

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

MONDAY, 14TH JUNE, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Barker, G Driver, P Ewens, R Grahame, G Hyde, M Iqbal and L Mulherin

1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence from the meeting were received.

3 Minutes - 17th May 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Review of the Housing Lettings Process (Minute No.129 refers)

Further to Minute No. 129, 17th May 2010, in response to a Member's query, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods reported that the Board's views and recommendations would be taken into consideration when the matter went back before the Executive Board in the autumn.

5 Changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report outlining recent procedural changes to the Council's Constitution in respect of the scrutiny process.

In response to a query regarding substitute arrangements for Scrutiny Board meetings, it was clarified that these arrangements applied to a whole meeting, not part of a meeting, and that Board Members were responsible for notifying their group office of their intended absence which, in turn, was responsible for arranging and notifying substitute Members.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Joint Protocol

RESOLVED – That the proposed Joint Protocol between the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) and the local Community Safety Partnership be approved, in accordance with the report now submitted.

7 Co-opted Members on Scrutiny Boards

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding scrutiny issues highlighted in the May 2009 Audit and Inspection Plan prepared by the Council's external auditors, KPMG, and drew particular attention to the comments contained in the Plan relating to the use of co-optees by Scrutiny Boards.

Members discussed and debated the options for possibly appointing co-optees onto the Board, either on a semi-permanent or on an ad hoc basis.

During the course of the discussion, a Member raised an issue regarding the current composition of the statutory representatives appointed annually to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) and it was agreed to refer this matter for consideration by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.

RESOLVED – That the Board agrees to appoint co-optees on an ad hoc basis, as and when considered necessary to assist with particular matters or inquiries, and the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, in consultation with the Chair, consider how, in practice, this might work given the Board's work programme.

(NB: Councillor R Grahame joined the meeting at 10.10 am, during the consideration of this item.)

8 Input into the Board's Work Programme 2010/11 - Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report seeking Members' input on the Board's proposed 2010/11 work programme.

In attendance at the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments were:-

- Councillor Tom Murray, Executive Member (Environmental Services).
- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods.

It was reported that Councillor P Gruen, Executive Member (Neighbourhoods and Housing) would be in attendance at the July meeting.

In brief summary, the main areas discussed were:-

- The more austere financial situation now facing local authorities. The Director of Resources would be reporting to the Executive Board on 22nd June regarding Government instructions for current year budget savings, and the likely impact on the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate was in-year savings in the region of £1.5m.

Members requested the Director to report to the Board when the cuts/savings had been identified.

- The success of the food waste recycling pilot scheme in the Rothwell area, and the possibility of a similar scheme being rolled out across the City.

Members requested that an analysis of the Rothwell pilot project be circulated to Board Members.

- The development of the proposed Residual Waste Plant. The possible commissioning of an anaerobic digester as part of a wider food waste strategy would have to be the subject of a separate procurement exercise.
- The introduction of revised domestic waste collection routes across the City, possible teething problems and how these would be tackled. The collection frequency of black, brown, green and food waste bins was also a live issue.
- More localised input and control of street cleansing services via local Members and Area Committees. Members expressed some reservations regarding this proposed initiative, unless sufficient resources were to be devolved at the same time.
- Illegal rubbish dumping and environmental enforcement issues.
- Missed refuse collections and how these were followed up.
- The frequency of street gully cleansing. Members requested that more detailed information be circulated to Board Members.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Murray and the Director be thanked for their input, which will be taken into account when the Board is finalising its work programme for 2010/11.

9 Determining the Board's Work Programme 2010/11

The Board considered the report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development regarding establishing the Board's work programme for 2010/11.

The Board identified the following areas/issues under the Environment portfolio for further consideration at the July Board meeting, when issues

would also be identified under the Neighbourhoods and Housing portfolio and priority issues identified for inclusion in the 2010/11 work programme:-

- Localised street cleansing service.
- Food waste recycling and the possible commissioning of an anaerobic digester.
- Partnership working, and what the Council's partners were doing to assist the Council to meet its environmental targets/ambitions;
- Travellers and associated issues across the City.
- Procurement of new Grounds Maintenance Contract 2011.

Members made reference to the following issues under the Neighbourhoods and Housing portfolio, which would be discussed at the next meeting :-

- Law and order issues, including anti-social behaviour, and how local people could be involved in the system.
- Affordable housing in Leeds and future options for Council housing.
- Local youth unemployment and what could be done about it.
- ALMO inspection results.
- Following up the outcome of previous Inquiries/investigations, including the review of the Housing Lettings Process referred to in Minute No. 4.

RESOLVED – That the Principal Scrutiny Advisor, in consultation with the Chair, prepare a draft work programme 2010/11 for submission to the next meeting.

10 Dog Warden Service

Abigail Sandham, Dog Warden Service, updated Members on progress on the consultation exercise regarding dog control orders.

It was reported that an item on dog control orders would be submitted to the first cycle of Area Committee meetings in June/July.

A Member requested that details of the number of cases of toxocarasis across the City be circulated to Board Members.

11 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

Tuesday, 13th July 2010

Monday, 13th September 2010

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 13th July, 2010

Monday, 11th October 2010

Monday, 08th November 2010

Monday, 13th December 2010

Monday, 17th January 2011

Monday, 14th February 2011

Monday, 14th March 2011

Monday, 11th April 2011

All at 10.00 am (pre-meetings at 9.30 am).