

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

MONDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, N Buckley,
R Grahame, M Harland, P Harrand,
G Hyde, J Jarosz, S Lay, K Mitchell, B Urry
and N Walshaw

49 Late Items

The following late item was admitted to the Agenda:

- Agenda Item 9 – Financial Health Monitoring

50 Declarations of Interest

Councillor R Grahame declared a personal interest in Agenda Item, 10, Co-ordination between Parks and Countryside and Environmental Action Services due to his membership of GMB.

51 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor P Davey. Councillor B Urry was in attendance as substitute.

52 Minutes - 12 November 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

53 Safer Leeds Community Safety Business Plan

The report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods provided the Board with the final version of the Safer Leeds Business Plan which was agreed by the Safer Leeds Executive in September 2012. The report also advised how the plan had been used to inform the newly elected West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) of the city's priorities in relation to crime reduction and policing. The plan would be developed further in early 2013 before being submitted for approval as the city's statutory Crime and Disorder Strategy to full Council in July 2013.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Superintendent Keith Gilert, Chief Officer, Community Safety

It was reported that the Board's comments regarding the draft Community Safety Business Plan had been taken on board prior to it being agreed by the Safer Leeds Executive.

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

- Policing challenges that go beyond the force boundaries, with reference to the new Strategic Policing Requirement; .
- It was suggested that the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) be invited to a future Board meeting. It was reported that he would be attending the next meeting of the Safer Leeds Executive.
- The PCC was now developing a West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan, in liaison with the Chief Constable, based upon identified local priorities. .
- Funding that would be made available to local authorities. The PCC had indicated that 2013/14 would be a transitional year.
- A deputy to the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner had not yet been appointed.
- Families First Programme – the first funding streams had become available and the highest priority families were being identified.
- Success of the focus on reducing burglaries and the partnership approach involved. Domestic Violence had also been identified as a priority area.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Board take an updated version of the Safer Leeds Business Plan in April 2013 for comment, prior to it being submitted for approval as the city's statutory Crime and Disorder Strategy by full Council in July 2013.

54 2012/13 Quarter 2 Performance Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)/Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods provided Members with a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and City related to the Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities).

RESOLVED – That the Quarter 2 performance information be noted.

55 Financial Health Monitoring

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development informed Members of the financial health of the Environment and Neighbourhoods

Directorate after seven months of the financial year 2012/13 and also presented the initial 2013/14 budget proposals relevant to the Scrutiny Board's portfolio.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services.
- Councillor Mark Dobson, Executive Member for Environment
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environment and Neighbourhoods

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

- There was a projected overspend of £903,000 across the directorate.
- Overtime and use of agency staff, particularly in waste management had been a contributor to the overspend.
- Due to weather conditions there had been additional volumes of garden waste collected (around 3,200 tonnes)
- Net expenditure of the directorate was £95 million. This included Parks and Countryside. Attendance management – absence was currently over-running at about 14 days in the refuse service. Budgets were based on 11 days but figures had historically been over 20. There had been several factors that had contributed to improving absence performance including improvements to the return to work process, improving protective clothing and improved links with occupational health.
- Pressures on the 2013/14 budget. These included the disposal of Quarry Hill car park, an increase in landfill tax, cessation of the asylum contract and reduction in other areas of income.
- The cost of agency staff in comparison to directly employed staff. Whilst agency staff did not cost when off sick or on holiday, approximately 45 days per year cover had to be provided for permanently employed staff in the refuse service in terms of sickness and annual leave.
- Areas of saving were highlighted. These included the following:
 - Removal of subsidies
 - Procurement savings
 - Identification of appropriate costs that could be charged to the Housing Revenue Account
 - Alternate week collection of recyclable and residual waste.
 - Proposals to close Middleton Park and Gotts Park golf courses.
 - Bowling greens – possible transfer to bowling associations.
 - Changes to bulky waste collection – potential involvement of third sector organisations.
 - Stopping commercial waste being disposed of at household waste sites.

- Bulk purchase of fuel – the Council would act as a broker and savings would be passed on to residents and to the Council.
- Food waste/anaerobic digestion – a piece of work was ongoing but this would not generate savings for next year if any scheme was to go ahead.
- Proposals to end the subsidisation of bereavement charges would enable the service to break even.
- There was an over-supply of golf courses and these could be returned to parkland.
- Grounds maintenance contract and savings on original contract price and charges to Housing Revenue Account.
- Activity in reducing fuel poverty.
- Costs of allotment provision

It was reported that there would be a working group meeting on 8 January 2013 to provide a further opportunity for Board Members to consider the initial budget proposals.

RESOLVED – That the report and discussion be noted.

56 Co-ordination between Parks and Countryside and Environmental Action Services

The report of the Chief Officer, Parks and Countryside considered the progress made in co-ordinating Environmental Action Services with Parks and Countryside, along with further plans to improve the way services are co-ordinated in a way that utilised resources more effectively and improved the level of service achieved.

Sean Flesher, Chief Officer, Parks and Countryside was in attendance for this item. Members discussed issues surrounding the mapping of and requirements for a work schedule for ginnels. Further issues discussed in relation to this included rights of way legislation and involvement of Parish and Town Councils.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

57 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development informed the Board of its forthcoming Work Programme. Recent Executive Board minutes were also appended to the report.

Members were informed of forthcoming items for the next agenda which included updates on the working group meetings undertaken in November and December regarding the Board's reviews on recycling and strengthening relationships with local Parish and Town Councils. There would also be updates following the Board's reviews on Dog Control Orders and the new Grounds Maintenance contract.

58 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 14 January 2012 at 10.00 a.m. (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.)