

# Scrutiny Board (City Development)



Councillor John Procter  
Chair of Scrutiny Board  
(City Development)

## **Membership of the Board:**

Councillor John Procter (Chair)  
Councillor Javaid Akhtar  
Councillor Bernard Atha  
Councillor Denise Atkinson  
Councillor Judith Elliott  
Councillor Gerry Harper  
Councillor Josephine Jarosz  
Councillor Matthew Loble  
Councillor Ralph Pryke  
Councillor Mohammed Rafique  
Councillor Matthew Robinson  
Councillor Steve Smith  
Ms Barbara Woroncow (Co-opted Member)

## **The Chair's summary**

I am pleased to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). It has been extremely busy year and my thanks go my colleagues on the Board who have been supportive throughout the year despite a number of long meetings.

This year the Scrutiny Board considered seven requests for scrutiny, two more than last year. Three requests involved the thorny issue of the department's proposals to close East Leeds Leisure Centre, Middleton Pool and reduce the hours at Garforth Leisure Centre. Whilst the Board has not been able to prevent the Directorate implementing these reductions in service we have challenged the rationale as to how these particular services were identified.

We were successful in stopping the closure of crèche facilities at four of our leisure centres following a request for scrutiny. We are grateful to the Executive Board Member for Leisure for listening to our concerns and for keeping the crèches open for a further 6 months from March 2011 in the hope of identifying alternative crèche operators.

We undertook an inquiry on the future of Kirkgate market . We spent a considerable amount of time hearing from a range of witnesses including the National Market Traders Federation, Friends of Kirkgate Market and individual traders. I and one or two of my colleagues on the Board were market traders for a day. We saw at first hand some of the problems in the market . It was certainly an eye opener. We made a number of recommendations to the Executive Board towards the development of a market strategy.

We considered a request for Scrutiny following the Council's decision to reduce the budget of Home Farm by £100,000. We heard from representatives of the Rare Breed Trust and Rare Breed International who offered to work with the Council to develop a robust business plan that would substantially reduce the farming operation costs. We have established a working group to investigate this further and hope that the Rare Breed Centre can be saved as it is internationally recognised as a centre of excellence.

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 over 40 Members of the public at our meeting in March 2011 which is extremely gratifying.

We undertook an inquiry on cemeteries and crematoria horticultural maintenance. We identified significant savings which could be made if the grave condition rules were strictly applied and alternative arrangements made for families to leave flowers, ornaments and trinkets as tributes. This would significantly reduce maintenance and grass cutting costs at our cemeteries.

We had four Call Ins this year. Two were officer delegated decisions concerning the Council's greenspace funds and LeedsCard and Breezecard and on both occasions we found it necessary to refer the decisions back for reconsideration. In the case of the LeedsCard and BreezeCard the proposal was to stop free entry to tropical world and Home Farm and replace it with a 20% discount. We considered there had been inadequate consultation and that they had not taken account of the introduction of a 'City Card'. The third Call-In was concerning the Directorate's proposals for 'A New Chapter: A Fresh Direction for Leeds Libraries and for Integrated Services. We referred this decision back to the Executive Board on the basis that the scope of the consultation document was too narrow, the depth of information provided insufficient and the timetable for consultation too short. We asked the Executive Board to extend the consultation period and include the criteria which had been applied to determine libraries which were being suggested for closure. We also asked that all the available data for each of the Council's libraries should be included when the results of the consultation are reported to the Executive Board. This issue is still ongoing. The fourth Call-In related to Whinmoor Grange Cemetery Design and Cost Report.

We have actively monitored and challenged the performance indicators of the City Development Directorate and received regular reports on the budget for 2010/11 and reviewed the Executive's proposals for 2011/12.

We have commented on a number of ongoing plans , strategies and service areas including the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011/2026, the Vision for Leeds 2011/2030 and a draft of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)

All in all a busy and successful year .

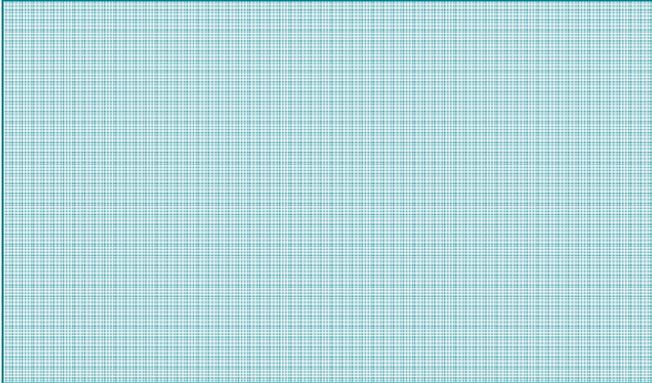
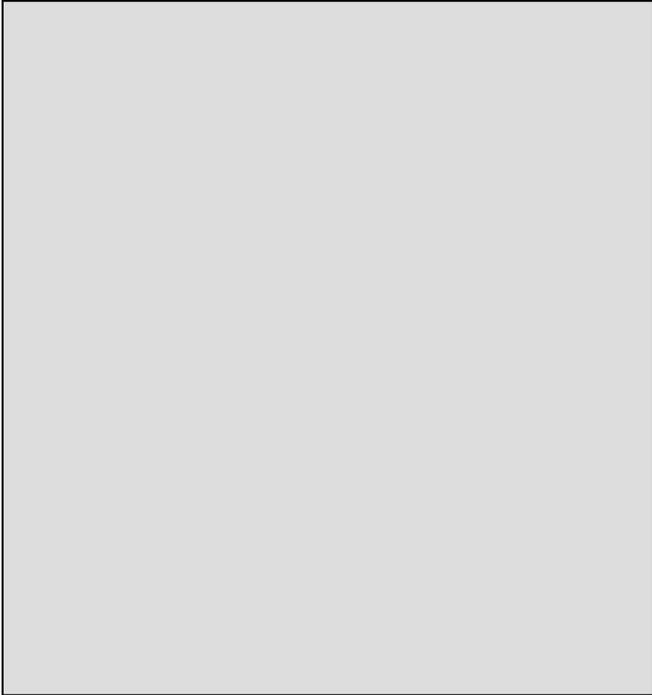
**Councillor John Procter Scrutiny Board (City Development)**

# **Inquiry to review Review the Future of Kirkgate Market**

**Summary**

**Anticipated service benefits**

**Our main recommendations**





# Inquiry into the Cemeteries and Crematoria Horticultural Maintenance

## Summary

The purpose of the Inquiry was to consider whether horticultural maintenance costs could be reduced at our cemeteries and crematoria.

## Anticipated service benefits

We are of the view that the implementation of our recommendations would make significant savings in the Council's horticultural maintenance costs at our cemeteries and crematoria. It would also improve the appearance of our cemeteries.

### Our recommendations

- That due to the success and benefits the Council receives from groups like the Friends of Guiseley and Friends of Becket Street Cemetery, that these be encouraged to be established at all the Council's cemeteries and crematoria, with the work being done through the Area Committees and the Head of Parks and Countryside developing suitable information packs and leaflets on how such groups can be established and promoted in local communities.
- That the Acting Director of City Development enforce the grave conditions on lawned and non-lawned areas in all cemeteries and crematoria managed by the Council; to reduce the maintenance costs by 1400 hours per annum and,
- That the Acting Director of City Development consider the introduction of suitable stand/display boards in designated areas, in the strewing lawns in Council's cemetery and crematoria, for people to place flowers and other tributes on.

"It is important when setting up this kind of organisation that a small group of individuals in the community are identified to drive the process forward".

Mr Barry Bootland, Friends of Guiseley Cemetery

"We noted that, with the exception of Newcastle general regulations covering graves are not enforced by core cities, although some authorities are trying to enforce the rules in new extensions.

Councillor Matthew Robinson

"We do planting and weeding; maintenance of graves where no family members are living; and minor maintenance work".

Mr Barry Bootland, Friends of Guiseley Cemetery

## Other work of the Board

### Proposed Withdrawal of Crèche Provision at Leisure Centres

We considered a request for scrutiny on this matter. We were successful in delaying implementation of the proposed closures of these crèches until March 2011. Subsequently a further extension of 6 months was granted to keep crèche facilities open at Scott Hall, Pudsey, Rothwell and Kippax Leisure Centres whilst potential alternative operators continued to be sought.

### Marketing Leeds

We discussed the Marketing Leeds Annual report 2009 and Annual Review 2009. We sought clarification of the relationship between Marketing Leeds and the Council. We raised concerns that there was a perception held by many that Leeds was not always “punching-its-weight”. We welcomed the news that Leeds was now 23<sup>rd</sup> in the league table of 30 leading cities for business when it was not listed at all in 1999.

### West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026

We were invited to comment on the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2012. We expressed a number of concerns as a Board and Members expressed a number of individual comments and suggestions and officers from the Council and Metro agreed to take them forward as part of the on-going consultation.

### Grants to Culture and Sport Related Organisations

We received details of the grant process to cultural and sporting organisations in Leeds and looked in detail at the amounts granted, the benefits to the city, the governance process and the in kind support provided by the Council. We reviewed the budget savings which were initiated in 2011/12 and monitored the changes being proposed with regard to West Yorkshire Grants and the Arts Council.

### Leeds Libraries and Information Services – Proposed Staffing Structure

We considered a request for scrutiny concerning the proposed new staffing structure for the Leeds Libraries and Information Service and received detailed reports from the Acting Director of City Development. We decided not to undertake further scrutiny.

### Section 106 and 278 Agreements

We suggested that the City Development Directorate produce a Guide for Elected Members on Section 106 and 278 Agreements. We were delighted with the booklet produced and having made a number of small changes the booklet was circulated to all Members of the Council.

## Other work of the Board

### Welcome to Yorkshire

The Chief Executive, Welcome to Yorkshire attended the Board and spoke on the work of his organisation. It was an extremely interesting and useful presentation. He spoke eloquently on a range of issues including the various campaigns to promote Yorkshire and the operating model for harnessing support from the private, public and third sectors. He reassured us that the organisation was very conscious of the cultural diversity in Yorkshire and expounded on the work undertaken by his organisation in this regard.

### Budget 2010/11 and 2011/12

We received regular reports on the financial position of the City Development Directorate in 2010/11. We monitored closely the forecasted income and expenditure and actual results on a monthly basis. We also received details of the budget for 2011/12 which had been approved by Council in February 2011 in so far as it related to the City Development Directorate.

### Call-In Leeds Libraries and Integrated Services

We considered a Call-In in respect of an Executive Board decision on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in relation to "A New Chapter: A Fresh Direction for Leeds Libraries and for Integrated Services. We referred this back to the Executive Board for reconsideration on the grounds that the scope of the consultation document was too narrow, the depth of information provided insufficient and the timetable for consultation too short.

### Leeds Bradford International Airport Surface Access Strategy

We were delighted that the Chief Executive of the Airport and the Director of Operations and Engineering attended the Board to talk about the surface access strategy for the airport. It was reported that a new strategy has to be in place by 2011 and this was being developed with all relevant partners. We also received details of the planning obligations which the airport has in relation to this strategy. We took the opportunity to raise a number of other issues at the airport including disability access and out of date post code navigation systems.

### Call-In Greenspace Funds

We considered a Call-In in respect of Delegated Decision D36872 on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010 approving the release of £201,654 from retained balances for Greenspace improvements in the area where the funding was generated. We referred this decision back to the Deputy Chief Planning Officer to incorporate additional supporting information that sets out the process applied in spending these residual sums and clarifies that Ward Members will be consulted in expenditure of these residual sums.

## Other work of the Board

### Home Farm Temple Newsam, Rare Breed Centre

We considered a request for scrutiny of proposals to cut £100,000 from the budget of Home Farm. We heard from representatives of the Rare Breed Trust, Rare Breed International Trust and other interested parties and agreed to undertake further scrutiny of this matter. We established a Working Group to consider the offers made by the Trusts to work with the Directorate see if significant savings could be made in the farming operation in order to save the Rare Breed Centre. **!!!!!!!Add bit more**

### Call-In LeedsCard and BreezeCard entry to Tropical World and Home Farm

We considered a Call-In in respect of Delegated Decision D37181 on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2010 approving a recommendation that free entry to these attractions for LeedsCard and BreezeCard holders be replaced by a 20% discount from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. We referred this back to the Chief Recreation Officer in view of the additional information provided to us which was not included in the original report on which his decision had been based, inadequate consultation and the introduction of a "City Card".

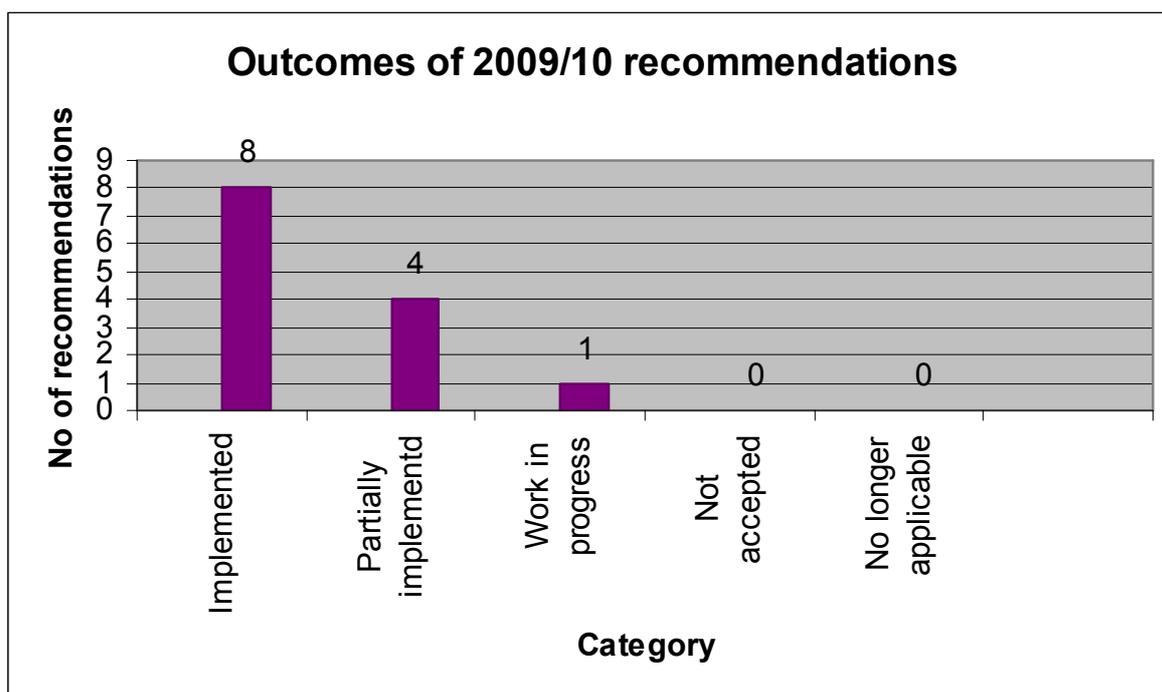
### Three Requests for Scrutiny concerning Leisure Centres

We received a number of requests for scrutiny concerning the decision to close East Leeds Leisure Centre, reduce the hours at Garforth Leisure Centre and close Middleton pool. Whilst recognising that we could not prevent the implementation of these decisions we agreed to scrutinise the rationale behind the selection for closure and reduced hours. **Add something after next meeting**

## Outcome of recommendations made in 2009/10

The Scrutiny Board (City Development) carried out an inquiry in 2009/10, which resulted in 13 recommendations. This section highlights some key examples of where these recommendations have resulted in service benefits, or otherwise added value.

- The inquiry was 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.
- The review facilitated an opportunity to consider whether consultation and notification practices were operating effectively and giving value for money.
- The service benefits of this review has increased 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.



## **The Board's full work programme 2010/11**

### **Requests for scrutiny**

- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**
- **Withdrawal of remaining crèche provision at leisure centres**
- **Leeds libraries and information service – proposed staffing structure**
- **Farming operations at Home Farm, Temple Newsam**
- **Reduced hours of opening Garforth leisure centre**
- **Closure of East Leeds leisure centre**

### **Review of existing policy**

- **Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – process and procedures and guide for elected members**
- **Grants to culture and sport related organisations**

### **Development of new policy**

- **Vision for Leeds 2011 / 2030**
- **Inquiry to review the future of Kirkgate Market**
- **Cemeteries and crematoria horticultural maintenance and development of further friends groups**
- **West Yorkshire local transport plan 2011/2026**
- **Leeds Bradford International Airport Surface Access**
- **Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)**

### **Monitoring scrutiny recommendations**

- **Inquiry which reviewed the methods by which planning applications are publicised and consultation undertaken**

### **Performance management**

- **Planning performance targets NI 157 major planning applications**
- **Performance report year end 2009 /10**
- **Performance reports for quarter periods 2010/11**
- **New strategic plans 2011/2015**

### **Briefings**

- **Current state of the city centre property market**
- **City Development Directorate 2010/11 periods 3 to10**
- **Long stay parking on vacant city centre sites**
- **Marketing Leeds annual report 2009 and annual review and activity plan 2010**
- **Budget 2010/11 and 2011/2012**
- **Welcome to Yorkshire**
- **The state of the roads in Leeds**

### **Call Ins**

- **Review of delegated decision No D36872 - Greenspace Funds**
- **Review of delegated decision No D37181 – LeedsCard and BreezeCard entry to Tropical World and Home Farm**
- **A new chapter: a fresh direction for Leeds libraries and for integrated services**
- **Whinmoor Grange Cemetery Design and Cost Report**