

# Scrutiny at Leeds City Council

Annual Report 2010/11



# Contents

	<b>Page(s)</b>
Foreword	2
Summary of Scrutiny Work in 2010/11	3 - 4
Highlights and Achievements in 2010/11	5 - 7
Reflecting on the year and planning for the future	8
Developing Scrutiny – Key action areas	9

# Foreword

The Council's Scrutiny Boards are uniquely placed to evaluate how well public services are being delivered and how they could be improved, from the point of view of those receiving and using those services. On behalf of the Scrutiny Boards, I have pleasure in presenting this 2010/11 Scrutiny Annual Report, which summarises the highlights and achievements of Scrutiny in Leeds over the last 12 months. In particular, this report demonstrates where Scrutiny has contributed to the development of policy and service improvements.

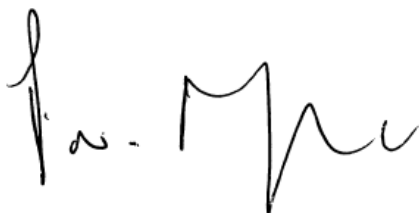
As well as celebrating Scrutiny's achievements, this annual report also reflects on the experience of past scrutiny activity and the progress made against last year's key action areas for development. As a Council, it is vital that we continue to identify steps to improve the way that Scrutiny operates in Leeds. To this end a number of actions for improvement have been identified.

Scrutiny Boards remain responsible for ensuring that items of Scrutiny work come from a strategic approach, as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest. A significant step has already been taken to encourage Scrutiny to be more strategic and outward looking in its operation and to focus on the City Priorities.

In May 2011, the Council agreed to change the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards and now five of the Scrutiny Boards are themed to mirror the city's Strategic Partnership Boards. In doing so, the terms of reference of these Scrutiny Boards determine a number of areas of review to be undertaken on behalf of the Council, which are focused around the new City Priority Plans.

Scrutiny Boards remain autonomous in determining the scope of their reviews and any other pieces of Scrutiny work they consider appropriate. However, more attention will now be given to how the Council and its partners work collaboratively to achieve better 'outcomes' for the communities they serve, with less emphasis on measuring the value of a service based on 'process'. This is in line with the Council's cultural shift towards a more outward looking and 'outcomes' based approach towards service delivery. Scrutiny Boards recognise that by working closely with the Strategic Partnerships, they will have a significant role in helping to deliver on the key activities set out within the new City Priority Plans.

Actions for developing Scrutiny are also detailed within this annual report.



Peter Marrington  
Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

# Summary of work and Publications 2010/11

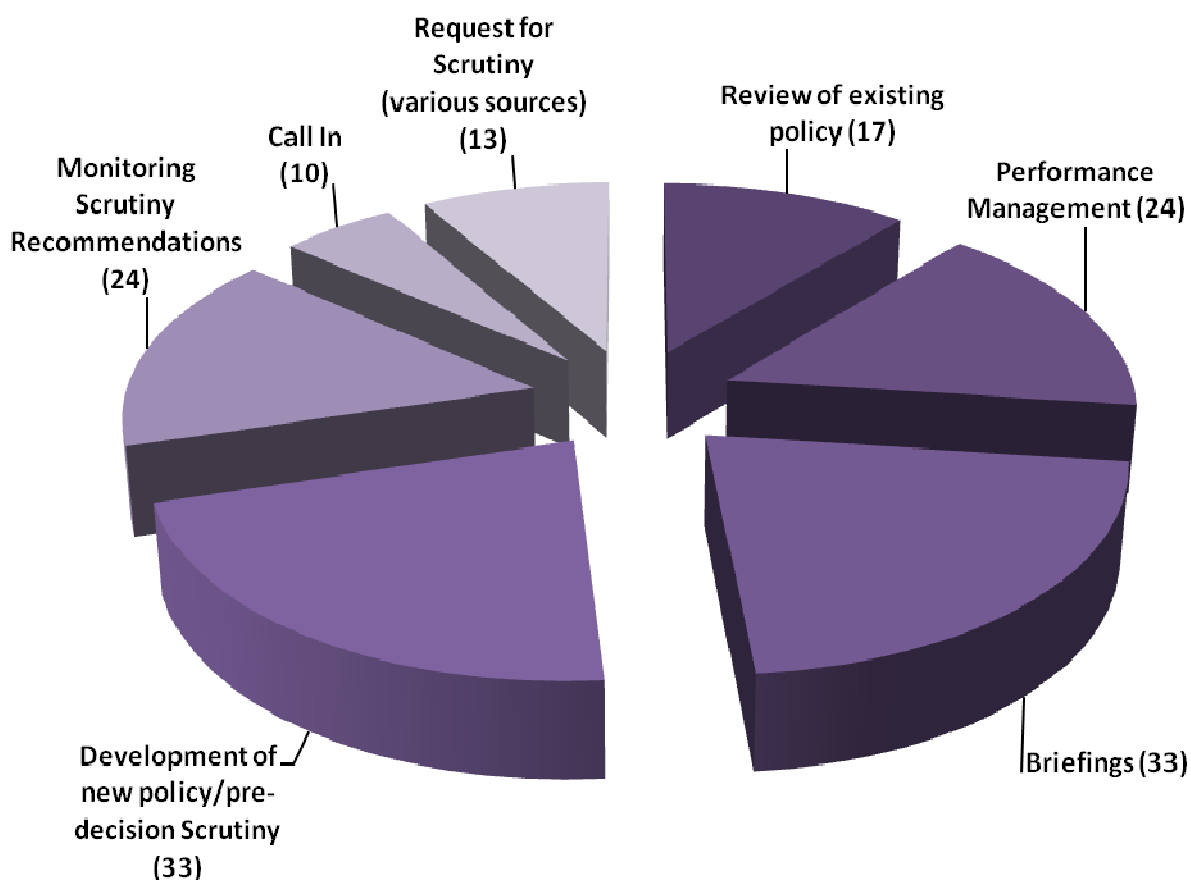
## Summary of Scrutiny Work in 2010/11

Each year, individual Scrutiny Boards produce their own annual reports reflecting on the Scrutiny work they have undertaken and also identifying other potential areas for future Scrutiny. These individual annual reports provide a more detailed account of the extensive work undertaken by the Scrutiny Boards and can be accessed via the Scrutiny Support Unit or Scrutiny website [www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny).

This report aims to provide a collective analysis of the work undertaken by Scrutiny over the last 12 months.

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 chart below represents the type and proportion of work that the Scrutiny Boards have done this year.

**Type and total number of Scrutiny work items in 2010/11**



## Final Inquiry reports published by the Scrutiny Boards in 2010/11

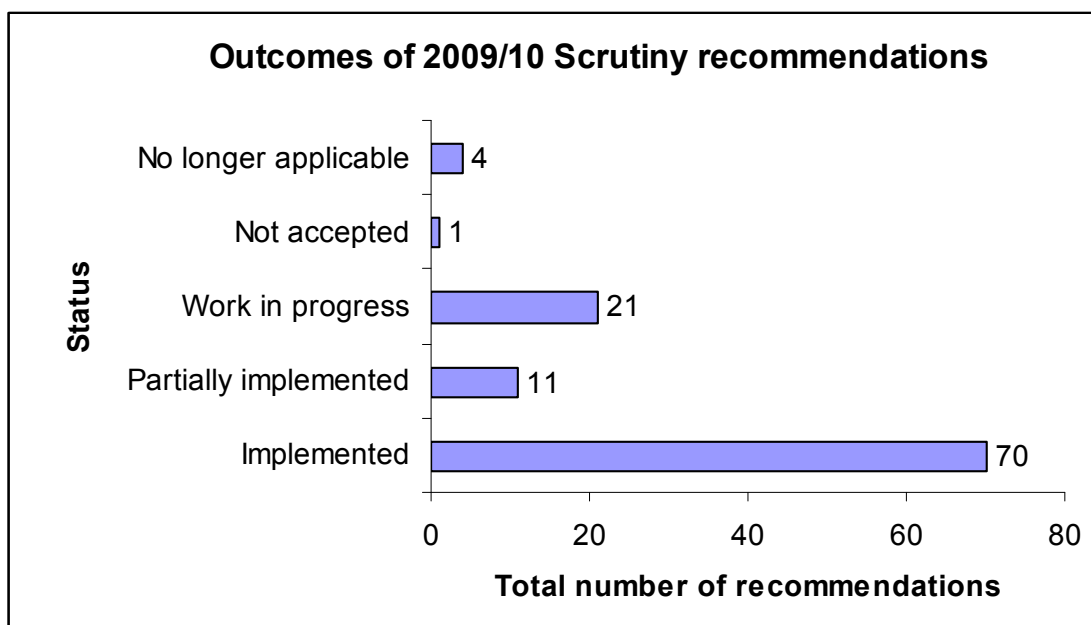
- Review on the Future of Kirkgate Market
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Horticultural Maintenance
- Home Farm, Temple Newsam
- School Balances
- Outdoor Education Centres
- Review of Gypsies and Travellers Provision in Leeds
- Offender Management
- Dog Control Orders
- Recycling
- Residential Care Services for Older People
- Review of Domiciliary Care and Reablement

## Outcome of recommendations made by Scrutiny in 2009/10

A key element of the Scrutiny Boards' work involves ongoing monitoring of recommendations arising from previous Scrutiny reviews.

Within their individual annual reports, the Scrutiny Boards highlight where previous Scrutiny recommendations have resulted in service benefits, or otherwise added value. As part of this, a statistical analysis of the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board in the previous municipal year is also produced showing the outcome status of the recommendations after 12 months of monitoring.

The chart below shows the outcome status (as of April 2010) of all the Scrutiny recommendations made during 2009/10.



# Highlights and Achievements

The individual Scrutiny Board annual reports provide a more detailed account of the extensive work undertaken by the Scrutiny Boards this year. However, a brief summary of the significant pieces of work undertaken by Scrutiny over the last 12 months is presented below.

- **Challenging existing policy**

Following a request from an Executive Member, the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board reviewed the provision of sites within Leeds for gypsies and travellers. In doing so, the Scrutiny Board challenged the Council's existing and costly policy of continuously moving families from one illegal encampment to another. Following extensive engagement with key partners and representatives from the gypsy and traveller communities, the Board concluded with a number of bold proposals aimed at easing the current cycle of evictions. These proposals included the provision of negotiated stopping sites in Leeds and an additional 25 permanent pitches to accommodate 'Leeds families' of gypsies and travellers.

- **Developing innovative methods of evidence gathering**

As part of its inquiry on combating child poverty and raising aspirations, the Children's Services Scrutiny Board identified two 'case study' areas of the city. In place of their usual Board meeting, Members split into two groups and spent a morning visiting these areas. Members had the opportunity to talk to local practitioners and to undertake some additional visits in smaller groups, including meeting local people, before reconvening for a round table discussion with senior officers about their findings. This proved to be an effective way of working, particularly in identifying the Board's recommendations, and has been recommended as an approach to use for other future Scrutiny reviews.

As part of the Scrutiny Inquiry on the future of Kirkgate Market, particular importance was placed upon the Board gaining an insight into the day to day operation of the Market place. The Chair and other Members of the City Development Scrutiny Board therefore volunteered to become market traders for a day and were able to experience first hand some of the problems that other witnesses had raised with the Scrutiny Board during its Inquiry.

- **Influencing Executive Decision Making**

Following a request for Scrutiny, the City Development Scrutiny Board reviewed the closure of crèche facilities at six of the Council's leisure centres. By conveying its concerns to the Executive Board Member for Leisure and working closely with the Executive, an extension of 6 months was granted to keep four crèche facilities open at Scott Hall, Pudsey, Rothwell and Kippax Leisure Centres whilst potential alternative operators continued to be sought.

- **Holding the Executive to Account**

The Call In process provides the facility for Scrutiny Board Members to require a decision taker to reconsider a decision within a specified time period. This is a separate function from the Scrutiny Board's ability to review decisions already taken and implemented.

The Call In facility was used on 10 separate occasions during 2010/11, seven of which related to Executive Board decisions. Scrutiny of these 10 decisions led to six of them being referred back to the decision maker for reconsideration, primarily due to concerns raised around insufficient consultation and/or a lack of sufficient information on which the original decisions had been based. Following the Call In process, all six of the decisions were reaffirmed by the decision maker following consideration of additional supporting information and, where appropriate, improvements made to consultations.

- **Scrutiny and Value for Money Reviews and Member Training**

One of the key action areas for Scrutiny this year was to undertake an increased number of value for money reviews. In taking this forward, the Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board initiated and trialled Member training on the subject of how to undertake value for money Scrutiny reviews.

A number of Scrutiny reviews this year incorporated a value for money element. A particular example is the Scrutiny review into Outdoor Education Centres provided by the Council. The Children's Services Scrutiny Board made a number of recommendations for improved joint working in order to maximise resources and secure the longer-term financial viability of the centres. The previously mentioned Scrutiny review around the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers also sought to find more sustainable and value for money solutions to a long-standing and high profile issue.

- **Leading on Regional Scrutiny**

Last year a protocol for the Yorkshire and Humber Councils' Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was developed in conjunction with all the relevant local authorities. In February 2011, a Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was established to respond to the national review and consultation around proposals for the organisation and delivery of Children's Cardiac Surgery Services. This Joint Committee was led and supported by Leeds City Council, but drawing membership from across the region.

The Committee met twice in March 2011 and subsequently issued an interim recommendation to the Programme Director responsible for the review seeking a 3-month extension to the consultation period. This was to enable the Committee to complete its detailed review and analysis of the proposals. As a result, a national extension was granted to allow for further Scrutiny of the proposals until October 2011. The work of the Yorkshire and Humber Council's Joint Health Scrutiny Committee is therefore ongoing.

- **Championing public involvement in Scrutiny**

A continual key action area for Scrutiny is around increasing the level of public/service user participation in the work of the Scrutiny Boards. In doing so, the Scrutiny Boards acknowledge that by focusing on matters of high public interest, this will inevitably encourage greater participation levels. Equally, during a period of planned service reconfigurations, it is vital that the public and particularly service users are actively engaged within key decision-making processes. This was a particular message championed by the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board throughout the course of its work this year.

Generally, high public interest matters originate from formal requests for Scrutiny. This year there has been an increase in the number of requests made to Scrutiny, with a total of 13 requests being considered by the Boards. During a particular meeting of the City Development Scrutiny Board in March 2011, a number of requests for Scrutiny were being considered. As a result, 40 members of the public attended this meeting, many of them expressing a wish to contribute to the debate. This had exceeded all expectation by the Board, which was very gratifying.



# Reflecting on the Year and Planning for the Future

It is vital that we reflect on the experience of past Scrutiny activity in order to identify best practice and also continue to improve the way that Scrutiny operates in Leeds. Last year we identified a number of key action areas to help develop the Scrutiny function during 2010/11. Progress made in delivering these key action areas is summarised below. Whilst a number of these areas will continue to remain a priority for Scrutiny, it is clear that any future challenges will be centred on the delivery of the City Priority Plans. In particular, it will be vital for Scrutiny to be more strategic and outward looking when undertaking pieces of Scrutiny work and assist the Council, and its partners, to achieve better value for money and economic sustainability.

## Key Action Areas 2010/11

## Progress

Encourage the increased percentage of pre-decision Scrutiny undertaken.	A much larger proportion of the Scrutiny Boards' work this year has been focused on the development of new policy (22% of the Boards' workload compared to 9% last year). Where referrals for Scrutiny are made by full Council or Executive Board, a key performance indicator is now included within the 2011/13 Democratic Services Service Plan for such work to be completed and reported on within the municipal year.
Work with regional colleagues to agree how best to Scrutinise the City Region.	This key action was set up to aid the work of the former City and Regional Partnership Scrutiny Board. As this Board no longer exists, individual Scrutiny Boards will continue to consider the implications of their work on the City Region, as appropriate. A good example of this is the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.
Encourage the increased participation of the public in Scrutiny activity.	As reflected in the work of the Scrutiny Boards this year, we continue to champion public participation within the Scrutiny process. As a key performance indicator within the 2011/13 Democratic Services Service Plan, this will remain a key action area for Scrutiny next year.
Undertake an increased number of value for money reviews.	This year the Central and Corporate Functions Scrutiny Board initiated and trialled Member training on the subject of how to undertake value for money Scrutiny reviews. Whilst there have been reviews specifically focusing on VFM outcomes, the Scrutiny function will continue to ensure that a value for money element is incorporated in all pieces of Scrutiny work where appropriate.
Ensure that equality, diversity and cohesion and integration issues are embedded within the Scrutiny process.	A Scrutiny Guidance Note within the Constitution details arrangements to ensure that equality, diversity and cohesion and integration issues are embedded within the Scrutiny process. This has been revised to reflect the new Equality and Diversity Scheme 2011-2014 developed in conjunction with the Council's new strategic plans. In strengthening links between Scrutiny and the City Priority Plans, this will also help ensure that equality impact assessments are an integral part of the Scrutiny process. However, this will remain a key action area.

# Developing Scrutiny

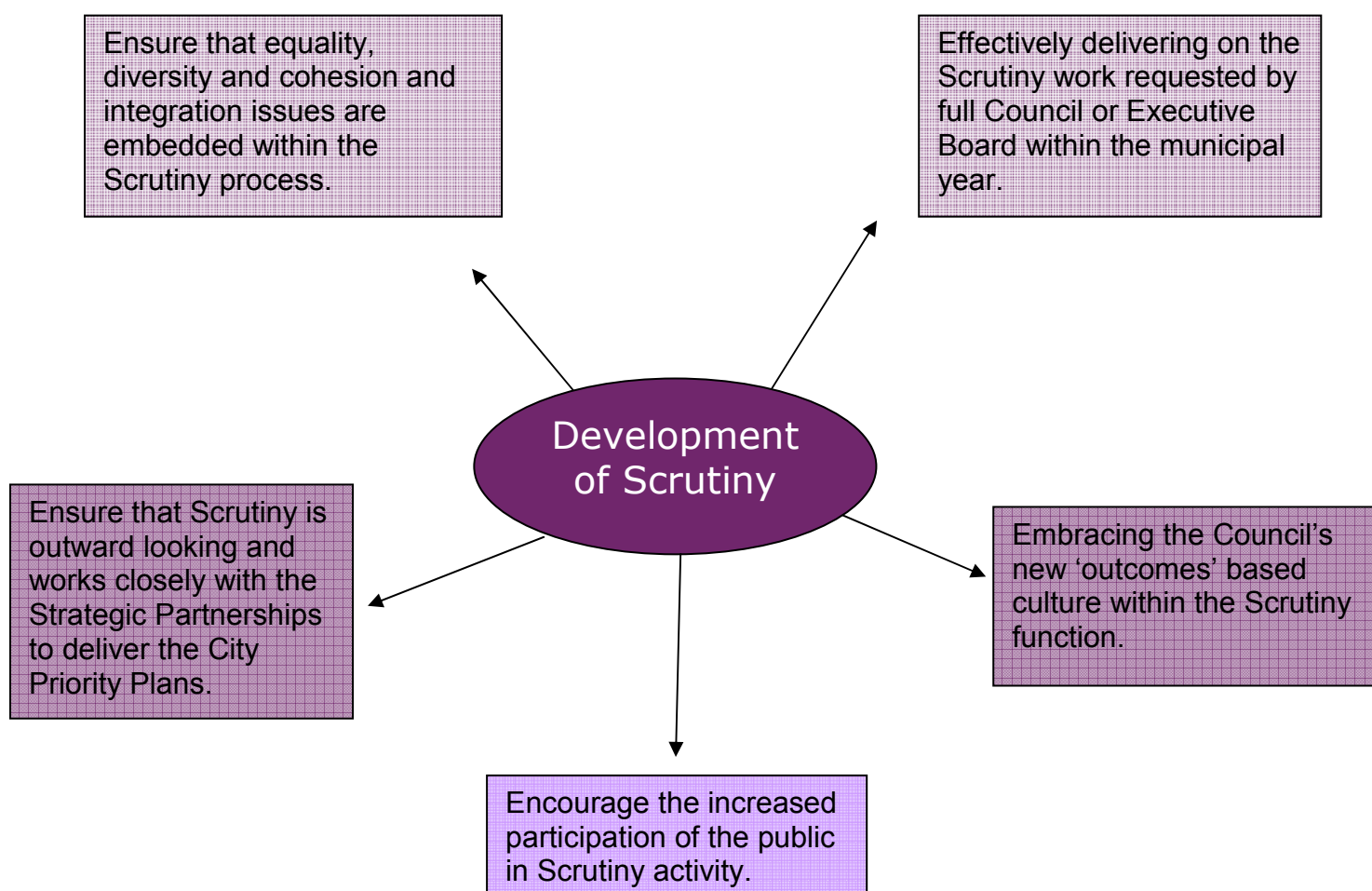
As always a key focus remains ensuring that Scrutiny is a worthwhile process for elected Members and adds value to the running of the Council.

As has been our practice in previous annual reports, we have published an action plan for the coming year identifying our key development areas.

The actions shown below are not an exhaustive list and a number of actions from previous years will continue to be progressed.

Our goals this year include

## Key Action Areas 2011/12



For those with access to the internet, further information on Scrutiny is also available at [www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny). This site includes information about each Scrutiny Board and links to the meeting papers and individual Annual Reports.

A list of all final reports since 1999 can be found on our website.