

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors C Anderson, C Campbell,
R Grahame, M Harland, G Hyde,
J Illingworth, K Maqsood, R. Stephenson,
K Wakefield and N Walshaw

71 Late Items

There were no late items.

72 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

73 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor M Robinson.

Notification had been received that Councillor C Anderson was substituting for Councillor M Robinson.

74 Minutes - 13th February 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

75 Migration in Leeds - Tracking of Scrutiny recommendations

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented a progress update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the earlier Scrutiny work around migration in Leeds.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer Communities
- Simon Foy, Head of Policy and Development
- Rob Murray, Head of Service – Looked After Children
- Pria Bharba, Commissioning Officer (Migrant Access)
- Dave Brown, Migration Yorkshire

In consideration of the progress made, a position status category was assigned to each recommendation as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – (Cat 2) – Achieved
- Recommendation 2 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 3 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 4 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 5 – (Cat 2) – Achieved
- Recommendation 6 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 7 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 8 – (Cat 4) – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring.

In relation to recommendation 7, the Board acknowledged the continued efforts of the Director of Children’s Services in working closely with other local authorities, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Education Funding Agency to address school funding pressures and anomalies in the funding system linked to supporting migrant children. The Board queried whether the Local Government Association (LGA) was also lobbying government on this matter and agreed to formally write to the Chair of the LGA on this matter.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Chair writes to the Chair of the LGA to highlight the Scrutiny Board’s concerns regarding existing school funding pressures and anomalies in the funding system linked to supporting migrant children.
- (c) That the above position status categories against each of the recommendations are agreed.
- (d) That a further update report is brought back to Scrutiny within the next 6 months.

76 Migration Update

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) was provided in response to the Scrutiny Board’s request to explore issues relating to immigration in light of the European Union referendum result. The report set out some initial thoughts on the issues that need to be considered in the context of migration in light of the referendum outcome and its potential impact on Leeds.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities

- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer Communities
- Simon Foy, Head of Policy and Development
- Rob Murray, Head of Service – Looked After Children
- Pria Bharba, Commissioning Officer (Migrant Access)
- Dave Brown, Migration Yorkshire
- Alex Watson, Head of Human Resources
- Emma Browes, Senior HR Business Partner
- Sue Wynne, Chief Officer, Employment and Skills
- Simon Brereton, Economic Development Programme Leader

The key issues raised were as follows:

- *Limitations surrounding data collection* – whilst recognising the importance of robust data collection to assist in quantifying the current position in relation to migration, the Board acknowledged the existing limitations of existing data sources linked to European Economic Area (EEA) migrants. Linked to this, particular reference was made to the work undertaken by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford which helps to provide independent analysis of all available data sources.
- *Impact on local labour supply* – the Board acknowledged that employment information regarding EEA migrants is not formally recorded and therefore it would not be possible to provide an accurate position. However, it was considered that EEA migrants do make up a significant proportion of the current local labour force. The Board therefore discussed the potential implication of this, as set out within the report.
- *Current research into business and skills implications* – the Board was pleased to learn that the LEP/West Yorkshire Combined Authority had commissioned research to explore EEA migrant labour in the City Region to assess the business and skills implications from a potential reduction in access to EEA migrant workers and to identify opportunities to develop relevant business support services. The Board requested that the findings arising from this research be shared with Scrutiny once available.
- *Housing implications* – whilst it was reported that housing demand may not be significantly impacted in the short term, the Board was mindful of the Council's continued efforts to still market Leeds as a place to come and train and live and that housing will still be a key factor in this regard.
- *Community Safety* – particular reference was made to the Council's efforts in tackling Hate Crime and whilst acknowledging that the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board had been receiving more detailed briefings surrounding the current Hate Crime Strategy, it was agreed that further information on this be circulated to this Scrutiny Board too.
- *Taking proactive action corporately* – the Board learned that the Council's Corporate Leadership Team was in the process of identifying key areas that will require further work in light of the EU referendum result as well as

identifying any data gaps that may need addressing. The Board requested that the findings of this work be shared with Scrutiny too.

In conclusion, the Chair welcomed the contribution of everyone to today's discussion and highlighted the importance of Scrutiny maintaining an overview of this important area of work in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the requests for information be provided.

77 Council Tax Support Policies

Following the Scrutiny Board's recent review regarding the development of a new Council Tax Support Scheme, the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) set out proposals relating to Council Tax Support policies for the Board's consideration and comment.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits
- Jane McManus, Project Manager (Council Tax Support)

The key issues raised were as follows:

- *Council Tax Support Scheme treatment of earnings* – the Board discussed the potential options available surrounding the treatment of earned income linked to the new Council Tax Support Scheme. In doing so, the Board agreed that the average earnings scheme would be the most appropriate and therefore supported the draft policy outline in this regard.
- *Discretionary Hardship Scheme* – the Board considered and supported the proposed Council Tax Support Discretionary Hardship Scheme as set out within the report.

During this item, the Chair took the opportunity to announce that Steve Carey would be retiring from the Council in May 2017 and thanked him for all the support he has provided to Scrutiny over the years and for his commitment generally within the Welfare and Benefits service.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board supports the Council Tax Support Scheme Treatment of earnings policy outline, as set out within the report.
- (b) That the Board supports the proposed Council Tax Support Discretionary Hardship Scheme as set out within the report.

78 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Governance of Scrutiny Support invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be noted.

79 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 10th April 2017 at 10 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.50 am)