

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair
Councillors A Barker, G Driver, P Ewens,
R Grahame, G Hyde, M Iqbal, L Mulherin
and R Procter

APOLOGIES: Councillor J Marjoram

12 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of personal interests were made:-

- Councillor G Hyde – Agenda Item 8 (Minute No. 16 refers) – Performance Management Report – Quarter 4 2009/10 – In his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes ALMO.
- Councillor G Driver – Agenda Item 8 (Minute No. 16 refers) – Performance Management Report – Quarter 4 2009/10 – In his capacity as a Director of Aire Valley Homes ALMO.
- Councillor R Grahame – Agenda Item 8 (Minute No. 16 refers) – Performance Management Report – Quarter 4 2009/10 – In his capacity as a member of the GMB trade union.
- Councillor M Iqbal – Agenda Item 8 (Minute No. 16 refers) – Performance Management Report – Quarter 4 2009/10 – In his capacity as a member of the GMB trade union.

(NB: See also later Minute No. 15).

13 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor J Marjoram.

14 Minutes - 14 June 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2010 be approved as a correct record.

15 Input to the Work Programme 2010/11

Further to Minute No. 8, 14th June 2010, the Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor P Gruen, Executive Member (Neighbourhoods and Housing) and Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, who responded to

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at the meeting held on Monday, 13th September, 2010

Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

- The recent review of the Housing Lettings Policy. It was suggested that the Board might wish to follow up last year's Inquiry by receiving regular updates regarding the implementation of the revised policy.
- Locality Working – It was suggested that the Board might like to look into this subject – what was locality working all about, what was the role of the Council and its partners and how effective was it?
- Issues associated with Travellers – To follow up the 2005 Inquiry on this subject, update Members on current issues and establish whether or not a further Inquiry might be appropriate and productive.
- Unemployment, worklessness and workforce skills issues, which may go beyond purely the remit of any one Scrutiny Board.
- Drug rehabilitation programmes, re-offending rates and what was the next step –change in terms of assisting offenders to re-integrate into broader society.
- Affordable housing, and the possibility of reviewing/re-opening the previous Inquiry.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Gruen and the Director be thanked for their input, which will be taken into account when the Board is finalising its work programme for 2010/11.

- (NB: 1. Councillor L Mulherin joined the meeting at 10.08 am, during the consideration of this item.
2. Councillor A Barker declared a personal interest in this item with regard to his wife's employment with St Anne's Homeless Shelter.)

16 Performance Management Quarter 4 2009/10

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report updating the Board regarding performance issues across a range of both national and local performance indicators which fell within the remit of the Board for monitoring purposes.

Councillor P Gruen and Neil Evans responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

- Delivery of EASEL – The Director undertook to separately supply further details to Councillor R Grahame.

- National Indicator 33B – Number of deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population – The Director undertook to separately supply further detailed information.
- Reviews of both national and local performance indicators were underway, with the aim of streamlining the number and type of information required.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments or requests for further information, the report be received and noted.

(NB: Councillor R Procter joined the meeting at 11.06 am, at the conclusion of this item.)

17 Procurement of Housing Contracts - Formal Response

Further to the Board's Call-In meeting held on 3rd June 2009, and the concerns raised as a result of that meeting, the Board received and considered a report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, submitted to the Executive Board on 22nd June 2010.

Present at the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments, were:-

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods.
- Daniel Hartley, Head of HR, Environment and Neighbourhoods.
- Malcolm Foster, Deputy Chief Procurement Officer.

In brief summary, the main areas of discussion were:-

- The Director welcomed the outcome of the Board's Call-In meeting. The more robust arrangements now put in place should lead to much better standards of housing in this category.
- A recommendation tracking report was due to be submitted to the September Board meeting and Members would be able to gauge progress for themselves.
- There had been some adjustment of staffing within the Procurement Unit to create both pre and post-contract teams, with greater emphasis on assisting Departments to manage and monitor contracts and to prepare in good time for re-tendering. This support role also extended to assisting ALMOs to manage and monitor their contracts.
- The corporate dialogue between the Procurement Unit and contractors, and the measures in place to try to ensure that sub-contractors were subject to the same constraints and values as the main contractor.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted, and re-visited as part of the Recommendation Tracking item at the next meeting.

18 Work Programme 2010/11

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted the Board's draft work programme, updated to reflect decisions taken at previous meetings, together with an extract from the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st July – 31st October 2010 and the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 22nd June 2010.

The following were identified for inclusion in the Board's work programme, subject to prioritisation:-

- An evaluation of the Rothwell pilot food recycling scheme.
- A review of the 2005 Inquiry into Travellers' issues, with a view to deciding whether or not a further Inquiry might be necessary.
- The budget information referred to at the meeting held on 14th June 2010 (Minute No. 8 refers).
- Locality working, with particular reference to localised street cleansing arrangements.
- A possible Inquiry into vacant housing issues in the City.
- The establishment of a Working Group, comprising the Chair and Councillors G Hyde, R Grahame, L Mulherin and P Ewens, to receive and consider the Department's response to the Board's previous Inquiry on worklessness.

RESOLVED – That, subject to any changes necessary as a result of today's meeting, the Board's draft work programme 2010/11 be approved.

19 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

Monday, 13th September 2010.

Monday, 11th October 2010.

Monday, 8th November 2010.

Monday, 13th December 2010.

Monday, 17th January 2011.

Monday, 14th February 2011.

Monday, 14th March 2011.

Monday, 11th April 2011.

All at 10.00 am (pre-meeting at 9.30 am).

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20 Angela Brogden

On behalf of the Board, the Chair paid tribute to Angela Brogden, the Board's Principal Scrutiny Advisor, and wished her well as she embarked on her maternity leave following this meeting. Richard Mills would be taking on Angela's role.

The meeting concluded at 11.45am.