

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING)

THURSDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, K Bruce,
D Collins, P Grahame, M Harland, A Khan,
M Lyons, J Pryor, K Ritchie and
G Wilkinson

80 Late Items

There were no late items.

81 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

82 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors J Bentley, A Gabriel and A Garthwaite.

Notification had been received that Councillor M Harland was to substitute for Councillor A Gabriel and Councillor J Pryor for Councillor A Garthwaite.

83 Minutes - 16 February 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

84 Environment related matters

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on a series of waste issues presented to the Board in September 2016:

The appendices provided summaries in relation to the following main areas:

- Appendix 1 – Recycling performance
- Appendix 2 – Odour and air quality monitoring in relation to the RERF and wider Cross Green area
- Appendix 3 – Engaging communities in the recycling agenda
- Appendix 4 – Reviewing existing recycling services and recyclables collected
- Appendix 5 – Maintenance of gullies.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Andrew Lingham, Head of Waste Strategy and Infrastructure
- Tom Smith, Chief Officer (Waste Management)
- Paul Spandler, Environmental Health Manager
- Jason Singh, Head of Service, Environmental Action
- Tim Price, Operations Director, Veolia UK Energy
- Paul Fowler, General Manager, Veolia Leeds ES UK.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation that materials were either recycled or combusted at the RERF. No materials were diverted to landfill. The Board was advised that there was some element of storage on-site linked to the overall waste input management processes.
- An update on outage issues, planned maintenance and arrangements for the treatment of waste during this period.
- Concern that Veolia had not met its recycling target. The Board was advised that the mechanical pre-treatment equipment at the RERF had since been reviewed and that Veolia have agreed to replace a key piece of machinery (the ballistic separators) to help resolve the problem and are undertaking temporary repair work in the meantime.
- The Board welcomed recent improvements that had been made, although there was some concern that 3 improvement notices had so far been served. The Board was advised that sanctions were available if contract obligations were not met.
- An update on arrangements for recycling garden waste. The Board was advised that there were 8 household waste sites in Leeds for residents living in areas where kerbside recycling was not available. Residents were also encouraged to use a composter.
- A request that future reporting included numbers as well percentages to provide overall context.
- The challenges obtaining data and information in relation to commercial waste when trying to provide an overall picture of how Leeds is managing its waste.
- The need to raise awareness about what items could be recycled, with particular reference to plastics. However, the Board also acknowledged the need to introduce national legislation to tackle the longstanding problems associated with packaging. In the meantime, the Board suggested that further analysis be undertaken to determine the implications of the Council adopting an approach whereby all types of plastics are collected in the green bins for processing.
- Concern about current emission permit thresholds, particularly in relation to oxides of Nitrogen (No_x) in view of the findings arising from the Board's recent inquiry into Air Quality. It was acknowledged Veolia had already installed the best available technology for reducing emissions and would continue to adapt as such technology evolves.

- The need to provide the Board with further information and data in relation to responsive gully cleansing. The Board was advised about the development of new software, which improved how information and data was being recorded.
- The need to develop greater links with highways regarding the reporting of issues. Linked to this, the Board was advised about plans to bring the maintenance, cleansing and repairs functions within one service area (Highways and Transportation) to create a more joined up service.
- Clarification sought regarding arrangements for drainage inspection by Yorkshire Water. It was suggested that a representative from Yorkshire Water be invited to attend a future Board meeting to provide further information.

In conclusion to this item, it was acknowledged that Neil Evans would be commencing his new role as Director of Resources and Housing from 1st April 2017 and would no longer have responsibility for the waste and environmental management service areas. The Scrutiny Board therefore took this opportunity to thank Neil for his leadership and support within these particular service areas.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the update on environment related themes be noted.
- (b) That the above requests for information be provided.

(Councillor A Blackburn joined the meeting at 11.25am during the consideration of this item.)

85 Work schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2016/17 municipal year.

The key points were:

- Proposed date of working group in relation to reviewing the role of wider tenant involvement groups on Tuesday, 25 April 2017 (10am-12noon)
- A suggestion that an additional Board meeting be arranged to take place on Tuesday, 23 May 2017, to consider any outstanding issues and sign off reports.

RESOLVED – That subject to any on-going discussions and scheduling decisions, the Board's outline work schedule be approved.

86 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 20 April 2017 at 10.00am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.35am)