

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor M Harland in the Chair

Councillors P Carlill, D Chapman,
P Drinkwater, S Firth, H Hayden,
D Jenkins, J McKenna, D Ragan,
M Robinson and S Seary

21 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

22 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

23 Late Items

There were no formal late items. However a report had been circulated after the agenda had been published in relation to Agenda Item 9 – Update on Leeds City Council’s preparations for the UK’s exit from the European Union.

24 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

25 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Tunnicliffe and Almass. During the meeting respects were paid to Cllr. Almass on his sad loss.

Councillor Drinkwater attended as substitute for Cllr Tunnicliffe and Cllr Ragan attended as substitute for Cllr Almass.

26 Minutes - 15th July 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Scrutiny Board Strategy and Resources held on 15th July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

27 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2024/25

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented details of the Council’s updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25 as reported to the Executive Board at its meeting on 24th July 2019.

Members were requested to consider the report and agree any specific scrutiny actions that may be appropriate.

In attendance at the meeting were:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 14th October, 2019

- Cllr. James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Victoria Bradshaw – Chief Officer Financial Services

Members discussed the following points:

- The Executive Member for Resources informed the Board that the spending announcement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 4th September 2019 would now need to be reflected in the Financial Strategy moving forward;
- Table 11 of the submitted report which provided Service Priority Rankings;
- Table 9 of the report which highlighted the general reserves;
- The Business Rates Pool as it was noted that the 75% retention scheme pilot would not be continuing for 2020/21, leading to a potential financial loss of around £10.2m for the Council in that year.
- Future reporting on the Council's financial strategy and exploring alternative ways of presenting such complex information in a more user friendly format.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

28 Annual Corporate Risk Management Report

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented the Annual Risk Management Report for the Scrutiny Boards consideration. This report provides an update on the Council's most significant risks and the arrangements both in place and planned activity during 2019/20 to manage them.

This report had been reported to the Executive Board on 26th July 2019. This report was supplemented by the Annual Corporate Risk Management Assurance Report which had been considered by the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 26th July 2019.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Cllr. James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Mariana Pexton Chief Officer – Strategy and Improvement
- Tim Rollett – Intelligence and Policy Manager

The Scrutiny Board discussed the following points:

- The differences between risks in relation to safeguarding of Children and vulnerable adults;
- Security of our systems and partners systems to minimise the risk of cyber-attacks. It was suggested that Elected Members would benefit from refresher training sessions on this matter.

The Board also suggested that the risk map should include Climate Emergency as a risk on the risk map. It was recognised that the risk map did currently include a risk in relation to air quality.

29 RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report.
Update on Leeds City Council's Preparations for the UK's Exit from the European Union

The report of the Chief Executive presented Members with an update on Leeds City Council's preparations for the UK's exit from the European Union.

The report had been presented to the Executive Board on 4th September 2019.

In attendance were:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources
- Neil Evans – Director for Resources and Housing
- Mariana Pexton – Chief Officer – Strategy and Improvement

The Members welcomed the report and said that it was interesting and easy to follow.

The Board were informed that work had been undertaken and was on-going in the following areas:

- Infrastructure and Supplies;
- Business and economic impact;
- Citizens and Communities impact;
- Media and Communications; and
- Organisational impact.

It was noted that every service was engaged on the process and taking the impact on services seriously so that they were prepared as best as possible.

It was noted that this current report had only been completed on the Friday previous to the Executive Board meeting to ensure that the information detailed within it was as up to date as possible. An earlier report had been presented to the Executive Board in February / March of 2019 in line with the March 2019 deadline.

Members discussed the following points:

- Resettlement work on-going in Leeds for its European citizens and staff including those citizens in Leeds from Ireland
- Potential shortages of prescription medicines
- Economic impact on Leeds due to its place in the financial economy
- Opportunity to work with partners and other world economies

Cllr. Hayden informed the Board that she was happy to take up the issue of potential shortages of prescription medicines at the Adults Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board.

Board Members requested that clarification be sought on whether resettlement would need to include those citizens currently living in Leeds from Ireland and for this to be circulated to all Elected Members for information.

RESOLVED – To note the content of the report.

30 Resilience and Emergency Planning - formal response to scrutiny recommendations

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented a formal response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny review around resilience and emergency planning.

Last year the Scrutiny Board set up a working group to undertake further scrutiny of current resilience and emergency planning arrangements in Leeds. The findings of the working group informed a formal Statement of the Scrutiny Board which was agreed and signed off in April 2019. The submitted report provided a link to the formal statement.

A formal response to the recommendations from the Scrutiny inquiry had been provided by the relevant Directorate for Members' consideration this was appended to the submitted report.

In attendance for this item were:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Mariana Pexton – Chief Officer Strategy and Improvement
- Jeff Thompson – Health and Safety Manager

Members discussed the following points:

- Public awareness and how this is accessed and monitored;
- Importance of Members being equipped to deal with issues, such as where to go for assistance and who to contact;
- Use of social media and council tax bills to provide emergency information for the public;
- The importance of communication during emergencies.

Members requested that this item be brought back to the Board in February / March 2020.

RESOLVED - To note the content of the report and the formal response from the relevant Directorate.

31 Work Schedule

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser presented the Board's work schedule for the 2019/20 municipal year for consideration.

It was noted that Resilience and Emergency Planning would be added to the work schedule.

RESOLVED - To note the content of the report and agree the overall work schedule with the addition of Resilience and Emergency Planning to be brought back to the Board in February or March 2020.

32 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board would be 14th October 2019 at 10.30am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.00am).

(The meeting concluded at 12.00pm)