

SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 16TH MAY, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, N Buckley,
R Grahame, M Harland, J Jarosz,
K Mitchell and N Walshaw

86 Late Items

There were no late items admitted to the Agenda.

87 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

88 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Davey and S Lay.

89 Minutes - 11th March 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

90 Draft Safer Leeds Strategy 2013-14

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development referred to the city's Community Safety Partnership, Safer Leeds, and its statutory requirement to prepare and implement a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. As this Strategy also forms part of the council's budget and policy framework, the Scrutiny Board was invited to make any formal comments before the final draft was submitted to the Executive Board for recommendation to Council. A copy of the draft Safer Leeds Strategy 2013-2014 was therefore attached for Members' consideration.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Councillor Gruen, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Councillor Coulson, Lead Member for Community Safety
- Superintendent Keith Gilert, Chief Officer, Community Safety
- Liz Jarmin, Head of Community Safety Partnerships (Safer Leeds)
- Mark Burns-Williamson, West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Sarah Drafz, Research Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 10th June, 2013

The Chair welcomed Mr Mark Burns-Williamson, West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, to his first meeting of the Scrutiny Board. It was highlighted that local crime and disorder strategies are now expected to have regard to the objectives set out in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan. A copy of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013 – 2018 was therefore provided to Board Members for information. Mr Burns-Williamson acknowledged that Safer Leeds has been a very effective partnership and reiterated the importance of integrated joint working to identify innovative ways of delivering efficient and cost effective services, particularly as government funding for community safety continues to reduce.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following issues were discussed:

- Joint Strategic Assessment – that this analysis of information and intelligence had helped to inform the draft Strategy and the supporting delivery plans.
- Local priorities for 2013/14 – that there would be a continued focus on reducing domestic burglary, reducing re-offending and tackling anti-social behaviour in communities. Members were particularly pleased to note the additional priority areas relating to strengthening the partnership approach to support a reduction in Domestic Abuse and improving our understanding and approach to deal with Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Measuring performance - Members felt that the draft Strategy needed to include quantitative measures to complement the narrative (similar to the West Yorkshire Plan) and that the supporting strategies cited in the action plan should be made easily accessible for the public to seek further detail if needed. It was noted that the on-line version of the Strategy would include links to these supporting strategies.
- Tackling and treating drug and alcohol addiction – the Commissioner welcomed the existing positive partnership working aimed at rehabilitating offenders who misuse drugs and alcohol. In acknowledging different patterns of drug use, with particular reference to problems from cannabis use and so-called 'legal highs', the Commissioner also highlighted a need for legislative changes to be made to help tackle this problem more effectively.
- The positive work of the Safer Schools Partnerships.
- Development of more restorative interventions – that a key action for 2013-14 is the development of a Leeds wide Restorative Practice/Restorative Justice Strategy.
- Statutory supervision proposals for short-sentence prisoners – Members raised concern over proposals to nationally commission private companies to provide supervision plans for prisoners with sentences less than 12 months. The Commissioner highlighted that he and other Police and Crime Commissioners had already expressed concern over the proposals to the Home Secretary and Ministry of Justice.
- Reference was made to appendix C within the WY Police and Crime Plan and the need to complete the current performance column linked to the indicators about making children safer in our communities. The

Commissioner explained that the data was not yet available but would chase this up immediately.

- Tackling business crime and exploring the potential for increased partnership working with Trading Standards.
- Clarification of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables.
- In acknowledging the Commissioner's intention to commission services from 2014/15, Members emphasised the importance of working closely with local authorities, Community Safety Partnerships and other partners as soon as possible in order to promote effective financial planning and continuity of services.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and concluded that whilst the Scrutiny Board is supportive of the priorities set out within the draft Safer Leeds Strategy for 2013-14, it advises that more quantitative measures are included within the Strategy to complement the narrative and aid performance monitoring. In addition, the supporting strategies cited in the action plan should also be made easily accessible for the public to seek further detail if needed and that this should be explained within the main body of the Strategy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the observations made by the Scrutiny Board on the draft Safer Leeds Strategy 2013-14 be reflected within the report to Executive Board in June 2013.

91 Improving recycling through effective communication and education - draft scrutiny report

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's draft report following its recent review aimed at improving recycling through effective communication and education.

Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, was in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Board's draft report on improving recycling through effective communication and education be agreed.

92 Strengthening the Council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils - draft scrutiny report

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented the Board's draft report following its recent review aimed at strengthening the Council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils.

In accordance with the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, Members considered the formal advice received from the Director of City Development in consultation with the relevant Executive Board Member.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Board’s draft report on strengthening the Council’s relationship with local Parish and Town Councils be agreed.

93 Community First Programme

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development referred to the request from Councillor S Golton for Scrutiny to review how Community First funding (Neighbourhood Match funding element) was being administered in Leeds. This work was undertaken in January 2013 and a report setting out the Scrutiny Board’s observations in relation to the Community First Programme was agreed in March 2013 and forwarded to the Office for Civil Society. A further copy of the Board’s report was attached for information.

Also attached for Members information was a letter from the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP, to the Chair of the Scrutiny Board in response to the Board’s report. In acknowledging this response, Members felt that the Scrutiny Board should continue to monitor progress with the Community First Programme in Leeds.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the response of the Minister for Civil Society to the Scrutiny Board’s report on the Community First Programme be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Board continues to monitor progress with the Community First Programme in Leeds.

94 Work Schedule

As this was the final meeting of the 2012/13 municipal year, the report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Board this year. Recent Executive Board minutes were also appended to the report for the Board to note.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

95 Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair reflected on the volume and quality of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board this year and thanked everyone who contributed to the work of the Board, including the Members of the Board for their commitment and contribution over the 2012/13 municipal year.