

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 13TH JUNE, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

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

83 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

84 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

85 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda.

86 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

87 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Gruen and J Akhtar. Councillors Illingworth and R Grahame attended the meeting as their substitutes.

88 Minutes - 13 March 2019

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the meeting held 13th March 2019, be agreed as a correct record.

89 Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented the terms of reference for the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board for Members' information.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):
a) Noted the contents of the report and Terms of Reference.

90 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support informed the Board of its role as the Councils Crime and Disorder Committee and included the Protocol between Scrutiny and the Community Safety Partnership in Leeds.

The report included the 'Principles for Engagement' document developed by the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel in liaison with the five local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a. Noted the attached joint protocol between Scrutiny and the local Community Safety Partnership
- b. Noted the Principles for Engagement document in relation to the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel and the Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees.

91 Co-opted Members

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support sought the Board's formal consideration for the appointment of co-opted members.

The Board was informed that they could appoint the following:

- Up to five non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that does not go beyond the next Annual Meeting of Council ; and or/,
- Up to two non-voting co-opted members for a term of office that relates to the duration of a particular and specific scrutiny inquiry.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a) Agreed to consider the appointment of co-opted members on an ad-hoc basis for any inquiries where it was deemed appropriate.

92 Sources of Work for the Scrutiny Board

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support provided information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

The following documents were appended to the report:

- Vision for Scrutiny at Leeds
- Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy 2018 – 2023
- 2019/20 Budget Report

The following were in attendance for this item and were invited to share their views around potential areas of work for the Scrutiny Board this year:

- Neil Evans Director of Resources and Housing
- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor J Lewis, Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability

- Councillor Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles
- Councillor Neil Walshaw, Chair of Climate Emergency Advisory Board
- Paul Money, Safer Leeds
- Adam Crampton, Head of Mechanical & Electrical
- Nahim Ruhi-Khan, Head of Responsive Repairs, Voids and Property Management
- Helen Freeman, Chief Officer, Environmental Action
- Sean Flesher, Chief Officer Parks & Countryside
- Jill Wildman, Chief Officer Housing Management
- Martin Dean, Area Leader

Those in attendance provided a summary to the Board of priority areas for the Council over the forthcoming municipal year.

In summary the following key areas were identified, in addition to those detailed in the report, for the Boards consideration:

- Climate Change Emergency, with regard to the remit of the Board and particularly with regard the energy efficiency of the Council House stock.
- Improving standard and quality of private rented sector housing, including energy efficiency
- Review of the delivery of the Council House Growth Programme
- Continuing the review of the roll out of Community Hubs across the city
- Clean Air Zone. Members were made aware there will be one further report going to Executive Board on this matter.
- Reducing the impact of poverty in the city including financial inclusion and universal credit
- An update on the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team Review and wider issues of ASB including graffiti and utilising CCTV provision.
- Review of the parks and greenspace strategy
- Parking services, current strategic approach, including enforcement and traffic regulation orders.

In addition to identifying matters for scrutiny, Members requested to review the climate change emergency work programme and agree how the different Boards will take this forward as part of their remit.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a) Noted the report and discussions be used to help inform the Board's work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.

93 Performance Report

The joint report of the Directors of Resources & Housing and Communities & Environment provided the Scrutiny Board with a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the Council and city and other performance areas relevant to the work of the Board.

The following were in attendance for this item to response to questions from the Scrutiny Board:

- Neil Evans Director of Resources and Housing
- Councillor Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles
- Paul Money, Safer Leeds
- Adam Crampton, Head of Mechanical & Electrical
- Nahim Ruhi-Khan, Head of Responsive Repairs, Voids and Property Management
- Helen Freeman, Chief Officer, Environmental Action
- Sean Flesher, Chief Officer Parks & Countryside
- Jill Wildman Chief Officer Housing Management
- Martin Dean - Area Leader

The following was discussed:

- Temporary accommodation. A Member requested the number of units in each ward be provided, and this was agreed to be provided before the next Scrutiny Board meeting.
- Responsive repairs. The quality of work and resources was briefly discussed. The Board agreed that a more detailed review be conducted during this municipal year.
- Contact centre. To receive an update in terms of the action plan for telephone performance and figures.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a) Noted the most recent performance information contained within the report and appendices 1 -3 and the issues which have been highlighted.

94 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presented the draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year. This included the traditional items of Scrutiny work which involves performance monitoring, recommendation tracking and Budget and Policy Framework Plans.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a) Noted and approved the work items already identified within the work schedule

- b) Noted that the Principal Scrutiny Advisor would work with the Chair to determine which areas of work identified as a priority would be incorporated into the Board's work schedule for the forthcoming year.
- c) Noted that the Chair and the Principal Scrutiny Advisor would consult with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding resources in line with the agreed Vision for Scrutiny and report back to the next meeting with a more detailed work programme.

95 Credit Union

The Director of Communities and Environment submitted a report on the long term strategic partnership with Leeds Credit Union (LCU), and provided the Scrutiny Board with information relating to the Executive Board's request for scrutiny.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Dave Roberts, Financial Inclusion Manager
- Chris Smyth, Chief Executive, Leeds Credit Union
- Paul Higgins, Head of Finance
- Janet Burr, Deputy CEO of Leeds Credit Union

The Financial Inclusion Manager presented the report, and highlighted the main issues identified by Executive Board and provided a summary of the background, future directions and initiatives of Leeds Credit Union.

Key issues identified with the Board:

- Clarity was sought on the acceptance criteria for those with poorer credit histories. In response, Members heard there was a 4% target for bad debts, and although this had the potential to become costly for the Credit Union, risks are taken to help people in need.
- In response to a question in relation to the long term sustainability of the Credit Union, and ideas on how to improve, the Board were advised that:
 - I. The knowledge of customer service employees specifically in one stop centres could be improved, to enable customers to find out about the service.
 - II. Savings and lending schemes could be employed and introduced to further organisations to help with financial inclusion.
- Members noted the potential for the Council, organisations and individuals to invest in the Credit Union through a deferred share scheme and whilst this remains as an option, it was considered to be complex.

The Board passed on their gratitude to the team for their hard work, and the Chair acknowledged that Dave Roberts is soon to retire and thanked him for his hard work and commitment over many years to help the citizens of Leeds.

RESOLVED – The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities):

- a) Noted the significant progress made and projects developed through the partnership work between the Council and Leeds Credit Union

96 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 11th July 2019 at 10.30 am (with a pre-meeting for all Board members at 10.00 am)