

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 13TH JULY, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, A Castle,
R Downes, D Hollingsworth, G Hyde,
J Jarosz, J Marjoram and M Rafique

20 Chair's Opening Remarks

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

21 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mulherin who was still on maternity leave.

22 Declarations of Interest

The following personal interests were declared:-

- Councillor B Anderson in his capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 8 - Minute 25 refers)
- Councillor A Blackburn in her capacity as a Director of West North West Homes (Agenda Item 8 - Minute 25 refers)
- Councillor D Hollingsworth in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Item 8 – Minute 25 refers)
- Councillor G Hyde in his capacity as a Director of East North East Homes (Agenda Item 8 - Minute 25 refers)

23 Minutes of Previous Meetings held on 3rd and 15th June 2009

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 3rd June 2009 and 15th June 2009 be approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor A Castle to the list of apologies for the 3rd June 2009 meeting.

24 Executive Board Minutes - 17th June 2009

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 17th June 2009 be received and noted.

25 Leeds Strategic Plan Performance Report for Quarter 4 2008/2009

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report which provided a strategic overview of performance against those improvement priorities in the Leeds Strategic Plan (LSP) which related directly to Environment & Neighbourhood priorities. The report and appendices provided an overall assessment of progress against the improvement priorities relevant to the Board.

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

- Councillor J Monaghan, Executive Board Member for Environmental Services
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer

The Chair invited the Executive Member with responsibility for Environmental Services to outline some of the pressures and key priorities within his portfolio for the coming year and areas where the Board may be able to add value.

Councillor Monaghan thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and pointed out the following issues:-

- the need for the City Council to tackle climate change along with other public sector organisations in the city to ensure that all partners were contributing effectively to the reduction of CO2 emissions. It was acknowledged that the City Development and City & Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Boards had also expressed an interest in this issue.
- the need to ensure that all residents of Leeds had access to recycling facilities, acknowledging that different areas of the city require different solutions for their waste and recycling needs. That as part of its inquiry into recycling, the Board could investigate the feasibility of kerbside collections for additional materials in certain areas of the city for example, glass in areas where access to bring sites were limited, or wider materials collected at the Household Waste sites.
- the need to provide additional facilities to collect items, for example, identifying schools as possible key points of collection.

The Chair thanked the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services for his comments. The Chair then invited Board Members to comment on those areas of interest within the performance indicators.

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

- TP-3a - Reduce Worklessness across the city with a focus on deprived areas.
 - Clarification was sought on whether the Council had enough strategies in place to reduce worklessness across the city with a focus on deprived areas.

(In response, the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods informed the meeting that the Council with its partners will continue to focus on the challenge of long term unemployment and an innovative pilot, was underway in areas of long term unemployment to develop a more effective multi-agency team with a family support focus).

- NI16 – Serious acquisitive crime rate
 - Members raised their concerns regarding the rise in the serious acquisitive crime rates (up 4.3%), and particularly the rise in domestic burglary rates (up 9.5%).
(In response, the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods informed the meeting that with burglary in particular, there was a strong commitment and willingness from strategic leaders to extend joint activity and co-operation between partners and to build on the existing city-wide burglary reduction plan to tackle these difficult issues. Embedding local processes as part of the Integrated Offender Management scheme (targeting the city's most prolific offenders) will be critical in 2009/10 especially within the context of the current economic climate).

- BP-05C – Rent collected by the local authority
 - The Board sought clarification of the figures to show what proportion of the rents owed were considered 'bad debts' and could potentially be written off.
(In response, the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agreed to supply this information).

- PI BV-91B – Percentage of households served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables.
 - Councillor Blackburn raised the issue of collectors not leaving green bags in areas where a collection service should be available.
(In response, Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer agreed to liaise with Councillor Blackburn after the meeting about her specific complaint).

- NI192 – Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
 - Members sought confirmation on the success of the two weekly green bin collection.
(In response, the Chief Environmental Services Officer informed the meeting that a pilot kerbside collection scheme, increasing the collection of dry recyclables for fortnightly (green bins) began on four routes in the city in October 2008. Whilst initial indications appeared to be positive, the Council were now waiting to collate a full years data on the pilot before considering rolling out the pilot scheme across the city).

A number of other issues were raised during the meeting in relation to recycling which the Chair confirmed would also be picked up during the Board's inquiry into recycling.

- NI15 - Serious violent crime/NI18 – Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision/NI28 Knife crime
 - Members acknowledged that the percentage of serious violent crimes in Leeds had decreased compared with previous years but felt that there was a need to target resources in hotspot areas across the city.

- NI4 – Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
 - In relation to community consultation, Members felt that there was a need to communicate feedback to members of the public more effectively.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) To address the issue of worklessness as part of the Board's work programme for this year.
- (c) To address the issue of the rise in serious acquisitive crime rates as part of the Board's inquiry into Offender Management.

Note:

- (a) Councillor G Hyde arrived at the meeting at approximately 10.10 a.m. during consideration of the above item and declared a personal interest in the above item in his capacity as a Director of East North East ALMO.
- (b) Councillor J Jarosz declared a personal interest in the above item in her capacity as a Probation Officer for the Magistrates Courts.

26 Performance Monitoring and Food Standards Agency Food Service Audit Update

The Chief Environmental Health Officer submitted a report on the performance and audit of the Food and Health Team food premises inspection service and the Food Standards Agency Action Plan.

Appended to the report was a copy of the Food Standard Agency Action Plan for Leeds City Council.

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

- Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer
- Ian Mallinson, Food and Health Service Manager

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

- clarification on the inspection of mobile food vans.
- clarification of the Council's complaints system for food premises in Leeds.

- clarification on whether Licensing Panels consulted with the Food and Health Team to establish whether a current applicant had any history of poor food hygiene practices.
- the need for environmental health and planning to liaise more closely with licensing. (The Chief Environmental Services Officer agreed to take this matter back to the department for further consideration).

Members requested further information relating to:

- food premises inspections and the outputs from these.
- the frequency and numbers of checks made in relation to the movement and identification of livestock.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Environmental Services Officer and the Food Health and Service Manager respond to the issues raised by Board Members.

27 Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement - Formal Response

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report presenting the formal response to the Board's earlier review of Dog Fouling Enforcement.

Appended to the report were copies of the following documents:

- Appendix 1 - Statement of Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods) – Enforcement of Dog Fouling.
- Appendix 2 – Environment & Neighbourhoods – Health & Environmental Action Service – chart detailing the response of the Directorate.
- Appendix 3 – Report on Dog Control Orders

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

- Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer
- Graham Wilson, Head of Environmental Action and Parking
- Stacey Campbell, Service Manager

The Board welcomed the responses to their recommendations.

In brief, the main issue raised was that Members felt that dog fouling offences were occurring more often when the clocks went back and the onset of darker evenings. Members requested that the Council take the lead in co-ordinating activities during this period to remind dog owners of their responsibilities.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED - That the report and appendices and the comments now made, be noted.

28 **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)
- Relevant extract of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st July to 31st October 2009 (Appendix 2 refers).

Members were asked to agree the membership of the proposed working groups and their forthcoming dates of meetings.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That confirmation be sought on the following memberships, times and dates of working group meetings as follows:

Procurement of Contracts working group

Thursday, 30th July at 1.00 p.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Hyde and Marjoram (Councillor Marjoram informed the meeting that he would be unable to attend this first meeting)

Lettings Policy working group

Wednesday, 29th July 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Hyde and Rafique (Councillor Blackburn informed the meeting that she would be unable to attend this first meeting)

Offender Management working group

Tuesday, 4th August 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn and Rafique

Recycling in Leeds working group

Tuesday, 11th August at 10.00 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn and Hollingsworth

Grounds Maintenance Contract 2011 working group

Tuesday, 11th August 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Castle and Hollingsworth. (Councillor Castle informed the meeting that she would be unable to attend this first meeting)

Roseville Door Factory working group

Tuesday, 18th August 2009 at 2.00 pm

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn and Jarosz

EASEL working group

Tuesday 25th August 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Hyde, Hollingsworth and Marjoram.
(Councillor Hyde informed the meeting that he would be unable to attend this first meeting)

Grounds Maintenance Contract 2011 working group (provisional follow up meeting)

Wednesday 2nd September 2009 at 11.00 a.m.

Membership: Councillors Anderson, Blackburn, Castle and Hollingsworth.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser advised that she would consult with Board Members after the meeting to confirm the membership and meeting times for the working groups on Worklessness and Enforcement Management and Performance.

29 Any Other Business

The Board requested a written response from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods regarding information provided by Housing Advice to private rented sector tenants in relation to bonds, especially to homeless people.

30 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 14th September 2009 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-Meeting at 9.30 a.m.)

The Chair also requested that the Board's October meeting be changed to Friday, 9th October 2009 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-Meeting at 9.30 a.m.)

The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.