

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 15TH JUNE, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, A Castle,
R Downes, G Hyde, J Jarosz, J Marjoram
and M Rafique

8 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the June meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods). He also welcomed a number of students from Leeds University who were in attendance.

9 Declarations of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:-

- Councillor M Rafique in his capacity as a Member on the Safer Leeds Partnership (Agenda Item 8) (Minute 13 refers)
- Councillor B Anderson in his capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 13) (Minute 18 refers)
- Councillor A Blackburn in her capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 13) (Minute 18 refers)
- Councillor G Hyde in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Item 13) (Minute 18 refers)

10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor D Hollingsworth and Councillor L Mulherin.

11 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th May 2009 be approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor M. Rafique to the list of apologies.

12 Executive Board - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 13th May 2009 be received and noted.

13 Changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report requesting the Board to note the changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to Scrutiny, and in particular, the new Crime and Disorder Functions of the Scrutiny Board which was required to be developed further this year.

The Board sought clarification of the role and membership of Safer Leeds, which was the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for the city.

(Jim Willson, Chief Officer, Drugs and Alcohol, who was in attendance, responded and outlined their specific role and current membership)

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That in relation to fulfilling the role and function of the Scrutiny Board, this Board notes the amendments to the Council's Constitution as outlined in the report.
- (c) That this Board notes the likely changes resulting from the Secretary of State regulations regarding the provision of information from partner authorities.

14 Co-opted Members

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on Co-opted Members.

The Board discussed the content of the report in detail and identified the potential benefits of appointing co-opted members on an ad hoc basis to assist the Board with its specific inquiries during the municipal year.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That no formal appointment of co-opted members be made to this Board at this present time.
- (c) That this Board supports the appointment of co-opted members on an ad hoc basis to assist the Board with its specific inquiries during the municipal year.

15 Input to the Board's work programme 2009/10 - Sources of work and establishing the Board's priorities

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on an input into the Board's work programme for 2009/10 and to identify sources of work and establish the Board's priorities.

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

- (a) Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-2011 – Executive Summary (Appendix 1(a) refers)
- (b) List of Scrutiny work undertaken in the past five years relevant to the Environment and Neighbourhoods portfolio (Appendix 1(b) refers)
- (c) Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (Appendix 2 refers)
- (d) Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st June 2009 to 30th September 2009 (Appendix 3 refers)

The Chair welcomed the following representatives to the meeting who were in attendance to respond to queries and comments from the Board:-

- Councillor J L Carter, Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Housing
- Stephen Boyle, Chief Regeneration Officer
- Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer
- Bridget Emery, Head of Housing Strategy and Solutions
- Jim Willson, Chief Officer, Drugs and Alcohol

The Board noted that Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Jim McNeil, Police Officer, West Yorkshire Police had conveyed their apologies.

It was also noted that Councillor J Monaghan, Executive Member for Environmental Services, had also conveyed his apologies but had already shared his views about potential areas of scrutiny work with the Chair.

The Executive Member with responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Housing outlined some of the pressures within his portfolio for the coming year and also raised some topics for possible scrutiny by the Board.

The above officers in attendance summarised the key activities and priorities of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate for the year ahead and suggested topics that the Board might like to consider including in its work programme.

Members commented on and sought further clarification on a number of particular issues for possible inclusion in the Board's future work programme.

Following detailed discussions, the Chair thanked the Executive Board Member and officers for their contribution and attendance.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

(Councillor A Blackburn joined the meeting at 10.40am during discussions of the above item)

16 KPMG - Scrutiny Review - May 2009

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on a recent KPMG external audit review of Scrutiny.

The report also provided details of management's response to the review recommendations.

Peter Marrington, Head of Scrutiny and Member Development was in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

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

- clarification of the name and history behind KPMG
- clarification of the next steps of the external audit review

(The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development responded and informed the meeting that the external audit review report would be presented to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 30th June 2009. Following that process, an action plan would be developed between the Scrutiny Board Chairs' and the Scrutiny Support Unit)

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the review's recommendations and accompanying management responses be noted.

17 Determining the work programme 2009/10

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report requesting that the Board consider formulating a draft work programme.

The Board discussed various issues for possible inquiry, update reports required and topics to be included in the work programme for the year.

In addition to its inquiry into the East and South East Leeds (EASEL) project, which was carried forward from last year, the Board expressed interest in addressing the following matters this year (to be scheduled):-

- Procurement of contracts, with particular focus on the issues arising from the Board's Call-In meeting held on 3rd June 2009
- Enforcement Management, including performance issues
- Lettings Policy
- Offender Management
- Grounds Maintenance Contract
- Recycling in Leeds, with particular focus on food and glass recycling

The Board also expressed an interest in the following matters, but agreed to include these in its work programme as 'unscheduled items' pending further clarification on the current positions and/or time permitting within its work programme this year :-

- ALMO Management Review
- Climate Change
- Area Management Review with specific reference to Area Committees

RESOLVED - That the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in conjunction with the Chair and the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, be requested to update and timetable the Board's work programme with a view to incorporating the above matters.

18 Inquiry into Older People's Housing - Draft Report

Referring to Minute 97 of the meeting held on 9th February 2009, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report seeking the Board's approval of the final report in relation to the above inquiry.

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

The Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser informed the meeting that Sandie Keene, Director of Adult Social Services, had raised the report with Councillor P Harrand, Executive Board Member for Adult Social Care, and she confirmed that there were no further issues to raise in respect of the Older People's Housing Scrutiny Inquiry.

The report was welcomed by the Director of Adult Social Services as it recognised the important contribution of appropriate housing options for the city's aging population. Adult Social Services will continue to work closely with officers in Environment and Neighbourhoods to support the development of an action plan and a joined up approach for commissioning care as required.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That approval be given to the Board's Inquiry report on Older People's Housing in accordance with the report now submitted.

19 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

RESOLVED – That the following dates be noted:-

Monday 13th July 2009
Monday 14th September 2009
Monday 12th October 2009
Monday 9th November 2009
Monday 14th December 2009
Monday 11th January 2010
Monday 8th February 2010
Monday 8th March 2010
Monday 19th April 2010

All at 10.00 am (Pre-meetings at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.25am)