

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, A Castle,
B Cleasby, D Coupar, D Hollingsworth,
G Hyde, J Marjoram, L Mulherin and
M Rafique

23 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the September meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods).

24 Declarations of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:-

- Councillor B Anderson in his capacity as Chair of West North West Homes (Agenda Items 8, 10 and 11 (Appendix A)) (Minutes 29, 30 and 33 refer)
- Councillor A Blackburn in her capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Items 8, 10 and 11 (Appendix A)) (Minutes 29, 30 and 33 refer)
- Councillor D Coupar in her capacity as a member on Belle Isle North Estate Management Board (Agenda Items 8, 10 and 11 (Appendix A)) (Minutes 29, 30 and 33 refer)
- Councillor D Hollingsworth in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Items 8, 10 and 11 (Appendix A)) (Minutes 29, 30 and 33 refer)
- Councillor G Hyde in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Items 8, 10 and 11 (Appendix A)) (Minutes 29, 30 and 33 refer)

25 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies reported.

26 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

27 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- (a) Members' Questions – Executive Member for Environmental Services (Minute 18 refers)

That this Board notes the follow up information provided by the Chief Environmental Services Officer in relation to those outstanding issues referred to within the minutes.

That in relation to the general frequency of **street bin emptying**, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to enter into further discussions with the Chief Environmental Services Officer with a view

to obtaining more clarification for Board Members. This matter would be explored further as part of the Board's Inquiry into Street Cleaning.

That in relation to the **enforcement of dog fouling** and whether this issue would be dealt with under the proposed Inquiry into Street Cleaning, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to obtain the written views of Councillor S Smith, Executive Board Member for Environmental Services for discussion at the Board meeting in October 2008 under the Performance Management Information item.

(b) Current Work Programme (Minute 21 refers)

That this Board notes the contents of a letter from the Environmental Protection Team addressed to Councillor S Smith, dated 22nd August 2008, regarding an update about the **complaint of noise nuisance**.

28 Executive Board - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 16th July 2008 be received and noted.

29 Update on the Supporting People Programme

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on the implementation of the Supporting People Inspection Action Plan.

The purpose of the report was to inform Board Members of progress against the service improvement recommendations made by the **Audit Commission** following the inspection of the Supporting People Programme in January 2007.

Bridget Emery, Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning, Environment and Neighbourhoods was in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification of the measures in place in achieving a two star Supporting People programme
(The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded and stated that the programme was now moving towards a three star performance)
- the concerns expressed about the competitive tendering programme and whether the department was using the money effectively
(The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded and stated that a rolling programme of competitive tendering was being undertaken)
- clarification as to whether a prototype on-line directory of 'Supporting People Commissioned Services' would be operational by the end of September 2008
(The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded and confirmed that the new and improved directory was being progressed, but would be slightly delayed due to technical ICT issues)

- clarification of a review of information available for housing services to ensure that consistent and concise information was available to customers *(The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded and informed the meeting that the review of information would always be an on-going piece of work and that their providers had, in conjunction with the Supporting People team, produced a series of leaflets and other customer information. The Board noted that this would never be a finished item due to the department's intention to continually review and improve on information for customers)*
- the need for the Board to be supplied with more information on those services which the commissioning body had agreed to fund on a short term basis in partnership with Adult Social Care, Children's Service, Safer Leeds or the Leeds Primary Care Trust *(The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded and agreed to supply this information to Board Members)*
- the need for the Board to receive quarterly updates on the Supporting People programme i.e. the next scheduled meeting being December 2008

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in conjunction with the Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning, be requested to provide the following additional information to Board Members in readiness for October's meeting:-
 - the rolling programme of **competitive tendering exercises**;
 - further detail on those services which the commissioning body had agreed to fund on a short term basis;
 - confirmation of when the on-line directory of 'Supporting People Commissioned Services would be operational i.e. should it not be before October, then to provide a progress report on its testing
- (c) That quarterly updates on the Supporting People Programme and the new on-line directory be submitted to future Board meetings.

30 Scrutiny Inquiries - Draft Terms of Reference

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting draft terms of reference for the Board's forthcoming Inquiries.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Inquiry into Street Cleaning – Draft Terms of Reference (Appendix A refers)
- Inquiry into Older People's Housing – Draft Terms of Reference (Appendix B refers)

At the request of the Chair, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser also circulated additional information on the draft terms of reference for the Private Rented Sector Housing Inquiry for consideration.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

Inquiry into Street Cleaning

- the need to make particular reference to the **enforcement of dog fouling** within the Inquiry
- the need for the Street Cleaning Inquiry Working Group to be convened before the October Board meeting
- clarification of the **grass cutting contract** and performance
(The Principal Scrutiny Adviser responded and it was agreed that this matter would be taken up separately as part of the performance management and recommendation tracking items in October 2008)
- the need to address the issue of **park maintenance**
(The Principal Scrutiny Adviser responded and it was agreed that this matter should be referred to the Chair of the Scrutiny Board (City Development) for action)

Inquiry into Older People's Housing

- the need to include the comments received from the Director of Adult Social Services
- the need to explore the implications of the increasing older people population on housing related services and the identification of future planning needs
- the need to ensure that older people have a safe and secure environment to live in, with a sense of belonging to and participating in communities
- the need to add Connect Housing and the Older People's Forum to the witness list
- the need to forward the final terms of reference to the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care) for any further comments and to await nominations from its Board Members to take part in the potential joint Inquiry.
- the need to look into a possible Board visit to Sheffield to observe its new retirement village at Woodhouse
(The Principal Scrutiny Adviser responded and agreed to investigate this matter further with a report back at the October meeting)

Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing

- the need to add the Tenants Federation and Students Unions to the witness list

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That, subject to those amendments referred to above, the terms of reference for the Inquiry into Street Cleaning be approved and that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to arrange a meeting of the Working Group before the next Board meeting.
- (c) That, subject to those amendments referred to above, the terms of reference for the Inquiry into Older People's Housing be approved and that the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to forward a copy to the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care) for comments.
- (d) That, subject to the addition of the Tenants Federation and Student Unions to the list of witnesses, the terms of reference for the Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing be approved.

31 Current Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on the Board's current work programme.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Current work programme (Appendix 1 refers)
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st September 2008 to 31st December 2008 (Appendix 2 refers)

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to include a further update on the Supporting People Programme for December's meeting.
- (c) That in relation to the **grass cutting contract** and performance, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to liaise with the Area Development Manager, Streetscene Services to commission a progress/options report for the October meeting.

32 CO2 Emissions Inquiry - Formal Response

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting the formal responses to the Board's recommendations following its Inquiry into CO₂ emissions.

Appended to the report was a copy of a document entitled 'City Development – Response to the Statement from the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) Inquiry: The Council's CO₂ emissions' for the information/comment of the meeting.

Tom Knowland, Head of Sustainable Development, City Development was in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification of what assurances Defra had given the Council in terms of the measures put in place in the immediate future to gain improved allowances in the first year of trading in relation to **carbon trading**
(The Head of Sustainable Development responded and agreed to come back to the Board with the relevant information on this issue)
- clarification as to whether the **Carbon Reduction Commitment** implications were being factored into the 2009/10 budget
- clarification of what penalties would the Council incur if they opted to do nothing until the baseline was established for the process of **carbon trading**
(The Head of Sustainable Development responded and agreed to come back to the Board with the relevant information on this issue)
- clarification of what role Area Management was playing in terms of the **Carbon Reduction Commitment**
(The Head of Sustainable Development responded and agreed to come back to the Board with the relevant information on this issue)
- clarification of whether the authority had a result following the Council's application to be a pilot authority on the **DfT's Low Carbon Vehicle Programme**
(The Head of Sustainable Development responded and agreed to come back to the Board with the relevant information on this issue)
- clarification of the process the Council followed with regard to ensuring that future street lighting **PFI contracts** included options for the reduction of CO² omissions
- the need for the authority to address some cases in relation to **energy efficient lighting** around street lighting

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That this Board notes that National Indicator 188 'Planning to Adapt to Climate Change' would be continued to be monitored as part of the performance management item and that other recommendations would also be monitored as part of the general recommendation tracking item.
- (c) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser in conjunction with the Head of Sustainable Development be requested to come back to the Board on those outstanding issues requiring clarification.

33 Lettings Policy - Proposed Changes

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on the Board's draft statement to the Executive Board in relation to the proposed changes to the Lettings Policy.

Appended to the report was a copy of a document entitled 'Statement of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) Changes to the Lettings Policy' for the information/comment of the meeting.

John Statham, Strategic Landlord Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods and Kath Bramall, Leeds Homes Policy Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- clarification if steps had been undertaken for the quarterly performance data relating to local housing issues to be broken down into wards, including data on the letting summary
(The Strategic Landlord Manager responded and confirmed that officers were addressing this issue)
- the Board reiterated its support to establish photo identification for each tenant, but urged the department to exercise sensitivity in implementing this policy
- the need to clearly manage the monitoring of the implementation of the assisted bidding system
- that the new Code of Guidance on Choice Based Lettings had been published and that the department was awaiting legal counsel's advice on this

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That approval be given to the document entitled 'Statement of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) Changes to the Lettings Policy' in accordance with the report now submitted.
- (c) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to advise the Board when the Lettings Policy had been considered by the Executive Board.
- (d) That a vote of thanks be conveyed to the Strategic Landlord Manager and the Leeds Homes Policy Manager on their invaluable work in producing this document.

34 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 13th October 2008 at 10.00 am (Pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.10 am)