

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, R Grahame,
J Jarosz, K Ritchie, B Urry and N Walshaw

66 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business to consider. However the Chair agreed to accept the following supplementary information in relation to agenda item 9:

- Final Inquiry report – Peckfield Landfill site

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch but was subsequently made available on the Council's website. (Minute No. 72 refers)

67 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

68 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bentley, J Dunn, M Harland, P Harrand and M Robinson.

69 Minutes - 16 February 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

70 Tackling illegal money lending - recommendation tracking

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the earlier Scrutiny review on tackling illegal money lending in Leeds.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive
- Dave Roberts, Financial Inclusion Strategy Manager
- Hilary Farmery, Communications Manager
- Jim Hopkinson, Head of Service, Targeted Services
- Joanne Swain, Leeds Credit Union.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- Consideration of the position status of the Board's recommendations in terms of their on-going relevance and the progress made in implementing the recommendations based on a standard set of criteria
- The work being undertaken in Children's Services, particularly in relation to Children's' Social Worker
- The importance of Children Centres
- The initiatives in place to engage with secondary schools including meeting with clusters, cluster managers and service delivery managers and the recommendation that contact should also be made with Chairs of Governors
- The need to ensure financial inclusion work is embedded into all Council services and the acknowledgment of its stated importance within the refreshed Best Council Plan
- The importance of not forgetting the enforcement role of this initiative in terms of identifying and prosecuting illegal money lenders
- The role of Birmingham Trading Standards and the request that the appropriate Scrutiny Board receives the next update report to Executive Board
- The role of Housing Leeds in the delivery of the strategy
- The role of Leeds Credit Union in the delivery of the strategy
- The added value and tangible difference this Scrutiny Inquiry has made in relation to the work of the financial inclusion team, including the raising of the profile and embedding the work of the team across the authority, how the inquiry has helped the financial inclusion team gain access to difficult to reach areas of the council and its influence on the Families First programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted
- (b) That recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 be classified as 'achieved' (category 2) and that the remaining recommendations be classified as 'not fully implemented. Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring (category 4)
- (c) That the successor Board be asked to keep a watching brief on the outstanding recommendations
- (d) That the appropriate Board receive the next update to Executive Board in relation to Birmingham Trading Standards
- (e) That contact is made with Chairs of Governors to help facilitate dialogue with schools.

71 Quarterly Performance Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) and Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report providing performance information in relation to the Safer and Stronger elements of this Scrutiny Boards remit.

The following were in attendance to respond to Members' questions:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing.

In summary the main areas of discussion were:

- The summary of the work of the Communities Board and proposals to refresh the Boards activities and focus
- To acknowledge that the Poverty Truth Challenge will report back in the summer
- The need to manage public messages in relation to crime statistics, particularly burglary in those instances where increased activity is a result of revised reporting arrangements
- That phase 4 of the implementation of Alternate Weekly will roll out in July 2015
- The need to work collectively across directorates to solve operation issues (for example, missed bins) rather than repeatedly making good and not tackling the root cause. It was acknowledged that in a busy service area it was sometimes difficult to make the time to reflect on management issues and smart solutions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

72 Final Inquiry report - Peckfield Landfill Site

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's draft report following the Board Inquiry into the Peckfield Landfill Site.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the draft report and recommendations be agreed
- (b) That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submit the report to those bodies to which recommendations are made.

73 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

74 Chair's Closing Remarks

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked on behalf of the Board all those officers who had contributed to the work of the Board over the past year.

The Chair also thanked fellow members for their hard work and attendance at full meeting and at working groups.

Finally he wished those standing for re-election good luck.

(The meeting concluded at 11.00am)