

# Scrutiny Board (City Development)



Councillor Ralph Pryke  
Chair of Scrutiny Board  
(City Development)

## **Membership of the Board:**

Councillor Ralph Pryke (Chair)  
Councillor Christopher James Beverley  
Councillor Roger Harington  
Councillor Matthew Loble  
Councillor Neil Taggart  
Councillor Gerald Wilkinson  
Councillor Adam Ogilvie  
Councillor Suzi Armitage  
Councillor Thomas Murray  
Councillor Ryk Downes  
Councillor David Schofield  
Councillor Terrence Grayshon  
Councillor Steve Smith

## **The Chair's summary**

I am delighted once again to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). As ever my thanks go to my colleagues on the Board who have managed to maintain their customary enthusiasm, good humour and rigour throughout the year despite quite a heavy workload.

This year the Scrutiny Board considered four requests for scrutiny, one more than last year. Two requests involved the thorny issue of the department's proposals to introduce barbeque areas on Woodhouse Moor. We spent a considerable amount of time looking at whether the consultation process undertaken by the department had been carried out properly and establishing whether a satisfactory cost benefit analysis had been carried out to justify the scheme. On both occasions we rejected the requests put to us for further scrutiny. It will be interesting to see during the summer whether the new arrangements for barbeques on Woodhouse Moor are successful. We may be revisiting this later in the new municipal year. We rejected a request for scrutiny of the A65 quality bus initiative on hearing the evidence presented to us. Finally we considered a request for scrutiny relating to the loss of employment land in the city. We deferred consideration of this matter pending discussions with the Chair of the Development Control Panel who is undertaking a review of the Local Development Framework which may address many of the issues raised by the Member.

We are grateful to the community groups and elected members who continue to raise issues of concern with us and wish to hold the Executive to account.

We had a Call In concerning an officer delegated decision regarding the sports of the future ICT refresh which we subsequently released for implementation. We had a further Call In to review the Executive Board decision of 26th August 2009 to proceed with the establishment of a barbeque area on Woodhouse Moor as there had been no public consultation about the recommended option and little indication of the size of the area, the surface treatment, or where exactly this area was to be located. We rejected the arguments put to us and released this decision for implementation.

As a consequence of negative publicity being given to how Section 106 planning agreements were being operated we undertook a short investigation of unspent funds.

We have actively monitored and challenged the performance indicators of the City Development Department particularly those which could impact on the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) score.

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 for Development and Regeneration at our meeting in March 2010.

We have commented on a number of ongoing plans , strategies and service areas including the Leeds City Region Transport Plan, the Playbuilder initiative, the Conservation and Planning Enforcement Services.

We recognised early in the year the importance of the Council's initiatives with regard to climate change. We agreed to concentrate on three key issues, namely:

- a. Evaluating options for installing LZC (Low and Zero Carbon) energy as part of the corporate estate, with a focus on small, medium and large scale projects;
- b. Development control processes to ensure that developments of over 10 dwellings or 1000 m<sup>2</sup> have at least 10% on-site LZC technologies;
- c. The appropriate delivery structure to ensure that LZC energy, particularly large grid connected or on-site in major regeneration areas, was delivered.

We held three very interesting sessions on the work being undertaken in this regard.

We made a number of informal visits to the new Roundhay Park Mansion, the South Leeds Sports Centre and John Charles aquatic centre.

I was again disappointed this year that the Department was unable to provide us with some of the reports and further information within the proposed and agreed timescales, with some slipping back by several months. I hope that in future greater attention will be given to the Board's relatively short operational timescales.

Finally, my thanks go especially to all the external witnesses who have taken the time and trouble to attend the Board this year on a variety of issues.

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

# **Inquiry to review the method by which Planning Applications are Publicised and Consultation Undertaken**

## **Summary**

We thought this review to be timely as it provided an opportunity to look at the ways in which planning applications are publicised and consulted on in the context of a period of considerable change in Leeds Planning Service. This review also facilitated an opportunity to consider whether consultation and notification practices were operating effectively and giving value for money.

## **Anticipated service benefits**

The service benefits of this review will increase the support provided to those who submit or seek information on planning applications by delivering an improved consistent and transparent planning service across the city.

### **Our main recommendations**

**That Leeds Planning Service redefine the role of its Planning Officers by aligning the geographical areas of work to the area committees so they can act more proactively in fostering liaison with developers, Members and the local community.**

**That in order to achieve consistency of service across the city the Chief Planning Officer**

- **seeks funding opportunities to extend the network of Community Planners with priority given to disadvantaged areas.**
- **if satisfactory progress is not made by 2012 consideration be given in the budget review to consider how these posts could be funded.**
- **in the interim and as part of the restructure of the area teams consider the appointment of nominated officers to cover specific areas as an option.**

**That the Chief Planning Officer introduces by 31st May 2011 a suitable Code of Practice for Publicity to be used across Planning Services to ensure consistency of approach and transparency and reassurance of process.**

**That the Chief Planning Officer undertakes to build in public engagement for future developments of the Public Access System and continue to improve the design and content of the Public Access Service within the resources available.**

**That the Chief Planning Officer continues to resource and develop with our partners, the community, amenity groups and associations database by using the range of communication channels available to the service and that greater emphasis be placed on pre-application engagement with communities to try to involve those who are hardest to reach.**

## **PublicAccess**

"The additional facilities which are now available on the Leeds Planning Service Public Access Site must make this one of the best sites in the country for all things planning."

Councillor Matthew Loble  
Roundhay Ward

## Other work of the Board

### Section 106 Agreements

We considered a report on Section 106 Payments following an article which appeared in a local newspaper. We looked at the current system for managing Section 106 Agreements in Leeds. We also received a breakdown of funds generated from these agreements and the protocols for spending this resource. We concluded that the article in the paper was very misleading.



### Leeds 2012 Olympic Project

We were pleased to receive details of the Leeds 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Project and terms of reference approved by the Leeds 2012 Olympic Project Board. We asked to receive details of the performance indicators which will be used to measure progress and the overall success of the project. We learned that there was interest in the facilities in the Leeds Aquatic Centre at the John Charles centre for Sport.



Leeds Aquatic Centre

### The Agenda for Improved Economic Performance

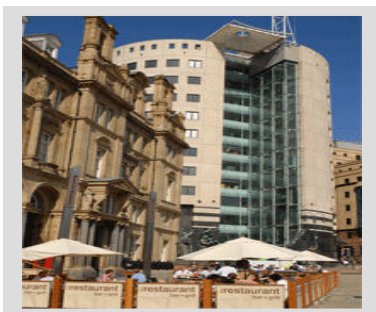
We were consulted on the development of an Agenda for improved economic performance. We made a number of comments and suggestions which were incorporated into the final document which is to be considered by the Executive Board in the spring of 2010.



Leeds 2

### Legible Leeds Project

We reviewed and commented on the work ongoing to improve the legibility of Leeds city centre. This means providing information that makes it easy to get into and out of the city centre and once there, easy to find your way around.

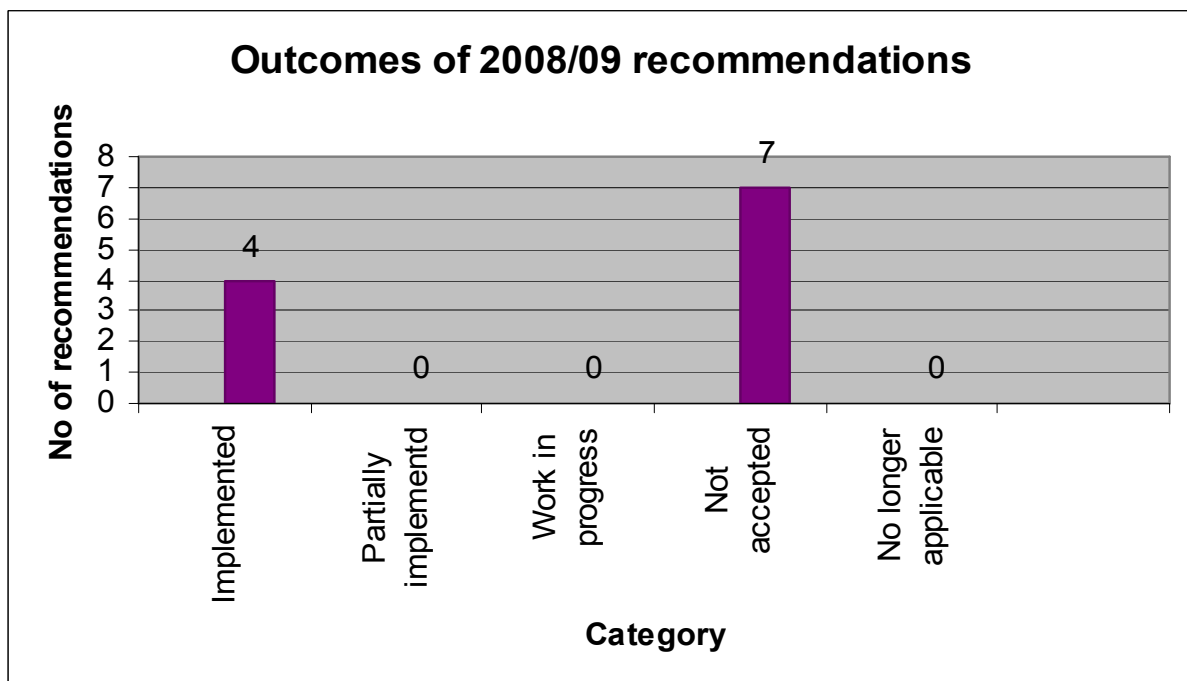


City Square

## Outcome of recommendations made in 2008/09

The Scrutiny Board (City Development) carried out two inquiries in 2008/09, which resulted in 11 recommendations. This section highlights some key examples of where these recommendations have resulted in service benefits, or otherwise added value.

- As part of our inquiry on resident parking schemes we were concerned at the length of time residents had to wait for resident parking schemes to be introduced once they had been included on the waiting list. We wanted to give residents the option to fund the cost of such schemes themselves provided they were within agreed Council policy. We also wanted to allow residents the opportunity to be able to recoup some of these costs by releasing their parking space for pay and display commuters during the day when they were at work. We also thought it appropriate to introduce charges for parking permits. Unfortunately the Executive Board did not concur with our proposals.
- We made four recommendations following consideration of a request for scrutiny on proposals to carry out highways improvements in the vicinity of the junction of Clarendon Road and Woodhouse Lane A660. This has resulted in the department reviewing its consultation process with regard to highway improvement schemes and undertaking to review the traffic modelling scheme for this junction improvement. We consider that these recommendations have now been achieved.



# The Board's full work programme 2009/10

## Requests for scrutiny

- Review consultation process carried out to determine whether to go ahead with a designated barbeque area on Woodhouse Moor
- Need for cost benefit analysis concerning the proposed designated barbeque
- Review loss of land allocated for employment
- Review A65 quality bus initiative

## Review of existing policy

- Provision of the New Street Design Guide and the provision of shared space and shared streets
- Legible Leeds project
- Planning enforcement service
- Agenda for Improved economic performance

## Development of new policy

- Inquiry to review the methods by which planning applications are publicised and community involvement takes place

## Monitoring scrutiny recommendations

- Statement on A660 corridor transport issues

## Performance management

- Quarter 4 2008/09, Quarter 1 2009/10, Quarter 2 2009/10, Quarter3 2009/10
- Working Group looking at identifying additional local performance indicators

## Briefings

- KPMG Scrutiny review May 2009
- Climate change update, on planning for renewables & low zero carbon technology delivery
- Traffic congestion - key location update
- Playbuilder initiative
- Informal visits to Roundhay Park Mansion, the South Leeds Sports Centre and John Charles aquatic centre
- Section 106 planning agreements
- Leeds City Region Transport Strategy
- Review of the Conservation Team
- Review of the 2009/10 Budget
- Leeds 2012 Olympic bid

## Call Ins

- Review of delegated decision D35700 sports of the future ICT refresh - 15608
- Review of Executive Board decision of 26th August regarding the decision to establish a barbeque area on Woodhouse Moor