UK nuclear industry.
- Rolls Royce Factory of the Future – working on the aerospace industry and expanding to incorporate growth of the AMRC's Composite Centre.
- Advanced Structural Testing Centre (ASTC) – testing and certification services for the AMPC and its partners.
- Knowledge Transfer Academy – to assist companies understand and implement new manufacturing technologies and techniques.

There were still plenty of development opportunities on the AMP.

Reference was made to the strategic location of the AMP with access to the M1, the Humber ports and Liverpool. It was also explained that special arrangements had been made with the Highways Agency and highway engineers to enable large products to leave the site via the Parkway.

Challenges facing the AMP:-

- How to maintain the vision and keep up the momentum
- How to sustain the development of the AMP
- Current economic climate
- Abolition of the RDA's and ending of Yorkshire Forward funding in March 2012
- Future of the AMP Technology Centre and the joint Rotherham/Sheffield Investment Team

Members of the Panel raised the following issues:-

How many jobs had been created and filled by local people at the site?

- it was explained that about 500 people worked on site but it was difficult to know how many were local. The majority of people were located regionally but some of the more highly qualified were world-wide. Others were students from the University working as part of their studies. There were plans to increase this with the development of the Knowledge Transfer Academy.

How would the Government's plans for the RDA's assets affect the future of the park?

- this was a crucial year for the park. Future development may well focus on supply chain opportunities for companies in the region e.g. around offshore wind power research and the civil nuclear engineering sector.

Why did there appear to be a large amount of down time on machines in the research centre?

- it was explained that as much of the work was developmental and research based it was unlikely that machines etc would be working constantly. Companies in Yorkshire could access the machines and techniques to see if they were applicable to their processes and product. The park was not purely commercial or based on out puts. It was concerned with knowledge which was saleable, or made available through licence, world wide.

How much funding had come from Yorkshire Forward?

- it was explained that the Yorkshire Forward had a joint venture with UK Coal.

What would replace the RDA's? What would be the role of the Sheffield City Region Local Economic Partnership?

- It was explained that the LEP was still formative and currently had no statutory authority and little in terms of funding.

How could more young people be encouraged to train, acquire skills and qualify?

- it was envisioned that the AMP would become a world centre of excellence for apprenticeships and training and to this end continued to work with the University and RCAT.

The Panel was of the view that the Government needed to be made aware of the profile of some of the companies based at the AMP and the success and importance of the AMP for Rotherham, the region, nationally and internationally.

Resolved:- (1) That representations be made to Government re: the importance of continuing to support and develop the AMP.

(2) That the officers be thanked for their informative update.

109. DECEMBER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Finance Manager, detailing the performance against the revenue budget for the Environment and Development Services Directorate as at the end of December 2010 and to providing a forecast outturn for the whole of the 2010/11 financial year.

An explanation was given of the reasons for the current projected overspend.

Key pressures were identified in:-

- Office Accommodation
- Land and Property Bank
- Streetpride – as a result of the severe winter weather prior to Christmas 2010. It was noted that the full draw down from the Winter Maintenance Reserve would be required.

It was also pointed out that any subsequent spell of cold weather could incur further costs and there may be costs incurred in follow-up services affected by the weather e.g. waste collection.

Resolved:- That the current forecasted year end outturn position (an overspend of £101,000) for the Environment & Development Services Directorate based on expenditure and income as at December 2010 and forecast expenditure and income to 31st March 2011 be noted.

110. MINUTES 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:-

- 14th January, 2011
- 28th January, 2011

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

111. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Town Centres held as follows:-

- 10th January, 2011
- 24th January, 2011

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

112. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Consideration was given to the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment held as follows:-

- 10th January, 2011
- 24th January, 2011

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