

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 21ST JULY, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, K Brooks, E Carlisle,
L Cunningham, P Grahame, C Hart-
Brooke, A Khan, A Maloney, T Smith,
J Tudor, P Wadsworth and N Walshaw

13 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

14 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

15 Late Items

There were no late items.

16 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

17 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lay, with Councillor Hart-Brooke attending as substitute.

18 Minutes - 23rd June 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

19 Matters Arising

Minute No: 7 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The Board was informed that the functions of the Director of Resources that relate to Civic Enterprise Leeds and Community Infrastructure Levy are to be removed from the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board. The functions that relate to Civic Enterprise Leeds will now be included within the remit of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and the functions that relate to the Community Infrastructure Levy will be included within the remit of the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board.

20 West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 - Update

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which highlighted the Scrutiny Board's commitment to maintain a watching brief surrounding the delivery of the new West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024. The Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime had provided a written update for the Scrutiny Board, which was appended to the report along with a copy of the published West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Resources
- Councillor Garthwaite, Leeds representative and Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
- Councillor Amanda Carter, Leeds representative and Vice Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
- Julie Reid, Head of Policing and Crime, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing and Environment
- Paul Money, Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities
- Nadeem Siddique, Head of Community Relations and Cohesion
- Claire Smith, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods and ASB Services
- Chief Inspector Pete Hall, Leeds District Police
- Gerry Shevlin, Domestic Violence Programme Manager
- Simon Hodgson, Head of Community Safety Services

The Chair welcomed the attendance of the Head of Policing and Crime who explained that the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime was unable to attend today's meeting. The Head of Policing and Crime then gave a brief introduction to the update report provided to the Board.

The Chair also welcomed the attendance of Councillor Garthwaite and Councillor Amanda Carter in their capacity as Chair and Vice Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel. Both gave a brief introduction to the role of the Police and Crime Panel, as well as highlighting key areas of priority for the Panel this year.

The following areas were also raised during the Board's discussion:

- *Consultation on the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan* – the Board discussed the engagement methods used as part of the consultation across West Yorkshire and while acknowledging that response levels had been relatively low, the Head of Policing and Crime explained that consultation will be continuing linked to the supporting strategies that are being developed to support the delivery of the Plan. Reference was also made to the appointment of the Mayor's Inclusivity Champion to increase the focus on engagement in services from lesser heard communities.

- *Public trust and confidence in policing* – the Board discussed the importance of community engagement in terms of helping to instil public trust and confidence in policing.
- *Police representation from BAME communities* – the Board was interested to learn what proportion of the West Yorkshire Police force represents BAME communities. The Head of Policing and Crime agreed to provide further information on this, including a breakdown of senior management level posts too. Linked to the Mayor’s pledge to increase police officer and police staff numbers, it was highlighted that particular importance had also been placed on doing more to attract, recruit, support and promote talented individuals who represent the diverse communities across West Yorkshire.
- *The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)* – the Board discussed the valuable work undertaken by the VRU in terms of addressing the underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. The Board also welcomed the longer-term funding commitment by the Home Office in terms of awarding a 3-year settlement of £15 million.
- *Mayor’s Safer Communities Fund* – The Board noted that over £208k in grants of up to £6k had been awarded to voluntary and community groups across West Yorkshire and discussed how such grants are awarded and also evaluated in terms of impact. The Head of Policing and Crime agreed to provide further information in terms of the groups that had received grants.
- *Motorcycle/quad bike related anti-social behaviour (ASB)* – Reference was made to the persistent problems of motorbikes and quad bikes being ridden anti-socially. As well as applying for additional funding towards tackling this matter, the Board noted that Leeds District Police has appointed a Sergeant to better co-ordinate the work of the current Off Road Bike Team as well as looking to add dedicated PCSOs to the team, stingers, drone capability and covert bikes.
- *Improving communication links with the public and Elected Members* – It was acknowledged that more could be done to communicate the positive impacts of Policing initiatives with the public as well as better utilising the role of Elected Members in helping to disseminate key information across local communities too.
- *Responding to 101 and 999 calls* – Following a request made by the Board, the Head of Policing and Crime agreed to provide further details surrounding 101 and 999 call handling data.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and the accompanying appended information be noted.

(b) That the additional information requested by the Board, as referenced above, be circulated to Board Members once available.

21 Safer Stronger Communities - Annual Update

The Chief Officer Safer, Stronger Communities submitted a report which explained that, having previously maintained a watching brief surrounding the development and delivery of the Safer Leeds Strategy 2018-21, the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board was consulted last year on the new Safer Stronger Communities City Plan 2021-24.

This report therefore presented an update position in relation to the priorities set out within the new Plan. Also appended to the report was a briefing paper by Leeds District Police which provided a short overview of the current efforts, successes and challenges associated with Leeds District's Neighbourhood and Partnerships work to support community safety in the city.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Resources
- Councillor Garthwaite, Leeds representative and Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
- Councillor Amanda Carter, Leeds representative and Vice Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel
- Julie Reid, Head of Policing and Crime, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing and Environment
- Paul Money, Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities
- Nadeem Siddique, Head of Community Relations and Cohesion
- Claire Smith, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods and ASB Services
- Chief Inspector Pete Hall, Leeds District Police
- Gerry Shevlin, Domestic Violence Programme Manager
- Simon Hodgson, Head of Community Safety Services

The Chair invited the Chief Officer Safer, Stronger Communities and Chief Inspector Peter Hall to give a brief introduction before inviting any comments and questions from Board Members.

The following areas were raised during the Board's discussion:

- *Changes to recording anti-social behaviour (ASB) data* – The Board was informed that ASB is no longer recorded as one category and is now broken down into numerous categories, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
- *Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)* – Linked to comments made by the Board during the earlier agenda item, the public consultation surrounding a proposed city-wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to vehicle nuisance was very much welcomed by Board Members.

- *Leedswatch* – The Board was informed that the service continues to consolidate after the implementation of the Leedswatch review on 1st September 2021 and that the control room is responsible for a number of functions across CCTV, the City Centre Vehicle Access Scheme, Out of Hours repairs, alarm response, security patrols and the Out of Hours Noise. Linked to this, the Chair reminded Members that a Board visit to Leedswatch is expected to take place in September.
- *Tackling Youth Violence* – The Board was informed of the involvement of Leeds District Police in the developing Youth Violence tasking group work and other proposed measures to strengthen coordination and response to youth violence concerns. Linked to this, a Youth Crime Prevention officer took up post in the Spring as work continues to support the Youth Justice Partnership. The Executive Member for Resources also highlighted the vital role of the Youth Service in terms of working to divert young people away from the Criminal Justice System.
- *Neighbourhood Policing Teams* – The Board discussed the role and allocation of NPTs while also acknowledging their own positive experiences and relationships with local NPTs.
- *Tackling illicit drugs and substance use* – It was acknowledged that over the past year, custody-based drugs testing had dramatically increased. In the past six months 1375 tests were conducted, versus 742 in the six months prior to that (an 85% increase). 52% of these tests were positive for cocaine / opiates and resulted in referrals and requirements for the individuals. The Executive Member for Resources also made reference to the excellent work that was being undertaken by Forward Leeds around tackling drug addiction and highlighted that the Safer Leeds Executive had also recently set up a Task and Finish Group to look at this matter in greater detail.
- *Community Payback* – The Board sought further information surrounding the current position on Community Payback schemes.
- *Sharing information on key contacts with Elected Members* – Board Members again emphasised the benefits of sharing key contact information with Elected Members in terms of also helping to disseminate this across local communities.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and valuable contribution to the Board's discussions.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and the accompanying appended information be noted.
- (b) That the additional information requested by the Board, as referenced above, be circulated to Board Members once available.

22 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented the Board's latest work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser reminded Board Members that a number of key areas of interest were raised during the Board's last meeting, as well as proposed approaches for incorporating these into the work schedule. These had therefore been reflected in the updated work schedule set out in Appendix 1 for the Board's consideration.

It was also noted that Board Members will be consulted on potential dates linked to the proposed working group meetings and site visits reflected in the work schedule.

However, with regard to the proposed scrutiny visit to Newmarket House and the RERF, it was noted that the service is in the process of organising a couple of events during September for any new Elected Members to attend Newmarket House and be briefed on the work of the service, as well as visiting the RERF too. As such, it was considered appropriate for Members of the Scrutiny Board to also join these planned events in terms of avoiding duplication of effort.

RESOLVED – That, subject the change reflected above, the Board's work schedule be approved.

23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 15th September 2022 at 10.30 am (pre-meeting for Board Members at 10.00 am)