

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING)

TUESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 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

51 Late Items

There were no late items.

52 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

53 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence.

54 Minutes - 17 November 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2015 be approved as a correct record.

55 Peckfield Landfill Site - Recommendation tracking

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry regarding Peckfield Landfill Site.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Recommendation tracking flowchart and classifications
- Details of progress against each of the recommendations
- Public Health Report – Summary of Analysis of Local Health Data 2015
- Impact on Health of Emissions from Landfill Sites – Advice from the Health Protection Agency.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Mary Harland, Ward Member for Kippax and Methley
- Councillor James Lewis, Ward Member for Kippax and Methley
- Councillor Keith Wakefield, Ward Member for Kippax and Methley
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Clive Saul, Minerals, Waste and Renewable Energy Planning Manager (Acting)

- Nicola Hoggart, Environment Management Team Leader – Waste (Leeds, Bradford & Craven), Environment Agency
- Roy Thompson, Regulatory Officer, Environment Agency
- Anna Frearson, Consultant in Public Health (Healthy Living and Health Improvement), The Office of the Director of Public Health, Technorth
- Dr Mike Gent, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Public Health England
- Ian Walker, Specialist Registrar, Public Health England
- Greg Hodgson, Head of Unit, Centre for Radiation Chemicals and the Environment, Public Health England
- Christine Boothroyd, Local resident and member of the Peckfield Liaison Committee
- Carolyn Walker, Local resident and originator of the Scrutiny request.

A brief overview was provided regarding the role of the Environment Agency and Public Health England in relation to Peckfield Landfill Site.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Clarification sought regarding the subsistence fee, which it was noted had not featured as part of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site. The Board was advised that the subsistence fee was contained within the Environment Agency's fees and charges public document.
- Clarification provided regarding assessment of the site and non-compliance arrangements.
- Confirmation that the site operator was unable to attend today's Board meeting.
- Confirmation that there had been no indication from the site operator regarding abandonment of the site. The operator continued to maintain and develop the infrastructure of the site.
- The Environment Agency suggested that if the site was abandoned then the permit would cease to exist and the site would be classified as contaminated land.
- Clarification of whether any contingency plans were in place in case the site was abandoned, particularly in terms of sufficient financial security for restoration and other contingencies.
- It was noted that financial security (in the form of a bond) would be used to ensure that the active phase of the site was capped so that it no longer posed an environmental risk. This would also be used as part of a 60 year aftercare and monitoring scheme, which involved capping the site, although it did not include full restoration of the site.
- A representative from the Environment Agency advised that the exact amount of financial security could not be disclosed as it was considered commercially sensitive information. However, it was confirmed that the Environment Agency had ownership of the bond and that this was subject to review every 6 years.
- The Board expressed concern that there was still a need to provide reassurance regarding aftercare and restoration of the site. Members also questioned whether a 60 year aftercare and monitoring

scheme was sufficient after learning that the site would still produce small levels of landfill gasses after 60 years.

- Clarification was sought about the types of waste disposed at the site and where the waste came from. The Board was advised that since 2006, the site only received non-hazardous waste. There were no restrictions in terms of where the waste came from.
- Confirmation that the operator was currently on target with completion of the site by 2020.
- An update on regular dialogue that existed between the Environment Agency and the Peckfield Liaison Committee.
- The Board acknowledged the Public Health report relating to the Peckfield Landfill Site and also the praise given by local residents for the work undertaken in this regard.

The status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – Not fully implemented (Progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 2 – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 3 – Not fully implemented (Progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 4 – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 5 – Achieved
- Recommendation 6 – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 7 – Stop monitoring
- Recommendation 8 – Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 9 – Achieved.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted
- (b) That the above status of recommendations be approved
- (c) That the Board will determine the most effective means of proceeding with some of the issues that had been identified.

(Councillor A Khan joined the meeting at 2.50pm during the consideration of this item.)

(Councillor A Gabriel left the meeting at 3.40pm at the conclusion of this item.)

56 Housing Related Matters

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on a series of summaries of housing issues that were presented to the Board in September 2015. In addition, the report also included

information relating to the implications of the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 and the current position regarding responsive repairs and maintenance.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities)
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing
- Liz Cook, Chief Officer (Housing Management)
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer (Property and Contracts).
- John Statham, Head of Housing Partnerships and Housing Growth

The key areas of discussion in relation to the various housing issues were as follows:

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) growth programme with a focus on HRA council house programme and use of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts

- An update on the Council House Growth programme.

Progress with the Empty Homes Strategy

- Acknowledgement regarding the significant progress made in relation to the Empty Homes Strategy.

Standards within the Private Rented Sector

- Particular reference was made to the proposed measures set out in the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 in relation to tackling rogue landlords in the private sector.
- Clarification that the Directorate was awaiting clarification regarding arrangements for managing the properties of a banned person. Further details to be provided to the Board when available.
- The Executive Member (Communities) advised that a report on private sector housing in Leeds was being submitted to a future Executive Board meeting. Details to be provided to the Scrutiny Board in due course.

Estate Management arrangements

- Good progress made in relation to the Tenant Scrutiny Board Inquiry regarding the Environment of Estates. Some initial feedback had been received in relation to improvements needed to estate walkabouts, communications and garden maintenance. An update on progress with the Board's Inquiry would be reported back to the Board.
- Acknowledgement of the positive work undertaken as part of the High Rise Project.

Local Lettings Policy

- Members were reminded that following the Board's November meeting, it was agreed that more detailed policy proposals would be developed and presented to the Scrutiny Board at its January 2016 meeting.

Enforcement of tenancy agreements

- Members noted the update and no particular issues were raised.

Briefings on housing management forums

- Members noted the update and no particular issues were raised.

Temporary accommodation

- Implications of the Autumn Statement to be reviewed in relation to Housing Benefit.
- A request to be provided with a breakdown by Ward regarding the 92 households in emergency temporary accommodation.
- Confirmation that the timescale for temporary accommodation was approximately 12 months. Due to the demands on Council housing stock and to ensure a level of stability, families were generally allocated private sector housing on a 6 month let.

Housing and Planning Bill

- Concern regarding aspects of the Housing and Planning Bill, particularly in relation to the policy referred to as 'pay to stay', which required higher rents for high income social tenants. The Board requested to receive a specific update on the Housing and Planning Bill at a future Board meeting.

Update on Responsive Repairs and Maintenance

- An update on the work undertaken by Mears and Leeds Building Services. The Board asked for a breakdown regarding the additional income in 2013/14 arising from performance deductions that was invested in the central heating boiler replacement programme.
- Members noted an omission in the report in terms of referencing repairs and improvement work to Council properties in the North of the City.
- A recognised need for greater consistency across the different contractors in terms of performance indicators.
- A need for more robust checks to audit the end-to-end service when measuring overall contractor satisfaction with repairs services (in accordance with KPI: RR6)
- Acknowledgement regarding other areas of poor performance that required additional support.

- The Board requested that future reports provide a breakdown of repairs completed within timescale in terms of emergency repairs, priority repairs and general repairs.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted
- (b) That the Board receives a specific update on the Housing and Planning Bill to a future Board meeting
- (c) That the requests for information/clarification be provided.

(Councillors P Grahame and K Ritchie left the meeting at 4.05pm, during the consideration of this item.)

57 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 key points of discussion were

- The Board noted the forthcoming working group meeting on PCSOs, scheduled for Wednesday 9th December at 10.00 am.
- The Board was advised that a bullet point had been omitted under the Community Safety theme for January in relation to LeedsWatch. The January Board meeting was also to include a briefing on initial budget proposals for 2016-17 and an update on Leeds Local Lettings Policy proposals.
- Following a discussion from today's Board meeting, it was suggested that the work schedule be updated to include the implications of the Housing and Planning Bill (to be considered at the March Board meeting).
- It was suggested that the Board receives an update on the Peckfield Landfill Site following further discussions with the Peckfield Liaison Committee. However, this was provisionally scheduled for the Board's April 2016 meeting.

RESOVLED – That the work schedule, as amended, be approved.

58 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 12 January 2016 at 1.30 pm (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.00 pm)

(The meeting concluded at 4.30 pm)