

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

WEDNESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors C Beverley, A Blackburn,
D Coupar, Mrs R Feldman, A Gabriel,
D Hollingsworth and R Lewis

78 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors B Anderson and A Blackburn declared personal interests in any matters relating to their membership of West/North West Leeds Homes ALMO. Councillor D Hollingsworth declared a personal interest in any matters relating to his membership of Leeds East/North East Homes ALMO.

(Councillor R Lewis also declared a personal interest later in the meeting under Minute No. 85.)

79 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Ogilvie, L Rhodes-Clayton and G Hyde.

80 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Chair requested an addition to **Minute 75** of the minutes - Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds–The Role of the Third Sector - an additional bullet point under main issues discussed to read: 'The Board discussed the need to use equitable cost comparisons when comparing collection/disposal costs, to help demonstrate value for money.' This was agreed by the Board.

RESOLVED – That with the additional bullet point to Minute 75 to read: 'The Board discussed the need to use equitable cost comparisons when comparing collection/disposal costs, to help demonstrate value for money', the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2008 be approved as a correct record.

81 **Matters Arising**

The Chair advised the Board that, with regard to Minute 74: **Budgetary Issues and Considerations**, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods had been invited to report back to the March meeting of the Board.

In addition regarding Minute 75: **Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds – The Role of the Third Sector**, the Chair advised that this report was also scheduled to be submitted to the March meeting of the Board.

82 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th January 2008 be received and noted.

83 Executive Board - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of The Executive Board meeting held on 8th February 2008 be received and noted.

84 Performance Report Quarter 3 2007/08

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report outlining the key performance issues considered to be of corporate significance for the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate as at the end of Quarter 3 (1st October to 31st December 2007).

Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, attended the meeting to present the report and respond to questions from the Board. The Chair also welcomed to the meeting, Executive Board Members Councillor J L Carter (Neighbourhoods and Housing) and Councillor S Smith (Environmental Services).

Issues raised by the Board on particular Performance Indicators were in brief summary:

- **BV-174 and BV-175 – The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population and the percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action** – Issues of under reporting were raised by Members. The Board requested information on the further action taken on racial incidents by area.
- **CP-CS50/LAA-SSC8/PSA1 – Reduce overall crime levels in Leeds by 35% by 2008** – Members were of the view that the current 30.5% reduction in crime levels was an excellent result as this was a very ambitious target.
- **LKI-EH8/CPA-H18 – Percentage of private sector homes vacant for more than 6 months** – Officers advised that the Council was very effective in chasing up landlords of vacant property and taking enforcement action. Performance was however being affected by the falling student market in Headingley and the increase in long term empty 'investment' properties in new city centre developments. Members expressed concern regarding properties that had been empty for some time and which had become derelict. It was suggested that Officers focus their efforts on particular problem areas of the city.
- **SP-KPI1 – Service users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living** – Officers advised that the comparative information should soon start to be published by other authorities.
- **BV-184a/CP-HM51/CPA-H1 and BV-184b/CPA-H2 – The proportion of local authority homes which were non-decent at 1st April 2007 and the percentage change in the proportion of non-decent LA homes which are not decent between 1st April 2007 and 1st April 2008** –

Officers advised that the results seemed static due to work being carried out on the basis of individual elements rather than whole-house improvements. Officers further advised that they were confident that decency levels would be met by 2010.

- **BV-91/CPA-E7A and BV-91b – Percentage of population resident in the authority’s area serviced by a kerbside collection of recyclables and Percentage of households resident in the authority’s area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables –**
 - ◆ Officers advised that significant sums of money were being provided for the development of the service and they were confident that targets for this year would be achieved. (*Detail of this would be included in the Budget report scheduled for the Board’s meeting in March.*)
 - ◆ The issue of providing high rise flats with recycling facilities was raised by Members, along with the need to encourage recycling by high rise residents – Officers advised that there were now planning regulations with regard to recycling facilities for new high rise flats.
 - ◆ With regard to the percentage of green bin waste being contaminated, Members were advised that this was about 4%.
 - ◆ Officers agreed to provide Members with information on these indicators on a Ward basis.
 - ◆ With regard to providing temporary recycling facilities on new housing estates, Members were advised that such facilities were not always practicable, however the Department was keen to provide more communal facilities generally.
- **LKI-RC1 – Number of household collections missed per 100,000 collections** – Officers advised that the disparity in reporting missed bins by crews and members of the public had been brought to the attention of the management team.
- **BV218b/LAA-SSC57 – Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle** - Officers advised that when contracts came up for renewal, contingency measures would be looked at to cover for when contractors were unavailable.

The Chair thanked the Executive Members and Officers for attending and responding to the issues, queries and concerns raised by the Board.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) With regard to BV175/CPA-H19 – The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action - that information be provided to the Board by Officers on the further action taken on an area basis.
- (c) With regard to BV-91/CPA-E7A and BV-91b – Percentage of population resident in the authority’s area serviced by a kerbside collection of recyclables and Percentage of households resident in the authority’s area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables – that information be provided to the Board by Officers on these indicators on a Ward basis.

85 Safer Leeds Partnership Plan

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 26th March, 2008

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report seeking the Board's comments on the draft Safer Leeds Partnership Plan which was attached to the report. The Plan set out the priorities for 2008 – 11 and reported on the progress made towards the current three-year Safer Leeds Strategy running from 2005 until 2008.

Richard Jackson, Chief Officer, Leeds Community Safety and Harvinder Saimbhi, Community Safety Development Manager, attended the meeting to present the report and respond to questions from the Board. They were accompanied by Councillor J L Carter, the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing and Chair of Safer Leeds Board.

Members raised a number of issues and questioned Officers on various aspects of the Plan, in particular:

- **Performance monitoring and reporting** of progress against the targets set out in the Plan - Officers reported that performance was monitored and reported on a regular basis to the Safer Leeds Partnership Board, the Safer Leeds Partnership Executive and Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber (GOYH).
- The need for **prostitution** and **domestic violence against males** to be addressed in the Plan.
- **Funding** – Members were advised that funding for the Safer Leeds Partnership was received from a variety of sources and although less money was available than the previous year, Officers were confident that the activities outlined in the draft Plan could be delivered.
- **Rape** – the low prosecution rates and the need to encourage reporting of this crime – Members were advised that with very specialised issues such as rape, the Safer Leeds Partnership worked in partnership with existing dedicated West Yorkshire wide units. The Chair outlined that statistical data regarding rape and where to access this information, could be added to the Board's Work Programme.
- **Under age drinking and the supply of alcohol to minors** – Members requested information on the alcohol strategy.
- The frequency of and attendance at **'Face the People' events** – Members were of the view that as well as the city wide event, smaller neighbourhood events were also necessary in order to engage with a wider audience.

The Chair thanked Officers for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That Members' comments on the Safer Leeds Partnership Plan be noted and included in the development of the Plan prior to it being formally adopted.
- (b) That the issue of statistical data pertaining to rape and the accessibility of this information be added by the Principal Scrutiny Adviser to the Board's Work Programme for future consideration.
- (c) That information on the alcohol strategy be provided to Members by Officers.

(Note: Councillor R Lewis declared a personal interest in this item as a Member of the Safer Leeds Partnership.)

86 Waste Solution Programme for Leeds

The Head of Scrutiny Support and Member Development submitted a report presenting Members with a brief update on the project, notifying Members of proposals for developing the evaluation criteria and of a presentation at the meeting on the proposed consultation framework.

Pippa Milne, Recycling and Waste Manager, and Andrew Lingham, Senior Project Manager (Waste Solution) attended the meeting to present this item and respond to queries and comments from the Board. Andrew Mason, the new Chief Environmental Services Officer was also introduced to the Board and outlined his responsibilities.

The following additional information provided before the meeting was recirculated to Members at the meeting:

- The Waste Strategy Forward Consultation Plan 2008/09,
- An Overview of the Evaluation Process and,
- The Board's Work Programme as regards the Waste Strategy – Scrutiny Inquiry.

Officers advised Members on the evaluation methodology and procurement process.

Lengthy discussion took place during which Members queried the current **status of the Leaders' Waste Strategy Working Group** and the **proposal to merge its work with that of the Scrutiny Board**. In particular, Members queried the compatibility of the scrutiny role with that of the Leaders' Working Group. The Chair undertook to clarify the issues raised by Members.

Members expressed their displeasure that the circulated information had not been distributed with the agenda papers and that, although their views were being sought on the proposed **consultation exercise**, the process had already begun and therefore the requested deferral of this item on the agenda was not possible. As a result, Members were disappointed that their comments on the proposed questions to be included in the March edition of the 'About Leeds' newspaper could not be taken into account as the editorial process had already been finalised, and that this had not been made clear at the outset. Members were however advised of the proposal for the **evaluation criteria** to be examined in more detail at the March meeting of the Board.

With regard to the **consultation exercise**, Members' views on the blandness of the questions and concerns whether the focus groups would be representative of the wider community of Leeds were noted.

The Chair requested assurances that the next stage would be carried out in a more open and detailed way.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That Officers discuss with Members how revised questions could be incorporated into the consultation process and whether these questions should be asked at the focus group meetings.
- (b) That a breakdown of how many people in each Ward would take part in the focus groups be supplied by Officers to the Board.
- (c) That the Board's consideration of the evaluation criteria be deferred until such time that the status of the Leaders' Waste Strategy Working Group has been clarified and more details provided regarding the compatibility of the scrutiny role with that of the Working Group.

87 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report on the Board's work programme.

Appended to the report was a copy of the Board's Work Programme as at January 2008 (Appendix 1) and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions – 1st February 2008 to 31st May 2008 (Appendix 2).

In brief summary, the following issues were raised:

- An outstanding question from the **2007/08 budget** as to where in the papers was there mention of the anticipated savings in reducing the Area Management Teams from five down to three.
- Regarding the item on **Rodent Control** planned for the March meeting of the Board – members were advised that this item had been deferred so that a representative from Rentokil could report to the Board
- Regarding the report on the **Leeds Strategic Plan** scheduled in the Board's Work Programme for March, the Board requested that only the indicators relevant to this Scrutiny Board be supplied.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the issues as raised above be noted and the Work Programme be amended accordingly.

88 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Wednesday 26th March 2008 at 10.00am, with a pre-meeting for the Board at 9.30am.

The Chair thanked Members for attending and the meeting concluded at 12.15pm.