

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 8TH MARCH, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, A Castle,
R Downes, J Dowson, D Hollingsworth,
L Mulherin and M Rafique

99 Late Items

There were no late items, however additional information was submitted in relation to Agenda Item 8, Dog Control Orders.

100 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ann Blackburn declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9, Fuel Poverty due to her position as a Director of West North West Homes ALMO. Minute No. 106 refers.

101 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barker, Hyde, Jarosz and Marjoram. The Chair explained that Councillor Hyde was absent due to Council business.

102 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

103 Matters arising from the Minutes

Minute No. 94 – Inquiry into Recycling

It was noted that briefing papers regarding the results of the fortnightly SORT collection pilots and also the education work being undertaken with local primary schools were provided to Members following the meeting.

104 Executive Board - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 12 February be noted.

105 Dog Control Orders

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development reminded the Board of the recommendations arising from the Dog Fouling Enforcement review, particularly in relation to reviewing the options available to the Council to extend Dog Control Orders in Leeds. An additional report was submitted by the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods which gave the Board an update on the adoption of Dog Control Orders.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Stacey Campbell, Service Manager (Health & Environmental Action Services)
- Helen Freeman, Chief Officer (Health & Environmental Action Services)

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- With regard to the re-introduction of Dog Licenses, Members asked whether this could be introduced locally. It was reported that it was believed that only national legislation could cover licensing of dogs. Subsequent clarification indicates that dog licences used to exist in the country under national legislation. This legislation was abolished in the late 1980s. Dog licences could not be re-introduced locally unless either national or Local Legislation provides for this. Leeds could apply for the reintroduction of a dog licence only by applying for a local act of parliament. Such an application would involve ensuring that parliamentary members would give sufficient support for the application and would need to be paid for by Leeds City Council. A recent consultation on compulsory microchipping for dogs and on dangerous dog control measures has been launched, in which the opportunity of resurrecting dog licences has not been raised.
- It was clarified that Dog Control Orders would now be implemented in a two stage process. Phase 1 would include a walking Multiple Dogs Order, Dogs on Leads by Direction Order and Exclusion Orders.
- The following issues were discussed in relation to phase 1 of the project:
 - Areas where dogs must be kept on leads.
 - Multiple dog walking – as the proposed maximum was six dogs, which was in line with DEFRA guidance, this figure would be proposed as part of the consultation process.
 - Education land – It was unclear whether individual school governing committees needed to be consulted on the use of exclusion orders. Clarification was therefore being sought from Education Leeds on this.
 - Consultation with 'Friends of' groups and tenant groups.
 - ALMO land – that the ALMOs were represented on the Project Board through Strategic Landlord.
- Enforcement of orders – penalties would be in line with those for dog fouling. The role of Wardens and other officers who could issue

enforcement notices was discussed. It was reported that Police would intervene where there were anti social behaviour issues. However, PCSOs are not considered part of the resource for enforcing dog control orders.

- Phase 1 of the implementation of the orders would primarily include children's play areas and council owned playing fields.
- How to highlight public concern about dog fouling – it was suggested that this could be done at Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.
- Signage of areas where exclusion orders would be enforced. It was reported that current signage, which was on lampposts, would be replaced where new lampposts were installed.
- Publicising enforcement action as a deterrent.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance. However, Neil Evans remained for the duration of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

106 Fuel Poverty

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development reminded the Board of the request for a report which set out the different schemes available to help address fuel poverty in Leeds, including those targeted at the private sector. Details of available schemes were detailed in the report.

The Chair welcomed Keith Gibson, Head of Service (Commercial and Business Support) to the meeting for this item.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Clarification was sought on the definition of the 'Decency' standard and the minimum requirement set.
- The Board discussed the Heat Lease Scheme (now Total Heat) and noted that a review was being undertaken regarding the future of this scheme.
- Members attention was brought to the Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and a bid by West North West Homes which also included some private sector housing.
- Members were informed of the support and advice provided by Yorkshire Energy Services. The Council is working closely with them to provide details of schemes available in Leeds to enable them to signpost members of the public to appropriate schemes. Members felt that this needed to be publicised better and requested that this information be made available to all Elected Members, ALMOs and Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Chair thanked Keith Gibson for his attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

107 Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035 - Revised Draft Action Plan

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development set out the revised draft Action Plan for the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035. It was reported that the Action Plan was being revised to take the Strategy through the period from 2009 to 2012 and it was envisaged that the Strategy would be reviewed with full stakeholder consultation in 2012.

The Chair welcomed Susan Upton, Head of Waste Management to the meeting for this item.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Recycling – it was reported that there were links to the recent Recycling Improvement Plan. Issues included specifically improving access to kerbside recycling facilities and by acknowledging that one size does not fit all, developing more innovative ways of recycling, noting that these must be operationally deliverable. In the future this could include increasing the range of materials recycled.
- Home composting and distribution of composting bins. That one of the actions within the Plan is to procure a supplier for composting bins to replace the current WRAP scheme.
- The current recycling pilot taking part in Rothwell. It was noted there had been confusion within neighbouring areas following changes to the collection routes, particularly for brown bins, as a result of the pilot scheme. It was highlighted that further information would be sent to residents.
- The Board received clarification that whilst the Council does measure the overall amounts of different waste streams collected, individual bins were not being measured.

The Chair thanked Susan Upton for her attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

108 Recommendation Tracking

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided the Members with a quarterly report on the progress made in implementing the Board's recommendations.

The report showed progress made against recommendations arising from the following previous inquiries:

- Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing

- Inquiry into Older People's Housing

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Rob McCartney, Housing Strategy and Commissioning Manager
- Michael Brook, Private Rented Sector Housing Manager
- Debbie Forward, Supporting People Manager

Members discussed the following recommendations in relation to the Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing:

- Recommendation 4 – Circulation of advisory leaflets for tenants. It was reported that these had been distributed to One Stop Centres and in problems areas. Members requested that all Councillors be issued copies to hand out at surgeries. It was reported that there had been a rise in the number of service requests following this recommendation. The Board agreed to continue monitoring this recommendation.
- Recommendation 8 – It was reported that external partners were sought to take over the administration of the Leeds Landlords Accreditation Scheme. However, this is still at an early stage.
- Recommendation 10 – Concern regarding the lack of tenant involvement. Contact was ongoing with the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership regarding this. It was agreed that this recommendation should be continued to be monitored.
- Recommendation 16 – Bringing empty properties back into use and assistance available to property owners. Members were asked to report of any properties that had been left empty long term.

Members discussed the following issues in relation to the Inquiry into Older People's Housing.

- Support for dementia sufferers to remain in their own homes. It was reported that this would be supported by the further development of Telecare Services.
- Recommendation 8 - .Concern regarding the dependence on the use of Telecare Services – it was reported that these services were backed up with personal visits where appropriate.
- Extra Care Housing Board – it was reported that this Board had only recently been established and had 2 housing representatives. It was chaired by Adult Social Care. The Scrutiny Board would be sent further details regarding its membership.
- Recommendation 13 – confirmation that all options of extra care provision were being considered.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the Recommendation Tracking be updated as discussed.

109 Performance Report Quarter 3 2009/10

The report of the Head of Policy and Performance presented key performance information against the improvement priorities relevant to the Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods) for Quarter 3 2009/10. Performance information was appended to the report along with a copy of the CAA Organisational and Area Assessment reports, published in December 2009.

The Chair welcomed Sue Wynne, Head of Regeneration, Policy and Planning to the meeting.

In brief summary, the following issues were discussed:

- Local employment opportunities – It was reported that as part of the Council's role as contractor of services, there are a range of channels through to developers and employers where the Council can state its requirements in terms of linking job opportunities for local people. However, the key now is having a single point of contact.
- Young People and NEETS – Members questioned the role of Regeneration Service in helping to tackle NEETs. Specific reference was made to the Future Jobs Fund Programme, which creates jobs for long term unemployed young people, and support to the Council wide employer-led Apprenticeship Programme, Work4 Leeds, with a target of 250 apprenticeships in place at the end of 2009/10-.
- Use of closed shop units – how to make the most of current assets and encourage new enterprise.
- Performance Indicator NI34 – it was reported that this was a new indicator and based on information provided by the Police.

The Chair thanked Sue Wynne for her attendance.

RESOLVED – That the report and performance information be noted.

110 Work Programme

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development outlined the Board's current Work Programme. Also attached was the current Forward Plan of Key decisions for the period 1 March 2010 to 30 June 2010.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

111 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 19 April at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.). There would also be an additional meeting on Monday, 17 May 2010.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 p.m.