

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING)

TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor J Procter in the Chair

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

39 Late Items

There were no late items.

40 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items, although the Chair advised that there may be a requirement for aspects of agenda item 7, Peckfield Landfill Site, to be considered in private session. It was advised that if this was the case then the relevant provisions were to be made clear to the Board.

41 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

42 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence.

43 Minutes - 13 October 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

44 Matters arising from the minutes

Minute No. 39 – Community Safety Related Matters – Prostitution

The Board requested an update regarding progress made in providing practical support to the Holbeck area, particularly the need for more street cleansing support. The Director of Environment and Housing advised that a twice weekly clean-up of the private estate was commencing in the next couple of weeks.

Minute No. 39 – Community Safety Related Matters – Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

A point of clarification was made in reference to the proposed percentage increase in the Council's contribution to fund PCSOs (from 21% to 50%) stating that this did not imply an increase in funding.

45 Peckfield Landfill Site

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented an update following the previous Scrutiny Inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Scrutiny Inquiry Final report, Peckfield Landfill Site (20 April 2015)
- Background information provided by City Development directorate
- An update on work at Peckfield Landfill Site submitted by the Environment Agency.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member (Environmental Protection and Community Safety)
- Councillor Mary Harland, Ward Member for Kippax and Methley
- Councillor James Lewis, Ward Member for Kippax and Methley
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Caroline Allen, Head of Service, Legal Services
- Steve Speak, Deputy Chief Planning Officer
- Andrew Lingham, Waste Management, Environment and Housing
- Clive Saul, Minerals, Waste and Renewable Energy Planning Manager (Acting)
- Emma Hargreaves, Minerals Enforcement Officer.

The Chair explained that the Board would be formally tracking the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site at its December meeting. It was noted that whilst the Environment Agency was unable to provide a representative to attend today's meeting, there would be a representative in December to address any further queries.

The Board received a brief presentation on the role of the Waste Planning Authority in relation to the planning and regulation of Peckfield Landfill Site.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification sought whether the site operator was on target to complete landfill of the site by 2020. The Board was advised that no issues had been reported by the site operator with regards meeting this target.
- Confirmation that LCC no longer disposed its waste at the site.
- A general overview of local residents' concerns; whether work was still on schedule; concern that parts of the site had been closed off and then re-opened; and concern that the site operator could withdraw from the site and the subsequent need for restoration work. However, it was

highlighted by the Ward Members that the number of resident complaints had reduced.

- Clarification sought about the types of waste being disposed at the site and where it was coming from. This was to be pursued with the Environment Agency in December.
- A suggestion that the originator of the request for scrutiny, Ms Carolyn Walker, also be invited to attend the Board's December meeting.
- Clarification that there was a requirement for the site operator to ensure that the site was being progressively restored.
- Confirmation that the Environment Agency had secured a restoration bond for the site. Clarification of the exact figure was to be confirmed by the Environment Agency at the December Board meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the originator of the request for Scrutiny, Ms Carolyn Walker, be invited to attend in December when the Board will be formally tracking the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site.

46 Effective Housing Management and Lettings Policies

The Chief Officer (Housing Management) submitted a report which presented proposed new approaches to housing management and key principles for local lettings policies.

The following information was appended to the report:

- List of local lettings policies.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities)
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services
- Kathryn Bramall, Housing Manager.

The key areas of discussion were:

- The Board discussed issues surrounding the behaviour of tenants and asked the department to provide clear guidance for all managers about taking past anti-social behaviour into account. The Board also requested some examples of cases to illustrate how this works in practice.
- The Council's responsibility to support tenants with different and sometimes challenging needs, the need for early intervention and signposting tenants to the right agencies. It was noted that a review of housing related support was due to be undertaken.
- A suggestion that issues arising from estate walkabouts are also factored into the tenancy management process.

- The Board welcomed the proposed delivery of pre-tenancy training and suggested that such training could also be extended to existing tenants where appropriate.
- The challenges in ensuring the right balance of housing provision across the city, particularly in terms of an increased demand for the younger population.
- It was highlighted that the report to Executive Board was now being scheduled for February 2016. It was therefore agreed that a further update would be brought back to Scrutiny for consideration in January 2016.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the above issues raised by the Scrutiny Board are taken forward and where appropriate inform the new approaches to housing management and lettings policies.
- (c) That a further report on this matter is brought back to the Scrutiny Board in January 2016 for consideration.

(Councillor A Gabriel left the meeting at 3.10pm, during the consideration of this item.)

47 Waste Strategy related matters

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an overview of key issues and challenges in the following areas:

- The City's Waste Strategy
- Recycling (including addressing low participation rates in existing alternate weekly collection (AWC) areas and viable options for non-AWC areas across the city)
- Managing waste in high waste properties.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member (Environmental Protection and Community Safety)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities)
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Andrew Lingham, Head of Service (Waste Strategy and Information).

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification that financial pressures had resulted in the Council now proposing a revised target to recycle 50% of household waste by 2020, with the longer-term target to exceed 60% remaining unchanged;
- Development of education and awareness initiatives to ensure a more consistent approach to household recycling across the city.
- Greater enforcement of contaminated waste.

- Confirmation that low take-up of household recycling in some areas had resulted in different approaches being applied.
- Confirmation that the Veolia Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility RERF was now in the commissioning phase and that full service commencement is anticipated to be in March 2016. Emphasis was also made in using the RERF Visitor Centre to develop an effective educational programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(Councillor G Wilkinson left the meeting at 4.20pm, Councillor M Lyons at 4.25pm and Councillor K Ritchie at 4.40pm, during the consideration of this item.)

48 Performance Update

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Board.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Environment and Housing Performance Information, September 2015 (Housing)
- Environment and Housing Performance Information , September 2015 (Community Safety, Waste and Environment)

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities)
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Andrew Lingham, Waste Management, Environment and Housing.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Particular emphasis was made around improving performance around rent collection rates. Linked to this, the Board requested that future reports also provide a breakdown of performance rates linked to the different payment methods used by tenants.
- Concern about the increase in tenants' arrears and clarification regarding how much of this was due to technical arrears.
- Concern regarding the % of housing repairs completed on target and the need for further improvements in this area.

RESOLVED – That the report and appendices be noted.

(Councillor P Grahame left the meeting at 4.50pm and Councillor A Khan at 4.55pm, during the consideration of this item.)

49 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2015/16 municipal year.

The Board briefly discussed arrangements for the December Board meeting. As part of the housing themed report from the directorate, the Board requested that this report also included further information surrounding housing repairs. In particular, to include further detail on how performance figures are compiled and the mechanisms/improvement plans in place to drive performance up to the 99% target figure.

In reference to the Board's February meeting, which is themed around Environmental matters, the Chair also suggested that the Board may wish to undertake a visit to the Veolia Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility.

The Chair also highlighted the forthcoming working group meeting on PCSOs which was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 24 November 2015 at 3.00pm.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be approved.

50 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 8 December 2015 at 1.30pm (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.00pm)

(The meeting concluded at 5.07pm)