

SCRUTINY BOARD (SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY AND CULTURE)

TUESDAY, 23RD APRIL, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor M Rafique in the Chair

Councillors P Wadsworth, R Harington,
M Ingham, J McKenna, B Urry and
J Chapman

142 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the April meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture).

143 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business to consider, however the Chair agreed to accept the following as supplementary information:-

- Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) – Minutes of a Meeting held on 9th April 2013 (Agenda Item 6)(Minute 146 refers)

The document was not available at the time of the agenda despatch, but made available to the public on the Council's website.

144 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary and other interests declared at the meeting.

145 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor D Cohen.

146 Minutes - 3rd and 9th April 2013

RESOLVED –

- a) That, subject to the following minor amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record:-

Minute 128 Call In – Kirkgate Market Strategy – to delete in the attendance 'Councillor R Lewis – Deputy Leader and Executive Board Member' and insert 'Councillor R Lewis, Executive Member, Development and the Economy'

- b) That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

147 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- a) Outcome of Call In (Minute 129 refers)

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser informed the meeting that a response had been received to the Call In recommendations from the Executive

Member, Development and the Economy and that Board Members had received a copy of the response.

148 Scrutiny Inquiry - Flood Risk Management

Referring to Minute 71 of the meeting held on 22nd November 2013, the report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented information as part of the Board's inquiry into flood risk management.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) – Flood Risk Management – Terms of Reference (Appendix 1 refers)
- Report of the Flood Risk Manager – Inquiry into Flood Risk Management – Background Report (Appendix 2 refers)
- Report of the Director of City Development – Outline of flood risk policies and procedures (Appendix 3 refers)
- Report of the Chief Officer Environmental Action, Head of Engineering Service – Briefing Note: Flood Risk Management: Gully Cleaning and Maintenance (Appendix 4 refers)

The Chair informed the meeting that the submission of evidence would cover the following specific areas:-

- The role and contribution of the various relevant council services including the Flood Risk Management team, Highways, Planning and Neighbourhood Management/Locality Teams (with regard to gully maintenance) to managing flood risk in Leeds (Session One)
- The role and contribution of Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency to managing flood risk in Leeds (Session Two refers)

In attendance to address the Board and answer Members' questions were:-

- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member, Environment
- Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Member, Development and the Economy
- Ms Jacqueline Simpson, Garforth Flood Support Group
- Mr Roy Coello, Head of Engineering Services
- Mr Peter Davis, Flood Risk Manager
- Mr Martin Sellens, Head of Planning Services
- Ms Helen Miller, Principal Planner
- Ms Helen Freeman, Chief Officer, Environmental Action
- Ms Wendy Kimpton, Yorkshire Water (Session Two)
- Mr John Woods, Environment Agency (Session Two)

Apologies had been received from Mr Adam Tunningley, Partnership Manager, West Yorkshire, Environment Agency.

As part of Session One of the inquiry, the Chair invited Mr Peter Davis, Flood Risk Manager to give a brief overview of the background information into

Flood Risk Management. Members also received a presentation which covered such issues as main rivers and watercourses; Leeds City Council flooding incident records (2001-2010); hotspot locations; photographs of different types of gullies/curbs and drainage examples etc.

The Chair then invited Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member, Environment to comment on his role as Executive Member in relation to this issue and as a Ward Member for Garforth where a number of flooding incidents had occurred over recent years. He commented on the excellent work undertaken by the Locality team who had remodelled the gully cleansing and maintenance issues. In conclusion, he referred to the continuing difficulties in relation to planning issues and how new developments fitted into the current structure around flooding.

The Chair then invited Ms Jacqueline Simpson, Garforth Flood Support Group to provide a brief overview of the history of the Garforth Flood Support Group. She commented on the work of the group which had been selected as a national pilot by DEFRA. She praised Leeds City Council for their response rate and excellent work undertaken on flood risk management in Garforth over the past few years and informed the meeting that the Garforth Flood Support Group remained active in reporting gully incidents to the Council. In conclusion she raised her concerns about the management of sites and enforcement of obligations during the construction phase of new developments.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from Board Members on the evidence submitted.

In summary the following issues were discussed:-

- The problems associated with chronic ground water issues, especially in relation to water getting into cellars which could contain sewerage and who was responsible in this regard with details of the measures in place to resolve this issue
- The need for a dedicated team or One Stop approach to achieve consistency
- The need for a joined up approach when dealing with broken gullies
- The need to address how individual gullies became blocked and to ensure that the service was cost effective
- Clarification on the effectiveness of a combined drainage system
- The need to consider including a programme of works for new roads and kerbs within the plans for new housing development
- Clarification of how the watercourse hotspots were cleared and whether they were linked to local gully maintenance schedules
- Clarification of how the services were maintained during times of vacancies/staff illnesses
- The improvements in information sharing between services
- Clarification of the current position in relation to Sustainable Drainage and the Draft Flood Risk Management Strategy

Officers duly responded to above issues. In relation to the Draft Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Board noted that the document was awaiting public consultation and had major implications for internal and external partners. It was noted that the Board would consider this document in due course as part of the budget and policy framework prior to it being considered by Executive Board and Council.

As part of Session Two of the inquiry, the Chair invited Ms Wendy Kimpton, Yorkshire Water to give a brief overview in relation to the role and contribution of Yorkshire Water to managing flood risk in Leeds. Members received a power point presentation which outlined the roles and responsibilities arising from the Water Industry Act 1991 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. She informed the meeting that Yorkshire Water was working and sharing information with the Council and as a result was trying to address the current flooding and blocked drains issues etc. In concluding she confirmed that Yorkshire Water's approach was well embedded in the flooding community and accepted that they could do better in a number of areas.

The Chair then invited Mr John Woods, Environment Agency to provide a brief overview of the work within the Environment Agency in relation to managing a flooding risk in Leeds. He informed the meeting that the role of local funding was crucial in unlocking grants for addressing flood risk management.

Prior to taking further comments from Board Members on the evidence submitted, the Chair invited Councillor R Lewis, Executive Member, Development and the Economy to comment on the funding issues and the importance of all agencies to work together with effective communication.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from Board Members on the evidence submitted.

In summary the following issues were discussed:-

- Clarification of the mechanisms in place in relation to dealing with water from watercourses, highways land and private land, and in particular where water had run from one house to another
- Suggestions sought on how communications could be improved between Yorkshire Water, Environment Agency and the Council
- Clarification if any programme of works had been identified for risk areas
- The need to recognise that collaborative working was very important between all agencies

Ms Wendy Kimpton, Yorkshire Water duly responded to the above issues. In relation to improving communications, she stated that there was a need to have a clear set of Service Level Agreements in place which had been raised at recent meetings held between Yorkshire Water and the Council.

In conclusion of the evidence provided, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the inquiry. He confirmed that good practice was evident, but that it was also important to have a joined up strategy in place.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to prepare a report on the Board's recommendations in relation to the inquiry into flood risk management for future consideration.

(Councillor R Harington left the meeting at 11.30am during discussion of the above item)

(Councillor P Wadsworth left the meeting at 11.35am during discussion of the above item)

149 Recommendation Tracking

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which updated the Board on recommendations from previous inquiries which have not yet been completed.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- b) That recommendations 4, 6, 8 and 10 be signed off, and that further progress reports be required in relation to recommendations 3 and 9.

150 Chair's Closing Remarks

As this was the last meeting within the current Municipal Year, the Chair thanked Board Members, Kate Arscott, Principal Scrutiny Adviser and officers for their contributions and support during the past year.

He also informed the meeting that Mr S Robinson, Governance Services would be leaving the Council on the Early Leavers Initiative at the end of May after 40 years service. Board Members conveyed their best wishes to Mr Robinson.

(The meeting concluded at 12.05pm)