

Scrutiny at Leeds City Council

Annual Report 2013/14



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Welcome

I have written before about the need for robust scrutiny and strong accountability. This Administration sees Scrutiny as a key performance tool in ensuring we meet our best city ambitions. I am pleased therefore to present the 2013-14 Scrutiny Annual Report.

In the following pages you will read about some of the key work undertaken by Scrutiny to drive our ambitions as well as holding decision makers to account.

I am particularly pleased to acknowledge a continued increase in the proportion of work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards that relate to pre-decision Scrutiny and the development of new policy. This is testament to the trust placed upon Scrutiny Boards by the Executive to help inform what are often high profile and sensitive decisions to be made. Particular examples this year have included proposals to introduce a Night Time Levy; charges for Residents' Parking Permit Schemes; the role and allocation of Police Community Support Officers; and the implementation of a School Transport policy.

Scrutiny Boards have also continued to demonstrate their key strength in bringing together a wide range of sectors and service users to identify solutions in addressing complex and cross cutting issues. This has been particularly demonstrated during recent inquiries into the Cluster Partnerships and in tackling domestic violence and abuse.

I am also pleased that following the integration of housing management we have successfully launched a single Tenant Scrutiny Board, chaired and run by tenants and leaseholders.

On the national scene, Leeds Scrutiny continues to shine with Children and Families Scrutiny Board's report on private fostering being showcased at the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference and Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board's work on welfare reform used as a case study in the Municipal Journal.

As always we must ensure we get maximum value from the considerable effort scrutiny members give to their respective Scrutiny Boards. We can do this best by driving service improvements and focusing on those areas which make us a more efficient and enterprising Council.

Finally, in recognition of the valuable contribution made by Scrutiny during 2013/14, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all members and officers involved in the Scrutiny process.



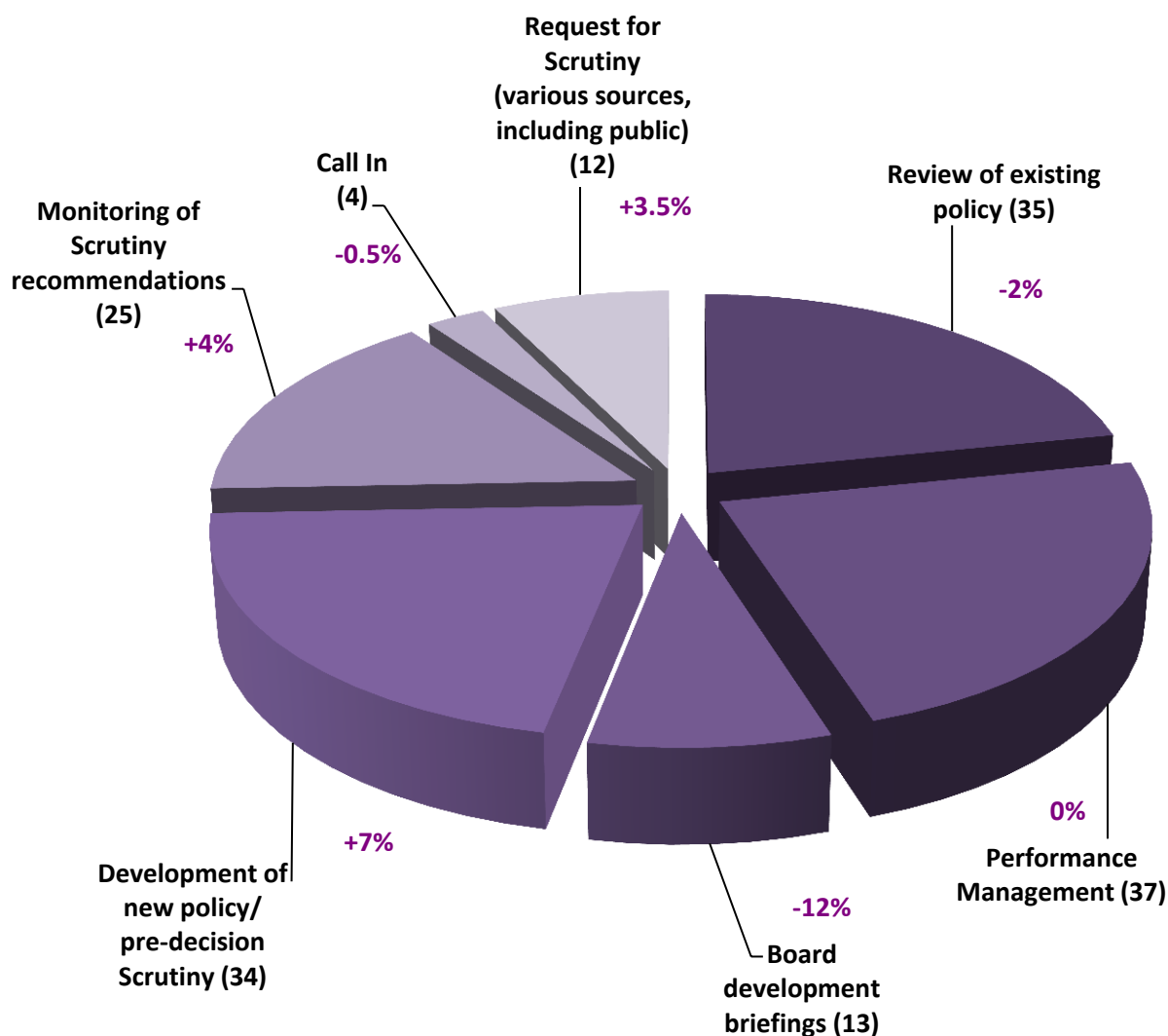
Councillor Peter Gruen
Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel

**Find out more at www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny and follow Scrutiny on
Twitter: @scrutinyleeds**

Summary of work 2013/14

The chart below represents the type and proportion of work that the Scrutiny Boards have done this year. The chart also highlights the annual fluctuation of the proportions of work undertaken.

Type and total number of scrutiny work items in 2013/14



Key Observations

- Linked to a key area of action this year, Scrutiny Boards have continued to increase the proportion of Scrutiny work undertaken in relation to the development of new policy and pre-decision scrutiny.
- In order to measure and demonstrate the impact and added value of Scrutiny, there has been increased emphasis in tracking the implementation of recommendations made by Scrutiny Boards.
- The number of requests for Scrutiny has continued to rise.

Highlights and Achievements

A summary of the significant pieces of work undertaken by scrutiny over the last 12 months is presented below, including relevant links to published reports by Scrutiny. This snapshot identifies where Scrutiny has specifically added value linked to existing Best Council Objectives.

Best Council Objective	Areas of Scrutiny	Added Value/Impact
<p>Building a child-friendly city</p>	<p>Supporting Children to Achieve in Maths and English (Children and Families Scrutiny Board) Report published September 2013 (click here for report)</p>	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specified teaching methodology and initiatives aimed at improving teaching standards across the city. • Ensured that lessons learned from successful schools in challenging circumstances are identified to inform methodologies employed to close the attainment gap. • Provided a focus on policies and practices that could hinder the progress of children and young people in their education.
	<p>Cluster Partnerships (Children and Families Scrutiny Board) Report to be published during 2014/15</p>	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged a wide range of practitioners to instil greater understanding of the structures, purpose and governance of Cluster Partnerships. • Improved services through sharing of good practice. • Helped to secure a sustainable future for Cluster Partnerships.
	<p>School Transport (Children and Families Scrutiny Board) Report to be published during 2014/15</p>	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured the delivery and implementation of a sustainable school transport policy which is fair and legally compliant. • Provided greater focus on alternative beneficial methods of travel and the mitigation of negative impacts.
	<p>NEET Inquiry Comprehensive Review (Children and Families Scrutiny Board) Summary of progress published October 2013 (click here for summary)</p>	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving forward the implementation of a city wide strategic model to reduce NEET and create pathways to education, employment or training for those at risk of becoming NEET. • Ensured there is progress in the provision of support for children and young people to employment. • Provided a focus on the levels and quality of information advice and guidance provision citywide.
<p>Dealing effectively with the city's waste</p>	<p>Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) of Recyclable and Residual Waste (Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board) Summary of findings published October 2014 (click here for summary)</p>	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in conjunction with the Environment and Housing directorate to evaluate the Phase One roll out of AWC and identified lessons learned which informed preparations for Phase Two. • Identified recommendations that were informed through direct engagement with frontline staff and Union representatives. • Identified wider performance monitoring needs to ensure the successful roll out and management of AWC across the city.

Best Council Objective

Delivery of the Better Lives programme

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Better Lives Programme

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Maintained an overview of this programme and ensured that all elected members were kept actively updated and assured of its delivery.
- Arising from this programme, the Scrutiny Board responded positively to a request to consider the forthcoming Review of Homecare Services.

Future of Residential Care for Older People

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Provided robust challenge, through the Scrutiny Call-In process, around the decision-making process linked to the future of residential care for older people.

Commissioning and Delivery of Health Services and the Associated Policy

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Raised the profile of the national allocation of NHS funding. This contributed to a rethink within the NHS about how it allocated funding that better reflected the demands caused by deprivation and the level of unmet need in large cities, such as Leeds.
- Considered the development of the 5-year Strategy for Specialised Services and proactively responded to proposed changes in specific service areas.
- Ensured the outcomes arising from inspections of local NHS Trusts by the Care Quality Commission were acted upon.
- Ensured progress is maintained for local NHS Trusts to achieve Foundation Trust Status.

Learning Disability Community Support Service

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Responded to the consultation around the proposed change in service model and requested further pre-decision prior to any Executive Board decision.

Leeds Health and Social Care Transformation

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Maintained an overview of the overall transformation programme and provided challenge linked to the current review of Urgent Care to ensure people access the most appropriate care across the city.

Better Care Fund

(Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board)



- Informed proposals around the 'Better Care Fund' aimed at improving community support and managing people's health and social needs to improve lives and reduce the level of hospitals admissions.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Report of the IRP on children's congenital cardiac services was published April 2013 ([click here for IRP report](#))



- Received national recognition by the Secretary of State for Health and the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) for its work on highlighting flaws in a national review of children's congenital cardiac services which otherwise would have seen services for Yorkshire and the Humber transferred elsewhere. Now monitoring progress of the new, larger review commissioned by the Secretary of State.
- Proactively monitored progress following the temporary closure and subsequent recommencement of children's cardiac services in Leeds in March/April 2013.

Best Council Objective

Promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Night Time Levy

(Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board)
Inquiry report published November 2013 ([click here for report](#))



- Provided a strong case to the Executive Board that led to the abandonment of proposals to introduce a night time levy.
- Recommended support for a city centre Business Improvement District, which was consequently adopted.

Residents Parking Permit Schemes

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)
Scrutiny comments reflected in appendix 3 of the report to Executive Board in November 2013 ([click here for report](#))



- Responded proactively to a public request for Scrutiny to consider proposals to introduce charges for residents' parking permit schemes.
- Presented a strong case for the Council not to introduce charges at this time and this was accepted by the Executive Board.

Strategic Economic Plan

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board and Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)
Scrutiny comments reported to Executive Board in March 2014 ([click here for report](#))



- Informed Leeds City Council's input to the regional submission, through pre-decision scrutiny at a joint meeting of the two relevant Scrutiny Boards.
- Identified a need to demonstrate a greater sense of ambition and maximise the allocation of resources from government to Leeds City Region, which was acted upon.
- Identified the need to strengthen the focus on housing growth and its supporting infrastructure within the Plan, which was acted upon.
- Recommended the inclusion of a SWOT analysis for Leeds in the council's submission, which was acted upon.

Apprenticeships

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)
Report to be published during 2014/15



- Identified ways to improve awareness of the range and variety of apprenticeships available and their benefits.
- Worked in conjunction with City Development, Children's Services and other partners in identifying ways of overcoming barriers to accessing apprenticeships, in particular in relation to qualification requirements.
- Engaged directly with young people to understand their views on apprenticeships and this informed the Scrutiny Board's conclusions.
- Informed how the council can most effectively develop its own role in relation to supporting and promoting apprenticeships.

Using the council's planning and procurement powers to promote employment and skills opportunities

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)
Achievements summarised in report to Scrutiny Board in March 2014 ([click here for report](#))



- Tracked progress in implementing recommendations from Scrutiny which had informed creative use of the council's planning and procurement powers and is now delivering greater numbers of employment and skills opportunities.

Cultural organisations' engagement with communities

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)
Report to be published during 2014/15



- Worked in conjunction with national and local cultural organisations to help increase community engagement as both audience and participants in cultural activities.
- Informed how grant funding can be targeted to increase community engagement.

Best Council Objective

Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council

Areas of Scrutiny

Leeds City Council's Decision Making Process and Due Regard to Equality

(Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board)

Inquiry report published April 2014 ([click here for report](#))



- Responded proactively to a request by the Leader of Council to undertake an assessment of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process.
- Enabled the voice and concerns of the public to be heard as part of this assessment which informed the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board.

The Role, Number and Allocation of Police Community Support Officers

(Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board)

Inquiry report published February 2014 ([click here for report](#))



- Worked in conjunction with the relevant Director, Executive Member and the Leeds Divisional Commander to undertake an option appraisal relating to the future role and allocation of Council funded PCSOs for the consideration of the Executive Board.
- Presented a case to the Executive Board in relation to two potential allocation options that consequently led to the Executive Board requesting further consultation prior to making a final decision.
- Gained Executive Board support around the principle of enhancing the role of PCSOs to maximise environmental enforcement resources and to develop a more integrated partnership approach between police and other partners within neighbourhoods.

Agency Staff and Overtime

(Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board)



- Recommended introducing a Challenge Panel linked to the drive to reduce agency staff.
- Re-shaped the People Plan Score Card and ensured compliance with objectives is scrutinised.

Brownfield Land

(Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)

Ongoing work



- Worked in conjunction with City Development in encouraging the development of brownfield sites for new house building.
- Ensured that all councillors were provided with up to date information about council owned brownfield land housing sites in their wards.
- Instituted regular monitoring of progress with the development of council owned brownfield land housing sites to provide challenge where required.

Affordable Housing

(Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)

Ongoing work



- Challenged City Development to progress recommendations from a previous inquiry in relation to developing models to encourage institutional investment.
- Visited housing developments and reviewed siting and design of affordable housing with developers and housing associations.

West Park Centre

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)

Report to be published in 2014/15



- Reviewed the lessons to be learned from the closure of the Centre to inform future policy and practice.

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse

(Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board)
Inquiry report published June 2014 ([click here for report](#))



- Identified service improvement needs by maximising the knowledge and expertise of a wide range of sectors and engaging directly with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Informed the development of a citywide Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan.
- Informed how the Council responds to domestic violence as a major employer, including the development of a revised Domestic Violence Policy and Guidance.
- Identified a need to develop a domestic violence charter mark for Cluster Partnerships.

High Cost Lending

(Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board)
Summary of findings published October 2013 ([click here for summary](#))



- Informed the development of a citywide High Cost Lending marketing campaign.
- Identified a series of required actions that have been incorporated into a corporate action plan aimed at tackling high cost lending.
- Received national recognition in an article within the Municipal Journal.

Tackling Illegal Money Lending

(Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board)
Summary of findings published February 2014 ([click here for summary](#))



- Strengthened the Council's role in raising greater awareness of existing support services through the development of an IML marketing communication plan in conjunction with the regional Illegal Money Lending (IML) Team.
- Assisted the IML Team to promote its existing education package into local schools and in raising greater awareness in secondary schools of the services of the Credit Union.
- Driving forward further action to ensure that Elected Members and frontline staff, particularly within the health and social care sector, have the knowledge and capacity to detect individuals in financial crisis and signpost them to appropriate advice and support.

Welfare Reform

(Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board)
Scrutiny tracking report published July 2013 ([click here for report](#))
Article by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. August 2013. ([click here for article](#))



- Tracked progress against earlier Scrutiny recommendations which resulted in further action being taken to deliver a consistent approach in providing advice and information to people.
- Recommended the creation of a contingency fund for the Contact Centre to deal with spikes in activity, which has been put in place.
- Promoted the idea of 'room reclassification'.
- Received national recognition from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Municipal Journal.

Leeds Let's Get Active Scheme

(Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board)
Comments reported to Executive Board July 2013 ([click here for comments](#))



- Promoted the role of local councillors, Area Committees (now Community Committees) and local community groups in ensuring that those who can most benefit from the scheme are aware of it.
- Pressed for an ambitious approach to the community offer aspect of the programme.
- Ensured that, through joint working with the NHS, the facilities at Quarry House are maximised in line with the Lets Get Active Scheme.
- Ongoing monitoring by Scrutiny of the development of the scheme and its sustainability, with a focus on participation rates from deprived areas of the city.

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty

Areas of Scrutiny

Provision of cookers for housing tenants in need

(Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)
Ongoing work



- Driving forward action to provide cookers to housing tenants in need, in order to promote healthy eating.
- Strengthening joint working with the furniture re-use organisations to increase the supply of white goods they can obtain and distribute to meet rising demand.

Private Rented Sector Housing

(Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)



- Recommended that insurers be encouraged to require landlords to be part of a local accreditation scheme as a condition of insurance, as a way of driving up standards in the private rented housing sector. This proposal was also included in the Council's response to the Department for Communities and Local Government on their recent consultation document.

Annual Tenancy Visits

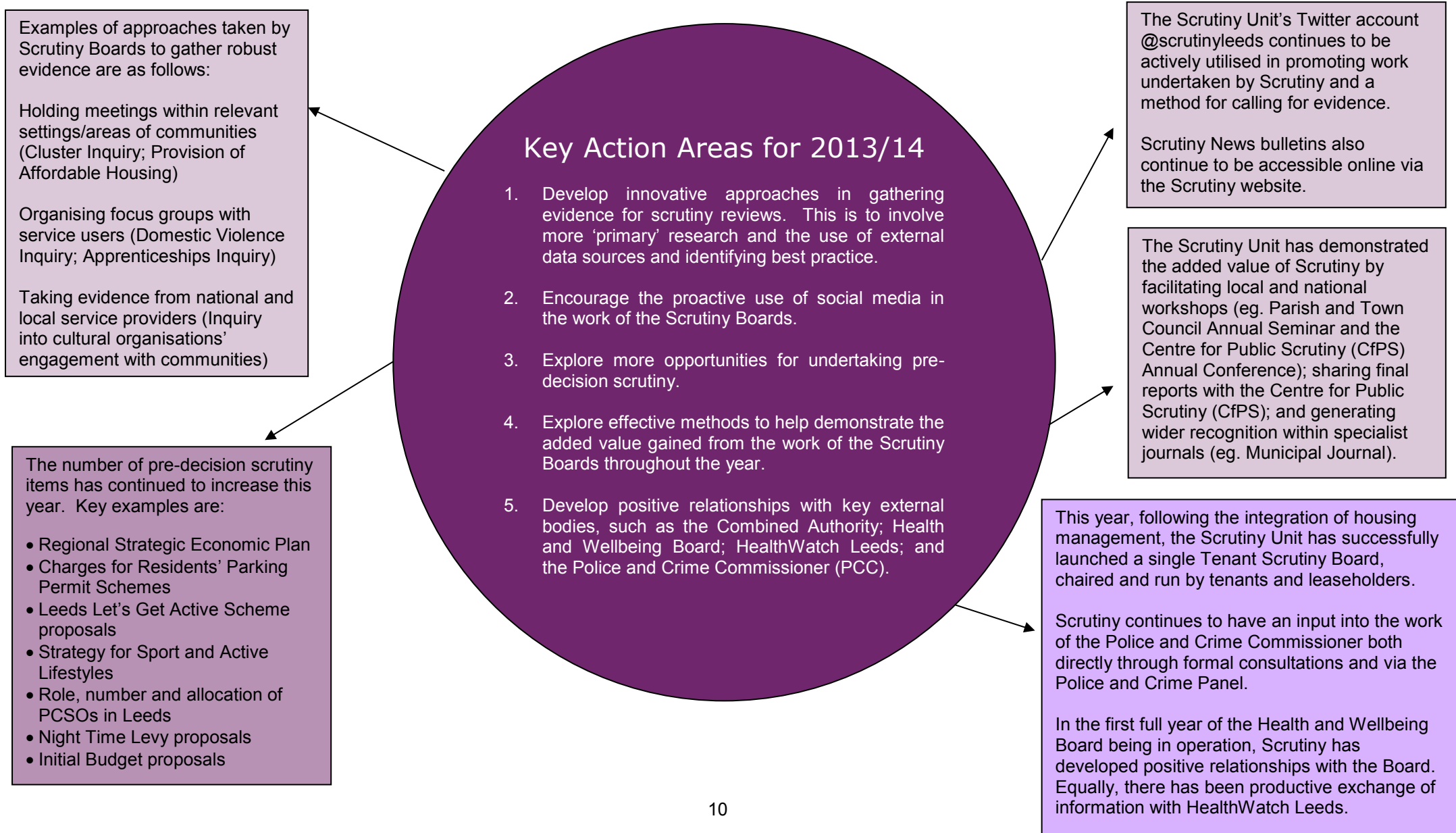
(Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board)



- Working with the Environment and Housing Directorate to develop the use of the annual tenancy visit as an opportunity to identify and respond to a range of issues where tenants may be vulnerable or benefit from additional support.

Reflecting on the Year

Last year we identified a number of key action areas to help develop the scrutiny function. Progress made in delivering these key actions is summarised below.



Planning for the future

As always a key focus remains on ensuring that scrutiny is a worthwhile process for elected Members and adds value to the running of the Council.

As has been our practice in previous annual reports, we have published an action plan for the coming year identifying our key development areas.

The actions shown below are not an exhaustive list and a number of actions from previous years will continue to be progressed.

Our goals this year include:

Key Action Areas 2014/15

