

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 15TH JANUARY, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, A Blackburn,
K Bruce, D Collins, A Gabriel, P Grahame,
R Grahame, G Harper, A Khan, K Ritchie
and G Wilkinson

59 Late Items

There were no late items.

60 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

61 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor M Lyons. Notification had been received that Councillor R Grahame was to substitute for Councillor Lyons.

62 Minutes - 4 December 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2017 be approved as a correct record.

63 Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) Review - Initial Proposals

The report of the Chief Officer of Housing Management presented a summary of the main outcomes arising from the recent review of Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) for the Board's consideration and comment.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer Property and Contracts
- Jill Wildman, Chief Officer Housing Management
- Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services
- Ian Montgomery, Service Manager, Tenant Engagement
- John Gittos, Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board

The key issues raised were as follows:

- *Clarity surrounding the consultation responses* - the Board was informed that there were approximately 350 individuals, groups and community organisations invited to take part in the HAP Review consultation, which attracted 82 responses, with representations made across all 11 HAPs.
- *Maximising the use of social media* - whilst acknowledging the use of the Council's website and existing Housing Leeds social media sites to launch the online HAP survey, the Board stressed the need to also maximise other relevant social media community sites moving forward.
- *Improving awareness of HAPs and engaging more broadly with tenants* – the Board particularly acknowledged proposals aimed at improving awareness and engagement with younger and other under-represented tenants.
- *Clarity surrounding membership requirements and training for HAP members* – the Board was advised that HAP members are required to follow a clear Code of Conduct and are involved in a range of training events.
- *Application of HAP funding* – in discussing the proposed allocation of HAP funding moving forward, Members stressed the importance of ensuring that Council tenants are the main beneficiaries given that HAP funding is sourced via Council rents.
- *Maximising value for money* – the Board noted that, whilst no firm proposals had yet been made, Housing Leeds is liaising with Procurement to explore greater flexibility for HAPs to use framework contractors or other external suppliers.
- *Implementation and next steps* – the Board noted details of further engagement plans during January 2018 as more detailed proposals for the future of HAPs continue to be developed prior to implementation in April 2018.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report of the Chief Officer for Housing Management be noted.
- (b) That the above comments of the Scrutiny Board are reflected in the ongoing development of proposals for the future of HAPs.

64 Performance Report

The report of the Directors of Resources & Housing and Communities and 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.

Appendix 4 of the report also outlined a proposed performance framework for Housing Leeds for 2018/19 for the Board's consideration.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Yeadon, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment

- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access
- Andrew Cameron, Head of Council Tax and Benefits
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer Property and Contracts
- Jill Wildman, Chief Officer Housing Management
- John Gittos, Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board

The key issues raised were as follows:

- *Unauthorised encampments* – the Chief Officer for Housing Management explained that reports of unauthorised encampments are dealt with on a case by case basis. However, the Board discussed the general principles and practices in place.
- *Temporary accommodation* – clarity was sought regarding the location of temporary accommodation provision across the city.
- *Housing repairs* – the Board acknowledged that Housing Leeds had encountered difficulties with the integration of the new automated information system ‘Total Mobile’ and that an action plan is now in place to address this.
- *Tackling homelessness* – the Board discussed the procedures in place aimed at preventing homelessness.
- *Annual Home Visits* – the Chief Officer for Housing Management confirmed that the latest figure (end of December 2017) for the percentage of completed visits was 84.2% and that the service was on track to achieve 100% by year end.
- *Missed bins* – in welcoming ongoing improvement in performance, the Board noted that the service continues to work with Highways in tackling particular access issues encountered by refuse vehicles.
- *Decommissioning of Siebel CRM* – the Board noted that the decommissioning of Siebel CRM had a major impact on performance as staff availability was reduced to accommodate training on the new system. Linked to this, the Board also suggested that further work should be undertaken to explore how Elected Members could also benefit from the new information system.
- *Controlled access to Community Hubs* – particular reference was made to the reduction in footfall at the Compton Centre following controlled access measures. Members therefore urged that other security solutions are explored.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the performance report and the proposed performance framework for Housing Leeds for 2018/19 (set out in appendix 4) be noted.
- (b) That the above comments and requests for information made by the Scrutiny Board are taken forward for action.

65 Financial Health Monitoring

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented the latest financial health monitoring report (month 7) as presented to the Executive Board on 13th December 2017.

However, the Chair proposed that the Board's consideration of this report be undertaken in conjunction with Agenda Item 10 'Initial Budget Proposals for 2018/19'.

RESOLVED – That the Board's consideration of the Financial Health Monitoring report be undertaken in conjunction with Agenda Item 10 'Initial Budget Proposals for 2018/19'.

66 Initial Budget Proposals for 2018/19

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented details of the Initial Budget Proposals for 2018-19, which included a copy of the Executive Board report dated 13th December 2017. The Board was asked to consider matters and proposals relating to service areas that fall within its remit and identify any comments and/or recommendations to be submitted for consideration by the Executive Board at its meeting on 7th February 2018.

As agreed, the examination of the initial budget proposals was undertaken in conjunction with a review of the in-year financial health of the authority (as at month 7).

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Yeadon, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing
- Michael Everitt, Head of Finance
- Richard Ellis, Head of Finance
- John Gittos, Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board

The following key issues were raised:

- Clarity was sought regarding the proposed budgeted efficiencies within Waste Management. The Board was informed that this was a savings target reflecting a detailed review of expenditure budgets within the service, including a number of areas where current year trends indicated that savings could be made.
- The Board noted the proposed injection of £360k to cover the annual net cost of 3 additional garden waste routes to cover the remainder of suitable properties across the city.
- Clarity was sought around the proposed increase to bereavement charges. The Board was informed that this would equate to a general 4% increase, which would also cover the cost of additional community engagement activity in the service.
- Clarity was also sought regarding future funding for local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Board was informed that the current funding arrangement had been secured for a further 2 years.

- Whilst the Director of Resources and Housing was asked to give an initial response regarding the implications of the recent collapse of Carillion, it was acknowledged that other relevant Scrutiny Boards were likely to pick up this matter in more detail.

In conclusion, the Chair confirmed that whilst the Scrutiny Board did not wish to make any formal recommendations to the Executive Board in relation to the initial budget proposals for 2018/19, a summary of the Board's key observations would be reported back to the Executive Board as part of a composite report produced by Scrutiny.

RESOLVED – That a summary of the Board's key observations in relation to the Initial Budget Proposals for 2018/19 be reported back to the Executive Board as part of a composite report produced by Scrutiny.

67 BEST COUNCIL PLAN REFRESH FOR 2018/19-2020/21 - INITIAL PROPOSALS

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support invited the Scrutiny Board to consider and provide any comment on initial proposals linked to a refresh of the Best Council Plan for 2018/19 – 2020/21. A copy of the Executive Board report dated 13th December 2017 was appended to provide further details of the initial proposals.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor James Lewis, Executive Member for Strategy and Resources
- Coral Main, Head of Business Planning and Risk
- John Gittos, Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board

The key issues raised were as follows:

- In querying the removal of the 'Low carbon' priority, the Board acknowledged the intention of this being reflected as a KPI under the new '21st century infrastructure' priority, alongside other related KPIs around improving air quality and reducing noise.
- The Board focused on the consultation and engagement strategies used to inform the content of the Best Council Plan as well as raising greater public awareness. Whilst acknowledging the cost-benefits of utilising on-line routes of communication and engagement, the Board stressed the need to also make the Plan more accessible via local libraries and Community Hubs.

In conclusion, the Chair explained that the comments made by the Board would be reflected in a composite report by Scrutiny and reported back to the Executive Board at its meeting on 7th February 2018.

RESOLVED – That the above comments made by the Board are reflected in a composite report by Scrutiny and reported back to the Executive Board at its meeting on 7th February 2018.

68 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.

In relation to the Board's next meeting, the Chair explained that this had been moved to Monday 19th February 2018 at 10.30 am.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board be held on Monday 19th February 2018 at 10.30 am
- (b) That subject to any on-going discussions and scheduling decisions, the Board's outline work schedule be approved.

69 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 19th February 2018 at 10.30 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.00 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm).