

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

TUESDAY, 13TH MAY, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, A Blackburn,
D Coupar, Mrs R Feldman, A Gabriel,
D Hollingsworth, R Lewis, A Ogilvie and
F Robinson

98 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors G Hyde and L Rhodes-Clayton.

99 Declarations of Interest

Councillors B Anderson and A Blackburn both declared a personal interest in any matters relating to their membership of West/North West Leeds Homes ALMO. Councillor Coupar declared a personal interest in any matters relating to her membership of Belle Isle Tenants Management Organisation.

Councillor A Gabriel declared a personal interest in any matters relating to her membership of Beeston Hill and Holbeck Residents Association. Councillor D Hollingsworth declared a personal interest in any matters relating to his membership of Leeds East/North East Homes ALMO. Councillor Lewis declared a personal interest in any matters relating to his membership as a Panel Member on South Leeds Homes.

100 Minutes - 26th March 2008 - Any Matters Arising

- (a) The Chair reported that he had received emails from a group called Leeds Organic Growers (LOGs) from the Kirkstall area, an organisation that collects garden waste in the Kirkstall/Weetwood area, and claims its collection costs are lower than those of the Council. Members felt that they did not have all the relevant information in order to compare like for like.
- (b) Members expressed concern regarding the backlog of domestic refuse collections following the industrial dispute. It was felt that the contingency plans had not been effective, as some collections had been outstanding for nearly four weeks or more, especially in the outer areas of the City.

Paul Langford, Chief Housing Services Officer was in attendance and informed the meeting that he would forward Members' concerns to the Chief Environmental Health Officer to investigate and report back to the Chair.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2008 be approved as a correct record.

101 Minutes - Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 11th March and 8th April 2008

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 11th March and 8th April 2008 be received and noted.

102 Minutes - Executive Board - 16th April 2008

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

103 Scrutiny Inquiry - Housing Lettings Pressures - Draft Report

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report for Members' consideration, attaching the draft final report of the Board's inquiry into Housing Lettings Pressures. The draft inquiry report reflected the evidence presented to Members and the subsequent discussions at the Working Group meetings.

The Board's inquiry had been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules and, as such, advice on the draft recommendations has been sought from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods. The following advice was given to the meeting:

Recommendation 2

"That, to supplement the Member briefing sessions (referred to above), the Strategic Landlord produce and maintain a Members' handbook on the Council's lettings Polices.

Rationale

Seek to clarify that this should relate to Lettings Policies.

Recommendation 13

That, within 12 months, the Chief Housing Services Officer establishes and commences a process, involving all key stakeholders, to determine the future customer profile of Council Housing within Leeds.

Rationale

This seeks to provide clarity around this process being targeted at who Council Housing will be for rather than the organisation and management of Council stock – which is how the previous recommendation could be interpreted."

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Paul Langford, Chief Housing Services Officer and John Statham, Strategic Landlord Manager, both from

Environment and Neighbourhoods Department who responded to Members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED - That, subject to the following amendments, the report be referred to the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods for consideration at the earliest opportunity:

Agenda Page 31 (Report Page 5)

- Paragraph 1: Delete '*letting*' and insert '*lettings*'
- Paragraph 2, 6th bullet point: Include examples of unacceptable behaviour – e.g. significant rent arrears, anti social behaviour and perpetrators of domestic violence.

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- Paragraph 5: Insert title immediately beforehand '*Supply and demand for Council Housing in Leeds*'
- Paragraph 6: Insert additional bullet point detailing extent of the current waiting list (i.e. the Leeds Homes Register – 30k registered of which 1300 have Priority Extra housing needs, 1700 have Priority housing needs and 27k have General housing needs.)

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- Paragraph 33, 5th bullet point: Include brief explanation of 'a Housing Solutions approach' or include reference to later section in the report, specifically paragraph 61.
- Paragraph 35, 2nd bullet point: Delete '*...is suggested is some...*' and insert '*...is suggested in some...*'

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- Paragraph 40 (last sentence): Delete '*mat*' and insert '*may*'.

Agenda Page 39 (Report Page 13)

- Paragraph 43: Delete '*...number of bedroom required.*' And insert '*...number of bedrooms required.*'

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- Paragraph 51: Delete '*...due to be re-launched...*' and insert '*...due to be relaunched...*'. Delete '*We whole-heartedly...*' and insert '*We wholeheartedly...*'
- Paragraph 55: Delete '*...overcrowding or under occupation.*' and insert '*...overcrowding or under-occupation.*"

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- Reports and Publications Submitted: Insert '*Copies of the above reports are available on request*'

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- ***Recommendation 2***

"That, to supplement the Member briefing sessions (referred to above), the Strategic Landlord produce and maintain a Members' handbook on the Council's Lettings Policies.

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- Recommendation 4**

That, working with each of the Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and the Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO), the Strategic Landlord seeks to develop a set of principles to ensure that all information on all the Local Lettings Policies in operation across the City is easily accessible by all members of the public, and are presented in a clear and consistent manner, by December 2008.

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- Recommendation 13**

That, within 12 months, the Chief Housing Services Officer establishes and commences a process, involving all key stakeholders, to determine the future customer profile of the Council Housing within Leeds.

104 Scrutiny Inquiry - The Council's CO₂ Emissions- Draft Report

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report for Members' consideration, attaching the draft final report of the Board's inquiry into the Council's CO₂ Emissions (Appendix 1 refers).

The Board was presented with a proposed redrafted section on 'Fleet Management' as follows:

Fleet Management

'We note the work being undertaken by Fleet Services and Environment City to minimise the impacts of emissions from Council fleet activity and believe that emissions from the Council's fleet should not be overlooked.

We were advised that Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel was introduced into the Council's vehicle fleet in 1998 and that exhaust particulate traps have been fitted to all fleet vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes) to help improve the air quality in the Leeds area.

We were also advised that to further enhance the Council's commitment to minimising the environmental impact of its vehicle fleet, where possible, all vehicles purchased meet the current noise and emissions standards. In addition, future vehicle purchasing procedures will ensure that the engines of such vehicles meet the EURO 5 criteria, well in advance of any legislative requirements.

We also heard that an alternative fuelled vehicle seminar was held by the Council during 2007, with invitations being extended to both the public and private sectors form around the City. The purpose of the event was to provide an opportunity for participants to attend and see / drive the vehicles first hand.

It is clear to us that new initiatives are constantly being developed and in conjunction with Cenex, a government led organisation, and the Energy Savings Trust, Fleet Services are investigating the possible use of alternative fuelled vehicles in the Council's fleet of the future. This work supports the review currently being undertaken to map the level of CO₂ emissions from vehicle deployment and develop a targeted reduction'.

RESOLVED - That, subject to the following amendments, the report be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration at the earliest opportunity:

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- Paragraph 3: Delete '*...CO₂ emissions for Leeds City Council...*' and insert "*...CO₂ emissions arising from the use of Leeds City Council assets...*'

Footnote to Paragraph 3: Current work around (the national indicator) NI185 is producing some quite different figures for our baseline, partly due to a new methodology and partly due to better data collection, so the table included is out of date. As such, it should be noted that this is indicative and a full baseline for 2008 in line with NI185 is current being established.

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- Recommendation 4: Delete '*...the current usage patterns be reviewed...*' and insert "*...the current usage patterns of street lighting be reviewed...*'

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- Replace 'Fleet Management' section (as above) and 'Recommendation 6' as redrafted and presented to the meeting as follows:

Recommendation 6: That the Board, or its successor body, be kept up-to-date regarding:

- (i) The on-going investigations around the use of alternative fuelled Vehicles in the Council's fleet.
- (ii) The outcome of the current review of CO₂ emissions from vehicle deployment and the arising targeted reduction programme.

105 Scrutiny - Draft Annual Report to Council 2007/08

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a copy of the Board's draft contribution to the Annual report. The report contained a summary from the Chair and reviewed the Board's inquiries and work programme during the past year.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the following amendments, the Board's contribution to the composite Annual Report be agreed:

Agenda Page 65

- Insert recommendation 5 on the Inquiry into Housing Lettings Pressure – as the main recommendation and detail all other recommendations as agreed.

Agenda Page 67

- Insert brief summary of the agreed statement and detail all recommendations as agreed.

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- Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds, 2nd paragraph : Delete '*...redistributes this socially and economically...*' and insert '*...redistributes this to socially and economically...*'

106 Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked Board Members for their time and commitment over the past year. The Chair also thanked Officers and in particular, Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, who has made himself regularly available. The Board also thanked the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing for engaging in a full and frank debate at the beginning of the municipal year.

The Chair thanked Members for attending and the meeting concluded at 12.15pm.