

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

WEDNESDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, A Blackburn, B Flynn,
A Gabriel, P Grahame, P Gruen,
M Harland, A Khan, S McCormack and
P Truswell

28 Welcomes and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and brief introductions were made.

Members and Council Officers held one minutes silence in remembrance of former Councillor Lancaster, who had recently passed away.

29 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

30 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt information.

31 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business, however the Board received the following supplementary information:

Agenda Item 9 – Scrutiny Inquiry into kerbside collection and recycling of domestic waste – additional data showing missed bin collections 2012-2018 and by ward 2015-2018 (minute 37 refers)

32 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests made.

33 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor J Bentley and Councillor G Wilkinson. Councillor B Flynn attended as a substitute.

34 Minutes - 26 July 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2018 be agreed as a true record.

35 Response to Scrutiny Inquiry into Leeds' Response to Grenfell

The report of the Director of Resources and Housing provided an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations in the Scrutiny Report on Leeds' response to Grenfell, agreed by the Board in December 2017.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Jill Wildman – Chief Officer, Housing Management

- Sarah Martin – Chief Officer, Civic Enterprise Leeds
- John Gittos – Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board
- Cllr D Coupar – Executive Board Member for Communities

Members considered each of the recommendations in turn and sought additional information regarding the following:

Recommendation 2 – Block Champion Approach

- Clarity regarding the role of a Council Officer.
- Clarity required on the wording which suggested Block Champions could potentially carry out inspections. Officers agreed to amend the narrative.
- Information to be provided on the recruitment of Block Champions, with specific reference to the East Leeds and Burmantofts areas which have the highest number of high rise flats.
- To consider how to enhance and promote the involvement of tenants.
- The potential to invite a selection of Block Champions when Scrutiny next reviews progress.

The Board was advised that the Service worked with representatives and tenants to build relationships and encourage individuals to act as Block Champions. The Council had reviewed the approach of ten other organisations to inform a new approach to tenant involvement.

Recommendation 4 – Exploring Handheld Technology

- Discussion focussed on new technology to support and aid staff undertaking their duties.

It was noted that a Phone App, to record fire safety checks and audits was to be piloted and evaluated at the end of October 2018 and rolled out in the New Year 2019.

Recommendation 5 – Ensure further engagement with Scrutiny to consider the impact of the Grenfell national public inquiry on the Council’s Housing Investment Plan. The Board resolved to keep a watching brief on the national public inquiry.

Recommendation 6 – Fire Safety

- Discussed the Government’s position on funding fire safety measures; including the provision of sprinklers in the city’s high rise blocks.

Members were reassured that the protection systems in Leeds are sound in their own right, without sprinkler systems, which provide an additional layer of protection for vulnerable adults. The Boards view was that the Government ought to fund sprinkler systems in Leeds and asked that this be raised.

Members commended all those involved in the recent Cottingley Fire incident and the approach to providing reassurance to residents.

Members were advised of the intention to provide an update report to both Executive Board and Scrutiny Board approximately June 2019.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

- a) Noted the progress of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Leeds' response to Grenfell.
- b) Requested a further recommendation tracking update at the beginning of the next municipal year.

36 Draft Terms of Reference - Inquiry into Kerbside Collection and Recycling of Domestic Waste

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny support provided the draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Boards inquiry into Kerbside Collection and Recycling of Domestic Waste.

The following were in attendance:

- James Rogers – Director of Communities and Environment
- Helen Freeman – Chief Officer, Environmental Action
- Andrew Lingham – Head of Service, Waste Strategy
- Councillor M Rafique - Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles

Members agreed the terms of reference, with the inclusion of Trade Unions as identified possible contributors.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

- a) Noted the information contained within the submitted report and the appended draft terms of reference.
- b) Agreed the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- c) Noted that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence

37 Session 1 - Scrutiny Inquiry into Kerbside Collection and Recycling of Domestic Waste

The report of the Chief Officer, Waste Management Services, provided information to support session 1 of the inquiry in accordance with the draft terms of reference.

The following were in attendance:

- James Rogers – Director of Communities and Environment
- Helen Freeman – Chief Officer, Environmental Action
- Andrew Lingham – Head of Service, Waste Strategy
- Matthew Birkett – Service Manager, Communities and Environment
- Councillor M Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles

The Head of Service (Waste Strategy) provided the Board with a summary of the national context; legislation and the statutory duties the Authority is required to undertake which have shaped the development of the waste strategy. It was reported that DEFRA was expected to release new recycling requirements by the end of 2018 and the Board was provided with comparative recycling statistics and collection frequency data from other local authorities.

The Board noted the additional information tabled at the meeting showing waste streams and recorded missed collections; and considered each graph in turn during their deliberations.

Key issues identified in discussions with the Board included:

- Strategies to achieve recycling targets – Clarity for session 3 was requested regarding the introduction of glass recycling and if this would assist Leeds achieving overall recycling targets, and what constraints would prevent the introduction of additional kerbside collections (i.e service capacity, cost)
- The development of a cross-party Waste Strategy Working Group
- Impact of extreme weather on waste collection
- The technical definition of a “missed bin” which the Board will consider further during this inquiry.
- The reporting of repeated collection failures. The number of repeat failures from 2015 was requested for presentation at the next inquiry session.
- Clarity was sought regarding the availability of comparative data from other core cities or statistical neighbours. The Board were advised that there is no longer a Government requirement to publish this information, but this information is collected and can be provided at the next session.
- The impact of ward boundary changes on the statistics reported – data collected in 2017 would not be directly comparable after boundary change in April 2018 as some dwellings will have been captured in a different ward
- The impact of new build homes on existing routes and the inclusion of waste management input in planning considerations.
- Walking distances for crews based on locations and risk assessments.
- The roll out of replacement refuse vehicles, which will have a larger capacity, and therefore may face increased access issues.
- Clarification regarding the Councils side waste policy. The Board were advised that this would be considered as part of the developing Waste Management Strategy.

The Scrutiny Board viewed a short presentation, showing the issues and challenges faced by collection crews on a regular basis, and further discussed the issues which prevented successful collection including access to streets; side waste; distance between bin storage/collection point and crew safety.

Members noted that on average, 56 bin collections were missed daily and set this figure within the context of presented collection data: 76,000 collected daily and 23 million collected annually.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

- a) Noted the information contained within the report
- b) Noted the content of the discussions on suggested performance improvement options
- c) Requested information as identified in the minute for presentation at the next inquiry session.

(During consideration of this item Councillor Gabriel withdrew from the meeting at 11:10 for 5 minutes, Councillor P Gruen withdrew from the meeting at 11:30 for 5 minutes)

38 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the 2018/19 municipal year. A copy of the minutes for Executive's Board meeting held on 25th July was appended to the report for information.

The Board also noted the following:

- Beeston Site Visit – dates to be confirmed, potentially November 2018
- Working Group, Housing Green Paper – 15th October 2018
- Working Group, Selective Licensing – 26th October 2018

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

- a) Noted the matters outlined in this report, and raised during the meeting.
- b) Agreed the overall work schedule (as presented at Appendix 1) as the basis for the Board's work for the remainder of 2018/19.

39 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday 28th November 2018 at 10.00 am.

(The meeting concluded at 12 noon)