

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 24TH JULY, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, D Collins, A Gabriel,
P Grahame, G Harper, J Jarosz, A Khan,
M Lyons, K Ritchie and G Wilkinson

11 Late Items

The following late information was submitted to the Board:

- Agenda item 7 - Air Quality in Leeds – Consultation Preparations. Report of the Director of Resources and Housing on the consultation strategy for the clean air solution.

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

12 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

13 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors A Blackburn and K Bruce. Notification had been received that Councillor J Jarosz was to substitute for Councillor K Bruce.

14 Minutes - 26th June 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2017 be approved as a correct record.

15 Matters arising from the minutes

Minute No. 8 – Sources of work for the scrutiny board

The Chair explained that since the Board's June meeting, the Executive Board met on 17th July 2017 and received a report on the work undertaken to-date by the Council and partners since the events of the Grenfell fire. At this meeting, the Executive Board agreed the following recommendation:

That in relation to the role of Scrutiny Boards, the following Scrutiny Boards be requested to pick up scrutiny of the relevant actions / emerging issues:-

- (i) Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources) – emergency planning;*
- (ii) Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and investment) – private sector properties and building control;*
- (iii) Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) – Council housing stock safety, resident engagement and investment decisions.*

The Chair therefore recommended that a scoping exercise is undertaken during August to determine the details of the Board's work in this regard.

RESOLVED – That a scoping exercise is undertaken during August to determine the details of the Board's work in relation to Leeds' response to Grenfell Tower.

16 Air Quality in Leeds - consultation preparations

The report of the Director of Resources and Housing provided an overview on the proposed consultation process for the implementation of an Air Quality Solution in Leeds.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing
- Councillor Yeadon, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- Polly Cook, Executive Programme Manager, Strategy and Resources
- Andrew Hall, Head of Transportation

The key areas of discussion were:

- As part of the consultation process, the Board emphasised the need to capture the views of all local communities and not just those within the City Centre.
- In determining potential solutions, particular importance was placed upon ensuring that air pollution problems are not consequently being dispersed to other parts of the city.
- Whilst acknowledging that Nottingham City Council had introduced a Workplace Parking Levy to tackle problems associated with traffic congestion, it was noted that this measure had also proved to be a long and complex process.
- The Board acknowledged that a more detailed approach would be produced once the preferred option for the Air Quality Solution is known moving forward.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and details of the proposed consultation process be noted.
- (b) That the Board schedules a working group meeting in November to consider the initial findings arising from the consultation process and feed in the views of Scrutiny.

17 Performance Report

The joint report of the Directors of Resources & Housing and Communities & Environment provided a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the Council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Scrutiny Board's remit.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- Councillor Yeadon, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Jill Wildman, Chief Officer Housing Management
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer Property and Contracts
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access
- Tom Smith, Chief Officer Waste Management

The key areas of discussion were:

- Unauthorised encampments – the Board discussed the challenges in relation to tackling unauthorised encampments. Linked to this, the Board noted the development of a new approach in identifying temporary sites across the city that will accommodate smaller groups of travellers for up to 28 days. The Board agreed to keep a watching brief of this new approach.
- Temporary accommodation – the Board requested further information in relation to the location of temporary accommodation provision across the city.
- Rent collection by Direct Debit – the Board noted plans to take a report to the Housing Advisory Board in September in relation to proposals to make the Direct Debit payment method mandatory in future.
- Housing repairs completed within target – whilst some concerns were raised regarding performance results, the Board noted the Council's efforts in delivering an action plan for improvement and undertaking regular monthly performance monitoring meetings with contractors.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Early Intervention Team – further clarification was sought regarding this new Team and the need to promote this more widely to Elected Members.
- Refugee Transition Guide – further clarification was sought regarding the production and delivery of this guide.
- Brown bin collection service – the Board noted that a report would be taken to the Community Committee Environment Sub-Groups aimed at identifying gaps in provision for brown bin collections.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the above requests for additional information be taken forward.

18 Safer Leeds Plan 2017/18

The report of the Director of Resources and Housing presented the refreshed Safer Leeds Plan 2017/18 for the Board's consideration.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities

The key areas of discussion were as follows:

- Reference was made to the work being undertaken by Safer Leeds around local drug markets, which had been identified as a priority area for 2017/18.
- The Board acknowledged the significant progress made in tackling domestic abuse and also welcomed the focus placed upon tackling perpetrators as well as supporting victims.

In conclusion, the Board welcomed the refreshed Safer Leeds Plan 2017/18.

RESOLVED – That the Board notes and welcomes the refreshed Safer Leeds Plan 2017/18.

19 Scrutiny inquiry into reducing repeat customer contact - formal response

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented the formal response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into the reducing repeat customer contact.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access

During the meeting, the Chair explained that Councillor Paul Wadsworth had approached him directly with a proposed request for Scrutiny in relation to the Contact Centre. The Chair had therefore made Councillor Wadsworth aware of the inquiry undertaken last year in reducing repeat customer contact and had also invited him to observe the Board's discussion during this particular agenda item.

In consideration of the formal responses set out within the report, the Board agreed to continue tracking the implementation of the recommendations stemming from this earlier inquiry and not to undertake a further inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted
- (b) That a further update is scheduled within the next six months.

20 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The Chair highlighted the following working group meetings that had been scheduled during August:

- Roll out of Community Hubs (Phase 3) – Wednesday 16th August 2017 at 10 am.
- Horticultural maintenance of Cemeteries –Wednesday 30th August 2017 at 1 pm.

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

21 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 11th September 2017 at 10.30 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.00 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm)