

Scrutiny Board (Development)



*Cllr Brian Cleasby
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Development)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Brian Cleasby (Chair)
Cllr Patrick Davey
Cllr David Hollingsworth
Cllr Graham Latty
Cllr Richard Lewis
Cllr Mathew Lobley
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr Andrew Millard
Cllr Adam Ogilvie
Cllr Neil Taggart

The Chair's Summary

I am once again delighted to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (Development). I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Board for their support through out this municipal year. I am constantly surprised at the range of expertise and knowledge that members are able to draw upon and which adds value to the scrutiny process.

The Local Government and Participation in Public Health Bill refers to scrutiny as a way of ensuring that members are in a stronger position to support citizens in challenging policies and practices in the local area. This for me is an extremely exciting and positive development for scrutiny. In addition the proposed strengthening of the scrutiny role that will require other public bodies as service providers to report and give evidence to our Scrutiny Boards is welcomed.

This year the Scrutiny Board concluded its inquiry on the Leeds City Region. Since starting this inquiry last year the City Region Development Programme has now been prepared and agreed by the 11 Councils which makes up the Leeds City Region Partnership. This initiative focuses the economic plan for the city region on areas where we can add value and deliver our Vision for the City. This will require a more co-ordinated and complementary action from all partners and stakeholders within the city region. Scrutiny will have a further role to play here. In the meantime we were pleased to have been involved at an early stage in this initiative.

The uncertainty around Supertram last year demanded that we review alternative transport plans. We received a presentation on the short, medium and long term transport policy for the city. We monitored what had been delivered against targets set in the Local Transport Plan (LTP1) and what was being planned for the future. We heard from METRO on the work being undertaken with the bus companies to beat the traffic and heard from First Bus about operational issues.

We have actively monitored and challenged the performance indicators of the Development Department particularly those which could impact on the Council's CPA score. We have continued to receive and comment upon ongoing plans and strategies which provide a framework for many other projects. We considered two formal requests for scrutiny during the course of the year. The Board has had a busy and productive year and a brief summary of our work follows.

As Lord Mayor elect I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the Board's work throughout the 3 years I have Chaired this Board. I look forward to seeing scrutiny develop further in 2007/2008.

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Inquiry on the Leeds City Region

We commenced this inquiry last year on the Leeds City Region. We wanted to know what the current Government thinking was on this issue and obtain details of other city region initiatives. We were keen to examine more specifically the implications of this work for the delivery of the aspirations in the Council's Corporate Plan. In particular we were interested in what difference it could make to the development of high quality transport and the delivery of the skills agenda? Since concluding our inquiry the Leeds City Region partners have joined forces to deliver a dynamic, successful and prosperous city region that supports innovation and enterprise and is capable of competing with the best that Europe has to offer. It has agreed the City Region Development Programme which has been signed by the 11 Councils which make up the partnership.



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Our other recommendations were

- That the Board endorses Leeds City Council's contribution to the broader city region partnership and to its efforts to enhance overall economic performance.
- That the Board endorses the view that other regional and national public bodies, government agencies and departments with a remit to promote economic growth, improve transport connectivity, improve skills levels etc, should seek to align their strategy and delivery plans to the city region.
- That the Board recognises that developing a city region strategy and policy in all areas will proceed at different rates dependent on the level of existing understanding, so for example transport thinking at a city region level is well advanced and moving forward, whereas a distinct city region skills offer is less well developed.

Our main recommendation was:

That the Board supports the city region approach as the functionally coherent unit for developing interventions aimed at achieving enhanced economic growth, particularly relating to interventions around transport connectivity; economic development (including innovation); skills and housing / building sustainable communities (i.e. places where people choose to live) where city region working can bring real added value.

“Our shared vision for the Leeds City Region is to develop an internationally recognised city region to raise our economic performance to spread prosperity across the whole of our city region and to promote a better quality of life for all of those who live and work here.”

Leaders of 11 Local Authorities which make up the Leeds City Regions Partnership

Other recommendations continued

- That an update report be presented to the Board in a year's time or when there were significant developments particularly with regard to governance arrangements.

“Our growth strategy identified 8 Northern city regions, Liverpool, Central Lancashire, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Hull and the Humber ports, Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear as the places where our ambitions to create a step change in economic growth in the North can be achieved.”

The Northern Way

Request for Scrutiny

We considered a request for scrutiny from a community safety representative on behalf of residents of Shancara Court opposed to the sale, demolition and redevelopment of the former Blackgates School at Tingley. The Board agreed unanimously on the evidence presented that further scrutiny was necessary. We investigated thoroughly the concerns and allegations raised by residents and received a detailed report from the Director of Development and heard from a number of witnesses. Our conclusions are set out below. We are grateful to the residents for raising this matter with us.

Our main recommendation was:

That the Director of Development be asked to expedite the Heads of Terms with Mintons as quickly as possible, preferably within 30 days



New Blackgates Primary School

“We noted in our discussions the capital spent on remodelling Blackgates and Drighlington schools under the Primary School Review and Leeds Primary Schools PFI programmes and the anticipated income from the sale of the former school sites”

Cllr Cleasby Chair Scrutiny Board

Our other comments were the view:

- That in order to ensure transparency in assessing whether best consideration had been achieved in negotiations of this kind that more than one tender should be obtained.
- That consultation with residents, Parish and Ward Councillors on the disposal of the site had sometimes been misleading and lacked transparency.
- That where a second external valuation is obtained that this should be from a different company.
- That consultation procedures with Parish and Ward Councillors should be strengthened, and in particular all Members of Council should be advised as to the proper course of action to be taken to enlist the help of a sponsoring department in the event of an asset becoming surplus.

Request for Scrutiny

We considered a request for scrutiny from Drighlington Parish Council / Drighlington Conservation Group, relating to the disposal of the former Drighlington Primary School.

We heard from Councillor James Durning, Parish Councillor for Drighlington, who outlined in detail the reasons for the request for scrutiny.

Officers responded to the two main grievances raised by Councillor Durning, namely the legal ownership of the asset and the lack of consultation over its disposal and answered questions raised by the Board.

We were satisfied with the responses received from officers and agreed that no further scrutiny was required on this matter. However, we did make the following recommendation.

Our recommendation

That with regard to the consultation process concerning the disposal of property assets in general, that the Board's concern regarding the Department's reliance on Ward Councillors forwarding information to Parish Councillors be conveyed to the relevant senior officers and that it be recommended in future that the Development Department consult directly with Parish Councils.



Civic Hall

Presentations

We received during the course of the year a number of reports and presentations on a wide range of issues as part of our monitoring and review role.



Guided Bus



Cyclists Kirkstall Road

- *Climate Change*

We considered a report summarising the latest evidence for climate change and reviewed the timetable for the development of a climate change strategy and action plan for Leeds. We have continued to monitor progress on this important issue. We have shown the documentary “An inconvenient Truth” and made a DVD available and encouraged all Members of Council to see it.



- *Transport*

We received a detailed report on the short, medium and long term transport strategy for the city in the light of the Government’s decision not to support the Council’s supertram application.

We took this opportunity to consider what had been delivered against the actions and targets set in the first West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2001 - 2006 and in particular progress on the key areas for Leeds over this period.

We also discussed with Metro and First Bus a range of issues and concerns including modernisation of the buses, investment, fares and the social needs of communities set against the operation of a commercial bus service.



- *Sustainable Design and Construction and Sustainability Assessments*

We received details of the three draft guidance documents being prepared by consultants EDAW on the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document, the Householders Guide and the Developers Assessment Supplementary Planning Document. We also considered the timetable for completion of these drafts and continued to monitor progress through the year.

- *Water Asset Management Working Group*

We monitored the progress being made by the Water Asset Management Working Group which was established following a series of flooding incidents affecting Leeds in 2004.



Drainage Works

- *Planning a Better Future – Planning and Development Services*

We received a detailed report from the Chief Planning Officer in order that we could consider and comment on the progress being made on implementing the solutions within the five improvement themes of the strategic review for the Planning and Development Services.



Plans

- *Travelwise Campaign Update*

We received a report providing information on the development of the Council's TravelWise campaign to promote sustainable methods of travel, and highlighted key achievements and progress in Leeds since 2004.

The paper showed how this activity has been fully integrated into the objectives of the Local Transport Plan and of the resource pressures in the Unit. Members were pleased to note how the Leeds TravelWise was closely involved in the development and launch of the West Yorkshire Travel Plan Network.

- *Night Time and Evening Economy*

We reviewed the impact of new licensing laws and considered whether partners are working effectively together. We also examined what facilities are being provided for the new burgeoning community in the city centre.

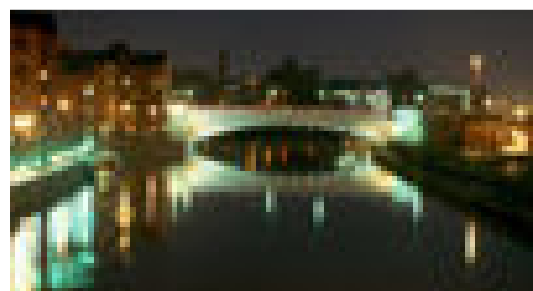
Leeds Waterfront

- *Addressing Worklessness*

We considered a number of papers on the work being carried out to address worklessness in the city. We continued to monitor progress during the year. We made two specific recommendations

Our recommendations were

- ◇ That responsibility for tackling Worklessness be brought under one body or department within the Council.
- ◇ That a framework be developed, aligned to Local Area Agreements that will enable effective monitoring of the objectives and targets set to drive forward the changes necessary on Worklessness and that a paper on this be brought to the Scrutiny Board for consideration.





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- *Parking in Town and District Centres*

We considered the framework and prioritisation for introducing parking policies in our 28 town and district centres.

The Board's full work programme 2006/07

- **Leeds City Region inquiry concluded**
- **Request for scrutiny former Blackgates School site**
- **Presentation on transport strategy for the city**
- **Presentation by METRO and First Bus on bus services in the city**
- **Reviewed procedures for applications to erect Telecom masts**
- **Presentation on sustainable design & construction and sustainability assessments**
- **Request for scrutiny former Drighlington school site**
- **London 2012 Olympic Games**
- **Climate Change**
- **Progress of the Water Asset Management Group**
- **Tackling Worklessness**
- **Ring Road Moortown Road safety**
- **Performance management indicators for quarters two and three**
- **Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report**
- **Presentation from the Chief Planning Officer**
- **Update on the Strategic Review of Planning & Development Services**
- **Development of the Travelwise campaign**
- **Parking in town and district centres**
- **Night time and evening economy**