

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

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

51 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

52 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

53 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

54 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

55 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor M Dobson.

56 Minutes - 15 October 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held 15th October 2020, be approved as an accurate record.

57 Volunteering Response to Covid-19

Further to the minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2020, the report of the Chief Officer (Communities) provided the Board with an update on the work which Leeds City Council (LCC), Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) and other organisations have continued to undertake in response to ongoing need in communities as the Covid-19 Pandemic has continued.

The Chair commended the work and various roles Martin Dean (Area Leader, Communities) had undertaken in the Council over 35 years. The Board shared their thanks for the work Martin had contributed, in bettering outcomes across communities.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer Communities
- Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access & Welfare
- Richard Jackson, VAL

The Chief Officer (Communities) introduced the report and highlighted the work in terms of considerations around the support provided to community hubs for the remainder of the year, and additional funding.

The Board were informed of the following matters:

- The increased demand across all Community Care Hubs, and in particular the inner city wards. Partnership working continues between Fareshare and the council to ensure that food supply remains sufficient, however access to a sufficient level of food has been identified as a challenge;
- The Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWSS) has seen a 50% increase on the helpline service and the effect this has on Community Care Hubs. Provision in terms of priority supermarket slots and paid vouchers were being promoted;
- Two new Community Care Hubs that will be delivered and resourced by universities across Leeds;
- Encouragement of Community Care Hubs to work collaboratively with partners in their local area;
- Ensuring neighbourliness continues across all wards to address mental health and inequality concerns;
- A working group in relation to sector resilience that focused on work streams such as sector resourcing, community led activity, volunteering, climate action and generous leadership in terms of supporting smaller organisations;
- The infrastructure in place in terms of a locally led approach.

In responding to Members' comments, the following had been discussed:

- Food supply complications specifically in relation to Slung Low Community Care Volunteer Hub and the process in terms of distribution. The Executive Member for Communities confirmed this particular issue would be looked at as a matter of urgency.
- LWSS referrals. Members heard that early complications with the helpline have now been resolved, and work was undertaken to ensure that all of the Community Care Hubs have a single point of contact to raise issues.
- Covid-19 Helpline operating hours and in particular, the implications on weekends. It was confirmed that the service operated Monday – Friday. Weekend work had operated at the start of the pandemic, however considerations needed to be looked at in terms of the demand on services across Community Care Hubs.
- In paying tribute to all volunteers during the pandemic, the number of volunteers across the Third Sector and Community Care Hubs had been discussed. It was acknowledged that engagement with volunteers

post the pandemic, to address inequality and poverty issues would still be needed.

- The fair distribution of finances across Community Care Hubs. Although funding was distributed on ward basis, the tailored approach did not cover the full cost of operations. A model was being considered in conjunction with VAL to provide funding on a full cost recovery basis.
- The work and role of Neighbourhood Networks had been emphasised.
- It was confirmed that an up to date document containing a list of contact details for all of the Community Care Hubs would be distributed to Board Members.

The Chair thanked everybody for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted, together with comments raised by the Board.

58 Priority Neighbourhoods and Locality Working

The report of the Director of the Communities and Environment provided an update to Members on locality working and the Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB) in relation to the emerging impact of Covid-19 in our most disadvantaged communities.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer Communities
- Localities Managers
- Alison Szustakowski
- Stuart Byrne
- Tajinder Virdee
- Rachel Marshall
- Andrew Birkbeck
- Jane Pattison
- Harpreet Singh

The Chief Officer (Communities) introduced the report, and provided the Board with a short presentation that highlighted the following:

- Background context on the Locality Working arrangements;
- The emerging impact of Covid-19 specifically in relation to tackling poverty and reducing inequalities;
- The Leeds Communities of Interest that seeks to address the needs of a wide range of families and people across neighbourhoods;
- Locality working update in terms of social and economic interventions;
- An update on the Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB);
- Proposed next steps and the opportunity for this Board to work in conjunction with all of the Scrutiny Boards to explore organisational development and design the council.

The Chair made reference to an LGA webinar that focused on asset based community development and local area co-ordination. It was requested that a presentation delivered by the Chief Officer (Communities) be distributed to Members of the Board following the meeting.

A Member requested additional information on how smaller pockets of deprivation in outer areas will be supported. The Chief Officer (Communities) confirmed an update on the matter will be provided in a future report for the Boards consideration.

The Chair invited the Localities Managers in attendance, to provide the Board with an update on the benefits of working across the priority neighbourhoods. The following had been highlighted:

- The work provided an opportunity to build on community engagement and issues in relation to ASB and hate crime;
- The increased support of youth provision;
- Information on local services have become more accessible;
- Closer working partnerships helped realign resources and accessing additional funding;
- Better understanding of local amenities to access external funding for additional infrastructure;
- Better support provided to Third Sector organisations;
- Longer term considerations around investment for the Priority Neighbourhoods.

The Chair outlined the importance of the work undertaken, and thanked those in attendance.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted;
- b) That the information outlined in the minute be provided as requested;
- c) That a further report be brought back to the Successor Board and form part of the work schedule in the new municipal year.

59 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year. Copies of the Board's draft work schedule were appended to the report, as well as the remote minutes of the Executive Board meeting held 21st October 2020.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule for the remainder of the municipal year be noted.

60 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next public meeting of the Board will take place on 14 January 2021 at 10:30am (there will be a pre-meeting for all Board members at 10am)

(The meeting concluded at 12:15)