

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 16TH MAY, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor G Driver in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bale, B Cleasby,
P Grahame, B Lancaster, T Leadley and
R Pryke

99 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

100 Minutes - 2nd April 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

101 Minutes - Executive Board, 4th April 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 4th April 2007 be received and noted.

102 Scrutiny Inquiry - Narrowing the Gap - Draft Final Inquiry Report

Further to Minute No 94, 2nd April 2007, the Committee considered the draft final report of its Inquiry into 'Narrowing the Gap', together with comments and observations thereon from the Leeds Initiative, Councillor Mark Harris, Alternate Leader of the Council and Executive Member (Central and Corporate) and Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods.

Councillor Harris, Neil Evans, Steve Williamson, Chair of the Narrowing the Gap Executive, and Kathy Kudelnitsky, Director, and Andrea Tara Chand of the Leeds Initiative, attended the meeting, expanded on their written observations and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- The inherent tensions and potential conflicts posed by the 'Narrowing the Gap' and 'Going Up A League' initiatives, and the need to give priority to the former in the view of the Committee;
- The deletion of reference to the proposed new casino and arena in Leeds from the 'Introduction and Scope' section of the report in view of the unproven effect either or both would have in terms of the Narrowing the Gap agenda;
- In the same section, the replacement of the phrase 'we do not want to look back at a string of failed schemes' with the more proactive 'We need to be more rigorous when assessing schemes';

- Leeds Initiative was in the process of reviewing its structures, including how the District Partnerships could evolve to include a greater degree of political input and accountability. The review was aimed at making greater use of local structures to address issues in a sustainable manner at local level, taking into account OSC's views regarding the dangers of 'solutions' being imposed on local communities. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Intensive Neighbourhood Management initiatives would inform this review. Part of the process had to be looking at how data was analysed and used. Another part concerned how and what was monitored. Partnership working in Leeds, although not yet perfect, had been recognised nationally as at the forefront of developments in this area, and the LAA review of 2008 and the Government White Paper on greater local scrutiny of services would help to focus partners on joint working and funding arrangements;
- Whilst acknowledging the importance of working with communities at local level, it was also recognised that local people needed to be encouraged to take advantage of City-wide as well as local resources and employment opportunities and issues such as improved transport links were crucial in this regard.

The Chair concluded by thanking everyone who had contributed to the Committee's Inquiry. As part of Scrutiny's recommendation tracking system, progress on the recommendations would be considered by OSC in September.

RESOLVED – That subject to the above minor amendments, the Committee's final report of its 'Narrowing the Gap' Inquiry be approved and circulated appropriately by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.

(NB: Councillor Bale joined the meeting at 9.20 am and Councillor Pryke joined the meeting at 9.37 am during the consideration of this item)

103 Draft Annual Report to Council

Further to Minute No 98, 2nd April 2007, the Committee approved the Scrutiny draft Annual Report 2006/07 for submission to Council, subject to two minor amendments.

RESOLVED – That subject to two minor amendments, the Scrutiny Annual Report 2006/07 be approved for submission to Council.

104 Scrutiny Board Arrangements 2007/08

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development reported that at its meeting earlier that morning, the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee had approved proposed arrangements for the organisation of Scrutiny Boards in the 2007/08 municipal year, which would be submitted for approval at the Annual Council Meeting on 24th May. The recommended arrangements, which linked Boards to Director portfolios, were as follows:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee -	Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy Planning and Improvement), Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance), plus co-ordinating and advisory role
Scrutiny Board (Resources) -	Director of Resources
Scrutiny Board (City Development) –	Director of City Development
Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure) –	Director of City Development
Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) -	Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services) –	Director of Children’s Services
Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care) –	Director of Adult Social Services

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

105 Chair's Closing Remarks

Councillor Driver stated that he would not be chairing meetings of OSC in 2007/08 and he thanked Members and officers for all their contributions and hard work during the last municipal year.