

Scrutiny Board (City Development)



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

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Barker
Cllr Chris Beverley
Cllr Bob Gettings JP
Cllr Arif Hussain
Cllr Jose Jarosz
Cllr Matthew Lobley
Cllr Jamie Matthews
Cllr Adam Ogilvie
Cllr Rachael Procter
Cllr Roger Harington
Cllr Neil Taggart
Cllr Gerald Wilkinson

DRAFT ONLY

The Chair's Summary

I am pleased to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). The support and encouragement throughout this busy year by all Members of the Board has been encouraging. We have had a number of positive outcomes.

We concluded an inquiry into the thorny issue of Residents Parking Schemes. We were extremely concerned as a Board that the demand for such schemes was increasing year on year, particularly in certain areas of the city. We were of the view that the process and options available needed to be considered if the credibility of the process was to be maintained. We made a number of recommendations as a result of our detailed deliberations. Unfortunately the Executive Board decided not to approve our recommendations.

There has been a three fold increase in the number of Call-Ins the Scrutiny Board has had to deal with this year as a consequence of changes to the scrutiny procedure rules. The first related to proposed highway works at Savins Mill gyratory. The second to the future ownership and management of the Council's small industrial unit portfolio at St Anns Mills / Abbey Mills, Kirkstall. Finally, we considered the City Development department's proposals to increase cemetery fees. With regard to the cemetery fees on hearing the evidence we accepted the department's explanation and agreed that the decision be released for implementation.

However, we were concerned that this decision had been implemented on 10th October 2008 prior to the expiry of the Call-In period on the 17th October 2008 and asked that effective measures be put in place to avoid this happening again.

We considered a request for scrutiny from Shadwell Parish Council concerning the continuing delays in adding paths to the Council's definitive map as rights of way. Based on the detailed evidence presented to us the Board felt able to support the officers to progress the list of applications in line with the Council's published statement of priorities and to reject this request.

The second request for scrutiny came from the North West (Inner) Area Committee concerning phase 1 of proposed highways works at on the A660 Corridor at Woodhouse Lane / Clarendon Road. We were able to make a number of recommendations as a consequence of our intervention on this matter.

The introduction of the Leeds Strategic and Council Business Plans 2008 to 2011 and changes to the national performance management arrangements has required changes to the Council's performance reporting and accountability arrangements. The quality and robustness of our performance management arrangements are a key element of the organisational assessment under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment and therefore it is important that these arrangements are effective. We have continued to monitor and challenge the performance indicators of the City Development department.

We have continued to receive and comment upon ongoing plans and strategies which provide a framework for many other projects.

A brief summary of our endeavours during 2008/2009 follows.

Finally, I would like to thank all the witnesses, officers and members of the public who contributed to our work during the year.

Cllr Ralph Pryke
Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Inquiry on Residents Parking Schemes

We were concerned that the waiting time for the introduction of residents parking schemes was unacceptably long even once they had been approved and added to the Council's waiting list for implementation. We recognised that the main reason for this was that there was only a limited amount of funding available in the Council budget each year for such schemes and that it had been necessary to prioritise requests according to greatest need. As demand for such schemes was increasing year on year, particularly in certain areas of the city, we were of the view that that the process and options available needed to be considered if the credibility of the process was to be maintained.



"We are grateful to Councillor Andrew Carter for drawing our attention to this issue early in the development of our work programme. We wanted to improve the options available to residents with regard to residents parking schemes and how they are delivered and funded."

Councillor Ralph Pryke (Chair)



Scrutiny Board City Development

"I think the methodology for introducing a Traffic Regulation Order especially RPZ's, is very frustrating. So much time is given over to dealing with objectors and addressing or disproving their concerns"

Councillor James Monaghan
Headingley Ward



Our Main Recommendation

That the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods

(i) undertake a review of residents parking schemes including detailed cost benefit analysis and consultation with residents, with a view to introducing an option that would enable residents to fund the cost of a resident parking scheme in accordance with agreed policy and does not accelerate lower priority schemes in advance of schemes on the approved list.

(ii) that this analysis work includes the use of the Council's consultants to provide additional staffing resources and methods by which residents could recoup the costs of a residents parking scheme, especially where a large proportion of residents are commuters, by releasing spaces during the day for 'pay and display' parking by non-residents.

(iii) that subject to (i) and (ii) above the option to allow residents to pay for a residents parking scheme be introduced from April 2010.

Our other recommendations were:

(a) That the assessment method for determining the suitability of establishing a residents parking scheme should include the availability of alternative parking and that this be considered as part of the review proposed in recommendation 1.

(b) That the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods review the issuing of resident and visitors parking permits and consult with residents across the city with a view to

- (i) phasing in charges for resident and visitor parking permits over a period of 5 years with regular progress reports to the appropriate Scrutiny Board.
- (ii) residents parking and visitors permits being valid for a period of 1 year instead of 3 years.
- (iii) restricting the number of resident parking permits (and visitor permits) that are issued to each household.

(c) That the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods

- (i) consider introducing regular reviews of resident parking schemes in order to ascertain how well they are operating and if they remain appropriate and fit for purpose, particularly if charging for residents and visitors permits is introduced
- (ii) report back to this Scrutiny Board on how this might be achieved.



Residents' Parking Zone Sign

(d) In order to improve the clarity and transparency of the process

- (i) that detailed guidance on resident parking schemes that promotes understanding of the process involved with resident parking schemes be included on the Council's web site by early 2009.
- (ii) that a policy document on this issue be developed and submitted to this Scrutiny Board for consideration with a view to it being included on the Council's web site.

(e) That the results of the pilot scheme to look at the level of fraud in residents parking zones be reported to this Scrutiny Board early in 2009.

(f) That certainty of funding of residents parking schemes is essential for long term planning of schemes on the approved list and which enables schemes to be run over two or more financial years and that a minimum of a three year planned programme should be adopted for these schemes.

"I am concerned that as car parking charges at the Leeds Bradford International Airport are high travellers are parking their cars in local residential streets up to two miles away from the airport. What is more they are left there for two to three weeks while they are on holiday"

Councillor Ryk Downes
Otley & Yeadon Ward

"I think the Council should have a very clear policy on where and when schemes can be put in and what those schemes are designed to do."

Councillor Colin Campbell
Otley & Yeadon Ward

Inquiry on Phase 1 Highways Improvements A660 Corridor Woodhouse Lane/Clarendon Road

We received a request for scrutiny from the North West (Inner) Area Committee on proposals for phase 1 of proposed highways improvements to the A660 corridor involving junction improvements at Woodhouse Lane/Clarendon Road, an inbound bus/cycle lane and improvements to a sub standard bus stop.

We received a substantial number of enquiries and emails on this matter from the general public, some of whom had been misinformed about the proposed scheme and the role and powers of scrutiny. Some residents attended our meeting in January 2008.

We agreed a Statement and made a number of recommendations as a consequence of our investigations at our meeting in February 2009 as follows:

Our Recommendations -

That the Chief Highways Officer

(a) review the current consultation process to ensure that at the very least consultees and particularly Elected members are encouraged to respond to requests and how a nil response to invitations to comment may be interpreted as no objections received or support for a particular scheme or project.

(b) review the process by which highways schemes are reported to Area Committees and particularly those that affect more than one ward in order to ensure proper consultation and feedback from all Members of Area Committees on proposed highways schemes.

(c) review the traffic modelling for the proposals at Clarendon Road to ascertain what alternative solutions, if any, are available including options for using the existing road space to make bus lane provision where it is needed.

(d) ensure that early consultation is carried out in respect to options for making early improvements to the A660 and that this shows the overarching strategy for the corridor to ensure that schemes are not considered in isolation.



Woodhouse Lane towards
junction of Clarendon Road



Woodhouse Moor



Clarendon Road towards
junction with Woodhouse Lane

Call-In of Executive Board or Officer Delegated Decisions

We received a number of Call-In requests from Members in accordance with the Council's scrutiny procedure rules concerning decisions taken by the Executive Board or by officers under the officer delegation scheme.

Savins Mill Gyratory

The first Call-In we considered was an officer's delegated decision concerning proposed highway works at Savins Mill gyratory.

We decided on the evidence presented to release this decision for implementation.



Savins Mill Way

St Ann's Mills / Abbey Mills, Kirkstall

The next Call-In we heard was in relation to an Executive Board decision concerning the future ownership and management of the Council's small industrial unit portfolio, St Anns Mills / Abbey Mills, Kirkstall and the investment and agricultural property portfolio.

We concluded that the factors raised by the signatories of the Call-In would not have made a material difference to the Executive Board's decision and the decision was immediately released for implementation.



Entrance to St Ann's Mill



Abbey Mills

Cemeteries & Crematoria Fees & Charges

Finally, we heard a Call-In regarding an officer delegated decision concerning cemeteries and crematoria fees and charges.

We noted that the substance of the Call-In was that charges for burials had increased by 9% whilst inflation was around 5%.

On hearing the evidence we accepted the department's explanation and agreed that the decision be released for implementation.

However, we were concerned that this decision had been implemented on 10th October 2008 prior to the expiry of the Call-In period on the 17th October 2008 and asked that effective measures be put in place to avoid this happening again.



Entrance to Lawnswood Cemetery & Crematoria

Request for Scrutiny: Delays in Adding Paths to the Council's Definitive Map as Rights of Way

In July 2008 we considered a request from Shadwell Parish Council concerning delays in adding paths to the Council's definitive map as rights of way. We received a report on this matter from the City Development department in September 2008.

We were satisfied on the evidence presented to us to support the officers to progress the list of applications in line with the Council's published statement of priorities.

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:

- ***Parks & Greenspace Strategy***

We received in September 2008 an update and contributed to the development of a draft Parks and Greenspace strategy for the Council.

We were delighted to be able to give our input to this document in advance of consideration by the Executive Board.

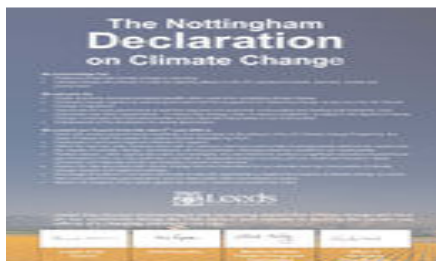
We recognise the importance of this strategy for the efficient and effective management of all our parks and green space in the city.



Roundhay Park Autumn



Middleton Park



- ***Climate Change Strategy***

We commented on the Leeds Climate Change Strategy: Vision for Action prior to submission to Executive Board and full Council for approval.

The Leeds Climate Change Strategy is a city-wide strategy focused on carbon reduction and climate adaptation and aims to fulfil the Council's commitment in the Nottingham Declaration.

- ***Review of the Leeds Economic Development Strategy***

In September 2008 we received a presentation and gave our views and input to the development of the city's agenda for improved economic performance.



Tower block in the city

- **Traffic Congestion – Key Locations**

We considered a report on key locations for congestion on the major highway network. This paper also provided information concerning congestion locations specifically identified by Ward Members.



Traffic queuing



Swimming pool at Kirkstall Leisure Centre

- **Consultation on the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres**

We were advised and commented upon the consultation exercise that was being carried out on the draft vision for leisure centres in Leeds prior to recommendations being presented to the Executive Board.



From the bridge, Neville Street

- **Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme**

We heard from the Chief Highways Officer and a representative from the Environment Agency on the latest version of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Design, Vision and Guide which aims to minimise the potential detrimental impact of the scheme and maximise the opportunities along 19km of the river Aire.



Dark Arches, Granary Wharfe



Planning Compliance

- **Management & Capacity of the Planning Compliance Service**

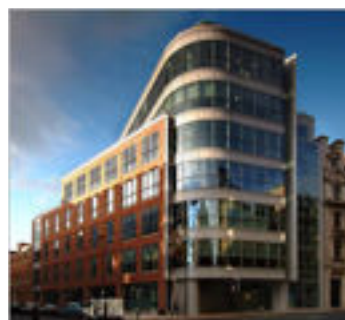
We received an update from the Chief Planning Officer on the actions being taken to address key issues in the Planning and Compliance service, focusing around the themes of improving the customer experience, developing skills and building capacity.



- **Strategic Review of the Planning & Development Services**

The Chief Planning Officer gave an update on progress being made on implementing the solutions within the five improvement themes identified in the strategic review of Planning and Development services.

We were pleased with progress which included the introduction of electronic consultations where objections and comments to applications would be included on line.



City Point

- **Sustainable Education Travel Strategy & Integrated School Transport Policy for Children's Services**

We discussed at some length the Executive Board's approval to the Leeds Sustainable Education Travel Strategy (LSETS) and the development of a Children's Services Schools Transport Policy which would be integrated in to the LSETS by 2010.

We identified from our enquiries that a number of schools still did not have approved travel plans in place. We requested that all Members of Council be provided with details of schools in their ward which did not have approved travel plans.



My bus

- **Major Arts Organisations Funded by Arts@Leeds 08/09**

We considered information on the process for awarding City Council grant aid to major arts organisations.

We requested details of the funding provided during the last three years to the seven major arts organisations referred to in the report and this was provided by the City Development department.



- **City Centre Park**

We considered a report on the vision for a new City Centre Park and proposals to undertake further feasibility work to explore the potential to develop a new piece of greenspace on the Council's site at Sovereign Street.

We agreed that this was an exciting proposal with a longer term objective of exploring land assembly opportunities in partnership with landowners of major sites that would function as a new park for the City Centre.



To Sovereign Street car park



Roundhay Park

Visits by the Board

- **City Varieties**

The Board visited the City Varieties prior to the commencement of the refurbishment of the building which would include the installation of an external lift.

- **Roundhay Mansion**

We were pleased to hear that an Agreement for Lease had been agreed with Dine Hospitality Ltd for the Roundhay Mansion.

We were also advised that planning permission and Listed Building Consent had also been approved for the remodelling works to the interior of the building and a new fire escape.

We had wanted to visit the Mansion, but as works will not be completed in this municipal year, the next Board will receive the invitation.



Inside the City Varieties



Grand theatre

- **Grand Theatre & Howard Assembly Rooms**



Howard Assembly Rooms

The Board visited the Grand Theatre and Howard Assembly Rooms which have been refurbished to an extremely high standard. The Assembly rooms have created a permanent home for Opera North.

The Board's full work programme 2008/09

- **Review of Existing Policy**

- ◇ Inquiry on Residents Parking Schemes
- ◇ Call-In of an Executive Board decision - The future ownership and management of the Council's small Industrial unit portfolio, St Ann's Mills / Abbey Mills, Kirkstall and the investment and agricultural property portfolio
- ◇ Request for scrutiny by Shadwell Parish Council regarding delays in adding paths to the Council's definitive map as rights of way
- ◇ Call-In of an Officer Delegated Decision - Proposed highway works at Savins Mill gyratory
- ◇ An agenda for improved economic performance: Review of the Leeds Economic Development Strategy 1999
- ◇ Update on the strategic review of planning and development services
- ◇ Call-In of an Officer Delegated Decision - cemeteries and crematoria fees and charges
- ◇ Publicity and Promotion of Leisure Events
- ◇ Request for Scrutiny by North West (Inner) Area Committee on proposals for phase 1 of highways improvements to the A660 corridor and draft statement and recommendations by the Board

- **Development of New Policy**

- ◇ Parks and greenspace strategy
- ◇ Sustainable education travel strategy and the development of an integrated school transport policy for Children's Services
- ◇ Consultation on the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres in Leeds
- ◇ City Centre Park
- ◇ Sustainable Communities Act
- ◇ Climate Change Strategy
- ◇ Leeds flood alleviation scheme

- **Briefings**

- ◇ Major arts organisations funded by Arts@Leeds 08/09
- ◇ Visits to the City Varieties, Grand Theatre and Assembly Rooms
- ◇ Traffic congestion - key locations
- ◇ Roundhay Mansion update

- **Performance Management and Monitoring**

- ◇ Accountability arrangements for 2008/09 and quarter one, two and three performance reports
- ◇ Previously received performance indicators