

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2014

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

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

21 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to accept the following supplementary information:

- Appendix 1 and 2 of the report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presenting draft terms of reference for forthcoming Scrutiny inquiries (Minute no. 28 refers)

The above documents were not available at the time of agenda despatch, but were subsequently made available on the Council's website.

22 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting. In relation to item 7 'Request for Scrutiny', Councillor Harland brought it to the Board's attention that she is Chair of the Peckfield Liaison Committee.

23 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor J Jarosz, with Councillor E Taylor in attendance as substitute.

24 Minutes - 28 July 2014

Further to Minute no. 16 'Refreshed West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan and draft Safer Leeds Strategy 2014-2015', the Chair confirmed that the performance information requested from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had been circulated to Board Members. The Board agreed to invite the Commissioner back to the Scrutiny Board in February 2015.

Further to Minute no. 19 'Work Schedule', the Chair explained that comments from Scrutiny on the Leeds Housing Standard had been agreed following the working group meeting on 28th August 2014 and were incorporated into the Director's report to the Executive Board for its

meeting on 17th September 2014. A copy of this report had been circulated to Board Members for information.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

25 Request for Scrutiny

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a request for Scrutiny from a member of the public, Mrs Carolyn Walker, in relation to the Peckfield Landfill Site near Micklefield. Mrs Walker had requested that the Scrutiny Board considers the ongoing issues linked to the operation of this site and the role of the Council and Environment Agency in this regard.

Attached to the report was a briefing paper from the Environment Agency summarising the regulatory work undertaken at the Peckfield Landfill Site over the last 12 months. Also attached was a copy of a community newsletter from the Environment Agency entitled 'Keeping you informed' and dated July 2014.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Carolyn Walker, Originator of request
- Christine Boothroyd, Micklefield resident
- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities
- Susan Upton, Chief Officer, Waste Management
- Catherine Saxon, Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency
- Robin Bispham, Regulatory Officer, Environment Agency
- Max Rathmell, Minerals, Waste & Contaminated Land Manager
- Louise White, Senior Minerals Planner

The Chair invited Mrs Walker to briefly outline the reasons for her request. In doing so, Mrs Walker also introduced another local resident, Christine Boothroyd, who has been on the local landfill liaison group for over 10 years.

The following key points were made by Mrs Walker:

- The Peckfield Landfill Site is in close proximity to the village of Micklefield and has been operating since 1992. Problems associated with the site have been ongoing for years, with a series of differently named operators being issued with licence breach notices on a regular basis.
- Mrs Walker explained that many of the complaints have related to odour, litter escape from the site, leachate, insufficient cover on waste at close of business and failure to capture gas. In relation to odour, it was also highlighted that residents have noticed high levels of odour at night and weekends when the site is not operating.
- Reference was made to data requested by local residents in relation to the number of compliance assessment reports issued by the Environment

Agency in relation to this site since 2008, with a high of 63 being issued in 2013.

- Acknowledgement was given to the significant level of work undertaken by the Environment Agency, in conjunction with the Council, over the last 12 months, including a 'Day of Action' dedicated to addressing the issues linked to this site.
- Whilst acknowledging that such rigorous monitoring had led to improvements with the site, concern was raised that this has begun to deteriorate again.
- Reference was made to the Health Protection Agency document 'Impact on Health of Emissions from Landfill Sites' published in July 2011. Whilst this document concluded there was little or no risk to health from well-managed sites, local residents had raised concerns with Public Health England about the potential health impacts surrounding this site.
- In conclusion, Mrs Walker requested that the Scrutiny Board pursue this matter further, but also took the opportunity to thank the local Ward Councillors and neighbouring Ward Councillors for their ongoing support and also the Leader of Council, the Council's Chief Executive and Director of Public Health for raising this issue with the Environment Agency.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following key issues were raised:

- Landfill gas – the Environment Agency explained that there are a wide range of components in landfill gas dependent on the type of waste present in the landfill. Odours in landfill gas are caused primarily by hydrogen sulphide and ammonia and it was noted that the Peckfield Site had a level of hydrogen sulphide that would create an odour. It was also noted that gas odours can be more prevalent during lower temperatures.
- Communication with residents – Members noted that communications and engagement with local residents had primarily been led by the Environment Agency and not the operator.
- Regulatory monitoring – in consideration of the briefing paper from the Environment Agency, Members acknowledged the significant level of resources invested by the regulator, in conjunction with the Council, in managing this site over the last 12 months. As such, Members felt that a more proactive approach needed to be developed by the operator.
- Closure of landfill sites - Members discussed the general implications surrounding the closure of landfill sites and noted that the removal of any operating permit would prevent any further involvement of the Environment Agency and place the onus on the Council to manage the site under the Contaminated Land Regime for which there is no longer any grant provided by Defra.

In conclusion, the Scrutiny Board agreed to accept the request made by Mrs Walker and undertake a Scrutiny inquiry. The Chair explained that a working group meeting would be arranged to discuss the potential scope for this inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and accompanying appendices be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board agrees to take forward the request for Scrutiny made by Mrs Walker and undertake an inquiry.
- (c) That a working group meeting be arranged to discuss the potential scope of the Board's inquiry.
- (d) That draft terms of reference for the inquiry are brought back to the Board's next meeting for formal agreement.

(Councillor A Blackburn arrived at 10.30 am during consideration of this item)

26 Inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse - formal response

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the formal response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations arising from its recent inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities
- Councillor Judith Blake, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Bridget Emery, Chief Officer Strategy and Commissioning, Office of the Director of Public Health
- Andrea Richardson, Head of Service Early Help
- Gail Faulkner, Head of Children's Social Work (South)

In response to Members comments and questions, the following key issues were raised:

- Front Door scheme – Members welcomed the ongoing commitment to develop the existing Front Door scheme aimed at providing immediate risk assessment and appropriate intervention relating to all incidents of domestic violence.
- Raising the profile of domestic violence locally – reference was made to a number of Community Committees that had identified domestic violence as a priority area within their work programmes, which was encouraged by the Board.
- Domestic violence charter mark for cluster partnerships – Members welcomed the commitment and progress already made in taking forward this recommendation with all key partners.
- Troubled Families Programme – Members were pleased to note that Leeds had been included in the expanded Troubled Families programme and that early intervention surrounding domestic violence would be incorporated into this.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and a further update is scheduled into the Board's work programme later in the year.

27 2014/15 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The report of the Director of Environment and Housing and Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) set out the position at quarter 1 in relation to the performance areas relevant to the Board's remit.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities
- Rory Barke, Area Leader (Corporate)

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

- Performance data – Members acknowledged that the report presented to the Board had detailed the performance position relating to the quarter 1 period. However, a request was made for future reports to set out the current position based on the most recent performance data.
- Street Cleanliness – Members sought clarification of the criteria used in monitoring street cleanliness.
- Dog fouling – Members were pleased to learn that a pilot scheme was being developed based around the neighbourhood watch concept which encourages local residents to proactively report irresponsible dog owners.
- Domestic Burglary – the Board were pleased to note that domestic burglary continues to show year on year improvement. It was noted that performance data is also available on a Ward basis.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

28 Scrutiny Inquiries - Draft Terms of Reference

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented draft terms of reference relating to the following forthcoming Scrutiny inquiries:

- Area based delegations to Community Committees
- The role of Police Community Support Officers linked to local integrated partnership working

In relation to the forthcoming inquiry into the role of PCSOs, the Board agreed to amend the terms of reference to include the Council's West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel Members within the list of potential witnesses.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the terms of reference for the Board's forthcoming inquiry on area based delegations to Community Committees be approved.

(b) That, subject to the above amendment, the terms of reference for the Board's forthcoming inquiry into the role of PCSOs linked to local integrated partnership working be approved.

29 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 16th July 2014 were also appended to this report for Members' information.

The Chair reported a change of date for the Scrutiny Board's meeting in January. This was now scheduled for Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 9.30 am, with a pre-meeting at 9.00 am.

The Chair also informed the Board that the Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board is considering a report in relation to the Council's district heating proposals at its October meeting. The SEC Scrutiny Board has therefore extended an invitation to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board to nominate a representative to contribute to this particular agenda item.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board's work schedule and the Executive Board minutes be noted.
- (b) That the Board's January meeting is changed to Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 9.30 am, with a pre-meeting at 9.00 am.
- (c) That Councillor Barry Anderson attends the meeting of the Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board on 21st October 2014 to represent the Board in consideration of the Council's district heating proposals.

30 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 13th October 2014 at 10.00 am. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm)