

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, J Bentley,
A Blackburn, D Collins, A Gabriel,
P Grahame, A Khan, P Gruen, M Harland,
N Sharpe, K Brooks, T Smith and
M Dobson

CHAIRS COMMENT

Councillor B Anderson, Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) welcomed everyone to this remote meeting of the Panel and explained the procedure to be followed.

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

3 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Under the provisions of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13-16 of the Members' Code of Conduct, the following declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests was made:

With regard to Agenda Item 7, Public consultation on proposals for Temple Newsam (Minute No. 8) - Councillor D Collins, Company Secretary of Zig Zag Lighting, which had in the past and may in the future fulfil contracts for events held within the grounds of Temple Newsam.

5 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor D Coupar.

6 Minutes - 5 March 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held 5 March 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising

Minute 95 – Housing Repairs Update Report. A Member requested information that set out housing activity figures on a local level basis regarding responsive repairs, voids and rent collection and that these be provided to the Board at a later date.

7 Safer Leeds - Verbal Update

The Chief Officer (Safer Leeds) was in attendance, and provided an update to the Board on the impact of the city's response to coronavirus and the recovery plan, on the work of Safer Leeds.

The following key points had been highlighted:

Street Support

- 220 rough sleepers had been accommodated in safe temporary accommodation across 8 sites and a contract has been secured until end of July 2020;
- Exit strategies are being discussed;
- Pre Covid-19 emergency accommodation including The Crypt has been closed throughout the Covid-19 period due to social distancing issues;
- Of the 220 rough sleepers that have been accommodated, 40 of those would normally have no recourse to public funding (NRPF);
- The current on-street activity is approximately 20 individuals with fewer rough sleepers on streets than previously;
- A draft 'move in/move on' transition framework has been developed with partners and seeks to support and safeguard individuals.

In response to questions, a number of matters were raised and discussed, including:

- *The dispersal of rough sleepers and support provided to those people identified in prime locations.* Members were informed that street support is in place city wide and across various wards and an increase in rough sleeping hot spot locations had been acknowledged and seeking to be responsive with Outreach Services and Local Housing Management Team;
- *Outreach support capacity* hasn't decreased nor increased. Additional support has been utilised from Safer Leeds, across the Council and West Yorkshire Police;
- *The level of interaction with the rough sleeper cohort regarding their future placement.* Members were informed that work alongside the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is currently being developed to secure voices of clients. Questionnaires and exercises are being reviewed to engage 200+ people.

Domestic violence and abuse

- An increase in reporting of incidents since March 2020 - 55-75 incidents every 24 hours being reported to the police;
- Set up a partner group to ensure we can respond to victims of violence and domestic abuse;
- 712 cases have gone through the body of officers mitigating risks within 24 hours - over 700 safety plans have been implemented to ensure families and victims are safe;
- Members were informed of a new legislation that would call for new governance across all Local Authorities to drive more coherent partnerships and engage a broader range of partners.

Anti-social behaviour

Responding to Member's questions, the following was discussed:

- *Spikes in speeding during lockdown including off-road biking and lack of collaboration of 20mph zones.* Members were informed that a Road Safety Partnership Group was being re-established and would include partners from West Yorkshire Police, Highways and Safer Leeds, and Members of the Board would be provided an update in due course of significant progress over the coming weeks;
- *The collaboration of closer working Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Ward Members.* Whilst identifying the good work undertaken by Neighbourhood Policing, a concern was raised regarding an overlap in number of crimes committed in the city centre compared to individual wards. It was confirmed that an update would be provided on those figures in due course;
- *Noise nuisance and neighbour disputes.* Particularly with house parties and large gatherings. Members were informed that as social distancing measures ease, colleagues in the noise nuisance (ASB) team will be able to enter premises to install equipment to measure noise, issue legal notices and enforce more tactical interventions.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer (Safer Leeds) for his attendance, work undertaken and agreed to work collaboratively on the issues raised at a future meeting.

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

- a) Noted the contents of the update, and comments raised during the meeting;
- b) Agreed to identify areas of work for the Board at the upcoming Scrutiny Board meeting for the 2020/21 municipal year.

8 Public Consultation on Proposals for Temple Newsam

Further to minute 58 of the meeting held 3 December 2019, the report of the Director of Communities and Environment outlined the findings of the public consultation on proposals for the land currently occupying the golf course at Temple Newsam Estate.

The following were in attendance for this item:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 9th July, 2020

- Councillor Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Communities
- Councillor Firth, Referrer
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- Sean Flesher, Chief Officer Parks & Countryside
- Emma Trickett, Senior Projects Manager

The Chief Officer Parks and Countryside, informed the Board that there had been a general consensus for the golf course to retain 18 holes and two 9 hole golf courses. It had also been reported that an online petition to stop the closure of the golf course, had acquired 2886 signatures.

Councillor Sharpe in her capacity as ward member for Temple Newsam, and on behalf of her ward colleagues had commended the outcome of the public consultation and expressed her view that the proposed facilities would encourage a wider range of age groups to the area.

The Chair invited Councillor Firth to speak, whom had originally presented the request for scrutiny. Councillor Firth informed the Board of concerns regarding the data contained within the report and requested these be re-visited to reflect the future investment of the golf course and the Council's current financial strains.

In responding, the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside informed the Board that the draft proposals had been submitted including details referring to the golf course, and that these would be contained within the report ahead of the future Executive Board meeting.

Members of the Board expressed general concerns regarding the financial aspects of the golf course, specifically in terms of its future investment and affordability. It was requested that information be made clear and available to Members in the upcoming Executive Board report. In responding, the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside explained a draft business case currently under review contained that information, and would be set out in an Executive Board report at a later date. Furthermore, it was highlighted that monies borrowed, wouldn't add to any existing revenue pressures and it was intended that the café would drive a surplus revenue, as would hosting events to drive additional funding.

In summarising his position Councillor Firth reiterated the need for the financial concerns to be addressed, and to understand the sustainability of the golf course. The Chief Officer Parks and Countryside agreed that comprehensive details regarding finance would be included in a future Executive Board report, and that these would be made available to the public.

The Chair sought and received agreement from the Board that the following conclusions should be reflected in the recommendations to the Executive Board:

- The Board welcomed the work and effort of officers to address the issues raised through the Referral to Scrutiny process.

- The Board welcomed the detail provided through the consultation, noting members were satisfied that the consultation had been conducted in a clear, thorough and effective manner.
- Members endorsed the conclusions set out by the Chief Officer for Parks and Countryside in his closing remarks to the Board.
- The Board recommends that the Executive Board report includes clarity regarding affordability as part of the presentation of a robust business case.
- The Board recommends ongoing communication with all local stakeholders to minimise and mitigate any concerns ahead of the Executive Board meeting.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance.

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

- a) Noted the contents of the report, along with members comments raised during the meeting;
- b) Requested that the information relating to finances be reflected in the upcoming Executive Board report, together with clear recommendations for the golf course as set out by the Chair at the conclusion of this item.

9 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's schedule for the initial meetings of the 2020/21 municipal year. Copies of the Boards work schedule were appended to the report, as well as a note from the Working Group – Covid-19 response and recovery held 28 May 2020, and the minutes of the remote Executive Board meeting held 19 May 2020.

Members were advised that there had been a review of all public meetings and in doing so, the Board will receive the work programme for the remainder of the year at the meeting to be held 9 July 2020.

RESOLVED – To note the report, and intention of receiving the work programme at the upcoming SB meeting on 9 July 2020.

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as 9 July 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 12:10 p.m.