

SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 27TH JUNE, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, R Grahame,
M Harland, G Hyde, J Illingworth,
K Maqsood, M Robinson, R. Stephenson,
K Wakefield and N Walshaw

1 Late Items

There were no late items.

2 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

3 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies for absence. However, notification was received that Councillor Wakefield would be arriving later to the meeting.

4 Minutes - 16 May 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2016 be approved as a correct record.

5 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the terms of reference for the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board for Members' information.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6 Co-opted Members

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development sought the Board's formal consideration for the appointment of co-opted members.

The Board was informed that they could appoint the following:

- Up to five non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that does not go beyond the next Annual Meeting of the Council; and/or
- Up to two non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that relates to the duration of a particular and specific scrutiny inquiry.

RESOLVED – The Board agreed to consider the appointment of co-opted members on an ad-hoc basis for any inquiries where it was deemed appropriate.

7 Sources of work

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

The following were in attendance for this item and invited to share their views around potential areas of work for the Scrutiny Board this year:

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor James Lewis, Executive Member for Resources and Strategy
- Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Executive Member for Employment, Skills and Opportunity
- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer for Customer Services
- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer for Communities
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer for Welfare and Benefits
- John Mulcahy, Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration.

Members of the Scrutiny Board also shared their views on potential areas of work.

In summary, the following key areas were raised:

- Progress surrounding welfare reforms;
- Review of the Council Tax Support Scheme;
- Future changes to the Leeds Advice Consortium;
- Digital Centre of Excellence programme, with particular focus on improving customer access to environmental service areas;
- Reducing repeat customer contacts by addressing service call failures;
- Community Hubs and the development of phase 3;
- Progress surrounding the Equality Improvement Priorities;
- Engagement processes with existing equality forums and organisations;
- Assessing the equality impacts of council decisions;
- Community Centres Review;
- Development of the Cohesion/Prevent Strategy;
- Review of Taxi & Private Hire Licensing, including safeguarding matters;
- Effective measures in maintaining the electoral register;
- Safeguarding issues linked to the night time economy;
- The Housing and Planning Act 2016 and its implications on citizens and communities;
- Digital inclusion, with references made to the recent inquiry undertaken by the City Development Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted and used to help inform the Board’s work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

8 Work schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report detailing a draft work schedule for the 2016/17 municipal year. This included the traditional items of Scrutiny work which involves performance monitoring, recommendation tracking and Budget and Policy Framework Plans.

In consideration of the wide range of potential areas raised during the meeting, the Board discussed how best to undertake its work this year. In conclusion, the Board agreed to prioritise the following three areas:

- Review of the Council Tax Support Scheme
- Safeguarding issues linked to the night time economy
- Reducing repeat customer contacts by addressing service call failures

In acknowledging the urgency surrounding the review of the Council Tax Support Scheme, Members agreed to arrange a working group meeting to discuss the potential scope for this inquiry before the Board’s July meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in liaison with the Chair and Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities), updates the work schedule to reflect the Board’s comments.
- (b) That a working group meeting is arranged prior to the Board’s July meeting to discuss the potential scope for the Board’s inquiry into the revised Council Tax Support Scheme.

(Councillor K Wakefield arrived at 10.45 am during consideration of this item).

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 25 July 2016 at 10 am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

At the end of the meeting, the Chair took the opportunity to alert Board Members that the Council would be taking part in the national one minute silence at 12 noon, in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack in Sousse, Tunisia on 26th June 2015.

(The meeting concluded at 10.55 am)