

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, N Buckley,
P Davey, R Grahame, M Harland, G Hyde,
J Jarosz, K Mitchell and N Walshaw

69 Late Items

The following late information was admitted to the Agenda:

- Agenda Item 8 – Integration of the Domestic Noise Nuisance Service into Safer Leeds report.

70 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

71 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies of absence were received on behalf of Councillor P Harrand, Councillor S Lay and Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods.

72 Minutes - 14 January 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

73 Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill

The report of the City Solicitor brought the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill to the attention of the Board. Within the report, particular reference was made to the new Community Trigger and Community Remedy provisions contained in the draft bill.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor P Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Harvinder Saimbhi, Head of Anti-Social Behaviour
- Gill Marshall, Section Head, Legal, Licensing and Registration Services.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Community Remedy provisions – it was noted that such provisions are designed to allow police officers to deal with low level crimes on the spot by imposing an out of court remedy or conditional caution.
- That Police and Crime Commissioners would be required to consult, prepare and publish a document setting out what reasonable interventions offenders would be required to undertake if an out-of-court solution is preferred.
- That there was a separate Government consultation on the Community Remedy seeking views to ensure that victims get a say in the punishments imposed.
- Community Trigger – that this would be a local trigger mechanism through which the response to a case of anti-social behaviour can be reviewed if no action has been taken by the authorities. This new mechanism is not to replace complaints processes.
- Leeds had been invited to pilot the Community Trigger. It was anticipated that this could go live in June 2013.
- Community Protection Notices – these are designed to give councils greater flexibility to deal with particular on-going instances of environmental anti-social behaviour issues that are not covered by the existing Environmental Protection Act 1990, such as ‘people noise’ including banging and shouting. These notices could be issued to businesses, individuals and organisations.
- Reference was made to the proposals within the Bill aimed at enabling landlords to seek possession of secure and assured tenancies on anti-social behaviour grounds. Linked to this, it was acknowledged that whilst the Council already has provisions in place for dealing with tenancy agreement breaches, these need to be enforced more rigorously.
- Whilst acknowledging that the Bill was still undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny, the Board noted the potential benefits associated with creating fewer but more flexible tools and powers aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour. It was noted that further work would be undertaken with partners to consider how best to apply these new flexible powers and any associated cost implications. However, it was hoped that the proposed new powers would enhance the current multi-agency approach of the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the results of the Leeds Community Trigger pilot be brought back to Scrutiny once available.

74 Integration of the Domestic Noise Nuisance Service into Safer Leeds

The report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods provided the Board with an update on the progress made in integrating and developing the Domestic Noise Nuisance Service as part of Safer Leeds (Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team).

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor P Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Harvinder Saimbhi, Head of Anti-Social Behaviour
- Liz Jarmin, Head of Community Safety Partnerships, Safer Leeds

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- That the Domestic Noise Nuisance Service now comprises of two sections: Day time case worker team (nine officers now embedded in the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team) and the Out of Hours Domestic Noise Response Service (embedded into Leedswatch).
- Domestic noise nuisance represents a substantial proportion of complaints received by the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
- That noise nuisance is not confined to certain wards and is a city-wide issue. However, there are particular noise hot spots.
- That Area Committees have the opportunity to commission an enhanced noise service using their well-being funding.
- As a large proportion of noise complaints are 'one offs', an improved noise pack had been introduced to assist the complainant in rectifying the problem themselves such as speaking with the offending party. These include noise diaries to gather evidence if the problem becomes persistent and further enforcement is needed.
- That the ALMOs now attempt at least three interventions to resolve any noise nuisance issues under Tenancy Agreements before making a referral to the LASBT.
- Reference was made to the work undertaken in offering support and mediation to vulnerable disabled clients.
- That further work is being undertaken to understand service trends and comparison with historical data.
- Members welcomed the progress made in improving the flexibility and effectiveness of the service, which was already receiving positive feedback from Elected Members, residents and staff.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

75 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's draft Work Schedule and recent Executive Board minutes.

The following issues were discussed in relation to the Board's Work Schedule:

- That a working group meeting had been arranged for 4th March 2013 to meet with the Council's Police and Crime Panel representatives to consider the draft West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan.
- That the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner is expected to attend the Scrutiny Board's April meeting.
- Income Generation – whilst it was reported that the Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services) was undertaken a wider piece of work on this, Members agreed to undertake a discrete piece of work around income generation opportunities linked to the Council's CCTV and security functions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

76 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 11 March 2013 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.)