

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

WEDNESDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Beverley,
A Blackburn, D Coupar, Mrs R Feldman,
A Gabriel, D Hollingsworth, G Hyde,
R Lewis, A Ogilvie, L Rhodes-Clayton and
F Robinson

22 Declarations of Interest

That the following personal interests were declared under Agenda Item 12 - Minute 30 – Recycling Strategy:

- Councillor B Anderson in his capacity as Chair of West/North West Homes.
- Councillor A Blackburn in her capacity as a Council Board Member on West/North West Homes and a Director of Groundwork Leeds (Agenda Items 12 & 13 – Minutes 30 and 31 refers) .
- Councillor D Coupar in her capacity as a Member of Belle Isle Tenants Management Organisation.
- Councillor D Hollingsworth in his capacity as a Council Board Member on East/North East Homes.
- Councillor G Hyde in his capacity as a Council Panel Member on East/North East Homes.
- Councillor A Ogilvie in his capacity as a Director of Green Leeds Limited (Agenda Items 12 & 13 – Minutes 30 and 31 refers).
- Councillor R Lewis in his capacity as a Council representative on the West Yorkshire Police Authority and as a Council Panel Member on South Leeds Homes (Agenda Items 11 & 13 – Minutes 29 and 30 refers).

23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 25th July 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) held on 25th July, 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

24 Executive Board Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 22nd August 2007 be received and noted.

25 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2007 be received and noted.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 24th October, 2007

26 Members' Questions

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which afforded Scrutiny Board Members the opportunity to put questions to the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Environmental Services.

Opening the session the Chair welcomed Councillor S Smith, Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, Steve Smith, Head of Environmental Services and Pippa Milne, Recycling and Waste Manager to the meeting.

The Executive Board Member informed the meeting that his portfolio no longer had responsibility for buildings, catering, highways and street lighting but that sustainability and climate change had been added to his portfolio.

Councillor Smith informed the meeting that in terms of moving forward, one of the biggest challenges for the Environment and Neighbourhoods Department was the Leeds Waste Strategy which still required a large amount of work . He then went on to inform the meeting that, in order to achieve the targets for the **Leeds Waste Strategy**, Leeds City Council would need to double its recycling percentage.

The following issues were also raised:

- The success of the pilot scheme for **garden waste**.
- The Council's proposals for **fortnightly collection** of the green waste bins and the reduction in the number of black bin to alternate collections.
- The problems with **hard to reach properties** which currently do not have recycling collections.
- The need for architects to design better **facilities for recycling** in any new-build in Leeds in the future.
- The proposals for the provision of education and information for every household on **recycling**, including **bulky household collections**.
- The need to review the current arrangements for **grounds maintenance**.
- The recognition that the current pay and grading review would impact on the service.
- The need to establish mainstream funding for the services paid for by NRF monies.
- The need to merge **Environmental Health** with **Environmental Enforcement** in order to provide a better service for the local population.
- The need to monitor more closely the Council's contract for **pest control**.
- The need to bring forward the Council's **Climate Change Strategy**.

The Executive Board Member for Environmental Services and the Officers responded to Members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- The Department's current position for the replacement of faulty or destroyed **litterbins**.
- The Department's response to the complaints regarding **vermin** in the Holbeck area as well as the City Centre areas.
- After taking into account the City's statistics for recycling to date, the levels of confidence that the City will be able to achieve the **targets set for recycling**.
- The potential role for **Area Committees** in the provision of **streetscene services**.
- Consideration of a collection service for those household who put out their black bin only when it is full (instead of it being collected weekly).
- The provision of **compost bins** and the practicality of households reducing their waste through home composting.
- The Board requested the original full list of proposed sites for the **energy from waste plant**.
- The provision for **educating children** in schools about recycling.
- The future treatment of **food waste**.

Concluding the debate, the Chair thanked the Executive Board Member and the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, together with Officers for attending today's meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (a) The an update report be submitted to a future meeting on the City's problems with vermin.
- (b) That all Members of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) be supplied with a list of the original sites considered for the proposed energy from waste plant.

27 Performance Report Quarter 1 2007/2008

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report presenting the **key areas of under performance** at the end of Quarter 1 (**1st April to 30th June 2007**).

Appended to the report was detailed information on the performance indicators, reported quarterly which were relevant to the Board's portfolio.

The following representatives were in attendance to answer Board Members' questions:-

Councillor S Smith, Executive Member for Environmental Services
 Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
 Steve Clough, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement – Chief Executive's Department
 Stephen Smith, Head of Environmental Services
 Pippa Milne, Recycling and Waste Manager

The following issues were raised:

- **BV-91b – Percentage of household residents in the authority’s area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables**
The issue around IT systems and the replacement of the current database software.
- **BV-199d/LKI-SC6 – Fly tipping**
The issue of average time it takes to respond to fly tipping and whether its incidence has increased.
- **LKI-EH8/CPA-H18 – Percentage of Private Sector Homes vacant for more than six months.**
Members noted the levels of voids are at their lowest for some time, though there are isolated issues which affect relet figures.
- **BV-66a/CPA-H6/BV-66b,c,d – Rent and rent arrears collection by the Local Authority**
Members were assured this was not a declining trend.
- **LKI-NR4/LAA-SSC32A – Percentage of Local Authority Homes which meet the Government’s decency standard**
Members discussed the issues of variations across the ALMOs in achieving these targets.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That this Board notes the Quarter 1 performance information outlined in the report.
- (c) That Members be supplied with an update report on void properties in the City.

28 Safer Leeds 2006/07 Annual Performance Report

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report informing Members on the progress made towards the three year Safer Leeds Strategy running from 2005 until 2008.

Appended to the report was a detailed report on Safer Leeds Crime and Disorder report for 2006/2007.

Richard Jackson Chief Officer, Community Safety attended the meeting and responded to Members’ questions and comments.

The following issues were raised:

- The movement of **people sleeping rough** from the City Centre to the Holbeck area.
- The incidence of on-street **prostitution** and its movement to various parts of the City and how this was being identified and tackled.

- Members asked the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods what the department was hoping to achieve from the proposed **Anti-social Behaviour Roadshow**.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and appendices be received and noted.
- (b) That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing be instructed to submit regular update reports on Anti-social Behaviour.

(Note: Councillor C Beverley left the meeting at approximately 10.35 a.m. during consideration of the above item).

29 Recommendation Tracking

Referring to Minute 18 of the last meeting, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a quarterly report on Recommendation Tracking from previous inquiries:

It was agreed that the completed recommendations be removed from the tracking system. The following inquiries were included in the report:

- (a) Grass Cutting Inquiry (2005)
- (b) Bulky Waste Collections Inquiry (2005)
- (c) Recycling Inquiry (2005)
- (d) Waste Solution Inquiry (2006)

RESOLVED – That the update on those recommendation provided by the Director of City Services be received and noted.

30 Recycling Strategy

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report providing Members with details of the proposed increase to **recycling and composting targets** within the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds and the recycling strategy for Leeds outlined in the appended Executive Board report dated 11th September 2007.

Pippa Milne, Recycling and Waste Manager presented the report and, together with Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Stephen Smith, Head of Environmental Services responded to Members' questions and comments.

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

31 Inquiry into the Council's role in reducing CO2 emissions

Referring to the Board's June 2007 meeting, when Members agreed to undertake an Inquiry into the role of the Council in **tackling climate change**, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report attaching the draft terms of reference.

Sharon Winfield, Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the report and responded to Members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED - That the draft Terms of Reference outlined in the submitted report be approved.

32 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on the Board's current work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for September to December 2007.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report and appendices be received and noted.
- (b) That a Working Group be set up to start in October 2007 to consider the Council's Waste Strategy. The following Members were appointed to the Working Group:

Councillors B Anderson, A Blackburn, D Hollingsworth and A Ogilvie

- (c) That a working group be established to collate information on the CO2 Emissions Inquiry to include:

Councillors Anderson and A Blackburn

33 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 24th October 2007 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting at 9.30 a.m.)

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting concluded at approximately 12.00 noon.