

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, A Castle,
B Cleasby, D Hollingsworth, G Hyde,
G Kirkland, J Marjoram and L Mulherin

60 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the December meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods).

61 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair consented to the submission of a late item of business relating to a summary report of the working group's discussions regarding the Board's Inquiries into Older People's Housing and Street Cleaning (Agenda Items 8 and 10) (Appendix 2 and Appendix 1 refer) (Minutes 67 and 70 refer). The reports were late due to the short timescale involved in producing the report and consulting working group members on its content.

62 Declarations of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:-

- Councillor B Anderson in his capacity as Chair of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 10) (Minute 70 refers)
- Councillor A Blackburn in her capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 10) (Minute 70 refers)
- Councillor D Hollingsworth in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Item 10) (Minute 70 refers)
- Councillor G Hyde in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Item 10) (Minute 70 refers) and as a dog owner (Agenda Item 11) (Minute 71 refers)
- Councillor B Cleasby in his capacity as a dog owner (Agenda Item 11) (Minute 71 refers)

63 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor A Gabriel and Councillor M Rafique.

64 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

65 Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) Miscellaneous Properties (Minute 53(b) refers)

The Chair referred to Councillor A Gabriel's comments in relation to seeking clarification on what was happening with properties not transferred to ALMOs and left derelict, especially properties in recreation areas, and the action being taken with the respective landlords in this regard.

He requested that this issue should be revisited at the next Board meeting in January 2009.

(b) Inquiry into Private Rented Sector Housing (Minute 55 refers)

Board Members noted and welcomed that they could now access the department's area profile reports around empty properties on the Council's Intranet.

66 Executive Board - Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 5th November 2008 be received and noted.

67 Inquiry into Older People's Housing

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting evidence in line with Session 1 of the Board's Inquiry into Older People's Housing.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- (a) Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) – Inquiry into Older People's Housing – Terms of Reference (Appendix 1 refers)
- (b) Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) – Inquiry into Older People's Housing – Summary Report of the working group meeting held on 1st December 2008 (Appendix 2 refers)

The purpose of today's Board meeting was to focus on the following specific areas:-

- links between the national 'personalisation agenda' and the future development of flexible and bespoke housing related services for older people
- implications of the increasing older people population on housing related services and the identification of future planning needs
- the current review of the **Leeds Housing Strategy** and its need to respond to the relevant strategic outcomes and priorities within the **Leeds Strategic Plan and Leeds Local Agreement**
- the **Leeds Older People's Housing Strategy** and accompanying action plan
- the condition of **sheltered housing stock** in Leeds and proposals for improvement, with particular reference to the **Supporting People**

Programme and PFI bid proposals for modernising housing provision for older people

The following officers were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Bridget Emery, Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning
Dennis Holmes, Chief Officer, Commissioning, Adult Social Care
Mick Ward, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Development (Older People and Disabled People)
Iain Kyles, PFI Project Adviser, Housing Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnerships

The Chair invited Board Members to comment on the late summary report of the working group meeting held on 1st December 2008.

The Board supported the comments of the working group.

Specific reference was made to the scale of the problem and the need to increase the number of properties up to a 21st century standard, subject to costs involved.

The Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning responded by explaining that some aspects of the work was picked up through the decency programme, but not all. She agreed to supply the Board with more information on the current estimates around the work that needed to be done.

The Chair then invited each officer present to briefly highlight the issues and concerns in respect of Older People's Housing to assist the Board with their Inquiry.

PFI Issues

Iain Kyles, PFI Project Manager, Housing Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnerships made specific reference to the following key issues:-

- the scale of the provision that the Council should be seeking to provide across the city and how PFI can help with this
- the need to identify priority locations
- the extent of need for extra care housing across the city

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues as clarification to questions raised:-

- the scale of PFI bid was gauged by reference to the total number of dwellings in out of date sheltered housing complex schemes with bed-sit type accommodation
- new provision of housing for older people was also being undertaken as part of the Affordable Housing Programme. PFI would complement this work and seek to increase the pace of new provision

- priority had been given to tackling the need for works to bed-sit complexes, as they offered the lowest quality of current sheltered accommodation
- the range of facilities provided in relation to the **Extra Care Housing Schemes** would vary by location according to the needs of each neighbourhood and the current range of facilities already available
- no provision had been made in the PFI for support to be given to older people and their families who elect to stay at home, for example the provision of extensions and alternate funding sources would need to be secured for such investment options

Strategic Partnerships and Development (Older People and Disabled People) Issues

Mick Ward, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Development (Older People and Disabled People) made specific reference to the following key issues:-

- how housing can support the move to 'care closer to home'
- Health and Well-being agenda i.e. promoting better eating/exercise and avoiding social isolation
- cross cutting initiatives i.e. falls prevention programme
- how older people were supported in managing their own health conditions i.e. through telecare/telehealth services
- further development of older people's mental health issues i.e. dementia

Commissioning, Adult Social Care Issues

Dennis Holmes, Chief Officer – Commissioning, Adult Social Care made specific reference to the following key issues:-

- having properties available that older people can downsize into and which are also adapted to meet their needs
- older people with dementia and the need to provide support to enable them to remain within their own homes
- the need to consider the demography of the population to help predict the future needs of older people and the services that would be required 20-25 years from now

Housing Strategy and Commissioning Issues

Bridget Emery, Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning made specific reference to the development of the **Leeds Older People's Housing Strategy** and the need to modernise services without putting people at risk or becoming socially isolated

(The Board noted that the draft Leeds Older People's Housing Strategy would be submitted to the February 2009 meeting for consideration)

During discussions, clarification was sought of the safeguards in place when individuals choose to commission their own services using direct payments or

individualised budgets. It was noted that the Council offered to carry out **CRB checks** for service users.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the evidence provided in line with session one of its Inquiry into Older People's Housing be received and noted.

68 Update on the Supporting People Programme

Referring to Minute 29 of the meeting held on 8th September 2008, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report providing a quarterly update on the Supporting People Programme.

Bridget Emery, Head of Housing Strategy and Commissioning was in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That a further update report be submitted to the Board in March 2009 when clarification on the future of the programme in relation to the **Area Based Grant** would be established.
- (c) That the feasibility of other Council led commissioning services adopting the contract management policies used by the Housing Strategy and Commissioning section be noted and welcomed.

69 Current Work Programme

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

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- Current work programme (Appendix 1 refers)
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st December 2008 to 31st March 2009 (Appendix 2 refers)

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That a report on the role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) be added to the work programme for consideration at the January 2009 Board meeting.
- (c) That in relation to the issues raised by the Board around the need for more robust scrutiny of the budgeting process, the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser be requested to add this as an item for discussion at the next Scrutiny Chair's meeting.

70 Inquiry into Street Cleaning

Referring to Minute 45 of the meeting held on 13th October 2008, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting evidence in line with Session 2 of the Board's Inquiry into Street Cleaning.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents for the information/comment of the meeting:-

- (a) Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) – Inquiry into Street Cleaning – Summary Report of the working group meeting held on 24th November 2008 (Appendix 1 refers)
- (b) Scrutiny Inquiry into Street Cleaning – Summary of issues raised by the public (Appendix 2 refers)

The purpose of today's Board meeting was to focus on the following issues:-

- comparative case studies of successful **beacon authorities** in relation to 'better public places' theme
- street cleaning enforcement powers of the Council and opportunities for joined up enforcement with other individuals/groups/organisations
- frequency and monitoring of street cleaning services
- resource pressures relating to street cleaning services

The following officers were in attendance and responded to Members' queries and comments:-

Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer
Graham Hollings, Streetscene Manager

The Chair invited Board Members to comment on the late summary report of the working group meeting held on 24th November 2008.

The Board supported the comments of the working group.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- a Member sought specific clarification of the street cleaning services carried out in relation to Carr Lane, Rawdon over the last 14 months (*The Chief Environmental Services Officer responded and agreed to report back on this issue*)
- clarification of the role of Environmental Services and ALMOs in relation to street cleaning on adopted and unadopted highways
- the continuing problems of parked cars and the need to inform residents in advance of street cleaning services arriving so that they can accommodate this by moving their cars
- clarification of how the ALMOs budget was administered in relation to street cleaning
- the need for officers to carry out a piece of work in the medium term on what a single street cleaning service would look like and the costs associated in delivering this

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

- (b) That the evidence provided in line with Session 2 of its Inquiry into Street Cleaning be received and noted.
- (c) That this Board notes the department's responses to the public letters outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

(Councillor A Castle left the meeting at 2.20 pm during discussions of the above item)

71 Enforcement of Dog Fouling

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting a monthly update on the enforcement of dog fouling across the city.

The Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser informed the meeting that the Draft Statement of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) on Enforcement of Dog Fouling would be considered at the Board's meeting on 12th January 2009.

Discussion ensued on the October 2008 data relating to the numbers of dog fouling Fixed Penalty Notices issues; prosecutions made, stray dogs impounded and dog service requests.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- Members noted the number of stray dogs impounded during October 2008 (87) compared to how many were returned to their owners (23). The Board agreed to issue a press release reminding dog owners of their responsibilities and particularly around this time of year in remembering that 'a dog is for life, not just for Christmas'
- the reasons why there had been only two Fixed Penalty Notices issued during the month of October

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the October 2008 data relating to the numbers of dog fouling Fixed Penalty Notices issued, prosecutions made, stray dogs impounded and dog service requests be noted.
- (c) That the Board's Statement on the Enforcement of Dog Fouling be considered at the January 2009 meeting.
- (d) That a press release be issued on the lines referred to above.

72 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 12th January 2009 at 10.00 am (Pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 2.25 pm)