

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, C Campbell,
R Grahame, M Harland, J Illingworth,
K Maqsood, K Wakefield and N Walshaw

38 Late Items

There were no late items.

39 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

40 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor A Carter.

41 Minutes - 12 October 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

42 The development of Community Hubs - Scrutiny Inquiry

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development reminded the Board of the agreed terms of reference relating to this inquiry and set out the purpose of this first inquiry session, which was to address the following areas:

- The level of clarity surrounding the future approach for the community hub network based on the 3 'types' of provision.
- The current infrastructure of the three pathfinder community hubs and the views of existing 'front of house' staff in relation to this model delivering a more integrated service (identifying any ongoing challenges)

A report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) was also appended to provide the background to the development of the Community Hubs within the city and other information pertaining to this first session. It was also noted that a number of 'front of house' staff had been invited to today's meeting to share their views and experiences with Scrutiny.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Susan Murray, Head of Customer Contact
- Bev Rice, Head of Library and Information Service
- Josette Ward, Community Hub Manager, Compton Centre
- Tom Booth, Customer Service Team Manager, Compton Centre
- Kamran Aziz, Library Assistant, Compton Centre
- Jacqueline Bolton, Customer Services Officer, Compton Centre
- Jan Jackson, Community Hub Manager, Armley
- Charlotte Batty, Assistant Community Hub Manager, Armley
- Elaine Gibson, Library Assistant, Armley
- Lucy Bain, Library Assistant, Armley
- Chris McLoughlin, Community Hub Manager, St George's Centre
- Janine Lowe-Waterworth, Customer Services Officer, St George's Centre

The Chair invited the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to briefly introduce his report. Members then watched a video produced by the directorate which showed 3 members of staff from the Compton Centre sharing their initial views and experience of the new Community Hub model. The Chair then invited the officers in attendance to share their own views of the Community Hub model with the Board.

In summary, the key areas of discussion were as follows:

- Embracing new ways of working – Members noted that many staff were initially apprehensive about the proposed new ways of working but were pleased to learn that staff have now embraced the Community Hub model as they recognise the value of working as a team in delivering more integrated services to customers.
- Staff training – this was a key area of discussion. It was noted that staff receive a skills and capabilities audit to determine training needs and a development plan. This has led to staff feeling more confident and empowered to deal with a wider range of customer enquiries.
- Working with the third sector - Members were pleased to learn that the Community Hub approach is being embraced by third sector organisations, with particular reference made to the successful Money Buddies scheme.
- Mobile provision – Members noted examples of where 'pop-up' provisions had proven to be successful in providing an un-met demand for access to Council and Partner services. It was highlighted that this provision is delivered by teams already based out of the Community Hub buildings with the aim of building up trust and encouraging people to continue to access services from the physical Hub sites. It was also noted that IT issues were still being addressed to improve access to systems remotely.
- Promoting self-serve facilities – it was highlighted that library staff are also actively promoting self-serve facilities such as the 'library at home' service.
- Interpretation services – Members were pleased to learn that provisions are made to address language barriers so that customers' needs are addressed at the point of enquiry. It was highlighted that video phones are also provided to enable sign language users to access interpreters too.

- Financial costs – Members sought budgetary information relating to the provision of Community Hubs.
- Community Hub buildings – particular importance was placed upon the standard of buildings used and it was noted that the Scrutiny Board would be considering this in more detail at a future inquiry session.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked everyone for their contribution and praised staff for their continued commitment in delivering the Community Hub approach. The Chair explained that the next stage of the Inquiry will involve visits to the 3 Pathfinder Community Hubs.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the Board notes the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- (b) That the Board's forthcoming Community Hub visits are arranged and confirmed with Board Members as soon as possible.

(Councillor A Blackburn arrived at 10.40 am during consideration of this item).

43 Performance Report (Qtr 2)

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) presented an update on the performance areas relevant to the Board's remit.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor James Lewis, Executive Member for Resources and Strategy
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits
- John Mulcahy, Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration
- Susan Murray, Head of Customer Contact

The key issues raised were as follows:

- Registration of deaths – Members queried the 90% target set for registering a death within 5 days of death and learned that this was a nationally driven target.
- Individual Electoral Registration – Members discussed initiatives linked to promoting the importance of registering, including door-step canvassing and adopting a routine enquiry approach by Contact Centre staff as well as piloting this approach within One Stop Centres.
- Checking the electoral register online – Members highlighted the challenge of individuals being able to check their registration details online. It was noted that this had been a longstanding problem nationally and that potential solutions continue to be explored.

RESOLVED – That the performance report be noted.

(Councillor C Campbell left at 11.25 am during consideration of this item).

44 Long term Strategic Partnership with Leeds City Credit Union.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) was requested to update the Scrutiny Board on the Council's joint work with the Leeds City Credit Union in tackling poverty, including the long term strategy for on-going partnership work. A copy of the Executive Board report on this matter, dated 21st October 2015, was appended to assist in providing this update to the Scrutiny Board.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits
- Susan Murray, Head of Customer Contact

The key areas of discussion were as follows:

- Gift card scheme – Members welcomed a new initiative involving a gift card scheme with a number of high street retailers to provide domestic appliances, furniture and electronic goods at prices up to 50% cheaper than high street rent to buy stores. It was noted that the Community Hubs would be used to actively promote this initiative.
- Modernisation of the Credit Union – Members felt that further effort was needed to assist the Leeds City Credit Union in modernising the range of services it provides to attract a wider range of customers. The Board therefore agreed to schedule a further session early in the New Year to explore this further.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the Board notes the Executive Board report.
- (b) That a further session is scheduled early in the New Year to consider further options available in assisting the Leeds City Credit Union to modernise its services and attract greater numbers of customers.

45 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the municipal year. The Chair highlighted that the work schedule would be updated to reflect today's discussions.

The Chair also proposed that the Board's next scheduled meeting on 7th December 2015 be cancelled. This would be replaced with a working group meeting linked to the Board's on-going Universal Credit Inquiry.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work schedule be updated to reflect the Board's discussions today.

- (b) That the Scrutiny Board's planned meeting on Monday 7th December 2015 be cancelled.
- (c) That a working group meeting is held on Monday 7th December 2015 at 10 am in line with the Board's on-going inquiry into Universal Credit.

46 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 18th January 2016 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am).

(The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm)