

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, A Blackburn, J Dunn,
R Grahame, M Harland, P Harrand,
J Jarosz, K Ritchie, M Robinson, B Urry
and N Walshaw

49 Late Items

There were no late items.

50 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

51 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence.

52 Minutes - 10 November 2014

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

53 Strengthening the Council's relationship with Parish and Town Councils - Tracking of Scrutiny recommendations

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the earlier Scrutiny review on strengthening the Council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils.

The following were in attendance for this item:

Councillor Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel

Chris Pilkington, Deputy Chief Officer of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations

Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer Communities

Rory Barke, Area Leader (Corporate)

Anne McMaster, Executive Officer, Citizens and Communities

David Feeney, Head of Planning and Economic Policy

In consideration of the report, the following issues were discussed by the Board:

- National Local Council Award Scheme – it was highlighted that this new national Scheme is to replace the Quality Parish Scheme and is scheduled to be re-launched in January 2015. The Deputy Chief Officer of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations gave a brief overview of the new Scheme and explained that it is yet to be determined how this Scheme will be administered locally.
- Engaging with Community Committees – the Board reinforced the importance of Community Committees actively engaging with their respective Parish and Town Councils on local issues and also ensuring that meeting agendas are disseminated to local Clerks.
- Indicative costs of Parish Elections in May 2015 – Members identified the need for indicative costs associated with the 2015 Parish Elections to be communicated to the parishes in the near future.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – linked to the Planning Charter with local Parish and Town Councils, it was noted that the current Charter already makes reference to the introduction of CIL from April 2015 and that this Charter will continue to be reviewed annually.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) As recommendation 2 is closely linked to the re-launch of the National Local Council Award Scheme, the Board agreed to continue monitoring this in the New Year.
- (c) The Board agreed that, with the exception of recommendation 2, the remaining recommendations had now been achieved.

(Councillor M Robinson arrived at 10.25 am during consideration of this item)

54 Quarterly Performance Report

The report of the Director of Environment and Housing and Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) provided a performance update on both the Safer and Stronger elements of the Board's remit. However, as requested by the Board, there was a more detailed focus on the 'Stronger' elements as part of this update.

The following were in attendance for this item:

Councillor Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel

Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer Communities

Rory Barke, Area Leader (Corporate)

Anne McMaster, Executive Officer, Citizens and Communities

Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing

Richard Ellis, Head of Finance (Supporting Environment & Housing)

Charles Oxtoby, Head of Finance (Strategy and Resources)

To accommodate officer attendance, the Chair requested that the Board considers those areas linked to the Citizens and Communities directorate and the Communities Board in the first instance. In doing so, the Chair also requested that any questions relating to the financial health of this directorate (linked to the next agenda item) be addressed during this session too.

As such, the following issues relating to the Citizens and Communities directorate and the Communities Board were discussed by the Board:

- Communities Board – Members received an overview of the locality and citywide projects being developed by the Communities Board which are due to commence in January 2015.
- Partnership working – linked to the project work of the Communities Board, Members reiterated the importance of working closely with partners to improve coordination and maximise resource.
- Measures of success – whilst acknowledging the complexity of many of the issues being addressed by the Communities Board, Members emphasised the need for the Communities Board to establish clear outcomes and measures of success linked to its project work.
- Poverty Truth Challenge – Members noted the 3 work strands linked to the Poverty Truth Challenge and particularly welcomed the work strand around stigma and the perception of poverty.
- Community Centres – Members discussed the budget savings target of £110k linked to Community Centres and reiterated the importance of Elected Members being engaged as part of the rationalisation of existing centres and efficiencies in Facilities Management charges.

The Board moved onto the performance areas linked to the Environment and Housing directorate and the following issues were discussed:

- Street cleanliness – Members discussed the criteria used in measuring street cleanliness and a suggestion was made for other forms of local intelligence gathering, such as Estate walkabouts, to also be taken into consideration, particularly in any hotspot estates.
- Police Community Support Officers – reference was made to the new national powers given to PCSOs and how these are being applied locally. It was noted that this issue was being picked up as part of the Board's ongoing inquiry linked to the role of PCSOs and integrated partnership working.
- Brown bin collection service – Members discussed alternative forms of communication for notifying residents about their brown bin collection service and noted the saving made by not issuing household letters.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(Councillor J Jarosz left the meeting at 11.00 am during consideration of this item)

55 Financial Health Monitoring 2014/15

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the current financial health of the Environment and Housing and Citizens and Communities directorates in line with the Board's portfolio.

The following were in attendance for this item:

Councillor Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel

Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing

Richard Ellis, Head of Finance (Supporting Environment & Housing)

Acknowledging that the Board had discussed the financial issues linked to the Citizens and Communities directorate as part of the previous agenda item, particular focus was now given to the Environment and Housing directorate.

As such, the following issues were discussed by the Board:

- Agency and overtime costs – Members discussed the use of agency staff and managing overtime costs within the Environment and Housing directorate but also noted that this was being addressed corporately. Linked to this, Members were pleased to note that sickness levels relating to the refuse collection service continue to improve.
- Car parking – Members noted that parking income was projected to be £546k higher than the budget.
- Alternate Weekly Collections – Members discussed the roll out of AWC and noted that a pressure of around £400k was currently being estimated based on the slippage of Phase 3 into two separate phases to help manage the roll out more effectively. It was also noted that overall waste volumes city wide were higher than budgeted.

The Chair reminded the Board that a working group meeting is to be held on Wednesday 7th January 2015 when Board Members will also have the opportunity to consider and comment on the initial 2015/16 budget proposals relevant to the Board's portfolio.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

56 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's current work schedule. The minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 19th November 2014 were also appended to this report for Members' information.

RESOLVED – That the Board's work schedule and the Executive Board minutes be noted.

57 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 9.30 am. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.00 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm)