

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor M Harland in the Chair

Councillors G Almass, K Brooks, P Carlill,
D Chapman, S Firth, H Hayden, D Jenkins,
J McKenna, M Robinson and S Seary

CHAIRS OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting which was held remotely.

The Chair on behalf of the Scrutiny Board praised the work of all the staff who had kept the Council's services going throughout the pandemic.

28 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

29 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were exempt items.

30 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

31 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

32 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Cunningham. Cllr. K Brooks attended the meeting as her substitute.

33 Minutes - 22 July 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

34 Matters arising

In relation to Minute 23 – Financial Performance Outturn Financial Year Ended 31st March 2020 the Board were advised that an agreement had been made for officers to view the accounts of Welcome to Yorkshire. However, at the time of this meeting no confirmation had been received that the Council had seen the accounts.

It was noted that this issue was included within the work schedule as an item to be brought back to the Board at a later date. In the interim this would be checked and details provided to Board Members

The Board had requested that a letter be sent to Government in relation to long term funding solutions to the Adult Social Care Services from Cllr Harland as Chair of Scrutiny Board-Strategy and Resources and Cllr Hayden as Chair of Scrutiny Board-Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles. Members were advised that this letter had been progressed and would be sent to them via email.

35 Annual Corporate Risk Management Report

The report of the Head of Democratic Services provided the Board Members with details of the Council's Annual Corporate Risk Management Report. This annual report provided an update on the Council's most significant corporate risks and the arrangements both in place and further activity planned during 2020-21 to manage them.

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr J Lewis – Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Resources
- Tim Rollett - Intelligence & Policy Manager

The Board was informed of the following points:

- The Annual Corporate Risk Report had been presented to both Executive Board in July 2020, and the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee;
- The report focused on the main risks of the Council both internally and externally;
- Members were provided with a brief explanation of risk criteria;
- Some risks had seen an increase due to Covid-19 these were listed as Leeds Economic Growth lag, Council Budget position and there is a specific risk in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- There is a new standard risk on Climate Change and this focuses on how to mitigate climate change;
- The process of risk management is ongoing to identify, assess and report on them.

Responding to a Member's question the Scrutiny Board were informed that the Council has two risks on finance one is the current in year budget and the other is the medium term budget. Members were informed that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Council's in year budget was under pressure and subject to regular monitoring through Executive Board the impact of Coronavirus has increased pressure both in year and on the 2021/22 budget.

Finance are in the process of producing a five year finance plan. However, with the ongoing threat of Covid-19 this is having to change rapidly to adapt to increased financial challenges. Members were advised that prior to the pandemic these risks would have remained high. However, with the pandemic both of these risks have been pushed even higher and there is a particular focus on the five year plan.

Responding to a question on a recent major incident which had occurred in Birmingham. Members were advised that the Council has a 'major incidents in

the city' risk which is rated as high. Incidents such as stabbings, terrorist attacks, floods, prolonged, or adverse weather conditions would fall under this risk area. There is also a risk on Community Cohesion which would offset any issues or tensions within local communities.

The Board were informed that addressing risks in relation to Covid-19 Risk Management had realised how interlinked many of the risks are. Going forward Risk Management would be taking best practice and lessons learned over the past few months to address other risk areas.

Members had noted that ICT failure was mid-range on the Councils risks and asked if it should be higher. Members were advised that this risk was on the radar especially with more people working from home and communicating in a variety of formats. The Board was informed that an update on this was due to be reported to the Corporate Leadership Team in November.

RESOLVED – To note the content of the report.

36 Business continuity planning during COVID 19

The report of the Director of Resources and Housing informed Board Members on how the Council's Business Continuity Plans performed and supported the council's critical services during the initial days of the COVID 19 outbreak and how the outbreak would inform business continuity going forward.

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr. J Lewis – Deputy Leader of the Council, and Executive Members for Resources
- Marianna Pexton – Chief Officer for Strategy and Resources
- Nigel Street - Principal Officer Resilience and Emergencies

The Board was informed of the following key points:

- Prior to the pandemic all Heads of Service had been requested to review their business continuity plans as part of dealing with a 'no deal' EU exit, particularly in relation to loss of staff, and loss of key suppliers and supplies;
- On 5th March an email was sent to managers and officers responsible for LCC's critical services requesting them to review their business continuity plans in readiness for the potential impact of COVID 19. Again paying particular attention to loss of staff, loss of workplace, loss of key suppliers and loss of supplies;
- As the cases of COVID 19 increased a major incident was declared, with Managers having to activate their business continuity plans.

However, after 7-10 days special measures were required due to the global scale of the pandemic with rapid emergency support through new ways of working and service prioritisation;

- An Essential Service Planning Framework was developed to determine essential and non-essential services. Three overarching principles were established
 - The protection of customers particularly the vulnerable;
 - Protection of the health and safety of all staff;
 - Ensuring compliance with Public Health and Government advice and guidance.
- A COVID 19 Silver Working Group was established, chaired by the Director of Resources and Housing supported by Chief Officers. The Silver Working Group continue to meet to explore how services which continued during the outbreak can be maintained and built upon in terms of their effectiveness and to oversee the resumption of services. The group are also preparing for a potential second wave;
- The Annual Business Continuity Report to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is due in December 2020, it will provide assurances that the arrangements are fit for purpose, are communicated effectively and are monitored.

Member's discussions included the following:

- The use of a two tier approach when considering future pandemics;
- Service prioritisation and movement of staff to critical services;
- Looking at lessons learned to make the plans more resilient and robust;
- The need to move the digital agenda on to ensure staff are equipped to continue providing services;
- Staff survey and the wellbeing of staff;
- Getting staff back into the workplace, and the work continuing around social distancing;
- Air quality in the city centre;
- Social gatherings and movement of young people around the city.

The Board requested that a future meeting have an item to discuss agile working, to include policy and the impact on staff and services.

RESOLVED – To note the content of the report.

37 Scrutiny review of resilience and emergency planning - recommendation tracking update

The report of the Head of Democratic Services set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review around resilience and emergency planning.

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr. J Lewis – Deputy Leader of the Council, and Executive Member for Resources

- Marianna Pexton – Chief Officer of Strategy and Resources
- Nigel Street - Principal Officer Resilience and Emergencies

Appendix 2 of the report had provided Board Members with an update on progress of the recommendations set out by the Scrutiny Board.

Members were provided with highlights of progress as follows;

Recommendation 1

- A 'Top tips' on the reverse of the Leaders message of the Council Tax bill which would be distributed to 350,000 domestic properties;
- Incidents such as the recent storms and the current coronavirus outbreak had helped to establish and test communication arrangements with citizens and communities. This included signposting to where further information and advice could be accessed;
- The Spontaneous Volunteers Toolkit had been developed to draft status. The planned exercises for this had to be postponed due to Covid 19 outbreak. Formal release of the toolkit is dependent on exercises to ensure that the toolkit is fit for purpose.

Recommendation 2

- During the flooding Councillors were provided with a confidential 24 hour one number call-out and contact telephone number for use by professional partners, Councillors, and council staff;
- Social Media has been utilised to provide and signpost to information;
- Copies of the Emergency Management Plan 'Quick Guide' is to be re-issued to councillors;
- Briefings have been provided to the 10 Community Committee Chairs about the local approach to Prevent and Counter Extremism;
- An Elected Members Support email box has been created to deal with Covid-19 related queries from councillors during the pandemic.

Recommendation 3

- Work to procure an app based communication solution to address lone working is still ongoing. Members have been consulted and this is due to be considered by Member Management Committee but has been curtailed due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

Board Members had briefly discussed the paper and the position updates during their pre-meeting.

RESOLVED – To:

- Recommendation 1 – Categorise as a 3 as unable to continue due to the current situation and continue monitoring;
- Recommendation 2 – Categorise as 2 having achieved;
- Recommendation 3 – Categorise as 4 and to continue monitoring.

38 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services requested Board Members to consider the work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

The draft work schedule was attached at Appendix 1.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser to the Board informed the Members of the following points:

- The November Meeting will include items in relation to Welcome to Yorkshire, Council Tax and Business Rates recovery;
- The October Meeting will focus on Budget Savings.

Members requested an item also be brought to the November meeting on the impact on homeworking and staff during the pandemic which will also include initial consideration of the agile working scrutiny request from earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED – To note the submitted report.

The meeting concluded at 11:50

39 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Board, Strategy and Resources will be on Monday 12th October 2020, at 10:30am. There will be a pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10:00am.