

Scrutiny at Leeds City Council

Annual Report 2016/17



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Introduction

Scrutiny within Leeds continues to provide 'critical friend' challenge to decision makers, through holding them to account for decisions made and engaging in policy review and policy development. Scrutiny is well placed to provide robust, evidence-based challenge to service delivery and performance.

The Council's six Scrutiny Boards have continued to target the resources available to them on priority areas aimed at driving forward the Council's ambitions and making a real difference to the people of Leeds.

The Council has continued to take a lead role to support and deliver regional joint health scrutiny arrangements – both on a whole Yorkshire and Humber basis and across West Yorkshire. Identifying cross-boundary issues and coordinating the scrutiny response to developments across the NHS are key activities; with the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) being a key focus during 2016/17, and due to continue into 2017/18.

This annual report highlights the key areas of work undertaken by scrutiny over the last year and in particular, demonstrates where scrutiny has added real value to the Council's 2016-17 Best Council Plan Objectives – these objectives were refreshed mid-year and will provide the basis for reporting in 2017-18.

In March 2017, the Council also welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a national inquiry into overview and scrutiny in local government. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee invited views on whether overview and scrutiny arrangements in England are working effectively and whether local communities are able to contribute to and monitor the work of their councils.

In its response, the Council was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the scrutiny function within Leeds and the particular importance placed upon the outward looking nature of local authority scrutiny, including assessing the role of external partners in delivering services.

Within the response a plea was made to strengthen existing scrutiny powers so that external organisations also have a mandatory obligation to engage in the scrutiny process rather than local authorities having to simply rely on good will. We particularly sought additional powers for scrutiny of bodies funded directly from the public purse and for those organisations funded to provide public services – including a requirement on Civil Servants from Central Government to attend and give account to local scrutiny board inquiries.

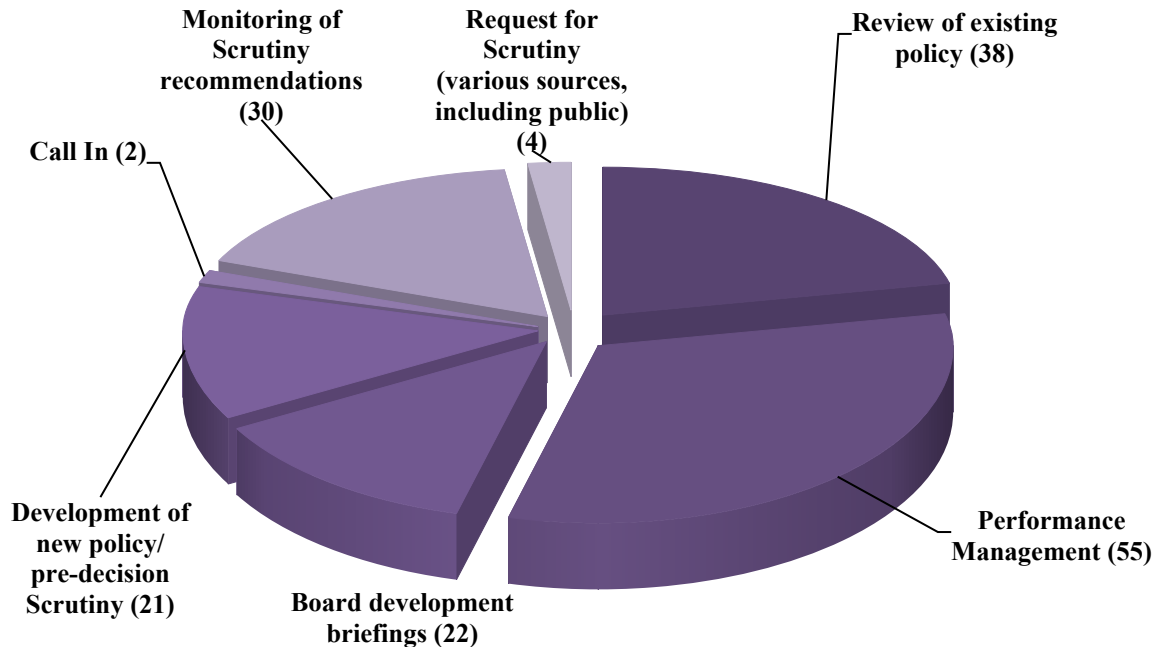
Once available, the findings and any consequential actions arising from the CLG inquiry will be used to inform the on-going development of the scrutiny function in Leeds.

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

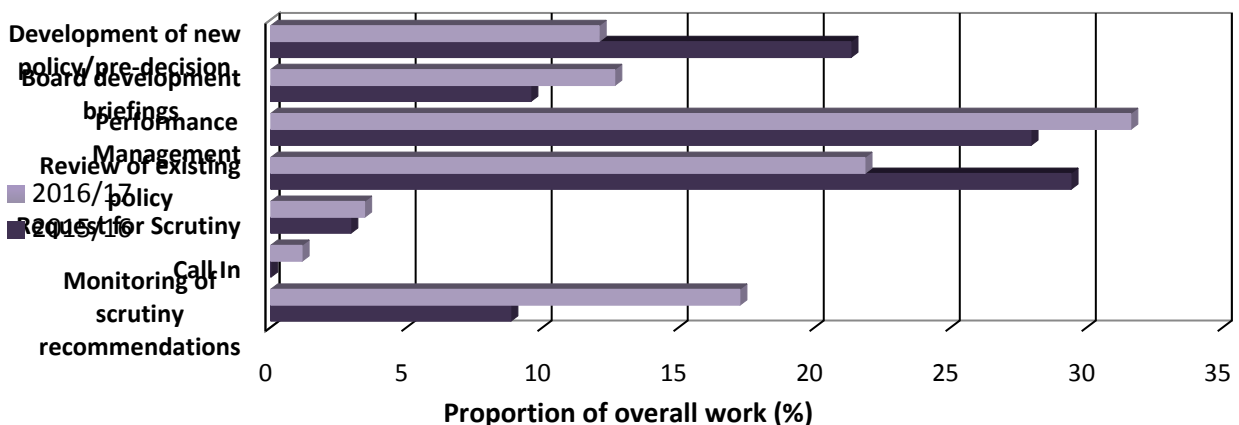
Summary of work 2016/17

This section highlights the type and proportion of work that the Scrutiny Boards have undertaken during the 2016/17 municipal year, with a comparative analysis with last year¹.

Type and total number of scrutiny work items in 2016/17



Scrutiny work items during 2015/16 and 2016/17








Key Observations

- Efforts to monitor the implementation and outcomes arising from earlier scrutiny inquiry recommendations have increased significantly this year.
- Whilst there has been more focus around performance management this year, the level of pre-decision scrutiny work has declined overall.
- Two Call In meetings were held this year.

¹ The scrutiny work analysis reflected in this report does not include Tenant Scrutiny Board as the responsibility for this function no longer falls within Democratic Services.

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 the 2016 -17 Best Council Objectives.

Best Council Objective	Areas of Scrutiny	Added Value/Impact
Building a child-friendly city	Learning for Leeds – sufficiency of school places and early years provision (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified that statutory requirements are being met and that there is sufficient school places across the City to meet demand in 2017/18 and plans in place to meet demand in future years.
	SEND Young People- what is it like growing up in Leeds? (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board) (click here for scrutiny report)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused on the voice of the Child and their families and the extent to which Children, Young People and their families feel informed and involved in decisions affecting their lives. Identified pathways for learning and achievement from year 9 onwards. Education settings and the opportunities for Children and Young people to obtain skills for life and qualifications. Evaluated the support available in preparing young people for adulthood including transition support. Reinforced the findings of Ofsted following inspection.
	Reducing the Number of Young People who are NEET (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus on the implementation of a city wide strategic approach to reduce NEET and create pathways to education, employment or training for those at risk of becoming NEET including SEND young people. Provided challenge on the level and quality of information advice and guidance provision citywide.
	Best City for Learning –Annual Standards Report (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided the necessary challenge on the attainment data in the report and a focus on the improvement of education provision.
	Youth Activity Funding (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted the need for further examination and dissemination of best practice across all community committee areas, with focus on the engagement of children and young people in the decision making processes.

Best Council Objective

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Building a child-friendly city

(continued)

Children’s Centres – Scrutiny Inquiry
(Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)



- Focused on how Children’s Centres impact on the lives of children, particularly in their early years, improve the lives of their associated families and deliver wider and economic and social benefits.
- Evaluated the roles and responsibilities of the Council and Partners in the provision and resourcing of Children’s Centres and the effectiveness of those partnerships.
- Highlighted the need to raise aspirations for the development of Children’s Centres to secure a sustainable future.

SEMH and Behaviour Management
(Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)



- Provided focus on the need for different approaches when tackling difficult and challenging behaviours and the importance of engagement with children and families, particularly in terms of developing learning and building positive relationships.
- Provided challenge regarding wellbeing support for teachers and school exclusions.

Home Education
(Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)



- Promoted understanding regarding the legislative and safeguarding requirements for children who are home educated.
- Areas of safeguarding concern were subsequently raised with the Leeds Safeguarding Children’s Board, the Secretary of State for Education and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System.

Corporate Parenting
(Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)



- Established a line of accountability and support by enabling the Corporate Parenting Board to update Scrutiny on plans and progress.
- Highlighted the need to raise awareness of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and ensure that relevant individuals know their responsibilities as a corporate parent.

Review of Ofsted inspection - Areas for Improvement
(Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)



- Ensured that adequate and timely progress was being made in respect of all the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted.

Best Council Objective

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Delivery of the Better Lives programme

Service Quality across Leeds' health and social care economy

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Continued oversight of the 'quality landscape' across health and social care services and providers in Leeds.
- Formal response and recommendations to proposed service changes.
- Retention of 'The Green' as a community asset with a change in use.
- Monitored progress of implementation of Better Lives Strategy – Phase 3.

Focus on specific service areas

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Ensuring a focus on specific service areas, including Renal Patient Transport, Children's Epilepsy Surgery Services, Provision of Blood Donor Centres and Autism.

Men's Health

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Helping to raise the profile of Men's Health issues, particularly focusing on the level of suicides and the provision of NHS Healthchecks.

Sustainability & Transformation Plans

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Oversight of the development of plans across the west Yorkshire and Harrogate footprint.
- Highlighting concerns around stakeholder engagement and involvement.
- Leading role in supporting West Yorkshire health overview and scrutiny arrangements.
- Oversight of the evolving and developing 'Leeds Health and Care Plan'.

Community Dental Services

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Identified NHS England plans to reduce the number of locations where Community Dental Services are provided.
- Highlighted concerns around the level of formal patient and other stakeholder involvement and consultation.
- Secured an extension of existing arrangements in order to allow robust patient and stakeholder involvement, engagement and consultation.

NHS service provision

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Regular oversight of the main NHS providers in Leeds – i.e. Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

Response to proposed service changes

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Responding to proposed changes to NHS services, including arrangements for GP practices, prescribing low value medicines, gluten free foods and branded medicines.

Best Council Objective

Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council

Areas of Scrutiny

Reducing repeat customer contact through tackling failure demand

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)
[\(click here for scrutiny report\)](#)



- Provided a strategic focus on the aspects of service delivery (Strategy, Policy, Structure, Process and/or Information) which generate failure demand within the organisation rather than this being viewed narrowly as a customer service issue.
- Helped facilitate the targeted work being planned as part of the internal service review with those service areas that create the highest volume of customer contacts with the Contact Centre (i.e Housing Leeds, Council Tax and Housing Benefits).

Review of wider tenant involvement groups

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)
[\(click here for scrutiny working group summary note\)](#)



- Evaluated the role, membership and governance arrangements linked to the various Housing Leeds tenant involvement groups/forums.
- Identified actions to strengthen links between tenant engagement groups and Community Committees and to aid information sharing and effective engagement between the Council's housing related Scrutiny Board and other established housing related bodies, with particular focus around Tenant Scrutiny Board, VITAL and Housing Advisory Board.
- Stressed the importance of ensuring that the Council's forthcoming review of Housing Advisory Panels includes the views of Scrutiny. This review is expected to take place during the 2017/18 municipal year.

Leeds Community Lettings Policy

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Following the Scrutiny work undertaken last year on this matter, further consideration was given to the results arising from the formal public consultation process and the views of Scrutiny helped to inform the final lettings policy proposals prior to formal approval.

Future provision of CCTV

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Engaged in early dialogue with the then-Director of Environment and Housing around opportunities to further develop and modernise the current CCTV service as well as exploit opportunities to generate new income activity.
- In reinforcing the importance of proactive engagement with Community Committees on the future provision of CCTV, the Scrutiny Board also gave a commitment to maintain a watching brief of progress surrounding the procurement of a new contract by April 2018.

Budget Scrutiny

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Regular and ongoing oversight of the 2016/17 budget position and challenges across the Council.
- Consideration of the initial 2017/18 budget proposals with a series of recommendations, subsequently agreed by the Executive Board, including a future review of joint funding arrangements.
- Reviewed progress against previous recommendations around 'fees and charges'.

Best Council Objective

Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council (continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Commissioning

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Robust challenge of the Council’s arrangements for the commissioning ‘people’ services’.
- Specific recommendations around elected member involvement, performance management, reporting outcomes and the efficient and effective use of resources.
- Progress against recommendations a key activity for 2017/18.

Procurement

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Continued to maintain oversight of the Council’s procurement arrangements.
- Specific focus on the levels of ‘off contract’ spending and non-compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules (CPR), resulting in and overall reduction in ‘off contract’ expenditure.
- Identified continued staff training on CPRs as a key action.

Council expenditure on agency staff

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Continued oversight and challenge over the Council’s use and of and expenditure on agency staff.
- Expenditure reduced by £5.9M (or 43%) between 2014/15 and 2016/17.
- Reduced expenditure achieved through a combination of improved procurement (improving value for money) and organisational challenge on the use of agency staff (increasing accountability).

ICT resourcing



- Maintained an overview of progress against previous recommendations around improving resilience of ICT resources.
- Oversight of key service review areas, including ‘Procure to Pay’.

Best Council Plan

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Coordinated the input of all Scrutiny Boards in refreshing the Best Council Plan.
- Maintaining an overview of progress against the Council’s ambitions.
- Overseeing the development of appropriate performance indicators.

The role of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and Entertainment Licensing in the night time economy.

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- Reviewed the safeguarding policies and improvements that have been implemented within Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and how the service contributes to public safety generally in the night time economy.
- Reviewed the contribution entertainment licensing and partner agencies make to the night time economy in Leeds.

Development of Community Committees

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- In tracking the recommendations arising from its inquiry last year, the Board continued to review the on-going work surrounding the development of Community Committees.

Best Council Objective

Dealing effectively with the city's waste

Areas of Scrutiny

Addressing areas of underperformance in recycling

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Engaging directly with the relevant Executive Board Member, Director and representatives from Veolia, the Board discussed the particular challenges and remedial action needed in relation to the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) in terms of meeting its contractual recycling targets.

Added Value/Impact

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty

Areas of Scrutiny

Peckfield Landfill Site

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)

[\(click here for scrutiny position statement\)](#)



- In monitoring the recommendations arising from the earlier Scrutiny inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site, the Board shared the frustrations of local residents and Ward Members regarding the lack of improvement associated with the management of this site.
- In liaison with the Environment Agency and Planning Officers, Scrutiny explored the broader issues surrounding the legislative and regulatory framework associated with landfill sites and produced a position statement setting out its views on what further action is needed to strengthen the current regulatory framework so that environmental issues linked to the management of landfill sites can either be alleviated or enforced more robustly in future.

Added Value/Impact

The impact of Welfare Reforms

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- Stemming from the Scrutiny work undertaken last year around Universal Credit, the Board engaged in discussions with both internal and external representatives (including DWP and ATOS) regarding the impact of the government welfare reform programme on the residents of Leeds.
- It was agreed that the views and concerns raised by Scrutiny on this matter would be reflected in a letter to the Chair of the Work and Pensions Parliamentary Select Committee along with a formal request for more detailed scrutiny at a national level.

Revised Council Tax Support Scheme

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)

[\(click here for scrutiny report\)](#)



- Worked in conjunction with the Council's Citizens and Communities directorate to consider the key features of a simplified alternative scheme that utilises the Universal Credit needs assessment.
- Reviewed the existing Personal Work Support Package element of the current scheme to ensure it continues to work effectively as part of a revised Council Tax Support scheme.
- Actively engaged with other key external organisations, which included representatives from Gipsil, VITAL, Leeds Housing Concern, Leeds Disability Hub, and DWP.

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty (continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Roll out of Community Hubs
(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- In actively tracking the recommendations arising from the Community Hubs Scrutiny Inquiry last year, the Board monitored overall progress in rolling out the Community Hub programme and helped inform the principles linked to the Phase 3 roll out.

Improving Air Quality in Leeds
(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)
[\(click here for scrutiny report\)](#)



- Helped inform and add value to the Council's breakthrough project on cutting carbon and improving air quality, with particular focus on evaluating the progress made in implementing the existing Leeds Air Quality Action Plan and ensuring it remains fit for purpose.
- Engaged a wide range of key stakeholders and professionals in this field, including the Head of the Joint Air Quality Unit at Defra and representatives from Public Health England.
- Promoted the findings of Scrutiny as part of National Clean Air Day on 15th June 2017.
- Acknowledging the complexities surrounding air quality and the need to respond appropriately to evolving national policies, including the introduction of a Clean Air Zone for Leeds, a commitment was made towards on-going Scrutiny engagement during 2017/18.

Future changes to the Leeds Advice Consortium
(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- Acknowledging that the Leeds Advice Consortium was in the final year of a three year contract, Scrutiny engaged in discussions with the Citizens and Communities directorate and the Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau to inform options for the future provision of this service.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Reviewed current position following severe flooding caused by Storm Eva on the 26th/27th of December 15.
- Evaluated the Flood Risk Management Strategy with a view to reducing risk under the requirements of sections 4 & 6 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- Considered partnership arrangements with the Environment Agency.

Advancing Bus Service Provision – Scrutiny Inquiry
(City Development Scrutiny Board)
(also promotes sustainable & inclusive economic growth)
[\(click here for scrutiny report\)](#)



- Contributed to West Yorkshire Bus Strategy consultation in order to support the improvement of bus services in Leeds.
- Facilitated debate on the Buses Bill proposal which promoted understanding of potential options for bus service improvement.

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty (continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Road Safety and KSI data
(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Engagement with West Yorkshire Police regarding road safety enforcement and safe driving.
- Reviewed progress in the delivery of the targeted approach for the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Leeds.

Transport for Leeds, Supertram, NGT and Beyond – Scrutiny Inquiry
(City Development Scrutiny Board)
(also promotes sustainable & inclusive economic growth)



- Responding to a request for Scrutiny from the Leader of Council there has been focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the Supertram and NGT schemes in order to establish and identify what lessons can be learned and applied for future schemes and projects.

Site Allocations Plan
(City Development Scrutiny Board)
([Click here for Scrutiny Report](#))



- Provided support and challenge in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council and support the decision making process of the Executive Board and full Council with regard to this strategic development plan.

Best Council Objective

Promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth

Areas of Scrutiny

Migration in Leeds, including potential issues arising from the EU referendum.
(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- Stemming from the work undertaken last year on Migration, the Board tracked its earlier recommendations as well as engaging in early discussions on the issues that need to be considered in the context of migration in light of the EU referendum outcome and its potential impact on Leeds.
- With cross-directorate engagement, they key areas raised related to the limitations surrounding data collection; impacts on local labour supply; current research into business and skills implications; potential housing and community safety implications; and the proactive steps being taken corporately on this matter.

Employment Growth and Access to Opportunities
(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Focus was provided on job growth, particularly with regard to the nature of employment in Leeds and how local employment opportunities are being secured.
- It was established that there is a need to identify and analyse qualitative evidence regarding the quality and quantity of city-wide employment, including self-employment. It was recommended that further scrutiny be conducted in this area.

Best Council Objective

Promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth (continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Housing Mix

(City Development Scrutiny Board)
[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)

Powering Up the Leeds Economy Through Digital Inclusion

(City Development Scrutiny Board)
[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- The monitoring of recommendations that ensure the timely delivery of the right property type and tenure within criteria of affordability as defined in the Core Strategy.



- Following up on the work undertaken in 2015/16 to review progress made against recommendations detailed in the inquiry report. The required outcomes focus on
 - a) reducing the digital divide and enhancing the economic prosperity of individuals and small enterprises.
 - b) improving digital literacy through education, learning and equipment to provide the necessary skills, confidence and support to embrace technologies.
 - c) the identification of good practice in partnership working and the co-ordination of activity.
 - d) development of a robust Digital Inclusion Strategy that supports the city's aspirations for the citizens and communities in Leeds.

Moving Forward

Towards the end of the 2016/17 municipal year, significant changes were made to the Council's management structures and also the Best Council Plan Objectives, with a refreshed Plan being agreed by Council in February 2017. Such changes have consequently led to revised Scrutiny Board remits for the 2017/18 municipal year, with details of these new Scrutiny Boards set out below.

➤ **Strategy and Resources**

Bringing together the council's central strategic and regulatory functions. This continues the arrangements for 2016/17 into the new municipal year with the addition of elections, registrars, licensing, local land charges and council tax processing previously considered by the citizens and communities board.

➤ **Infrastructure and Investment**

Bringing together the council's development and infrastructure functions to monitor the council's progress in relation to transport and planning, regeneration and housing growth. These functions were previously part of City Development. The separation of functions between this and Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport enable sufficient focus on these key areas.

➤ **Inclusive Growth, Culture and Sport**

Bringing together the council's economic growth functions to monitor the council's progress as a strong and compassionate city promoting opportunities for access to learning, skills and employment for all. The committee will oversee the cultural and sport related functions of the council and activity in the city. These functions were previously part of City Development. The separation of functions between this and Infrastructure and Investment enable sufficient focus on these key areas.

➤ **Environment, Housing and Communities**

Bringing together services affecting the lives of citizens living and working in the council's neighbourhoods to monitor the council's progress as a citizen focussed city prioritising environmental sustainability. This continues the arrangements for 2016/17 for environment and housing whilst adding functions relating to communities which were previously considered by the citizens and communities board.

➤ **Children and Families**

Focussing on services affecting the lives of children and families in the city to monitor the council's progress as a child friendly city putting children first. This continues the arrangements for 2016/17 into the new municipal year

➤ **Adults and Health**

Bringing together social services for adults and universal public health services to monitor the council's progress in improving healthy, lifestyles and quality of care across the city driving integration and partnership with health bodies. This continues the arrangements for 2016/17 into the new municipal year.