

Scrutiny at Leeds City Council



Annual Report 2007/08

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Foreword



Cllr Pauleen Grahame, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Welcome to the Annual report of the Council's Scrutiny Boards. This report details the work undertaken by the Council's seven Scrutiny Boards in 2007/08.

I am delighted that the Council has been awarded four stars following this year's Comprehensive Performance Assessment and I would like to acknowledge the contribution Scrutiny Members have made in achieving this score. This is a fantastic result. However we must continue to improve, and therefore I look forward to working with our external Auditors, KPMG, in the coming year in their review of Scrutiny.

Areas I am sure that will be of interest to the Auditors will be the relationship Scrutiny has with the Executive and the added value our work programmes give to the running of the City.

Meaningful involvement of the Scrutiny function in the business of the Council requires effective engagement with Executive Members and service areas. It also requires the development of scrutiny work programmes that take account of the Council's priorities. The recently agreed Memorandum of Agreement between Scrutiny Boards and the Executive will, I hope, go a long way to addressing these issues. However success will largely depend on the willingness of the Executive to engage with Scrutiny and of Scrutiny Boards to ensure that their work is timely and adds value.

This coming year will also see elements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act come into force which will have a direct effect on how Scrutiny works. I believe a key challenge for Scrutiny will be how well we engage with our partners and scrutinise performance against the targets set in the Local Area Agreement. In many respects how we undertake this Scrutiny will have a significant impact on the Council's reputation. It is important that we create positive expectations about Scrutiny with our partners. I am pleased therefore that Overview and Scrutiny Committee was able to agree with our partners the 'Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds'.

Such challenges will require us to review the training needs of Scrutiny Members. Therefore we look forward to working with the Member Development Working Group in drawing up a programme of training opportunities.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Chairs for their hard work and commitment this year.

Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Work of the Boards

In 2007/08 there were 7 Scrutiny Boards:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)
- Scrutiny Board (City Development)
- Scrutiny Board (Environments and Neighbourhoods)
- Scrutiny Board (Health and Social Care)
- Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)
- Scrutiny Board (Resources)

Each individual Board has reported its work in more detail in this report.

Call In

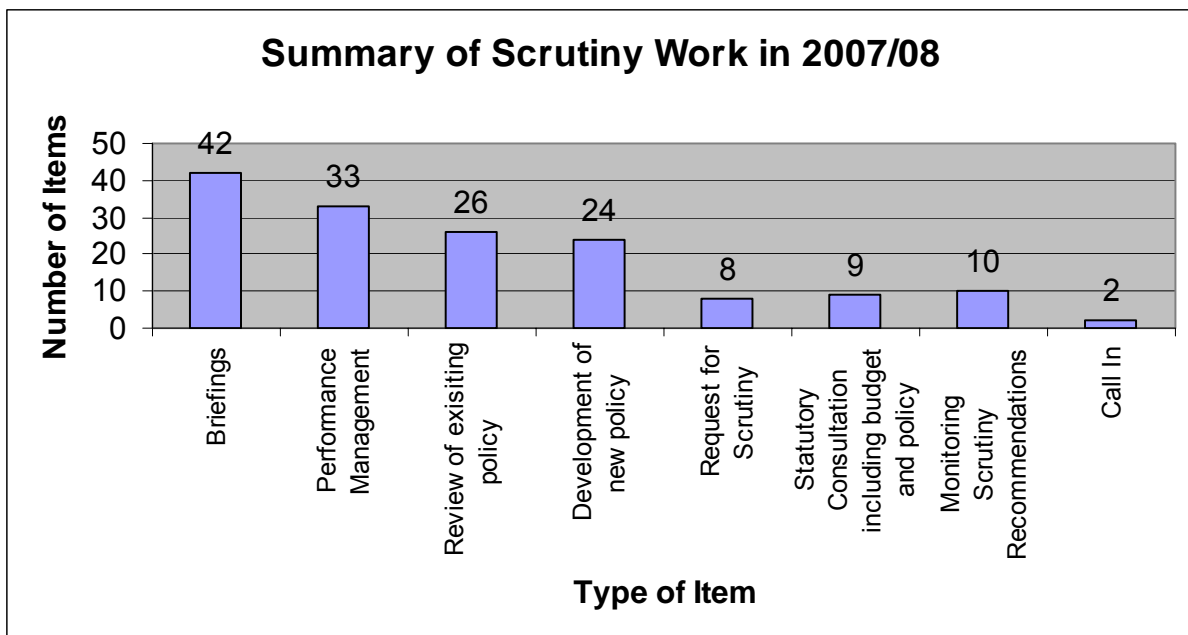
There have been two Call Ins this year;

- the review of parking facilities including adjustments to prices. (decision released for implementation)
- grant aid to Radio Asian Fever (resolved that the decision of the Area Committee be reconsidered)

Summary of Scrutiny Work in 2007/08

Each Scrutiny Board identifies the type of work it does. This allows scrutiny Members to see at a glance the balance of the items on their work programme and support them in deciding what types of work they would like to focus on.

The bar chart below represents the types of work that the Scrutiny Boards have done this year.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Pauleen Grahame (Chair)
Cllr Barry Anderson
Cllr Sue Bentley
Cllr Judith Chapman (part)
Cllr Bob Gettings
Cllr Stewart Golton (part)
Cllr Ted Hanley
Cllr Andrea McKenna
Cllr Bill Hyde
Cllr Elizabeth Minkin
Cllr Ralph Pryke

The Chair's Summary

Because of the 'overview' remit of this Committee, our work this year has rightly focused on a number of operational matters and high level corporate performance management issues. This has to a certain extent restricted our ability to concentrate on a single topic of inquiry. Nevertheless, I believe the Committee has undertaken a number of interesting and worthwhile investigations.

I am particularly pleased with the way in which we have embedded the performance management system this year. This process is now firmly established as part of the work programmes of Scrutiny Boards and will, I believe, inform the content of a lot of our future Inquiries.

Our involvement in the drafting of the Leeds Strategic Plan has been beneficial to its development. It is very important that Members are given the opportunity to shape the direction of the City. I now look forward to seeing Scrutiny Boards holding to account those who must now deliver our agreed objectives and targets.

It was pleasing that the Committee agreed two important documents this year, firstly the 'Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny' and secondly the 'Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds'. Both documents can be viewed on the Council's Internet.

As always I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for their attendance, contributions and hard work in making the year a success.

**Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny

The statutory relationship between the Executive Board and the Scrutiny function is clearly defined within the Local Government Act 2000.

However, this does not address the subtleties and nuances required to establish successful and robust scrutiny in a dynamic political environment. Since the introduction of the Overview and Scrutiny function there has been a continued national debate around the relationship between the two bodies.

Much of this discussion has alluded to the need to establish a culture of parity between Scrutiny Boards and the Executive Board in a way that allows robust challenge of decision making and also nurtures the ability of the Executive Board to sponsor elements of the work programme for the common good of the Council's policy making process.

The Memorandum of Understanding aims to set out a broad agreement which will underpin the relationship between the two functions ensuring the promotion of mutual respect to foster a climate of openness leading to constructive debate, with a view to ensuring service improvements.

Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds

"I want to argue that there is a perfectly respectable alternative career in public life and it is the job of holding powerful people to account"

Jeremy Paxman,
Writer and broadcaster
Centre for Public
Scrutiny Annual
Conference

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act will extend the powers that local authorities already have to scrutinise health services within their areas to the activities of a number of named public sector partners, as part of their wider community leadership role for the City.

The purpose of the Protocol is to provide guidance and a common understanding for how scrutiny of statutory public sector partners will operate in Leeds. The Protocol has been drawn up during the early stages of the new arrangements and may be amended and further developed as the relationship between Scrutiny and public sector partners develops. The aim is for all parties to help ensure that Scrutiny remains a positive and challenging process.



Performance Management

Performance Management is a key tool for holding the Executive to account for its activities. The Committee continues to receive high level performance information from which it can identify areas that require further Scrutiny.

The Committee's full work programme 2007/08

- Call In – Review of Parking Facilities including Adjustments to Prices
- Call In – Grant to Radio Asian Fever
- Personnel Panel Appeal Arrangements
- Scrutiny of the Budget and Quarterly Monitoring
- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Review of Planning Performance
- Review of the Disability Equality Scheme
- Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007
- Leeds Strategic Plan
- Development of a Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds.
- Direct payments
- Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their Families
- Review of the Leeds Half Marathon
- Consideration of a number of Operational/Constitutional matters
 - Tracking and Monitoring Scrutiny Recommendations
 - Responding to the Government's consultation document on Petitions and Calls for Action
 - Review of Call In Arrangements

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)



*Cllr Bill Hyde
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Children's Services)*

Membership of the Board:

Councillor Bill Hyde (Chair)	Mr Tony Britten
Councillor Colin Campbell	Mr Ian Falkingham
Councillor Judith Chapman (part)	Ms Celia Foote
Councillor Judith Elliott	Prof Peter Gosden
Councillor Ronald Feldman	Mr Robert Greaves
Councillor Sharon Hamilton	Mr Tim Hales
Councillor Roger Harington	Mrs Sandra Hutchinson
Councillor Alan Lamb	Ms Taira Kayani
Councillor Brenda Lancaster	Mrs Sue Knights
Councillor Jacqueline Langdale	Ms Jeannette Morris-Boam
Councillor David Morton (part)	
Councillor Tom Murray	
Councillor Karen Renshaw	

The Chair's Summary

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to return to chairing the Scrutiny Board this year. As always, the members of the Board have been tireless in their commitment to scrutiny, and I must particularly pay tribute to those who willingly volunteer for working groups, visits and other activities over and above the monthly Board meetings. Without this additional work, there is no doubt that we would not be nearly as effective, given the breadth of our remit.

This year the council has been subject to both a Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review inspection, and inspectors from both teams interviewed Board members as part of the assessment process. Whilst we still await the outcome of the inspection report, I would like to thank those officers who continued to support our inquiries conscientiously at the same time as they were busy meeting the demands of the inspection process.

As always, our work programme has been a delicate balancing act. We need to ensure that we maintain an overview and focus on performance, holding people to account for delivering the Every Child Matters outcomes, whilst also identifying some more in-depth pieces of work where we can add value to the development of policy and service delivery. Our inquiry on services for 8-13 year olds is a good example of this. We have also responded to external requests for our input, as in our inquiry on Fountain Primary School.

This year has been the first year of a new, more rigorous recommendation tracking system for scrutiny, which has helped us to keep a closer eye on the impact of our recommendations. I look forward to seeing this become embedded over the next year, enabling us to be robust in challenging any areas where progress is not happening.

I am especially pleased that we have continued to support the Young People's Scrutiny Forum this year, and am proud that their work was chosen as a case study of good practice by the IDeA for their children's services scrutiny toolkit. Following the publication of the 'Catching the Bus' report last year, Forum members have worked jointly with Scrutiny Board members and officers to monitor their recommendations and also to progress some of them. I wish the Forum well with their new inquiry, on the environment.

Cllr Bill Hyde
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Services for 8-13 year olds

The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan sets out local priorities and actions to deliver universal and targeted services to all children and young people aged 0-19, and older for those with special needs.

Within this framework, the Scrutiny Board identified the 8-13 age group as a key target group. Early years and youth services are well established services with recognised target age ranges at either end of the 0-19 age spectrum. Members felt there was now a need to extend this approach to join up in the middle in a more formalised manner. This complemented the strong conclusion of the Board's inquiry on youth services, carried out last year, which was that there needed to be more investment in universal and targeted services for the 8-13 age group, and that seeking to re-engage young people and their families in structured provision and support at 13-plus was often very difficult.

The Board identified a number of aspects of the 'infrastructure' necessary to successful delivery of universal and targeted services for 8-13 year olds as the focus for the inquiry:

- Meeting the requirement to provide information for children, young people and families
- The use of assets, particularly schools but also other buildings, to deliver services
- Governance models in relation to extended schools
- The role of councillors in supporting and promoting local delivery of services for 8-13 year olds
- The opportunities that are available for young people aged 8-13 to participate in decision-making and influence issues that affect them
- The infrastructure required to deliver the play strategy

The Board heard from a wide range of witnesses involved in the delivery of services to this age group, and also carried out visits to various providers as part of the inquiry.

Some of our main recommendations were:

- **That an in-depth review of transport take place, to promote more effective use of existing resources and improve access to services**
- **Assistance and encouragement for families to access holiday activities**
- **Ensuring up to date information and local activity programmes**
- **That all schools not yet participating in extended services provision are encouraged to do so**
- **Developing local networks to support smaller organisations**

We also highlighted the need for a more stable funding framework for services to 8-13 year olds, and to ensure that the core offer of universal provision is available to children across all areas of the city.

We asked to be kept informed of progress with the Play Partnership and the Participation Partnership.

Education Standards

At its first meeting of the year, the Scrutiny Board identified education standards as a topic for one of its major inquiries for the year. The choice of this topic accorded with priorities in the Vision for Leeds and the Children and Young People's Plan, as well as reflecting a recurrent theme identified from the Board's regular consideration of performance management information.

Members initially identified two potential areas of focus for the inquiry: the 14-19 age group, and early years and primary transition. Having considered the two areas, the Board decided to focus this year's inquiry on trying to help break the cycle of underachievement at the 14-19 stage of the education system and to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

However this was accompanied by a strong recommendation that an inquiry is prioritised in 2008/09 on those entering the education system.

The Board's inquiry looked at the following areas:

- How pupils are identified as at risk of becoming NEET
- The support provided to pupils in schools to support their attainment and to prepare them for adult life
- The role of school improvement services and curriculum development in supporting the achievement of this group of pupils
- Attendance, behaviour and exclusion strategies to encourage pupils to engage in their education
- The role of other services such as extended services and study support, and family support services
- Tracking of pupil destinations and achievement post-16

The inquiry combined the presentation of written evidence to formal Board meetings, with a number of visits to schools, colleges and training providers. Members were able to discuss the issues with a range of young people as well as with professionals.

The final inquiry report will be agreed by the Board in summer 2008.

Young People's Scrutiny Forum

Following the very successful 'Catching the Bus' report produced by the Young People's Scrutiny Forum last year, young people have chosen 'Protecting our Environment' as their next theme.

Their inquiry, which spans this year and next year, will focus on three themes: waste management, education and sustainable buildings. The inquiry aims to:

- Establish ways in which schools and other Leeds City Council services can reduce their impact upon the environment, and encourage them to implement these changes
- Encourage Leeds City Council and Education Leeds to play a part in raising awareness of environmental issues among the people of Leeds
- Ensure the opinions of young people in Leeds, with regard to environmental issues, are heard and acted upon by decision makers.

The Forum hopes to make a short film to accompany their inquiry.

In the meantime, a joint group of young people, Scrutiny Board members and officers from the council and Metro, have worked together to monitor progress with the recommendations of the 'Catching the Bus' report. This has been an important development in ensuring that the young people are able to see the results of their work translated into action.



Members of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum during scoping of the environment inquiry



Inclusion

A scrutiny working group looked in detail at two of the key objectives of the revised Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy:

- The further development of specialist provision, including the role of the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)
- The further development of the behaviour continuum and provision, including the role of the pupil referral units.

The working group also assessed progress with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board's 2006 report on the SILCs.

We intend to continue to monitor progress in this area next year, as the Inclusive Learning Strategy develops further. In particular we have made some recommendations regarding the effectiveness of behaviour interventions and the use of inclusion finances by schools.

Fountain Primary School

Early in the year the Board was asked to undertake an independent inquiry into the way Fountain Primary School had been established by Education Leeds.

The focus of the inquiry was to explore the circumstances surrounding this particular primary school reorganisation scheme, that consequently led to the need for staffing reductions after only two years of the new school being in operation. As a result of the Scrutiny Board agreeing to do this work, staff called off planned strike action.

Our main recommendations included:

- That priority be given to funding the project to bring the school together on one site (this project has recently been agreed)
- Improved and more transparent projections of pupil numbers to inform future decisions about the need for school places
- Improved communication with parents when new schools are established
- Proposals for closer working between schools, governing bodies and Education Leeds through all stages of school reorganisation and the period immediately following.

The Board's full work programme 2007/08

Review of existing policy

Education Standards Inquiry
Fountain Primary School Inquiry
Inclusion
Parenting Support

Development of new policy

Inquiry into services for 8-13 year olds
Inclusion Strategy
Review of 14-19 education and training provision in Leeds

Performance Management and Monitoring

Overview of Children's Services and Children and Young People's Plan priorities
Performance Management information
Standards in Leeds schools and Ofsted inspections
Monitoring of recommendations from previous inquiries including:

- Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)
- Adoption in Leeds
- Catching the Bus
- Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority
- Youth Services
- Review of 14-19 education and training provision in Leeds
- Departmental Communications

Budget and Policy Framework

Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-2011
Children and Young People's Plan

Briefings

David Young Community Academy

Young People's Scrutiny Forum

Monitoring of recommendations from Catching the Bus inquiry
Protecting the Environment Inquiry

Scrutiny Board (City Development)



*Cllr Ralph Pryke
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(City Development)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)
Cllr Geoff Driver
Cllr Jack Dunn
Cllr Penny Ewens
Cllr Janet Harper
Cllr Matthew Lobley
Cllr James Monaghan
Cllr Rachael Procter
Cllr Brian Selby
Cllr Neil Taggart
Cllr Paul Wadsworth*

Cllr Alec Shelbrooke* was a member until
Cllr Wadsworth was appointed on 20th
February 2008

The Chair's Summary

I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). My thanks go to all colleagues on the Board who have faced the challenges of the year with their customary enthusiasm, good humour and rigour throughout the year.

This year the Scrutiny Board considered two requests for scrutiny concerning disposal of the former Miles Hill and Royal Park schools. As a consequence of these requests we agreed to undertake an inquiry on the consultation processes used by the Council in respect to such disposals. We also decided to widen this inquiry to incorporate a case study specifically to review how the City Development department had consulted with regard to the Aire Valley Area Action Plan. We identified a number of issues and recommendations as a result of our endeavours.

We considered a request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers concerning the City Development department's proposals to increase the use of "shared space" between pedestrians and vehicles in the form of shared surface, shared area and home zones. We received a large number of letters, emails and telephone calls from a number of groups representing the blind, partially sighted and other disabled people on this matter. We were able to make two interim recommendations and agree that a formal inquiry should be carried out once the City Development department was able to give advice on how it wished to proceed, having undertaken further work to identify best practice and the results of new emerging studies.

We received two very interesting and useful presentations on the Leeds Initiative and the work and responsibilities of the Chief Officers within the City Development department.

We have actively monitored and challenged the performance indicators of the City Development department particularly those which could impact on the Council's CPA score.

In particular we reviewed the work being undertaken to improve the performance on planning appeals (Performance Indicator BV204).

Our aim has always been to challenge and hold to account the decision makers, and we were therefore pleased to have a meaningful dialogue with the Executive Board Member under our 'Members' Questions' item.

We have continued to review, monitor and challenge the development of policies within the City Development department. In particular, along with other Scrutiny Boards, we commented on and contributed to the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan.

We have also commented on a number of ongoing plans and strategies which provide a framework for many other projects, such as the Local Development Framework which will soon replace the Unitary Development Plan.

All members can bring individual concerns to Scrutiny, and this year we spent some time on a disagreement between ward members and officers on the need for planning permission in addition to the deemed consent to construct bus lanes in Kirkstall, on the implementation of 20 mph limits near schools and in residential areas, and the lack of progress in opening Park and Ride services or agreeing a successor "Plan B" for the rejected Supertram proposal.

Under the new tracking arrangements we reviewed progress on implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission's Inquiry into the impact of flooding events on the Leeds district.

In 2007 the City Development department took responsibility for the Council's highways and leisure functions and we acknowledge the challenge of managing such a demanding and wide ranging portfolio.

In 2008/09 sections of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act will come into force and this will affect how scrutiny operates in the future. We will need to engage with our partners much more and scrutinise performance against the targets set in the Local Area Agreement.

My thanks to the Board's support officers and to all those witnesses from within and outside the council who have contributed their experience and professionalism to our work over the past year.

Cllr Ralph Pryke
Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes

We agreed in developing our work programme to undertake an inquiry to review some of the consultation processes in the City Development department to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Subsequently - and before agreeing our terms of reference for this inquiry - we received two requests for scrutiny from Councillor Jane Dowson and Councillor David Morton concerning the lack of consultation in respect of the former school sites at Miles Hill and Royal Park respectively. We decided to widen our inquiry beyond the City Development department and include consultation on the disposal of school buildings and land involving Education Leeds and the Environment and Neighbourhoods department.

We decided to focus our inquiry on two specific case studies :-

◇ Case Study 1

To review the consultation processes applied by Education Leeds, the City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods departments when school buildings and land are declared surplus to requirements using Miles Hill and Royal Park as case studies.

◇ Case Study 2

To review the consultation processes applied by the City Development department on the development of the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan.

Our Main Recommendations

(i) That Education Leeds be asked to communicate with relevant service departments and identify much earlier in the process schools which may be declared surplus to requirements in order to improve long term strategic planning.

(ii) That Education Leeds, the City Development department and service departments (mainly Environment and Neighbourhoods) consider how this could be achieved in the new municipal year whilst recognising the sensitivity of the issues involved.



Scrutiny Board (City Development)

“We are grateful to Councillor Jane Dowson and Councillor David Morton for drawing our attention to this issue and requesting scrutiny.

We have spent some considerable time investigating the processes involved in consultation particularly with regard to the disposal of former schools and identified a number of improvements that can be made”

Councillor Ralph Pryke (Chair)



Our other recommendations were:

(a) To the extent that

(i) surplus sites have already been approved for disposal by the Executive Board, the proposals in the Executive Board report of August 2007 should apply.

(ii) aspirations for community use of those surplus sites / buildings arise after the Executive Board decision, then officers of the relevant service departments should communicate clearly with the community and explain the criteria which will apply if a case is to be made for community use.

(b) That in view of the sensitive issues surrounding school buildings due to become surplus, the Chief Executive of Education Leeds and the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods develop a basic set of principles, that is supported by all Council departments and Elected Members, and which are transparent and provide a consistent approach in determining the future of these Council assets.

(c) That the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods introduce a fixed time frame for bringing forward alternative uses for former school buildings and that it be incorporated into the basic set of principles.

(d) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods with other relevant service departments assess the level of consultation that can be applied in determining gaps in service provision in a community and how community groups might assist the Council in delivering the Council's objectives in that community.

(e) That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development ensure that an appropriate annual seminar is held for Elected Members on the disposal of Council assets including former school buildings.

(f) That the Director of City Development

(i) in developing future Area Action Plans (and the preparation of Development Plan Documents as a whole), continues to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the process and monitors the effectiveness of such activity, as a basis for continued improvement.

(ii) within the context of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Statement of Community Involvement and available resources, ensures that consultation activity is appropriately targeted and tailored, to ensure that the quality and quantity of engagement is fit for purpose.



Aire Valley Regeneration



Request for Scrutiny: Shared Spaces & the New Street Design Guide

We considered a request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers, Mr Keith Spellman. It concerned the City Development department's proposal to expand the use of shared spaces between vehicles and pedestrians. This had been incorporated into the new draft Street Design Guide which was out for consultation.

We received a great deal of correspondence on this matter from a range of organisations including the National Federation of the Blind, Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People, Talking Newspaper, Otley and the Leeds Jewish Blind Society.

"The National Federation of the Blind is totally opposed to shared spaces which are being introduced by local authorities."

Jill Allen-King and Barry Naylor
National Federation of the Blind.



Shared space street in a new development

Initial Recommendations

(1) We suggested that, because of the complaints made to the Board about organisations who allegedly had not been consulted on this matter, the consultation period be extended by at least 4 weeks and this was agreed by the Director of City Development.

(2) We were subsequently advised by the department that it needed to give further consideration to the issues raised with regard to "shared space" in the context of national best practice, new government guidance and emerging studies. We therefore agreed that a scrutiny inquiry should be undertaken on "shared spaces" in the new municipal year once the position became clearer.

Request for Scrutiny: A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment

We considered a request for scrutiny from Councillor John Illingworth, Member for Kirkstall Ward, concerning the A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment.

Before determining his request we received legal advice from the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) with regard to planning applications, permitted development rights, the Council as highways authority and details of Counsel's advice received. We also obtained evidence from the City Development department on the cumulative impact assessment that had been undertaken with regard to this scheme. We considered past, present and future consultation opportunities that had been given regarding the A65 Quality Bus Initiative.

We decided on the basis of the evidence presented to us not to undertake further scrutiny of this matter.



A65 Kirkstall Road

"We were grateful to Councillor Illingworth for raising this issue but, having taken into account all the evidence presented to us and received officers' assurances regarding measures to consult with the 140 householders who were directly affected by the scheme, the Board voted not to proceed with a formal inquiry"

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)

Presentation and Reports

We received during the course of the year a number of wide ranging reports and presentations as part of our monitoring and review role. These included:

- *Leeds Initiative*

We received a detailed presentation from the Director of Leeds Initiative and members of her team on the progress being made to restructure this organisation to meet the changing needs and expectations of the Council and of its partners.

We were particularly interested to hear about how the Local Area Agreement and local area partnerships were influencing these changes and the issues involved.



- *20mph Zones*



Typical entry to a 20mph Zone

We reviewed the rationale behind the strategy for introducing 20mph zones in certain parts of the city. We noted that Leeds requires that there must be put in place a significant number of speed reducing features such as speed humps so that speeds are reduced and kept down to 20mph throughout the zone, although this is not required elsewhere (notably Portsmouth). The department's resources in this regard are targeted towards areas where there have been accidents. We noted that frequent changes in speed limits can be unnecessarily confusing to drivers.

- *Flooding Events*

We spent some time reviewing the progress which has been made on implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Scrutiny Commission Inquiry into flooding within Leeds.

We were particularly interested in the partnership working through Aire Action Leeds, the flood resilience scheme and the additional staffing resources provided to the land drainage section.



Flooded Road



Land Drainage Works

- *Planning & Development Services*

The City Development department in 2007 undertook a strategic review of its planning & development services which identified five improvement themes to consider, namely:

- ◇ capacity building & working with the private sector
- ◇ realising a definitive officer view
- ◇ development and support for Plans Panels
- ◇ information & communication technology
- ◇ improved customer services

We received a report from the department on the progress which had been made to date in implementing solutions within these themes.

We also received a specific report outlining and analysing planning appeals against the BV204 performance indicators and the work being undertaken to improve performance in this area.

- *Local Area Agreement*

We focused our endeavours on the performance management arrangements that have been or are being put in place as targets within the Local Area Agreement and which fall within our area of responsibility.

- *Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative*

We reviewed progress in delivering “Sharing the Success”, the Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. We were delighted to hear that 20 projects are up and running, including two flagship projects as a result of this initiative.



Housing in City Centre



City Square



Planning Application



Partnerships

- *City Centre Area Action Plan*

We identified and discussed a number of issues arising from a paper submitted by the Director of City Development summarising the scale and nature of the responses received during the formal consultation stage on the City Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options.

- *City Centre Housing*

We considered some of the trends affecting the demand for and supply of flats and houses in the city centre, vacancy levels and the infrastructure required to support a mixed population in the city centre.

We were concerned at the lack of facilities within some of these flat and housing developments in the city centre. Clearly, there was a danger that market forces were dictating the type of city centre population and the facilities that they need rather than trying to plan for more sustainable and mixed communities providing the necessary school places, doctors, dentists and shops early in the process. We recognised that this was a difficult balance to achieve.

We received some anecdotal evidence of the reluctance of older people, seeking to down-size, to move into the city centre.



K2 City Centre



Off Millennium Square



University of Leeds



Leeds Metropolitan University

- *The Local Economic Impact of Students on Leeds*

We received interim papers outlining the work currently being undertaken in conjunction with the local Universities to try to identify the economic impact of students, and the Universities themselves, on the local economy.

The impact is significant and growing, and we thought further study into this together with their indirect economic effects could lead to better understanding, and therefore potential mitigation, of real and perceived problems for all residents and businesses.

- *Town & District Centre Regeneration*

The City Development department updated the Board on the operation and achievements of the Town & District Regeneration Scheme since its inception in 2005.



- *Management & Capacity of the Planning Compliance Service*

We considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer on the management and capacity of the planning compliance service.

We supported and endorsed the following actions:

- (i) Review of the career graded progression and training and development opportunities available to compliance staff.
- (ii) Regular progress reports to appropriate parties on key enforcement cases.
- (iii) Review prosecution procedures including making provision for holding taped interviews compliant with PACE requirements and provide appropriate training for enforcement officers.
- (iv) that the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development consider the inclusion in the 2008/09 Member training programme of the compliance service and discuss with the Chief Planning Officer the most appropriate time for this to take place.
- (v) that the Board's successor be asked to review this issue in 2008/09.



Otley Library



Park Square



City Point



Newton Grove, Chapel Allerton

The Board's full work programme 2007/08

- **Request for Scrutiny A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment**
- **Impact of Flooding Events on the Leeds District**
- **Request for Scrutiny - Former Miles Hill and Royal Park Schools**
- **Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes**
- **Update on the Strategic Review of Planning and Development Services**
- **Request for Scrutiny regarding the increased use of Shared Surfaces under the Council's new Street Design Guide**
- **Presentation by Chief Officers of the City Development department**
- **Strategy for Introducing 20 mph Zones**
- **Questions to the Member with portfolio responsibility for Development and Regeneration**
- **Presentation on the Leeds Initiative current work and future development plans of the organisation**
- **City Centre Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Consultation Responses**
- **Consultation on the Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan**
- **Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) - Sharing the Success**
- **Performance Management Indicators for Quarters one, two and three**
- **Detailed look at Corporate Plan Indicator (i) ED50 Businesses satisfied with the Council in helping to create a good business environment (ii) BV165 % of Pedestrian Crossings with facilities for disabled people and (iii) BV204 Performance on Planning Appeals**
- **Introduction and Questions to the Chief Highways Officer**
- **Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report**
- **Presentation from the Chief Planning Officer**
- **Update on the Strategic Review of Planning & Development Services**
- **Housing Mix, Vacancy Rates and Infrastructures - City Centre**
- **The Local Economic Impact of Students in Leeds**
- **Section 106 Planning and Section 278 Highways Agreements**
- **Traffic Congestion – Key Locations**
- **Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme**
- **Review of the Conservation Team**
- **The Local Economic Impact of Students at Leeds' Two Universities**
- **Budgetary Issues and Considerations**
- **Review of Compliance Unit, City Development department**
- **Local Area Agreement Performance Management**

Scrutiny Board

(Environment and Neighbourhoods)



*Cllr Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Environment and Neighbourhoods)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Barry Anderson (Chair)
Cllr Christopher Beverley
Cllr Ann Blackburn
Cllr Debra Coupar
Cllr Mrs Ruth Feldman
Cllr Angela Gabriel
Cllr David Hollingsworth
Cllr Graham Hyde
Cllr Richard Lewis
Cllr Adam Ogilvie
Cllr Linda Rhodes-Clayton
Cllr Frank Robinson

The Chair's Summary

It has been another busy year working with the Scrutiny Board and I am pleased to present this annual report.

There is a huge remit for the Board covering two Executive Board Member portfolios, and I am grateful for the work and commitment of other Board members throughout the year. However, I feel there is still much to do and in many ways regard this report as 'work in progress'.

I am pleased with the progress of the inquiry into housing lettings and the interim report that the Board has produced – I look forward to receiving an initial response to our recommendations and monitoring progress against these. Nonetheless, like many of the Board members, I do not feel that our work in these areas is complete but I also recognise that this in itself may present a significant challenge for the Board next year. With such a wide remit we will need to focus on the outcome of our efforts and think very carefully about our future work programme, placing a higher priority on those areas we wish to examine in more detail.

I am equally pleased with the work we have done around the Council's own CO₂ emissions, but also feel somewhat frustrated that, as a Board, we have not achieved more in this area. Perhaps this reflects the importance of establishing realistic priorities at the beginning of the year and maintaining that focus as the year progresses.

I am grateful to Councillor Les Carter and Councillor Steve Smith, both Executive Board Members, who have attended the Board on more than one occasion this year and discussed a number of key issues facing the Council.

I was particularly heartened by the discussion with Councillor Les Carter, which led to the Board undertaking its inquiry into housing lettings. I feel this provides a good example of the benefits to be had when Scrutiny and the Executive work collaboratively to identify a policy area that will benefit from some detailed examination by a cross-party group of local councillors. I am sure that I reflect the views of other Board members when stating that I truly hope the recommendations we have identified help to address some of the housing pressures across the City.

Finally, it has been an honour to Chair the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) during the current year and I am extremely grateful to my fellow Board members, officers, and other witnesses who have contributed to the work of the Board and shown a true commitment to improving services for the residents of Leeds.

Councillor Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

Inquiry into Housing Lettings Pressures



A Council Property

As members of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods), we have been extremely keen to ensure that Housing remains a priority area throughout 2007/08. In June 2007, as part of the Board's initial work planning discussion, we identified a number of potential issues to be considered in detail throughout the year and, following a further discussion with the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing, it was suggested to us that we could usefully undertake an inquiry which examined the Council's current Housing Lettings Policy, including the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

We were aware that a number of issues were currently having an impact upon the Council's Lettings Policy in general and we were eager to understand these in more detail. Therefore, we agreed to the suggestion of the Executive Board Member.

We recognised that there are some significant difficulties and challenges facing the City Council and its partners in this regard, but we wanted to understand more about the overall factors affecting the supply and demand for Council Housing in Leeds, while maintaining a focus around Local Lettings Policies and the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

The inquiry consisted of three dedicated sessions, where we received, considered and discussed evidence from a range of different sources, including the Strategic Landlord and representatives from each of the three Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and the Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) – as these organisations are responsible for interpreting, implementing and administering the Council's Lettings Policy. We believed this approach to be a fundamental element to this inquiry, helping to ensure it was undertaken in a comprehensive manner.

Main recommendation

That as a matter of urgency, the Strategic Landlord reviews all relevant policies and procedures to ensure that each ALMO adopts a consistent approach and takes appropriate legal action when the Council becomes aware that any false and/or misleading information has been provided at any stage during the application process.

Other recommendations were:

- *That the Strategic Landlord considers how best to involve the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods), or its successor body, as part of the annual review of the Council's Lettings Policy, prior to final approval.*
- *That, through the ALMOs, the Strategic Landlord ensures that all local ward members are provided with quarterly performance information relating to local housing issues, in particularly waiting times and lettings.*

In December 2007, we wrote to Yvette Cooper MP, the then Government Minister for Housing, inviting her to meet with us and discuss the national context for Housing, how this impacted locally and any areas for future development. However, primarily due to a ministerial reshuffle, we were unable to secure a convenient date for such a discussion. Nonetheless, in March 2008 the Chair of the Board was able to secure a meeting with a Civil Servant from the Department of Communities and Local Government to discuss some emerging themes from the inquiry.

The Chair also met with the Council's Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer to discuss some additional matters raised during the third session, namely Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) and Selective Licensing. However, we have not discussed this in any detail and, therefore, these remain areas of particular interest that we may wish to revisit sometime during 2008/09.



Other recommendations (cont.):

- *That, in conjunction with the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, the Strategic Landlord, as and when appropriate, delivers a series of Member briefing/information sessions on housing related matters and following any significant changes to policy.*
- *That, to supplement the Member briefing sessions (referred to above), the Strategic Landlord produce and maintain a Members' handbook on the Council's Lettings Policies.*
- *That, to enhance the openness and transparency in the development of Local Lettings Policies (LLPs), the Strategic Landlord ensures that, through the ALMOs, all local ward members are formally consulted in a timely and appropriate manner.*
- *That, within each ALMO/ BITMO, the Strategic Landlord actively promotes the photographing of all main and joint tenants at the time of signing their tenancy agreements.*
- *That, working with each of the Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and the Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO), the Strategic Landlord seeks to develop a set of principles to ensure that all Local Lettings Policies in operation across the City are easily accessible by all members of the public, and are presented in a clear and consistent manner, by December 2008.*

- *That by April 2009, the Strategic Landlord, through the ALMOs, formulates proposals, including the allocation of dedicated resources, aimed at proactively addressing under- occupancy, in the longer-term, across council housing stock locally*
- *That, by December 2008, the Strategic Landlord review the application registration procedures to ensure that appropriate checks on customers' identities are undertaken at an earlier stage of the lettings process, for example, as part of the housing need assessment process.*
- *That, by December 2008 and in conjunction with each ALMO and the BITMO, the Strategic Landlord seeks to develop and implement suitable strategies to tackle sub-letting of council properties.*
- *That a review of such strategies is undertaken 12 months after implementation, with a view to ensuring such strategies are and remain fit for purpose.*
- *That the Strategic Landlord continues to monitor the use of Leeds' Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, and actively promotes and encourages its use as a mechanism to advertise a range of housing options and opportunities, including private landlord accommodation and affordable housing.*
- *That by April 2009, the Strategic Landlord, through the ALMOs, ascertains the level of under-occupancy across all council housing stock.*

Other recommendations (cont.):

- *That the Strategic Landlord ensures that affordable housing solutions are more closely linked to the Leeds Homes Register and CBL scheme by actively identifying appropriate customers and signposting them to relevant schemes in the city.*
- *That, by December 2008, the Strategic Landlord considers ways in which a more proactive approach by staff could help provide customers with realistic advice and help facilitate mutual exchanges where such an approach offers an appropriate solution.*
- *That in considering any proposed changes to the Council Lettings Policy, the Strategic Landlord seeks to undertake a further and more detailed examination of the likely implications of such, and provides this to the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods), or its successor body, for consideration.*
- *That the Strategic Landlord provide a 6-monthly report to the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods), or its successor body, regarding progress in developing a 'Housing Solutions' approach and any available performance data.*

- *That by April 2009, the Strategic Landlord, through the ALMOs, undertakes further research to establish the most appropriate interventions for reducing under-occupancy across council housing stock locally.*
- *That the Strategic Landlord continues to develop and promote a 'Housing Solutions' approach in order to respond to the changing nature of customers' housing needs in the City, including appropriate changes to the Council Lettings Policy.*
- *That, by December 2008, the Strategic Landlord explores and implements ways in which 'mutual exchanges' are better promoted and marketed as part of the available housing options.*
- *That, in developing a 'Housing Solutions' approach, the Strategic Landlord develops and implements a robust performance framework, in order to provide meaningful, accurate and timely performance information for all key stakeholders.*
- *That, within 12 months, the Chief Housing Services Officer establishes and commences a process, involving all key stakeholders, to determine the future customer profile of Council Housing within Leeds.*

We believe that this inquiry provides an excellent example of how scrutiny can work in conjunction with the Executive and add real value by examining specific policy areas in more detail. We have identified a series of recommendations which we sincerely hope go some way to improving the outcomes for the residents of Leeds in relation to meeting housing need and we look forward to monitoring progress against these in due course.

As local councillors, housing related issues continue to represent a large proportion of our casework and, irrespective of political allegiances, we are all committed to working towards improving the availability of and access to quality housing across the city. As such, we look forward to maintaining a focus on housing related matters during 2008/09.

Inquiry into CO₂ Emissions



It has become clear to us that there is now near universal acceptance by world governments that climate change is occurring as a result of man-made greenhouse gas emissions. Previously, the drive for reducing the levels of carbon emissions had come from a small, but growing, number of committed individuals. However, it is increasingly recognised that local councils are uniquely placed to provide leadership, raise awareness and influence behaviours and councils are now recognising that systemic changes locally can have a significant impact on the level of carbon emissions in general. It is also recognised that action by local councils is crucial to the achievement of the Government's climate change objectives. As such, in September 2007, we included an inquiry into the Council's Climate Change agenda on our work programme. However, given the potential breadth of this topic, we agreed that the inquiry should initially focus on the Council's own CO₂ emissions.



CO₂ emissions impact on climate change

As part of the inquiry itself, we considered a brief overview of the overall policy drivers around CO₂ emissions and details of the Council's targets and current performance. The information presented to us demonstrated that the main sources of CO₂ emissions identified were Council buildings, street lighting and the Council's vehicle fleet; areas which we examined in more detail and addressed in our statement and recommendations.

Our recommendations

- *That, to provide much needed new resources, at least one of the 35 LAA priorities for Leeds focuses on climate change.*
- *That all major sites are surveyed as soon as possible and where the certificates are poor, a clear plan of action to improve them up to the maximum feasible and viable score is drawn up.*
- *That the Board, or its successor body, be kept up-to-date regarding:*
 - (i) *The on-going investigations around the use of alternative fuelled vehicles in the Council's fleet.*
 - (ii) *The outcome of the current review of CO₂ emissions from vehicle deployment and the arising targeted reduction programme.*
- *That the Carbon Reduction Commitment implications are factored into the 2009 budget calculations.*
- *That a policy be developed and implemented to ensure the use of Whole Life Costing analysis when specifying new-build and major refurbishment projects, including the development of a linked, ring-fenced, fund to pay additional capital costs where revenue costs would be recouped within an agreed time period.*
- *That the potential for further reductions in CO₂ emissions through changes to the current usage patterns of street lighting be reviewed in more detail, including consideration of the implications associated with altering the times that street lights are on and potentially through selective dimming late at night.*

Presentations and reports

During the course of the year, we received and considered a number of reports and presentations covering various aspects within our remit. Such items helped us fulfil our monitoring and review role and included the following areas:

Safer Leeds

Early in the year, we considered the Safer Leeds 2006/07 Annual Performance Report, which detailed progress made towards the 2005-2008 strategy. Later in the year we welcomed Councillor Les Carter in his capacity as Chair of the Safer Leeds Board, when we considered the draft Safer Leeds Partnership Plan (2008 – 2011), which set out the Partnership's proposed priorities and targets



for 2008-2011. During this discussion, we identified a number of issues, namely around prostitution and domestic violence, to be considered as part of the further development of the Plan. We also queried whether the expected reduction in funding would impact on the delivery of the priorities.

Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds



Kerbside recycling in Leeds

Throughout the year, we have considered a number of areas relating to the issue of waste across the city, including: the Council's approach to recycling and its recycling targets; the role of the voluntary and community sector in helping to deliver the waste strategy; the issue of garden waste; and progress of the Leeds Waste Solution project.

As part of this work we heard from a range of community organisations currently operating in various part of the city including the Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store – an organisation which collects unwanted furniture and redistributes this to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and families. The organisation not only provides a useful service to some of the most disadvantaged people in the city, it also diverts a significant amount of furniture that might otherwise be sent to landfill.



Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store

We also heard from Seagulls – an organisation that collects surplus paint and redistributes this to various community groups and people on low incomes – thus reducing the level of hazardous material requiring disposal.



Community RePaint Leeds

Leeds Organic Growers (LOGs) is another local enterprise we spoke to. LOGs is currently seeking to establish a green garden waste kerbside collection service for households in the Kirkstall and Weetwood areas of the City. We heard that such waste will then be composted, sieved and graded. Bagged compost will be available for sale to scheme members and the general public.

We welcomed the input from the various organisations that we spoke to and look forward to their continued involvement in helping to deliver the integrated waste strategy for Leeds.



Leeds Organic Growers

Pest Control

Arising from discussions with the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Environmental Services, we requested a report detailing the current arrangements for dealing with vermin and other pests across the City. We were presented with the following information:



A brown rat



A house mouse



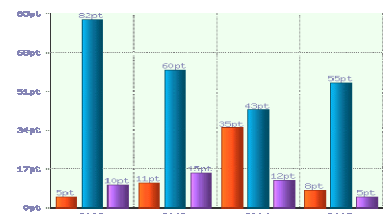
A wasps' nest

- The Council's primary legal obligations in relation to pest control;
- Performance trends relating to requests for pest control services;
- A summary of the pest control service in Leeds;
- An outline of the recently established partnership arrangement between the Council and Rentokil, to provide the reactive domestic pest control service, including current performance levels;
- Details of opportunities to reduce the rodent population in Leeds.

Later in the year, we agreed to invite representatives from Rentokil to attend a future meeting of the Board (in the new municipal year) to discuss performance issues and the operation of the new arrangements with the Council. We hope this will help us take a broader view of the new arrangements and the approach to pest management.

Performance Reports

Over the course of the year we have considered detailed performance reports on a regular basis. Using a suite of performance indicators, these reports have helped to provide us with a very good overview of performance and highlight those areas where there is room for improvement. Using the information provided



Monitoring performance is a key role

we identified a number of areas where performance was not meeting the targets set and questioned the Director on the underlying reasons for any apparent under-performance, or where there were concerns regarding the quality of the data systems used to produce the information. This also helped us identify issues on which we wanted further and more detailed information, such as:



Dealing with abandoned vehicles in Leeds

- Vacant homes and re-let times;
- Dealing with abandoned vehicles;
- Progress in achieving housing decency standards

However, while the focus of the Board has tended to be on those areas where performance has been below target, we feel it is equally important to recognise and acknowledge those areas where performance has been good and targets met.

The Board's full work programme 2007/08

Main Inquiries

- Lettings pressures
- Inquiry into the Council's role in reducing CO₂ emissions

Previous Inquiries – Formal responses and update reports

- Monitoring of recommendations – Anti-Social Behaviour
- Monitoring of recommendations – Affordable Housing
- Inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck – Formal Responses to Recommendations

Other

- Performance Report Quarter 4 2006/07
- Performance Report Quarter 1 2007/08
- Performance Report Quarter 2 2007/08
- Performance Report Quarter 3 2007/08
- Members' questions
- Safer Leeds 2006/07 Annual Performance Report
- Recycling Strategy
- Consultation on Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan
- Voids and Empty Properties Update
- Street Cleansing and Britain's Cleanest City Award Update
- Outcomes of Research into the Housing Market in Leeds
- Rodent Control in Leeds
- Integrated Waste Strategy – Waste Solution for Leeds
- Budgetary Issues and Considerations – Environment and Neighbourhoods
- Integrated Waste Strategy – The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Safer Leeds Partnership Plan

Scrutiny Board

(Health and Adult Social Care)



*Councillor Judith Chapman
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Health and Adult Social Care)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Judith Chapman (Chair - part)
Cllr Stewart Golton (Chair – part)
Cllr John Bale
Cllr Jane Dowson
Cllr Geoff Driver
Cllr Penny Ewens
Cllr Clive Fox
Cllr John Illingworth
Cllr Mohammed Iqbal
Cllr Graham Kirkland
Cllr Mohammed Rafique
Cllr Luke Russell

Co-opted Members of the Board:

Joy Fisher – Alliance of Service Users and Carers
Eddie Mack – Leeds Voice Health Forum Co-ordinating Group
Sally Morgan – Equalities
Somoud Saqfelhait – Touchstone Mental Health Services
Laurence Wood – Leeds Patient and Public Involvement Forums

The Chair's Summary

I am pleased to present the annual report of Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care) for 2007/08.

As Chair of the Board for the second half of the municipal year, I would like to thank Councillor Stewart Golton, Chair of the Board for the first half of the municipal year, for his contribution to setting the work programme and starting work on our major inquiry this year into the Localisation of Health and Social Care Services in Leeds.

This year, in addition to our large scale inquiry, we have looked at several other issues, including obesity and teenage pregnancy, and carried out a series of site visits to health and social care establishments in Leeds. We have continued to examine NHS dentistry, homecare services and the reconfiguration of renal services.

This year, we established a new working group to receive details of proposals for changes to health services from our colleagues in the local NHS Trusts. This working group has met several times during the year and considered a variety of proposals for change at an initial stage, including the centralisation of children's services at Leeds General Infirmary and changes to PCT managed GP services in South Leeds.

One of the major developments this year has been the work undertaken to prepare for the new Local Involvement Network (LINK). As a Board, we have taken a keen interest in the arrangements so far and I am sure scrutiny members will wish to continue to monitor progress in the next municipal year. Patient and Public Involvement in Health (PPI) forums were abolished at the end of March 2008. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of all the PPI forums in Leeds who gave so much time and effort to examining health issues over the last few years and contributed to the work of the Board in a co-opted capacity.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the members of the Board for completing our busy work programme with such enthusiasm and commitment.

Cllr Judith Chapman, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care)

Inquiry into the Localisation of Health and Adult Social Care Services in Leeds

We undertook our inquiry because we wanted to learn more about the impact on the people of Leeds of the national and local reforms in how health and social care services are delivered. These reforms place an increasing emphasis on delivering care and treatment closer to home, in the community.

Technological advances in recent years mean that diagnosis, care and treatment have changed over time. It is now possible to treat some patients quite safely in their own homes or at their GP's surgery or health centre.

We wanted to make an assessment of the range of methods of available for delivering health and social care services in Leeds. We undertook a series of site visits to four health centres and clinics, two intermediate care facilities, a day centre for older people suffering from dementia, Wharfedale Hospital and two dental facilities, the Leeds Dental Institute and the Leeds Out of Hours Dental Surgery.



Councillor John Bale, Zoe Kirk, Matron of Wharfedale Hospital, Councillor Graham Kirkland and Judith Lund, Assoc Director, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, on a site visit to Wharfedale Hospital in January 2008



Middleton Community Health Centre (LIFT)

We talked to the Chief Executives of Leeds PCT, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and the Council's Director of Adult Social Services in the course of our Inquiry, as well as speaking directly to staff and service users at the sites we visited. We also talked to City Councillors on some of our Area Committees as part of our fact-finding about how commissioners involve local people in the planning and decision-making process.

We had heard a lot about the new Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) funded community health centres in Leeds. These are purpose-built facilities which we feel are not being fully utilised. We would like to see their spare capacity, and that in Wharfedale Hospital, put to use to reflect the needs of the community.

We made 12 recommendations, including:-

- That thematic groups be developed for health and wellbeing, including adult social care, in each of the three areas in Leeds (based on the revised area management structure) and that the thematic groups work with Area Committees to discuss and agree the nature and regularity of their dialogue in the future
- That Leeds PCT provides quarterly reports to us during 2008/9 regarding the development of services in the new LIFT financed health centres in Leeds
- That, during the summer of 2008, Leeds PCT carries out consultation to determine what services and opening times local people would like to see for their new Community Health Centres and reports back to us at the October meeting
- That Leeds PCT keeps us informed of progress with its programme of buildings refurbishment over the next municipal year
- That the strategy for Wharfedale Hospital, due to be developed during early 2008, be presented to the first meeting of our Scrutiny Board in the 2008/9 municipal year
- That Leeds Adult Social Services and Leeds PCT make arrangements to produce commissioning and procurement documentation in plain English and offer personal contact for voluntary and community groups to explain tender documentation and procurement processes and report these arrangements back to us by December 2008.

Teenage Pregnancy

We wanted to look at teenage pregnancy this year because we shared the concerns of Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) about the rising rate of teenage pregnancy in Leeds.

We gained an overview of the issues at a one-off meeting in February where we talked to professionals involved in teenage pregnancy in Leeds, including Teenage Pregnancy co-ordinators, a Senior Sexual Health worker and a Teenage Pregnancy Midwife. We also considered the findings from a recent report about Leeds written by the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team.

We are pleased to note that there are good services in Leeds for young women who are pregnant or have given birth, but we would like to see a full inquiry in future, focussing on prevention of teenage pregnancy. We therefore recommended that consideration be given to setting up a Scrutiny Commission during 2008/09 to carry out this important piece of work.



Obesity

In April 2006, Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing) carried out an inquiry into Childhood Obesity: Prevention and Management. We have monitored progress with the recommendations in that report and we also felt that we would like to look again at obesity during 2007/08, this time with a focus on adult obesity.

We held a one-off meeting in March 2008, inviting witnesses from within the City Council and externally from Leeds PCT, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Leeds and the Director of Public Health.

During the meeting, we looked at both obesity prevention and obesity treatment and acknowledged the relevance of both to tackling obesity.

Rising levels of obesity are a national problem and we anticipate that future Scrutiny Boards with responsibility for Health in Leeds will wish to monitor or further scrutinise obesity.

The NHS Dental Contract: One Year On

New contractual arrangements for NHS Dentistry were implemented in April 2006 and marked a radical change in how primary care dental services from dental practices are provided and funded in England. Last year, the Board carried out an inquiry which revealed areas of concern about the new NHS Dental Contract. This year, in addition to monitoring progress with all eight of the recommendations in the Board's 2006/07 report through to conclusion, we held a dentistry 'workshop' meeting in October. The overall aim of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for frank discussion about dental provision and oral health in the city of Leeds, to look at the challenges and barriers and consider solutions for Leeds.

Following the workshop, attended by Leeds PCT and the Leeds Local Dental Committee, we made three further recommendations:

- Whilst recognising that there are ethical issues involved, we recommend that Leeds City Council re-opens the debate on fluoridation, having regard to the evidence of improved dental health in the children of the fluoridated cities of Birmingham and Newcastle.
- That Leeds PCT works in partnership with the LLDC to develop a local system to reward dentists for improving oral health in Leeds, which can reflect actual work carried out.
- That the Department of Health considers underwriting the PCTs' shortfalls in anticipated patient charge income to enable the PCT to
 - plan on the basis of a guaranteed sum for dentistry and;
 - commission on the basis of oral health need, rather than having to consider ability to pay patient charges.

"The Department has always steadfastly ruled out any underwriting of Patient Charge Revenue (PCR) as this would go against the principles of aligning budgetary responsibility and commissioning responsibility. PCTs have been allocated the full budget for dental services in order to allow them to commission the maximum amount of services to meet the local needs of their population. It is the PCTs' responsibility to ensure that providers of NHS dentistry collect the necessary patient charges where they are due. Where PCTs develop services in ways that reduce the proportion of PCR raised, they need to reflect this in their financial planning."

Department of Health response



The Board's full work programme 2007/08

Main Inquiry:

- The Localisation of Health and Social Care Services in Leeds

Board Statements:

- The NHS Dental Contract: One Year On
- Teenage Pregnancy in Leeds
- Obesity in Leeds

Previous Inquiries – Formal Responses and update reports:

- Childhood Obesity Management and Prevention
- Dignity in Care
- Community Development in Health and Wellbeing
- NHS Dental Contract

Other:

- Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust Fire Safety Standards
- Reconfiguration of Renal Services in Leeds
- NHS Annual Health Check
- Establishing a Local Involvement Network (LINK) for Leeds
- Neighbourhood Network Service for Sikh Older People
- Partnerships for Older People Programme
- Leeds Strategic Plan
- Closure of Ward 1 at Wharfedale Hospital
- Home Care Services in Leeds (quarterly updates)
- Commissioning Strategy for Social Care (quarterly updates)
- Altogether Better
- Care Closer to Home
- Healthy Leeds Partnership Arrangements
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's Proposals for Respiratory, Cardiology and Stroke Rehabilitation Services
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's proposals for Centralisation of Colorectal Surgery
- Adult Social Care Quarterly Performance Reports
- NHS Annual Health Check
- Proposals for the re-design and re-commissioning of Urgent Care Services in Leeds and West Yorkshire
- Local NHS Proposals for service changes to
 - Children's Inpatient services
 - Clinical service reconfiguration
 - GP led Health Centres
 - PCT led GP services in South Leeds

Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)



*Cllr Ted Hanley
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Culture and Leisure)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Ted Hanley (Chair)
Cllr Bernard Atha
Cllr Andrew Barker
Cllr Bob Gettings
Cllr Arif Hussain
Cllr Brian Jennings
Cllr Graham Kirkland
Cllr Vonnie Morgan
Cllr Lisa Mulherin
Cllr Linda Rhodes-Clayton
Cllr Gerald Wilkinson

The Chair's Summary

Being the Chair of Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure) for the 2007/08 municipal year has been a real privilege.

It has been an interesting and, at times challenging, year. The work has been intriguing and rewarding, and I would hope beneficial to the Council and people of Leeds. I would like to thank my fellow Board Members for their considerable hard work both in the full Board and various Working Groups. My thanks go also to the officers who have provided us with expert opinion and evidence throughout the year, often at short notice.

Without doubt, our main piece of work this year has been the Wharfemeadows Fence Inquiry. This Inquiry showed how the use of Scrutiny can defuse a controversial and contentious issue by engaging with the affected local communities to provide a balanced and objective outcome. A number of lessons came out of this review not least the role Scrutiny could have when the Council needs to take difficult decisions. While still waiting to formally hear from the Executive Board on all of the recommendations, it was pleasing to see the positive manner in which the Board's report was received by the Executive, despite, it may seem, a difference of opinion regarding the routine procedure for making counsel advice publicly available – which was one of our main recommendations.

The other Inquiry which the Board embarked upon related to the Middleton Park Equestrian Centre. The Board's approach to this issue has been somewhat different to that adopted in relation to Wharfemeadows – but I feel the outcome, while yet to be finally confirmed, has been equally productive – with the negotiations between the Council and the Centre's Trustees seemingly securing a way forward that will retain the service provided by the Centre.

I think the Board's approach to both these inquiries has demonstrated an attempt to engage and build a positive relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive. I believe the relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive is a key area that needs to be developed and nurtured and while some progress has been made in this area, it remains an area for further and continued development. As such, I believe the regular meetings between the Executive Board and Scrutiny Chairs established during the year play an important part in this relationship and I look forward to these continuing over the coming year.

Like other Scrutiny Boards we found the discussions on the Leeds Strategic Plan very informative and useful, as were the quarterly performance reports, and I hope the Board's comments and observations have been equally helpful. Clearly, as we move into an era where the Local Area Agreement (LAA) provides a common focus for the Council and its partners, the Board's early and continued involvement in these aspects of work will be invaluable.

While not featuring prominently on many of the Board's meeting agendas, I know that all Members of the Board have taken a keen interest in the development of the proposed Sports Trust and when advised that '*the timing wasn't right for the Board to be provided with an update*', we acted quickly and incisively to set up a working group to establish the current position. I look forward to the outcome from this work.

Having such a large and broad remit, I feel the Board has tried to choose its topics for Inquiry with care. We have tried to receive regular updates on most of the major projects and kept a watching brief on numerous other schemes. Inevitably, however, some important issues have not been addressed. Next year's challenge will be to ensure we focus on the issues that really matter and where the Board's involvement can and will make a difference.

Cllr Ted Hanley
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)

Inquiry into River Safety Management at Wharfemeadows Park, Otley



In July 2007 we received a request for scrutiny from the Wharfemeadows Action Group (WAG) relating to the proposed fencing arrangements within Wharfemeadows Park, and agreed to undertake a Scrutiny Inquiry to examine the:

- Recent decisions of the Executive Board regarding Wharfemeadows;
- Grounds for those decisions; and,
- Advice submitted.

We took evidence from a range of witnesses and a number of different sources, including WAG, Otley Town Council, the local Member of Parliament and a representative from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). We undertook a site visit and also listened to advice from Council officers.

It was abundantly clear to us that there was a genuine level of public concern raised by the decision to fence off parts of the river but we accepted that the body of water within Wharfemeadows Park, and the potential risk to public safety it posed, had been a source of concern to officers for some time.

We concluded that the Executive Board made the decision it did in all good faith with all available and appropriate information before it. We also believed that it would have been highly unlikely for there to be public consensus as to whether the fencing should have been erected, but felt there were a number of learning points regarding the process of decision-making, which had quite clearly generated a significant level of ill-feeling towards the Council.

Our Main recommendation:

That the Charter between Leeds City Council and the Parish and Town Councils within the administrative area of Leeds City Council, particularly Section Three – Working in Partnership, is strictly adhered to.

Section Three states “*Consultation will be used to involve local councils in decisions of the City Council that affect local communities. Consultation between the partners of this Charter is a two-way process, which can only be effective where there is a sense of partnership and mutual trust.*”



*Members' site visit
Wharfemeadows Park, Otley*

“We wanted to ensure that there was an open and transparent inquiry that looked at the decision-making process and all the information that formed the basis of the decision made. We also wanted to hear and listen to the views and concerns of the public.

I believe we achieved our objectives and, through our recommendations, gave a very clear message about transparent decision-making within the Council.”

Cllr Bob Gettings, Member of the Board

Our other recommendations:

- That all legal advice obtained by the Council is publicly available save in circumstances to be determined by the Council’s Monitoring Officer. The reasons for any non public disclosure should be made clear by the Monitoring Officer.
- That all requests for Counsel’s advice are made in written form save in exceptional and urgent circumstances.
- That the Executive Board and Scrutiny Boards work in partnership to identify future decisions where Scrutiny input prior to the decision being made can add value to the overall process and the decision made.

In addition to considering the very specific and particular issues associated with Wharfemeadows Park, there was unanimous agreement that, as a Board, we ought to consider more general issues associated with the Council’s overall Water Safety Policy sometime in the near future.

However, while we tried very hard to ensure the final report reflected the range of views within the Board, the final report did not receive unanimous agreement and as such a minority report was produced and appended to the main report agreed by the Board.

Nonetheless, we were pleased that our report was generally well received by the Executive Board, but remained frustrated and disappointed that further consideration of Recommendation 2 (relating to the public availability of Counsel advice) was delayed until April 2008. As such, we have been unable to consider the Executive Board’s formal response to our report and its recommendations. However, we hope to do this very early in the new municipal year.

Other Inquiries

Middleton Park Equestrian Centre

At the beginning of the municipal year we agreed to undertake an inquiry into the governance arrangements of Middleton Park Equestrian Centre. This followed a report to the Executive Board outlining the role of the Council and the financial and management arrangements of the Equestrian Centre Trust. We wanted to discuss the background to current arrangements and the proposals for the future.



*Riding for the disabled:
Middleton Park Equestrian Centre*

We reviewed the management agreement currently in operation and heard from Trustees from the Centre and also visited the Equestrian Centre.

We established that the Centre catered for approximately 220 rides per week, including carriage rides for the severely disabled. Those of us that visited the Centre were extremely impressed by what we saw, witnessing at first hand the opportunities and obvious benefits to those attending.

We felt the Centre provided a valuable service for some of the most vulnerable people from across the City, and as such welcomed the on-going dialogue between the Council and the Centre. As the year progressed, it became clear that negotiations regarding future arrangements were at an advanced stage. We therefore agreed to defer any further consideration of this matter until such negotiations had been concluded and a firm proposal had been put forward.

Sports Trust

Toward the end of the municipal year, in March 2008, we established a Working Group to examine the development and ascertain the current position regarding the Sports Trust.

In April, we received the first update from the Working Group, which included: a brief profile of members of the current shadow Trust Board; the current draft agreement for lease; and the detailed external legal advice received by the Council. We also received an outline of the financial benefits of the proposals and a summary of developments since March 2006.

After reviewing and considering the information presented at the meeting, we were disappointed that the Board had not been more involved in the development of the proposals to date. However, we agreed to continue with our inquiry and identified a range of additional information to be presented to a future meeting of the Working Group.



Leeds Proposed Sports Trust

Request for Scrutiny: Disabled Access to the Grand Theatre

In February 2008 we received a request for scrutiny from a member of the public, asking us to examine disabled access at the Grand Theatre. This request was presented to us in April 2008, alongside an initial response from Council officers.



Leeds Grand Theatre

While a lift and disabled toilet facilities have been added to the Grand Theatre during recent refurbishment works, it was highlighted to us that these were of little consequence if initial access to the building was restricted.

This was essentially confirmed by officers from the Council's access team who, having visited the building, advised us that the Box Office and its route through to the Theatre could not be considered accessible by any modern design standard.

Prior to the meeting where we considered this request, the Chair of the Board visited the Grand Theatre to see, first hand, the specific issues being raised. However, we were conscious of the time available to undertake a scrutiny inquiry during the remainder of the current municipal year and were also mindful of any duplication that may be caused as a result of undertaking a formal scrutiny inquiry. As such, we heard from the Council's Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer who outlined a proposed action plan, aimed at addressing the access issues presented. In light of this and given the time constraints, we decided not to undertake a scrutiny inquiry. Nonetheless, we were very grateful for this matter being brought to our attention and we intend to continue to monitor the situation and receive a progress report early in the new municipal year.



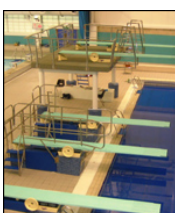
Presentations and reports

To help us fulfil our monitoring and review role, over the course of the year we have monitored performance on a range of issues using different mechanisms, including quarterly performance reports, which have highlighted areas of good performance and also areas for improvement, and question and answer sessions with the Executive Member for Leisure on a range of topics.

Major Projects

One other such performance monitoring mechanism we have developed is a process by which we have received regular updates on major capital build projects across our remit. This has helped us keep track of progress and monitor performance (including budgetary issues) across a number of projects. As part of this monitoring work, we also undertook site visits – which helped us understand some of the complexities often involved.

Some of the projects monitored through the 'Major Projects' reporting framework



The New Aquatics Centre



Leeds Art Gallery



The New Discovery Centre

This approach has been a useful tool and we hope to develop and further refine this process during the new municipal year – paying particular attention to the Aquatics Centre, which we understand to currently be the subject of ongoing sensitive negotiations in general terms and specifically regarding the adjustable pool floor (which failed soon after the opening of the centre).



Proposed outline plan: Morley Sports Centre

New Leaf Leisure Centres

The March Board meeting saw Members given an update on the **New Leaf Leisure Centres PFI Project**. Members were advised that approval had been gained from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) for the outline business case and confirmation of £30 million PFI Credits to build two leisure centres (at Morley and Armley) had been received. Detailed planning applications were due to be submitted in April 2008, with on-site works due to commence during August/September 2008. It was anticipated that the new facilities would be operational in May/June 2010.

We clearly welcomed the progress in developing proposals for two new sports centres in the Leeds area, but again felt that, as a Board, we had not been updated in the most timely and appropriate manner. We also had some concerns regarding the provision of facilities and the support provided to specific activities and local groups during the construction phase of the projects. This was a particular concern in the Morley area given that the new leisure centre could not be constructed without the demolition of the existing centre – which would have a clear impact on regular users of the current facilities.

The exact Morley Leisure Centre activity programme cannot be recreated at alternative leisure centres nearby. However, we were pleased to hear that a large amount of work has been undertaken to develop complementary programmes at other sites and that all clubs with block bookings had been spoken to individually by the centre manager to discuss their options.

We were also heartened to learn that consultation regarding the closure of the Morley Leisure Centre had been ongoing through a working group. The working group had been meeting regularly since November 2006 and was made up of local Councillors, residents, users and clubs.

We were aware of proposals to present the potential programme for relocations to a further working group, followed by a drop in session for the public to discuss the plans being submitted for final planning approvals, along with any general concerns regarding the closure.

While we are not aware of the specific date for the closure of Morley Leisure Centre, we have been advised that this is likely to be in or around July 2008. We were also advised that the final programme for the relocations will be displayed on the notice board in the reception at Morley Leisure Centre and on the website www.leeds.gov.uk/newleaf.

We believe the development of two new leisure centres in Armley and Morley will not only benefit the local communities but all the people of Leeds. As such, we look forward to maintaining a watching brief on these projects at regular intervals throughout the coming year.

Roundhay Mansion

Initially arising from a Major Projects update, the status of the Mansion at Roundhay Park became of particular interest to us during the year, and was further stimulated by a wide ranging discussion with the Executive Board Member for Leisure regarding the current status and future proposals for the Mansion. This was followed by a site visit and further progress updates.

The Mansion is a Grade II Listed building located on the edge of Roundhay Park and for many years was used by Craven and Gilpin as a café/bar/function venue. However, the lease was surrendered in 2003 and since that time no such facility has been on offer at the Mansion – despite an extensive, yet unsuccessful, marketing exercise in 2006.



The Mansion in Roundhay Park



Roundhay Mansion: Visitor Centre Exhibition

The Mansion has seen significant investment in its external fabric and a new Visitor Centre and Education Centre has now opened. We feel these are excellent facilities – with the interactive projector proving to be a big hit on our site visit.

In March we were advised that the appointment of a specialist agent to recruit interest in the restaurant and function facilities at the Mansion had proved productive, with in excess of 200 requests for additional information on the premises – including some from high profile names and businesses. We were also advised that it was envisaged that interested parties would be asked to submit initial offers towards the end of March 2008.

We acknowledge that progressing initial expressions of interest to a position where the Council has a signed lease is a time consuming exercise – and we will monitor progress in this regard. However, we very much look forward to the successful and timely conclusion of this project, which will lead to the Mansion being put to full use once again.

Other Matters

We also considered a number of other matters, for example the high level process for awarding Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid and agreed to receive a future and more detailed report on how the assessment of all arts grant applications is undertaken and the subsequent monitoring arrangements. We also had some input into the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan and Council Business Plan, which, once finalised, will outline some key improvement activities and performance targets for the Council.



Arts Grants considered

At our final meeting of the year we considered a report which outlined a number of areas that we may wish to consider in the new municipal year. We have already highlighted some of these in this report, such as Middleton Park Equestrian Centre and Roundhay Mansion. Other areas which we feel may warrant more detailed consideration include proposals for the Leeds Half Marathon in 2008 and future years and cemetery provision across the City.

The Board's full work programme 2007/08

Main Inquiries

- Wharfemeadows Fence Inquiry
- Middleton Park Equestrian Centre Inquiry
- The Development of the Leeds Sports Trust Proposals

Previous Inquiries – Formal responses and update reports

- Inquiry into Leisure Centres - Response to Recommendations

Other

- Performance Reports (Quarter 4 2006/07 and Quarters 1, 2 & 3 for 2007/08)
- Questions to the member with portfolio responsibility for Leisure and Cultural Services
- Lift in Leeds Library
- Leeds International Concert Season
- Indian International Film Academy Yorkshire - 9th-10th June 2007 – Evaluation
- Consultation on Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan
- Major Projects Update
- Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties Music Hall - Progress Update
- Parks and Countryside Update
- Outdoor Bowls Provision
- Current Governance Arrangements for the Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties
- New Leaf Leisure Centres PFI Project
- Roundhay Mansion
- Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid
- Request for Scrutiny – Disabled Access at the Grand Theatre
- Sports Trust – Working Group Update
- Council Business Plan (2008 – 2011)

Scrutiny Board (Resources)



*Cllr Sue Bentley
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Resources)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Sue Bentley (Chair)
Cllr Mark Dobson
Cllr Ryk Downes
Cllr Clive Fox (part)
Cllr Peter Gruen
Cllr Josie Jarosz
Cllr Val Kendall
Cllr Graham Latty
Cllr James Lewis
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr Ralph Pryke
Cllr Alec Shelbrooke (part)

The Chair's Summary

I am very pleased to present this annual report of the Scrutiny Board (Resources). Since being appointed as Chair of the Board at the Annual Council meeting in May 2007, I have had the pleasure of working with Board Members who are enthusiastic and committed to the Scrutiny process. I know that because we have a positive approach to scrutiny that has made a difference this year in the development of Council policy and improving the delivery of its services. I am grateful to everyone for their patience and understanding during this busy year.

The attached report details all of the work carried out by the Board during 2007/08, but I would particularly like to highlight our two most significant pieces of work which relate to the commissioning of the passenger transport and taxi and private hire contracts and the development of disability employment strategies. The first originated from four private hire companies who expressed concern about these contracts to a local ward Councillor who subsequently requested scrutiny of this issue. We were pleased to undertake this inquiry and to meet and reassure representatives of the trade. The second was a request for scrutiny from the Mental Health Employment Consortium concerning the lack of work placements for people with mental health problems. We widened our investigation to include all disabilities and produced a statement and recommendations. We met with a number of representatives from disability groups. I am sure the Board's work in these two areas has helped to establish closer links between the Scrutiny Board and the local community.

We have undertaken our performance management remit and received a number of reports throughout the year. We were particularly concerned at the worsening figures regarding sickness levels in the Council. We looked at the initiatives being undertaken by Human Resources to try and improve the current figures and we will monitor these initiatives closely.

We have looked at and contributed to the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan and Council Business Plan.

We have received a number of updates on the development of new HR policies and

procedures which have been or are being introduced during the current year. These developments are very exciting and are already providing better support to our managers in carrying out their specific management responsibilities.

Finally, I am grateful to all the officers who support the Scrutiny Board and to all the internal and external witnesses who have attended and contributed to the Board's deliberations throughout the year.

Cllr Sue Bentley
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Resources)

Inquiry to Review the Commissioning of Passenger Transport and Taxi and Private Hire Contracts

We considered a request for scrutiny from Councillor Kabeer Hussain in November 2007 concerning the current contract arrangements for passenger transport and taxi and private hire contracts. He referred to a number of issues relating to how those contracts were awarded and operated.

We were advised that a new Framework Contract would commence in September 2008 and a review was opportune and appropriate. We spent some considerable time looking at the processes involved with these contracts and meeting with the licensed private hire operators who had initiated the original complaints and other licensed private hire and taxi operators and other trade representatives.

We concluded that, whilst we identified a number of proposals aimed at improving communication, publicity and understanding of the processes involved, the overall commissioning of these contracts seemed to us to be fair and understood by most licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators. We asked for an equality impact assessment to ensure that our findings were supported.

Our main recommendation was

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) arrange for an Equality Impact Assessment Audit prior to the letting of the Framework Contract in September 2008 and report to this Scrutiny Board on the outcome.

"We wanted to ensure that the processes involved with these contracts were fit for purpose.

We did not want to lower our standards in any way but ensure that everyone that applied was dealt with fairly and efficiently."

Cllr Alison Lowe, Member of the Board



Scrutiny Board (Resources)

Our other recommendations were:

- (i) **That the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) arrange for the document "Guidance on Tendering" to be checked for plain English and**
- (ii) **provided to contractors at the point of them applying to be included and registered on the Supplier and Contract Management System (SCMS) and**
- (iii) **issued by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section to applicants at the time of applying for an operator's licence.**

Our other recommendations (continued)

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

- examine and report back to this Scrutiny Board as to whether any further measures could be undertaken to improve the clarity of process to ensure licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators understand what is required of them in order to be included on the Framework Contract.
- ensure that licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators are advised how to request feedback on their submission for entry onto the Framework Contract and subsequent tender submissions, and that feedback is clear and easily understood. This should include a name and contact in each department.
- write to the appropriate licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators to explain the reasons why the Elmete Wood School transport contract had been awarded to a single contractor and that a general section on single contracts be incorporated into the "Guidance on Tendering" booklet.
- consider whether contracts could have a lead in period and include in the "Guidance on Tendering" booklet a clear description as to the reasons for the contract period, how and when contracts can be extended and the process by which routes and contracts are determined.
- explore with the contractors concerned the possibility of publishing winning firms and prices for these contracts on the Council's internet site each year to contribute to the transparency of process.
- (i) arrange to send flyers to the 132 licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators in the city publicising the briefing sessions in March 2008 concerning the Framework Contract 2008 and (ii) consider training and support methods that could be used to assist licensed private hire and hackney carriage operators to complete the necessary documentation perhaps through the Council's internet site and in time for the Framework Contract in 2008. This should include a suitable training session for Members on Licensing/Procurement being held immediately after the local elections in May each year, to ensure that Members understand the processes involved and are kept up to date with developments so that they are able to give sound advice and guidance to their constituents on these matters.
- extend the closing date for tender returns of the 2008 Framework Contract to ensure that there are at least 10 working days between the documents being available and the closing date for expressions of interest.

That prior to letting of the Framework Contract in September 2008 the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) extend the advertising of the Framework Contract to include other appropriate publications and Council offices within the appropriate community that are open to the public.

That the Director of Resources convey the thanks of the Scrutiny Board to the officers in the Procurement Unit and Passenger Transport for their significant contribution to improving the commissioning of these contracts since taking over responsibility for this service.



Meeting of the Taxi Working Group



Taxi and Private Hire HQ



Private Hire Taxi



Councillors and some of the representatives from the trade, private hire and taxi operators

Request for Scrutiny on Disability Employment Strategies

We considered a request for scrutiny from the Chief Executive of Leeds Mind on behalf of the Mental Health Employment Consortium regarding the lack of work placements in the Council for people with mental health problems.

We were concerned to hear about the issues they raised and agreed to establish a Working Group to investigate the position within the Council with regard to all disabilities including those related to mental health. We opted to produce a statement and recommendations on this important issue.

We were delighted that the Director of Resources fully supported our proposals.

Our main recommendation was

That a Project Manager be appointed to oversee this initiative and for the Director of Resources to ensure that sufficient funds were available to implement the action plan within the timescales specified.

Our other recommendations were:

That Scrutiny Board (Resources), having considered the report of the Chief Officer (HR), endorses the comments and suggestions of the Disability Working Group as follows:-

(a) That it is important to ensure that proper advice and guidance is given to disabled people concerning work and the effect this may have on their benefit entitlement

(b) That any proposals should contribute to helping those disabled people who have a long history of worklessness

(c) That in developing a strategy and action plan for the employment of disabled people as set out in the report, consideration be given to incorporating or strengthening in the plan the:

- (i) advocacy and support mechanisms
- (ii) importance and use of role models, mentors and champions
- (iii) provision of tool kits for managers
- (iv) development of recruitment packs
- (v) need for quality training and support for managers
- (vi) need to set milestones in the action plan

“There are virtually no opportunities made available by the Council, one of the largest employers in Leeds, for people with mental health problems.

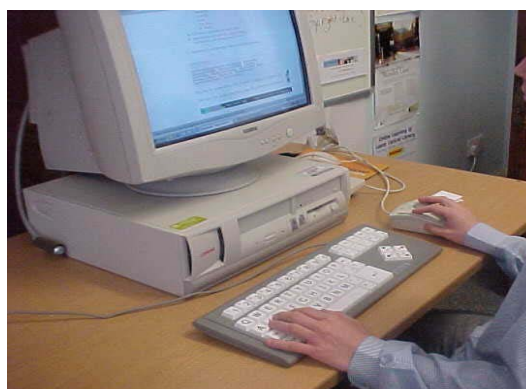
As a local Mind association we know that many people with mental health problems want to return to work but are deterred by the fear of prejudice and discrimination.

The Council should be an exemplary employer in this area but does not at all facilitate the placement of people into work experience contexts.”

Julian Turner, Chief Executive
Leeds Mind



Internet Access



Our other recommendations (continued)

(vii) need to undertake further work to establish the actual numbers of disabled people employed by the Council who may not be currently registered as such for a range of reasons.

(d) That many Voluntary Sector organisations such as Touchstone, Leeds Incapacity Employment Projects (LIEP), Steps for Excellence in Personal Success (Steps) and Mental Health Employment Consortium actively want to receive many more referrals in this area.

(e) Recognition that there needs to be a culture change by the Council in positively encouraging the employment of disabled people and much less emphasis placed upon meeting performance targets.

(f) Acknowledgement that a range of new policies and procedures are being developed that reflect the changing demands and requirements of a modernised authority and the need to widen employment opportunities for disabled people.

(g) That an application be made for the Council to join the National Employers Forum on Disability with the aim of achieving best practice and long term benefits for the Council.

(h) That specific milestones be added to the action plan to ensure implementation and transparency in its delivery.

(i) That progress in implementing the action plan and recommendations of the Scrutiny Board be undertaken through the new scrutiny tracking arrangements previously reported to the Board.

“ The Board was extremely grateful to the Mental Health Employment Consortium for bringing this matter to our attention.

We were pleased to be able to make a number of recommendations concerning the development of a disability employment strategy which received the full support of the Director of Resources and the Executive Board Member with portfolio responsibility for Central and Corporate Functions.”

Cllr Sue Bentley, Chair



Detailed Attendance Analysis of Sickness Absence

We first looked at sickness absence in November 2007 and asked for a further detailed report and recommended that the Director of Resources review the relevant management systems and introduce sub-codes and categories that will enable HR to:-

- i. identify the costs of employing all agency staff across the Council and the reasons for their employment
- ii. analyse specific departments and sections of departments where agency staff were being used on a regular basis
- iii. submit progress reports to this Scrutiny Board

We considered a detailed analysis of the current trend relating to sickness absence in Leeds City Council and recommend further interventions to aid the management of attendance.

We looked at sickness absence in other comparable local authorities and Core Cities to assist us in our discussions.

In April the Board agreed to support the following recommendations:-

- for further work to be undertaken to ensure effective analysis and reporting of sickness absence and associated costs in order to drive improvement activities.
- for an increased emphasis on reinforcing the critical role of line managers in the employment relationship.
- that more formal performance management be introduced and cascaded down through the managerial structure in order to prioritise improvements in this area.
- to critically review the number of cases where employees are on either half or nil pay and seek to resolve these cases in the most effective and timely manner.
- for more work to be undertaken to address the issue of applying rigour to the application of the relevant policies and procedures in support of improving performance in this area.
- for work to be undertaken between HR and Legal Services to critically review the Council's approach to risk in order to more successfully progress cases through ill health capability procedures where this was appropriate and justified.
- for HR to undertake further work to identify if there were any fundamental differences or lessons to be learned in the way in which Education Leeds and ALMOs as arms length operators manage their sickness levels that could be applied to other areas of the Council.
- that the effectiveness of HR disseminating information to staff concerning national outbreaks of sickness be included in a future staff survey.
- that a further progress report on detailed sickness attendance analysis be submitted to the Scrutiny Board responsible for this area early in the new municipal year, subject to any changes that might be made to the Scrutiny Board structure at the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2008.



People are the key



Valuing Colleagues



Good relationships with the trade unions are important



We want people to achieve their potential

Presentation and Reports

We received during the course of the year a number of wide ranging reports and presentations as part of our monitoring and review role. These included:

- **Sensible Risk Management**

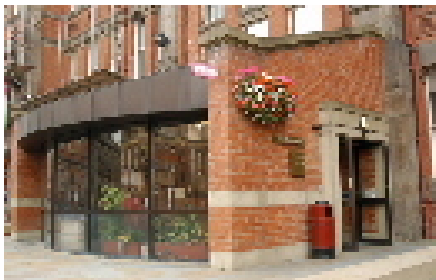
We looked at how officers make decisions on health and safety grounds after risk assessments have been undertaken.

We reviewed the process and fully endorsed the Health and Safety Executive's approach to sensible risk management which should not be used as a barrier to unreasonably prevent activities.

We recommended that the Audit and Risk Section ensures that Members are advised at an early stage of any significant health and safety incidents in their respective wards.



Location of the Audit & Risk Section Civic Hall



*Leeds Benefits Service Main Office
2 George Street, Leeds*



This form can be used to claim housing, Council tax and education benefits

- **Single Managed Fraud Team**

We were provided with an update on progress with regard to implementation of the Single Managed Fraud Team initiative as approved by the Executive Board on 17th October 2007.

We were pleased to note that arrangements have now been established, a business plan is being developed, good progress has been made in harmonising procedures and training for both Jobcentre Plus and the Council's Benefits staff is underway. Phase 2 will see staff co-located with Jobcentre Plus staff.

- **Business Support Centre (BSC)**

We reviewed the HR strategy to develop shared services that was being implemented and delivered through the Business Support Centre (BSC).

We noted that the broad objectives in terms of efficiency and objectives was to reduce staffing levels by 20%, improve the quality of the service and develop smarter working and utilise technology.



BSC and CRS, Belgrave House



Jobs with the Council

- **Centralised Recruitment Service (CRS)**

We received a presentation and monitored the progress concerning the Centralised Recruitment Service located in Belgrave House.

We noted improvements in the management of the service, business process and consistent outputs, levels of e-recruitment, reductions in external costs of advertising and introduction of improved recruitment policies.

We asked to review other savings which could be made by making further efficiencies in recruitment practices, advertising costs and better use of technology.

- **Reduce Fraud and Error in Benefits and Council Tax**

We received a presentation on the proactive work being undertaken to help prevent fraud and error entering the benefits system.

We considered the work being undertaken to help identify inconsistencies in the system on an ongoing basis.

We also looked at the approach to investigating and prosecuting benefit fraud.



- **Slivers of Time Project**

We recognised the importance of this national initiative and have received regular updates on its progress in Leeds.

This initiative to accelerate the "Narrowing the Gap" agenda by bringing people from the city's deprived areas into the workforce is extremely exciting.

- **Resolving Customer Enquiries Taken by the Council's Contact Centre**

We wanted to look at the effectiveness of resolving customer enquiries which had been taken by the Council's Contact Centre and passed to the relevant service department for action.

We considered an initial paper in September 2007 on the end-to-end delivery of services to our customers and acknowledged the significant improvements in accessibility of services that had taken place. However, we expressed concern that some service departments were not responding to customer enquiries and complaints made through the Contact Centre in a timely and cost effective way.

In April 2008 we considered a further detailed report providing further data and explanation as to the reasons for repeat contact at the Contact Centre, and the steps in place to reduce the need for chase-up calls.

The report focused specifically on East North East Homes ALMO (representative of the ALMOs) and the refuse collection service (bin deliveries and missed bin calls).

This joint report of the Chief Customer Services Officer and Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods was detailed. It looked at the main issues, initiatives and positive steps currently being taken to improve the customer experience. It also acknowledged that there was still more to do particularly on the end-to-end delivery of services to our customers.

We would have liked to revisit this issue had time allowed.



New ALMOs



Refuse Collection Services

The Board's full work programme 2007/08

- **Request for Scrutiny regarding the need for the Council to establish more work placements for people with mental health problems**
- **Statement of the Board and publication of recommendations on the development of disability employment strategies**
- **Consultation on the Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan**
- **Request for Scrutiny to review the commissioning of the passenger transport and taxi and private hire contracts**
- **Consultation on the development of the Council's Business Plan**
- **Performance Management Indicators for Quarter 4 2006/07 and Quarters 1, 2 and 3 for 2007/08**
- **Budgetary Issues and Considerations**
- **Treasury Management Review**
- **Review of the Centralised Recruitment Service**
- **Slivers of Time Project**
- **Alternatives to Landlines Internet Access – Narrowing the Gap**
- **Ethical Investment**
- **Leeds Benefits Service Take-Up Activity**
- **Resolving Customer Enquiries taken by the Council's Contact Centre**
- **Review of the level of Sickness Absence within the Council**
- **Single Managed Fraud Team**
- **Sensible Risk Management**
- **The Government's Proposals for Supplementary Business Rates**
- **Proactive Work being undertaken in Revenue and Benefits to reduce fraud**
- **Review of the development of the Business Support Centre**

Developing Scrutiny

As has been our practice in previous Annual Reports we have published an Action Plan for the coming year. We have also reviewed last year's Plan and made an assessment of how well we have met our previous ambitions.

The Action Plan this year reflects what we consider to be the main areas for development. A key focus remains ensuring that Scrutiny is a worthwhile process and adds value to the running of the Council. By doing this we will ensure that Scrutiny has a meaningful role to play in the running of the City. This in turn will encourage elected Members, partners and communities to become actively involved in the Scrutiny process.

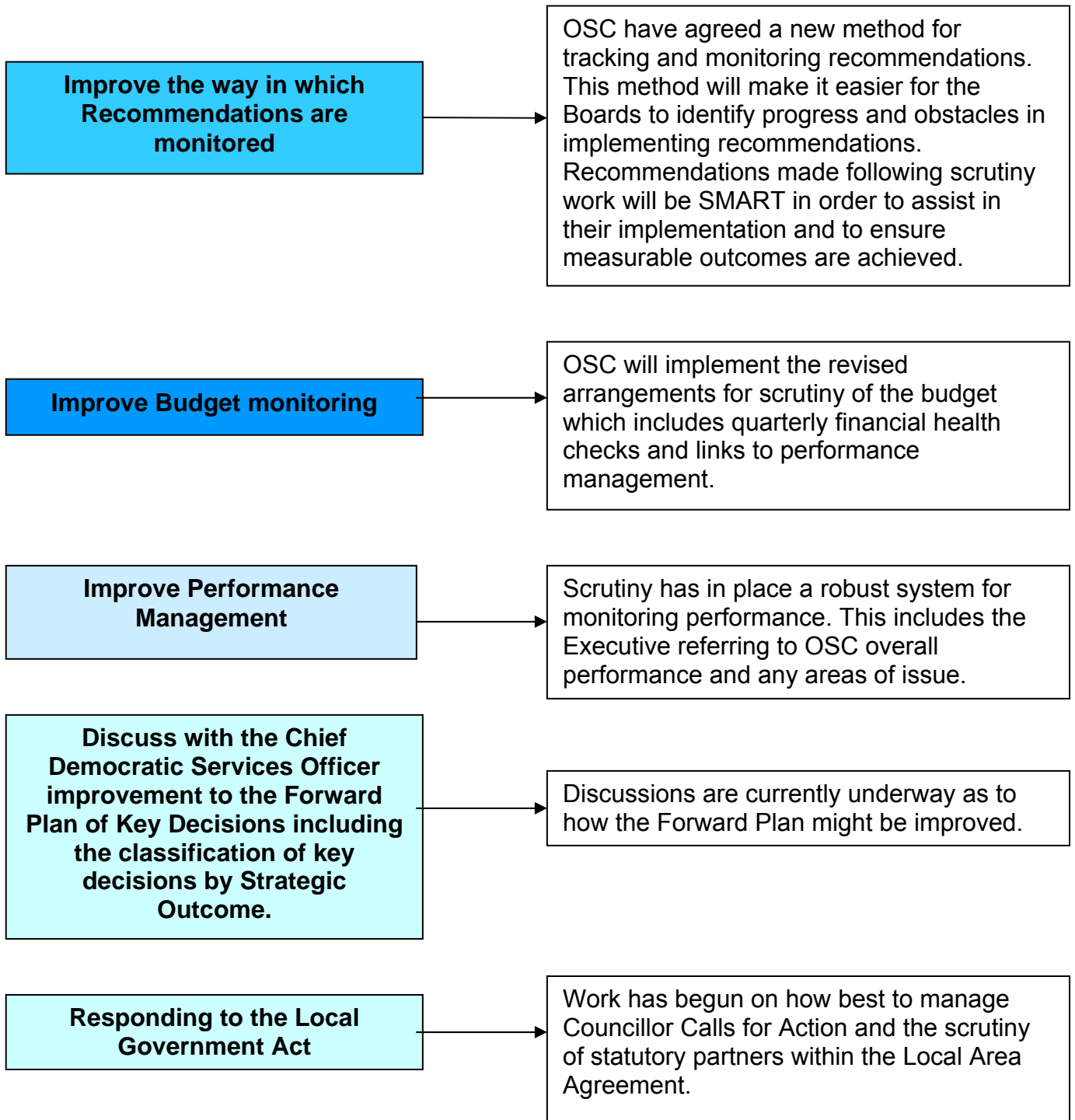
Other goals include building on the key relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny and bringing into focus the importance of Scrutiny in driving improvements within the Local Area Agreement.

How we meaningfully scrutinise the Budget must also be an area where we can improve our performance.

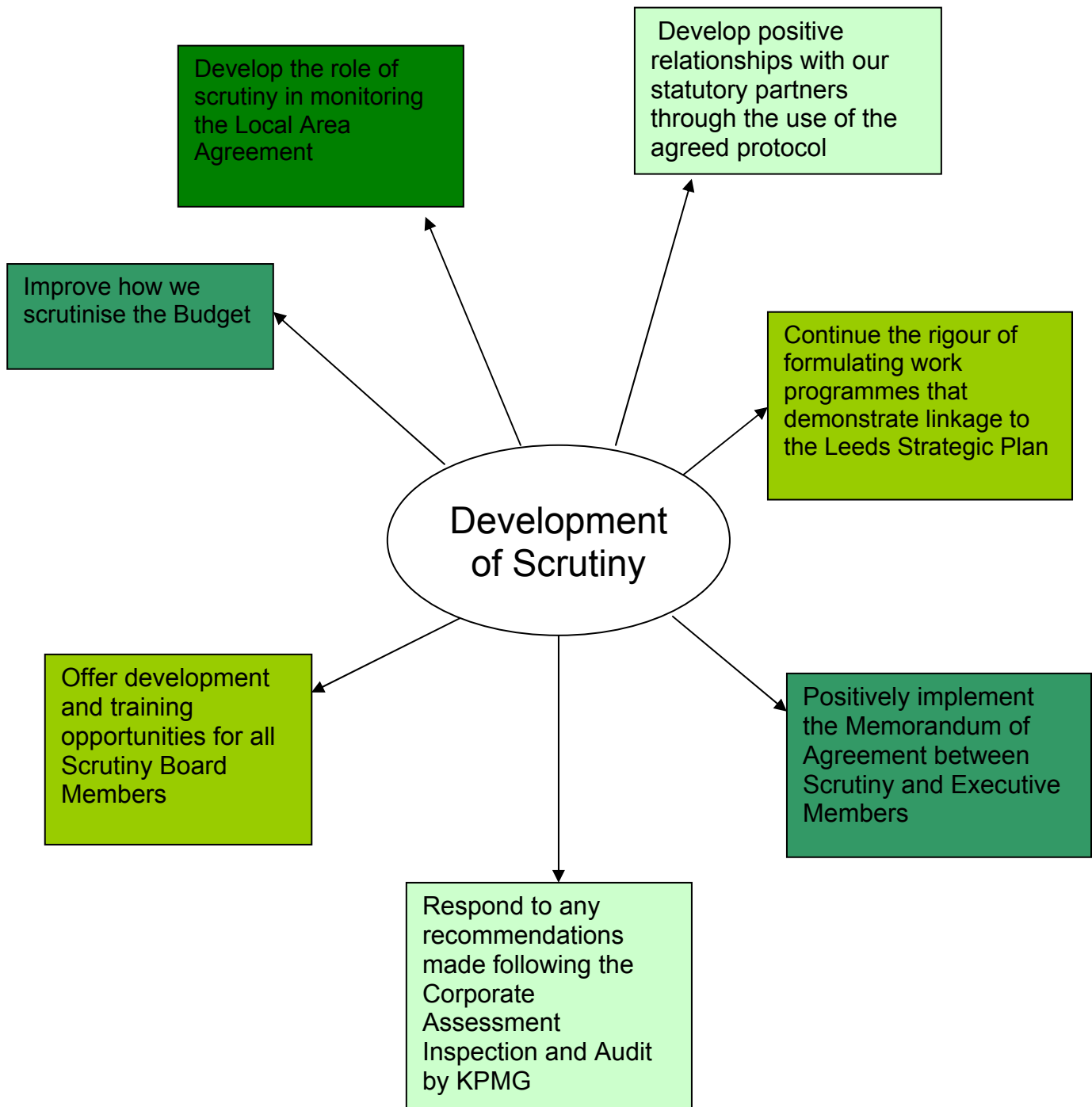


Action Plan 2007/08

Progress



Action Plan 2008/09



Scrutiny Publications 2007/08

Guide to Scrutiny – comprehensive publication

Revised and updated Information Leaflets:

Guide to Scrutiny – officers

Guide to Scrutiny – Members

Guide to Scrutiny – external witnesses

Final Reports issued by Scrutiny Boards in 2007/08

- Fountain Primary School
- Services for 8–13 year olds
- The localisation of health and social care services in Leeds
- Reviewing the commissioning of passenger transport & taxi & private hire contracts
- Consultation Processes
- Wharfemeadows Fence Inquiry
- Housing Lettings

Statements issued by Scrutiny Boards in 2007/08

- Inclusion
- The NHS Dental Contract: One year on
- Teenage Pregnancy in Leeds
- Obesity in Leeds
- Comments on the Leeds Strategic Plan
- Disability employment strategies
- Sickness absence
- Shared Spaces
- Council's role in reducing CO2 emissions

Operational Documents

- Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny
- Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds

A list of all final reports since 1999 can be found on our internet site

www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny

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