



SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds on
Monday, 17th May, 2010 at 10.00 am

A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board
in a Committee Room at 9.30 am

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

- B Anderson (Chair) - Adel and Wharfedale;
A Barker - Horsforth;
A Blackburn - Farnley and Wortley;
A Castle - Harewood;
R Downes - Otley and Yeadon;
J Dowson - Chapel Allerton;
D Hollingsworth - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
G Hyde - Killingbeck and Seacroft;
J Jarosz - Pudsey;
J Marjoram - Calverley and Farsley;
L Mulherin - Ardsley and Robin Hood;
M Rafique - Chapel Allerton;

Please note: Certain or all items on this agenda may be recorded on tape

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A G E N D A

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9			<p>REVIEW OF THE HOUSING LETTINGS PROCESS - DRAFT STATEMENT</p> <p>To consider and agree a draft Statement of the Board following its review of the housing lettings process.</p> <p>(Late Item - Draft Statement attached)</p>	1 - 14
10			<p>WORKLESSNESS REVIEW - DRAFT STATEMENT</p> <p>To consider and agree a draft Statement of the Board following its review on worklessness.</p> <p>(Late Item - Draft Statement attached)</p>	15 - 34
11			<p>ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010</p> <p>To consider a report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development seeking approval of the Board's contribution to the Annual Scrutiny Report.</p> <p>(Late Item -Draft Annual Report 2009/2010 attached)</p>	35 - 44

**Draft Scrutiny Statement
Housing Lettings Process
May 2010**

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Introduction and Scope

Introduction

1. During the April 2009 Council meeting, concerns were raised about the appropriateness of some lettings made in the city and the need to develop lettings policies that would lead to more sustainable communities.
2. In response to these concerns, the Executive Board considered a report from the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods in July 2009 which included a number of proposed options for change aimed at improving the management and allocation of tenancies. The Executive Board requested that these proposals be developed further into recommendations for change to be incorporated into a revised Lettings Policy and guidance.
3. The Council's Lettings Policy is annually reviewed and developed to reflect changes in legislation, case law and customer feedback. Scrutiny has actively contributed to this annual review process in the past and therefore we would fully expect Scrutiny to remain a key stakeholder during the development of any proposed revisions to the current Policy.
4. However, in July 2009 we agreed to conduct a separate review of the Council's housing lettings process. A working group of the Board was established to consider evidence during this review, which included Councillors Barry Anderson, Ann Blackburn, Graham Hyde and Mohammed Rafique.

Scope of the review

5. The scope and timetable for this review was formally agreed by the Scrutiny Board on 9th October 2009.
6. In determining the scope of this review, we recognised the importance of ensuring that Scrutiny complements the wider piece of work being undertaken to develop the proposals for change put forward to the Executive Board in July 2009. In doing so, this enabled resources to be used effectively and avoided duplication of work.
7. In welcoming a review of the Lettings Policy, we also acknowledge that a further refined Lettings Policy alone is not enough to secure long term improvements to the local lettings system. It is clear that any future changes to the Policy will need to be based upon a more integrated process from the housing application stage through the lettings process to housing management.
8. In view of this, we agreed to take a broad look at the lettings process from the housing application stage through to tenancy management to explore where improvements in partnership working and data sharing can be made to improve the allocation and management of tenancies.
9. As part of the proposals put forward to the Executive Board in July 2009, we noted that particular emphasis was made on ensuring that accurate and full information is gathered on every applicant at an early stage in the housing application process in order to improve the overall risk assessment process.



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10. We therefore focused our review around the development of a robust risk assessment process where more detailed and comprehensive information is gathered at an early stage in the housing application process, such as housing need assessment, and utilised effectively throughout the lettings and housing management process.
11. In acknowledging the use of Personal Housing Plans (PHP) within the Leeds Housing Options Service, particular attention was given to the development of a new Support Needs Assessment process. Based around the support needs element of PHPs, this would be used for all customers that have housing need assessments. Linked to this, we also looked into the development of information sharing protocols between key partners to ensure that all relevant information was being collated and fed into the new assessment process.
12. Furthermore, we explored how the new Support Needs Assessment could be utilised effectively throughout the lettings and housing management process in terms of identifying the ongoing support needs of tenants and assisting in making appropriate referrals to specialist support agencies.
13. At the time of conducting our review, we also noted that new draft statutory guidance on social housing allocation for local authorities in England had been released for consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). This guidance aims to tackle any misconceptions about allocations and to provide clarification on the flexibilities that local authorities can exercise in the allocation of social housing. We therefore considered it appropriate for Scrutiny to consider the implications of this new guidance on the Council's powers and flexibilities in relation to lettings and to feed into the Council's response to the consultation process.
14. In October 2009, the working group discussed the principles of the draft guidance and made a number of suggested amendments to the Council's proposed response. These amendments were incorporated into the response document and this was subsequently endorsed by the full Scrutiny Board prior to it being submitted to the CLG on 23rd October 2009. The final CLG document 'Fair and flexible: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England' was published in December 2009.
15. During our review, we welcomed the involvement of a wide range of services and organisations. These included Housing Policy and Strategy; the local Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs); Belle Isle Tenant Management Association (BITMO); Police; Community Safety; Anti-Social Behaviour Unit; Adult Social Care; Children's Services; Leeds Youth Offending Service; Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust; and NHS Leeds.
16. In recognising the importance of obtaining the views of tenants during our review, we also invited tenant representatives from each of the ALMOs, BITMO and the Leeds Tenants Federation to a meeting of the working group. Fourteen tenant representatives attended this meeting and actively shared their views about the level of support provided to prospective tenants



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and also the management of existing tenancies.

17. Overall, our review emphasises the valuable role that all key partners have in the housing lettings process in terms of sharing data that will help determine and address the housing support needs of prospective and existing tenants.
18. We do acknowledge that there will be resource implications attached to our recommendations and that these will need to be considered as part of the wider piece of work aimed at improving the Council's lettings policy and processes.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Demonstrating a fair and transparent social housing allocations system

19. Social housing plays an important role in providing accommodation for a wide range of households, including some of the most vulnerable in society.
20. However, faced with the ongoing challenge of balancing increased demands for social housing against a decreasing supply of social housing properties, it is vital that decisions on the allocation of social housing are taken fairly and in ways that are transparent and can be explained and justified to all concerned.
21. The new statutory guidance on social housing allocations, 'fair and flexible', reiterates the notion that social housing is principally aimed at those in greatest housing need. Local authorities are therefore required to continue to frame their allocation schemes to give reasonable preference to applicants who fall within the categories set out in Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 2006, over those who do not.
22. However, in consultation with local communities, the new guidance encourages local authorities to also make greater use of available flexibilities within the current legislation in order to take account of and respond to local circumstances, providing that schemes do not work to the detriment of those in greatest housing need.
23. The Government also believes that the best way to ensure sustainable tenancies and to build settled, viable and inclusive communities is to give applicants more of a say and a greater choice over the accommodation which they are allocated. In view of this, the Government is keen to see choice in the allocation system becoming the norm and has set a target to replace conventional schemes with choice-based lettings schemes (CBL) by 2010.
24. However, we acknowledge that Leeds City Council already operates a choice-based lettings scheme called Leeds Homes. This allows customers to make expressions of interest in advertised Council properties, some Registered Social Landlord properties and some properties owned by members of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
25. The purpose of the Council's Lettings Policy is to achieve the right balance between meeting need, giving choice to customers and creating sustainable communities. We therefore welcome the wider piece of work currently being undertaken to review the Lettings Policy in response to concerns raised by local Elected Members and to also reflect the objectives and outcomes which the Government believes allocation policies should achieve.
26. However, we also recognise that a further refined Lettings Policy alone is not enough to secure long term improvements to the local lettings system. It is clear that any future changes to the Policy will need to be based upon a more integrated and robust process from the housing application stage through the lettings process to housing management.



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Ensuring a robust housing need assessment process

27. During our discussions with local tenant representatives, there was a general acknowledgement that the principles surrounding the current choice-based lettings scheme offers a transparent and fairer process for allocating properties. However, particular concerns were raised about the application process itself. It was felt that this needed strengthening so that more rigorous checks are made on prospective tenants to ensure that individuals are not intentionally misleading the Council in an attempt to increase their housing need status. Gathering relevant and reliable data during the housing application process is paramount and we have dedicated a section within our Statement which considers this particular issue in more detail.

28. There was also a consensus view amongst all officers, Members and tenant representatives that more effort is required to identify the support needs of individuals during the early stages of the housing application process so that individuals are supported and monitored effectively from the outset and not left to cope on their own. This particular matter is also addressed in more detail in the following sections of our Statement.

29. As part of the proposals put forward to the Executive Board in July 2009, particular emphasis was also made on ensuring that accurate and full information is gathered on every applicant at an early stage in the housing application process in order to

improve the overall risk assessment process.

30. During our review, particular attention was given to the role of Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) used by the Leeds Housing Options Service. The PHP prompts the Housing Options advisor to find out detail relating to a household's current/previous accommodation, their support needs and whether there are any issues relating to potential risk. Specific sections in the PHP relate to medical history, drug/alcohol dependencies, criminal convictions and history of violence. It was noted that whilst the PHP does not in isolation represent a formal risk assessment, it does provide a source of information on a person's history that can be used by a range of housing practitioners, including the Leeds ALMOs.

31. In consideration of the PHP process, ALMO representatives explained that the existing Leeds Homes Membership Form, used as part of the housing application process, and the additional needs assessment process followed by the ALMOs already addresses many of the issues included within the PHP and helps to identify vulnerability issues and support needs.

32. Whilst recognising that other additional information could usefully be gathered as part of this process, importance was placed upon building on the existing processes and avoiding unnecessary duplication and added bureaucracy.

33. We therefore sought further clarity around what additional information would be gathered, the purposes of this information and the mechanisms used



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for collating and recording this information.

Development of a new Support Needs Assessment

34. Particular focus was given to the development of a new Support Needs Assessment. It was proposed that the specification for this new assessment will derive from the support needs element of the PHP. A draft version of the specification was shared with key partners during our review for their consideration and input. This specification highlighted the additional issues that would be picked up by the new assessment process, which covered areas around health related support needs; risk to self; life history; and risk to others.
35. In consideration of this, we debated whether this assessment process should be completed for all applicants or just targeted at those requiring a housing need assessment.
36. The fact that a customer is in housing need does not in itself indicate they have additional support needs or will necessarily present as being more problematic. A large proportion of customers in priority bands will not require any support other than their immediate housing issue. However, it is recognised that the Council does re-house specific groups of customers who are vulnerable and prone to lead chaotic lifestyles resulting in complex housing needs.
37. In applying this new assessment process to all applicants it was made

clear by the ALMOs that there would be significant resource implications in view of the high volumes of housing applications received. It was therefore considered more appropriate at this stage for this process to be targeted at those requiring a housing need assessment.

38. We learned that once the specification for the new Support Needs Assessment is finalised, this will be fed into the new IT system, Orchard's Archouse Plus, as an additional workflow for use in the application process. This will therefore make it easier for all ALMO/BITMO staff to access and utilise, when required, and should provide a consistent and most effective way of storing and sharing such information.
39. However, other key issues which need to be considered relate to how the information requested as part of the new assessment will be gathered, verified and monitored.

Gathering relevant and reliable data

40. When gathering information during the housing application process, we acknowledge that the process remains heavily reliant on the applicant providing such information and also on the skill of the housing officer to prompt a further support needs assessment where required.
41. As with Personal Housing Plans, we noted that the new Support Needs Assessment will require customers to provide a signature to declare that they have not knowingly given false information or withheld information



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relevant to their application. However, we are also pleased to note that particular importance will be placed upon customers having a sense of ownership and full involvement in identifying their needs and the measures required to address these needs as this too should encourage a more open and honest assessment.

42. We appreciate that housing officers do not have the capacity to assess every application for verification and therefore we recognise the valuable role that other agencies will have in terms of sharing local intelligence about a prospective tenant with housing officers. This is particularly important in terms of identifying support needs.
43. Whilst it was acknowledged that some individuals will already have clear support mechanisms in place at the point of application, it was highlighted that some agencies are better than others in sharing details about an individual's support needs and that some will only share information once an individual has been re-housed.
44. When assessing the housing support needs of an individual, it is clear that a more coordinated approach, particularly between Housing, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and local NHS services, needs to be developed.
45. The single assessment process (SAP) is not a new concept as agencies across the health and social care sector are already required to work together to ensure that assessment and subsequent care planning are effective and coordinated.
46. Within Children's Services, we also acknowledge the role of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). It too aims to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of children's needs and strengths; taking account of the roles of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. The CAF also aims to improve integrated working by promoting coordinated service provisions.
47. More recently, new pilot sites to develop a Common Assessment Framework for Adults were announced by the Care Services Minister, Phil Hope, on 23rd March 2010. These will develop and test improved information sharing across health, social care and also wider community support services, which will include housing support services.
48. As these assessment processes will include data that is relevant to the housing support needs of an individual, we believe there is merit in seeking to improve the coordination of such data as part of the lettings process. In doing so, this will assist in verifying the accuracy of the data gathered as part of the new Support Needs Assessment and will also promote a more holistic approach towards addressing the housing support needs of an individual.
49. In discussing this approach with representatives from Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and the local NHS Trusts, we acknowledged the need for further work to determine exactly what data from the SAP and CAF processes can and should be shared in order to assist the lettings process. The coordination of such data



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should not become a burdensome task and therefore the key will be to identify the relevant core elements of the SAP and CAF processes that will assist in determining and addressing the housing support needs of an individual.

50. In addition, we also recognised the need to consider any potential IT data issues and resource implications in terms of developing appropriate mechanisms that will aid the coordination of such data.

51. In view of this, we recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing an action plan which seeks to address these particular issues.

Recommendation 1

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing an action plan over the next 6 months to improve the coordination of data shared between Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and local NHS Trusts to help identify and address the housing support needs of an individual.

As part of this action plan, consideration should be given to the following issues:

(i) to determine exactly what information from the Single Assessment Process and Common Assessment Framework processes can and should be shared to assist the lettings process in terms of identifying and addressing the housing support needs of an individual.

Recommendation 1 continued

(ii) to consider any potential IT data issues and resource implications in terms of developing appropriate mechanisms that will aid the coordination of such data

That this action plan is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

52. When determining any potential risks to others as part of the new Support Needs Assessment process, we also recognise the valuable role that the Police and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit have in sharing their local intelligence with housing officers about prospective and also existing tenants.

53. We acknowledge that there are existing mechanisms used by housing officers to obtain such local intelligence, such as requests made under Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. However, we believe that there needs to be a more coordinated approach where such local intelligence is systematically shared as part of the Support Needs Assessment process to inform the application process and enable appropriate action to be taken. We therefore support the proposal that a formal data sharing protocol is developed between the ALMOs, the Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in order to achieve this aim.



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Recommendation 2

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing a formal data sharing protocol between the ALMOs, the Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to ensure that local intelligence about prospective and existing tenants is systematically shared as part of the new Support Needs Assessment to inform the application process and enable appropriate action to be taken.

Effective use of Introductory and Demoted Tenancies

54. In 2002, the Council implemented Introductory Tenancies. All new tenants who have not previously lived in a Council or housing association home are granted an introductory tenancy for the first 12 months of the tenancy. This type of tenancy gives customers fewer rights than a secure tenancy and enables the Council to take possession action through the courts more quickly than for secure tenants. The 2004 Housing Act also introduced the ability for the Council to seek a Demoted Tenancy through the court, which give tenants similar rights to Introductory tenants but enables easier possession if they are breached.

55. During our review, we acknowledged the benefits of both these approaches when dealing with problem tenants, particularly those who are perpetrators of anti-social behaviour or where there is proof of a false declaration made during the application process.

56. However, we also acknowledged that both are heavily reliant on the collection of robust evidence that is gathered and used during the probationary period.

57. In view of this, we believe that the data sharing improvements set out within recommendations 1 and 2 should also be used to enable more effective enforcement of Introductory and Demoted Tenancies in future.

Recommendation 3

That the data sharing improvements set out within recommendations 1 and 2 are also used to enable more effective enforcement of Introductory and Demoted Tenancies in future.

Adopting a proactive and preventative approach towards tenancy management

58. Where there are tenancy management issues, however mild, we believe that that these can often indicate that someone is struggling and in need of additional support. We therefore emphasise the importance of adopting a proactive and preventative approach towards tenancy management, where support solutions are actively sought prior to any enforcement action being progressed.

59. Housing officers are likely to come across particular triggers which may indicate that an existing tenant is in need of a further support needs assessment. These may include problems with rent arrears or issues



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arising from concerns/complaints raised by neighbouring residents or Elected Members about the behaviour of a particular tenant.

60. We would also emphasise the important role that those Council staff and other statutory agencies who have contact with tenants and can gain access to tenant properties have in terms of flagging any concerns which may trigger a further support needs assessment.
61. Where such concerns or complaints are brought to the attention of the ALMOs, it is vital that these are acted upon with urgency.

Recommendation 4
That any concerns or complaints made to the ALMOs about the behaviour of a particular tenant are acted upon with urgency.

62. Where it is found that support mechanisms are already in place for a particular tenant, housing officers should not have to deal with any tenancy management issues in relation to that tenant in isolation of the relevant support agencies.
63. During our review, it was explained that enforcement action will not be taken by the courts unless evidence can be provided to show that a needs and risk assessment of that individual has been carried out and appropriate action taken to try and engage with the individual to address their support needs. Only when an individual continues to refuse such support can appropriate enforcement action be taken.

64. Particular reference was made to the housing related support services commissioned through the Supporting People programme. Such services include a range of interventions, often low level support, which enables vulnerable people to secure and maintain independent accommodation. They have a clear preventative role and intervention can successfully avert loss or breakdown of accommodation.
65. An example of where this has proved successful in the past was shared during our review. This involved a single male suffering from schizophrenia who was subject to possession action by a Leeds ALMO due to the condition of his property. However, the Leeds ALMO had agreed to suspend possession action pending a housing options/support package being put in place. The Homeless Prevention Fund was used to clean the property at a cost of £3,000 and housing related support, through Foundation Housing, was subsequently put in place to support this individual on an ongoing basis.
66. Without this intervention, it was highlighted that the Council would have needed to place this vulnerable individual in temporary accommodation after the traumatic experience of eviction. In all likelihood, the ALMO would have subsequently deemed the individual to be unsuitable to be a tenant. A two year stay in temporary accommodation would have cost the Council around £17,000 and therefore a 'spend to save' benefit of around £14,000 was generated for Housing Services as a result of such preventative action being taken.



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67. In taking forward the lessons learned from this particular case study, we would encourage the ALMOs to make such referrals to the Leeds Housing Options Services at the earliest opportunity so that preventative housing related support services can be assessed and coordinated appropriately.

68. However, we appreciate that the ALMOs can be dealing with hundreds of cases at any one time which may not require immediate referral and therefore could unnecessarily swamp the Leeds Housing Options Service. In view of this, we recognise the need for further guidance to be provided to ALMOs to help clarify appropriate stages of referral to the Leeds Housing Options Service.

69. We therefore recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing a protocol between the Leeds Housing Options Service and the Leeds ALMOs to clarify appropriate stages of referral to the Leeds Housing Options Service for preventative housing related support services to be assessed and coordinated.

Recommendation 5
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on developing a protocol between the Leeds Housing Options Service and the Leeds ALMOs to clarify appropriate stages of referral to the Leeds Housing Options Service for preventative housing related support services to be assessed and coordinated.

Managing tenants with acute and complex support needs

70. During our review, we also recognised the need to avoid the potential pitfalls of a 'referral culture'. Where a tenant is signposted or formally referred to an appropriate support agency, it is vital that any subsequent tracking of that tenant's support needs is coordinated effectively and not just left to a particular partner to pursue. This is particularly paramount where a tenant has acute and complex support needs.

71. We learned from Adult Social Care and the Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust that where an individual has significant support needs and in receipt of specialist care, a care co-ordinator/manager would be assigned to look at the ongoing needs of that individual from a holistic perspective.

72. However, our review has highlighted the need to strengthen partnership working when tracking and responding to the ongoing support needs of such tenants.

73. During our discussions with the key partners, there was a general consensus that more informal approaches towards sharing information and tracking and responding to those tenants with acute and complex support needs often proves more effective in terms of getting any issues resolved quickly.

74. Particular reference was made to the personal case conferencing approach used by the Leeds Housing Options Service and the added benefits this has brought to the service in terms of



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bringing together various key agencies to discuss the support needs of an individual and agreeing appropriate actions to be taken.

75. The benefits of a case conferencing approach was also evident during the Scrutiny Board's separate Inquiry this year into Integrated Offender Management (IOM). Effective IOM case management relies upon the timely and accurate flow of information between partner agencies involved in the management of offenders, particularly those offenders identified as high risk or high harm and requiring a Multi Agency Public Protection Assessment (MAPPA).

76. In view of this, we learned that the Leeds IOM case conferencing approach allows for effective information sharing between partner agencies and ensures that multi-agency intervention plans are completed and reviewed regularly.

77. We therefore recommend that the personal case conferencing approach is adopted as a good practice model as part of the housing management process for those tenants with acute and complex support needs.

Recommendation 6

That the personal case conferencing approach used by the Leeds Housing Options Service is adopted as a good practice model as part of the housing management process for those tenants with acute and complex support needs.

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**Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)
Housing Lettings Process
May 2010
Report author: Angela Brogden**



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**Draft Scrutiny Statement
Worklessness
May 2010**

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Introduction and Scope

Introduction

1. 'Worklessness' is a relatively new term that is starting to be used and heard more frequently. Whilst there are various definitions of worklessness, it is defined by the Department of Work and Pensions as "people of working age who are not in formal employment, but who are looking for a job (the unemployed), together with people of working age who are neither formally employed nor looking for formal employment (the economically inactive)".
2. Helping people find work and stay in work is recognised as a priority both nationally and locally. The Government has set a goal of achieving 80% full employment by 2016 and sees tackling worklessness as a way of also increasing social inclusion, reducing inequalities and improving well-being.
3. There are a number of Government Departments and agencies which have primary responsibility for improving skills and linking people back into employment. These include the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and the newly established Skills Funding Agency.
4. A National Indicator on worklessness (NI 152) was introduced to look at the proportion of the working age population who are claiming an out-of-work benefit—either Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefits, Income Support for lone parents or other income related benefits. In terms of the commitment locally to achieve the targets set by the Government, the reduction of worklessness is also identified as one of the Council's current improvement priorities.
5. However, in July 2009 the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board considered the Quarter 4 2008/09 performance data for reducing worklessness and acknowledged the difficulties in meeting existing targets, particularly within the current economic climate.
6. In view of this, it was agreed that a working group of the Board would be established to consider the key issues affecting worklessness across the city and to determine how Scrutiny could effectively contribute in addressing this particular problem. The membership of this working group included Councillors Barry Anderson, Ann Blackburn, Graham Hyde and Josie Jarosz.
7. Within this policy area, it was highlighted that both strategy and delivery is fragmented, with responsibility spread across a range of agencies and providers. In terms of the impact on employers in particular, it was noted that they would often be approached by a variety of different agencies and this consequently leads to confusion and frustration by the employer.
8. It was therefore considered appropriate and timely for Scrutiny to focus its attention on the development of the new delivery model for work with employers – 'Employment Leads'.



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Scope of the review

9. We learned that the 'Employment Leeds' model aims to provide a flexible and coordinated approach to assist employers to fill vacancies, develop and retain staff.
10. The model seeks to bring together an offer of assistance for employers, during the recession and as the market recovers, making the most of the skills and experience of all partners. It will also build on the work of the Local Employment Partnership (LEP), a partnership between local businesses and Jobcentre Plus, to maximise employment opportunities for those living in the most deprived areas of Leeds.
11. It was noted that this way of working will require input and collaboration from services across the Council and agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and Yorkshire Forward, as well as effective engagement with the employer / business facing partnership groups in the City.
12. In terms of the overall leadership of the Employment Leeds model, we learned that the Worklessness Strategic Outcomes Group had been tasked to influence and oversee the strategic development and operation of Employment Leeds.
13. However, it was felt that Scrutiny could assist in exploring opportunities for improved partnership working, particularly with the employer / business facing partners, and help ensure that a co-ordinated and joined up approach is embedded within the new delivery model.
14. At the beginning of our review, we noted that a funding bid had already been submitted to Yorkshire Forward to support the development of the model and to take forward this approach from April 2010 through to March 2013. This bid also included funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).
15. The key strands of activity for the Employment Leeds model gives consideration to the overall 'journey to work', from preparing individuals for work through to job retention. However, it was highlighted that the funding from Yorkshire Forward and ERDF will only support work which is 'employer facing' and responds to the needs of employers rather than individuals. In view of this, we learned that the model assumes that the 'preparing for work' strand will be supported with funding elsewhere.
16. In recognising the importance of this particular strand to the overall success of the Employment Leeds model, we agreed to also focus our attention around existing pre-employment provision and explore how such provision could be fed effectively into the Employment Leeds model.

Evidence gathering

17. During our review, we welcomed the contribution of senior officers from Regeneration Policy and Planning and also Economic Services. In recognising the valuable role of Jobcentre Plus in helping to deliver the Employment Leeds model, we also welcomed the advice and contribution of the External Relations Manager at Jobcentre Plus.



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18. In consideration of the 'preparing for work' strand of the model, we also decided to conduct a visit to a local Jobshop (Tunstall Road Jobshop). This provided an opportunity to meet with the Programme Manager, Service Manager and also some of the customers of the Jobshop to obtain their views about the support available to individuals in terms of securing employment.
19. In February 2010, we also welcomed an invitation to attend a joint worklessness workshop where the main focus was around tackling youth unemployment.
20. This workshop, chaired by Jobcentre Plus, was attended by a wide variety of key partners. Whilst providing an opportunity to discuss some of the challenges facing Leeds in terms of addressing those young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), we found that many of the issues raised reinforced some of our own findings around existing barriers in tackling worklessness more generally. This is addressed in more detail in paragraphs 57 to 72.
21. We concluded our evidence gathering sessions for this review at the end of February 2010. Since then, we note that the funding bid for Employment Leeds model was endorsed at a Yorkshire Forward Full Business Plan panel on 30th March 2010 and will be considered by the Yorkshire Forward Board in June 2010. The final bid included £2,395,272 of Yorkshire Forward funding and £984,151 of European Regional Development Funds over the 3 year period.
22. It is clear that the way in which services are delivered and planned can have a substantial impact in helping workless people find and sustain employment.
23. Following our review, we identified 3 key principles aimed at tackling the problem of worklessness. These are:
- Adopting a more **holistic approach** towards worklessness and considering the needs of the whole family rather than just on an individual level.
 - Embedding a culture of **partnership working** both internally and externally.
 - Delivering **value for money** through smarter targeting and improved coordination of services/resources.
24. We acknowledge that there will be resource implications attached to our recommendations which will need to be taken into consideration. However, our recommendations have been formulated to reflect the above key principles and to assist the Council and its partners to move forward in achieving the objectives of the Employment Leeds model.
25. As a result of our review, we also recognised that worklessness has far reaching consequences in terms of other socio-economic problems, such as child poverty.
26. Children's economic circumstances are essentially determined by the economic status of the adults in their household and figures released by the Office of National Statistics in August 2009 showed that the number of children in workless households stood at around 1.9 million, up 170,000 from a year earlier.



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27. The concentration of worklessness among families has serious consequences for the children within them and clearly any measures that successfully address child poverty, especially by giving more households access to jobs, are likely to have wide-ranging effects in the years ahead.
28. We were unable to explore these links in any great detail as part of this review but believe that this warrants further consideration by Scrutiny in the future.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Employment Leads delivery model and key strands of activity

29. At the start of our review, we received two diagrammatic summaries to help illustrate the Employment Leads delivery model and its key strands of activity. These are attached as Appendix A (delivery model) and B (key strands of activity).

30. The main objective of the Employment Leads model is to make the most of the skills and experience of all partners in bringing together a coherent Leeds offer of assistance to existing and new employers in terms of undertaking job brokerage and retention activities.

31. As the funding from Yorkshire Forward and the European Regional Development Fund will only support work which is 'employer facing' and responds to the needs of employers rather than individuals, we received details of the main activities for which such funding would be used as part of the model. In summary, these are as follows:-

Employment Leads Co-ordination Team

32. This team, based in the Council's Regeneration Service (Jobs and Skills division), will include a Project Director, Project Officer, a Procurement Officer and Admin support. The team will work with employers and developers to identify the number and types of jobs available, the skills required across different sectors and the recruitment timescales.

Job Brokerage Team

33. A Job Brokerage Team will be employed by the Council to work with employers to identify their needs and to assist with the recruitment process. This team will work with a broad range of employers, which may include Retail, Construction, Hospitality, Business Finance and Professional Services, Care and Health, and public sector opportunities.

Retention Team

34. Activities will be developed in close consultation with key strategic partners to ensure that they complement existing/ planned provision. It is expected that the majority of work under this strand will be commissioned and will include a number of activities, for example, the establishment of mentoring/buddying schemes to help businesses to retain staff.

Programme Management and Commissioning Activity

35. The Council's Regeneration Service will carry out the following functions:-

- Commissioning and contracting of activity to deliver required outcomes in relation to the Job Brokerage and Retention Teams (within a framework agreed by the Leeds Worklessness Strategic Outcomes Group). Work will be commissioned as competitive grants or as contracts whichever is the most appropriate.
- Early and ongoing advice/ support to partners around interpreting the funding requirements, especially those relating to ERDF monitoring, audit and eligibility issues, and



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addressing any performance issues as they arise.

- Development/ implementation of monitoring and reporting systems including submission of claims documentation to Yorkshire Forward.
- Establishment/ coordination of an Operational Steering Group involving key partners.

36. As the Employment Leeds model aims to provide a more coherent approach in liaising with employers and supporting new investors to the city, particular importance was placed upon the role of City Development and Economic Development and Planning Services in helping to raise the profile of the Employment Leeds model amongst prospective employers and developers.

37. In view of this, we recognised the need for relevant staff members within City Development, Planning and Economic Development Services to be briefed on the Employment Leeds model, its objectives, how they support and contribute to its delivery, and what it offers developers and employers.

38. Particular reference was also made to the intelligence gathered by Economic Development Service in terms of the local economy and potential employers and investors coming into the city.

39. Whilst we noted that this local intelligence is being shared between Economic Development and Regeneration Services on an ad hoc basis, it was clear that a more systematic approach towards sharing such data needs to be developed to

assist the delivery of the Employment Leeds model.

Recommendation 1
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that appropriate briefings are provided immediately to relevant staff within Economic Development and Planning Services in City Development on the objectives of the Employment Leeds model to help raise its profile amongst employers and developers.

Recommendation 2
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on ensuring that a more systematic data sharing mechanism is developed between Economic Development and the Regeneration Services in relation to data gathered on the local economy and potential employers and investors coming into the city.

40. It is clear that effective partnership working between Council services and all other partners will be a key factor for successfully delivering the Employment Leeds model. However, we found this to be particularly important in terms of the 'preparing for work' strand of the Employment Leeds model in view of the wide range of existing services currently providing employability support.

Existing employability support in Leeds

41. Jobcentre Plus is the government agency charged with supporting people back into work. During our review, we



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received details of the wide range of employability support currently provided by Jobcentre Plus in Leeds.

42. In response to the recession, we noted that Jobcentre Plus had introduced additional enhanced services for employers and individuals. This included a package of support for Jobseeker Allowance customers who are newly unemployed, those aged 25 plus; increased funding through the Rapid Response Service to support employers and their employees facing redundancies to help them find new jobs; and day one eligibility to Local Employment Partnership vacancy opportunities.
43. In addition to the support provided by Jobcentre Plus, we also acknowledged the wide range of other employability support services available within the public, private and voluntary sectors.
44. In relation to the support provided by the Council, we decided to focus on the information, advice and guidance provided through the network of Jobshops located in areas with high claimant levels.
45. During our review, we conducted a visit to the Tunstall Road Jobshop. This provided an opportunity to meet with the Programme Manager, Service Manager and also some of the customers of the Jobshop to obtain their specific views about the employability support available to them to help secure employment.
46. We noted that the feedback from customers was generally very positive in recognition of the facilities available through the Jobshop service. This included a free impartial face-to-face advisory service; support with preparing CVs and completing application forms; help with interviews skills; internet access for jobsearch and the latest information on local job vacancies.
47. In view of this, we found that one of the main issues raised by customers was around accessibility to such facilities. We noted that the Tunstall Road Jobshop service was only available 2.5 days a week despite there being a clear demand from customers for the service to operate full time.
48. In discussing this further with the Service Manager of the Jobshop, we learned that despite such demand needs, access to the service remains restricted due to limited staff resources.
49. We therefore discussed alternative options available for providing additional coverage, such as developing closer links with the voluntary sector. However, in doing so consideration would need to be given to the level of training required for volunteers and the sustainability of this approach long term. It was noted that opportunities to target and maximise the impact of outreach activity were being explored with Jobcentre Plus and other partners.
50. In recognition of such a valued support service, we believe that further work needs to be undertaken to determine existing customer demand across the city for such services and to explore ways in which such demand needs can be met effectively.
51. In particular, we believe that attention should be given to the potential demand on services in the short term in



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anticipation of the challenges presented by continuing decreases in public funding nationally.

Recommendation 3

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods develops an action plan over the next 6 months to determine the existing customer demand for Jobshop services and to explore ways in which such demand needs can be met effectively.

In particular, attention should be given to the potential demand on services in the short term in anticipation of the challenges presented by continuing decreases in public funding nationally.

52. During our visit to Tunstall Road Jobshop, particular importance was placed upon strengthening links between the Jobshops and other key partners and employers in order to raise their profile and be considered as a key contact in terms of future job opportunities.

53. A key role of the Council is to identify where workless individuals are not accessing support and to signpost them to appropriate existing services rather than trying to duplicate this provision. However, we believe that all partners should also be encouraged to signpost individuals to other relevant services where appropriate.

54. We were pleased to note that this approach is also supported by Jobcentre Plus and the Leeds Learning Partnership. We learned that both have secured funding to have a unit in

Leeds Market that would act as an employment and training hub and offer advice to individuals and signpost them to appropriate services. However, it was noted that the long term sustainability of this facility will be depended upon the level of commitment given by other partners to provide staff resource for this unit.

55. To help facilitate this approach, we believe there is merit in mapping all employability support services in Leeds with a view to producing a comprehensive directory that can be utilised by all partners and employers. This directory can also feed into and support the Employment Leeds model.

56. Whilst we would advise that such a directory is produced and maintained by the Council, responsibility should be placed upon all partners to ensure that this directory is kept up-to-date.

Recommendation 4

(i) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on producing and maintaining an up-to-date electronic directory of employability support services/schemes/agencies within Leeds.

(ii) That this directory is widely publicised and responsibility placed upon all partners to keep the directory up-to-date.



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Addressing youth unemployment

57. During our review, particular attention was also given to the support available for young people seeking employment. We noted that on 15 December 2009, the Department for Work and Pensions published its employment White Paper 'Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment'. Within this, young people are identified as the demographic group most exposed to the negative impacts of the recession. In view of this, three-quarters of the government's £400m support programme over the next 18 months will be invested in tackling youth unemployment.
58. The White Paper sets out new support initiatives for young people to help get more of them back into work. A summary of this support is set out in Appendix C.
59. In February 2010, members of the Board's working group also attended a joint worklessness workshop aimed at tackling youth unemployment, which was chaired by Jobcentre Plus.
60. During this workshop, we again acknowledged the wide range of employability support services and initiatives in place within the public, private and voluntary sectors which aim to tackle youth unemployment.
61. Particular reference was made to the new Future Jobs Fund programme, which aims to create jobs for long term unemployed young people. In November 2009, DWP approval was granted to the Future Jobs Fund bid

submitted by the Council on behalf of partners. The initial contract, covering the period November 2009 to April 2010, assisted in delivering 263 jobs and therefore in view of its success, a further bid to extend the programme was submitted by the Council.

62. We also learned about the Council wide employer-led Apprenticeship Programme, Work4 Leeds. This has been developed to enable young people and adults from key target groups to apply for entry level posts. By the end of 2009/10, it was predicted that 250 apprenticeships would be in place.
63. As both of these programmes offer a minimum of 6 months training and work experience, this was considered a key factor to their success. In view of this, we would recommend that any future expansions to these schemes also adopt a minimum of 6 months work experience.

Recommendation 5

That, in recognition of the success of the Future Jobs Fund programme and Work4Leeds Apprenticeship programme, the Council ensures that any future expansions to these schemes also adopt a minimum of 6 months work experience.

64. Whilst we were pleased to note that such a wide range of local support services are available to help tackle youth unemployment, we also recognised that one particular service was not being utilised to its full potential. This was the Leeds Youth Service.



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65. The Youth Service works predominately with young people aged 13 to 19 and provides access to universal information, advice and support. In particular, it plays a valuable role in delivering targeted support to those at risk of not progressing, which will include those young people that are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

66. In view of this, we believe that further work is needed to generate greater awareness amongst Leeds Youth Service staff about the provisions available for addressing youth unemployment.

Recommendation 6
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and the External Relations Manager at Leeds Jobcentre Plus produce a joint action plan aimed at generating greater awareness amongst Leeds Youth Service staff about the provisions available for addressing youth unemployment.

67. We noted that figures provided by the Leeds Connexions Service indicated that in February 2010, the number of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 1,822 (8.3%) and a further 1591 whose current status is Not Known.

68. One of the key concerns raised during the workshop was around those young people whose status is Not Known.

69. Young people are classed as Not Known if they have not had contact with the Connexions service within a certain

period (how regular the contact needs to be depends on whether the young person is NEET or EET). The Not Known figure, therefore, includes young people who may be in contact with other services but whose record has not been updated on the Connexions database.

70. The Not Known figure reported is above statistical neighbours and regional comparators and therefore reducing the number of young people whose status is Not Known is a key priority for Leeds.

71. To help address this problem, particular attention was given to the need for partners to work more closely together in sharing information that will help to track a young persons progress, particularly once they stop accessing support from the Connexions service. Whilst data protection issues were often regarded as a barrier to effective data sharing in the past, it was considered vital that such issues are overcome if Leeds is to address the rising numbers of NEETs and reduce the number of young people whose status is Not Known.

72. As well as tracking individuals, we also recognised the value of effective data sharing to enable the Council and other partners to improve the coordination of existing employability support services and target resources more effectively.

Improving the co-ordination of resources through effective data sharing

73. The level of funding available for pre-employment provision was not



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considered to be a concern. However, there is a recognised need for greater alignment of such funding in order to avoid duplication of effort and thereby deliver better value for money.

74. We have already acknowledged that there are a host of organisations working in communities that are targeting the same workless families and individuals in line with their own performance indicators. Many of these are commercial agencies driven to achieve profitability alongside those organisations funded from public sector funding streams and therefore have previously been reluctant to share their customer data.

75. However, it is clear that improved data sharing will enable the Council and other partners to target resources more effectively. We noted that this has already helped to strengthen and add value to the relationship between Environment and Neighbourhoods and Jobcentre Plus.

76. Whilst data sharing approaches are being encouraged amongst other services and partners to enable a more integrated approach towards tackling worklessness, it was evident from our review that this still remains an area for improvement.

77. During our review we noted that the Council has piloted a data sharing project with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in relation to lone parent benefit claimants about to be migrated to Job Seekers Allowance.

78. Through improved data sharing, this pilot project focuses on how the Council can utilise its resources more effectively

to provide targeted marketing of support services to this particular client group.

79. To encourage the further development of data sharing protocols across the Council and its partners, we recommend that the lessons arising from this pilot project are reviewed and widely disseminated to illustrate the benefits of such an approach.

Recommendation 7
To encourage the development of data sharing protocols further across the Council and its partners, we recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the lessons arising from the Council's data sharing pilot project with DWP on lone parent benefit claimants are reviewed and widely disseminated to illustrate the benefits of such an approach.

80. Further to this pilot project, we understand that work is planned to identify future local data sharing opportunities using the local authority's well-being powers.

81. The DWP protects the information that it holds by strict adherence to Data Protection Act principles ensuring that management and use of all customer information is lawful.

82. In February 2010, we noted that the DWP had released a guide to data sharing to tackle worklessness. Within this, particular emphasis is given to the right of the customer to expect that their information will be handled securely and for their benefit, which we totally support.



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83. The guide indicates that informed consent to data sharing can meet some of the legal requirements for data sharing and that a number of local partnerships are building a shared 'client tracking system' on the basis of informed consent arrangements. However, such arrangements are based on collecting new data to be shared.
84. In moving forward, we believe there is merit in the Council also exploring the use of its powers to promote economic and social well-being and the processes for obtaining informed consent from individuals in order to make best use of data to target and deliver activity to reduce worklessness.

Recommendation 8

That, where appropriate, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on exploring the use of the Council's powers to promote economic and social well-being and the processes for obtaining informed consent from individuals to make best use of data to target and deliver activity to reduce worklessness.

Supporting people with multiple barriers to work

85. Many workless families and individuals will have multiple barriers to work including housing problems, poor health, childcare needs, issues relating to alcohol or drugs misuse or a history of offending. As no one organisation can provide solutions to all of these issues, such families and individuals are likely to have numerous different action plans
- and professionals working with them, which can cause confusion.
86. Partnership working is therefore essential and we believe the key to achieving this effectively is to identify one lead professional to look at the needs of that family or individual from a holistic perspective and to co-ordinate the necessary interventions with other key partners.
87. During our review, particular reference was made to the EASEL and West Leeds Gateway Worklessness pilot project, also referred to as the '4 Families' project. This project has been running since May 2009 and entails development of a case management approach to supporting workless families and individuals and strengthening partnership delivery of employment and training support. The project is located in four particular neighbourhoods (Halton Moor, Osmondthorpe, Gipton and New Wortley) and is aimed at supporting those households furthest away from the labour market.
88. The main objectives of the project are to test out whether delivering a personalised approach via a dedicated mentor is an effective way of supporting people with multiple barriers to work and to develop multi-agency working in neighbourhoods in the area of employment and economic inclusion.
89. The mentors use a self assessment approach as a way of developing an action plan with individuals which allows them to track their own progress on their route to work or training. It recognises that the target client group will have complex barriers to joining or returning



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to the labour market from skills and lack of work experience to practical issues such as debt, family problems and so on.

90. We understand that an evaluation of this project commenced in October 2009 to look at the cost effectiveness of the model and to develop good practice from it. Once completed, we recommend that the findings from this evaluation are brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

Recommendation 9
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that the evaluation findings from the 4 Families pilot project is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration once available.

Developing a holistic Works and Skills Plan

91. In moving forward, we noted that the White Paper 'Building Britain's Recovery; Achieving Full Employment' highlights the government's expectations for the development of new Work and Skills Plans.

92. The overarching objective of Work and Skills Plans is to set out how local authorities, working within their partnerships, can help deliver a reduction in worklessness and promote economic inclusion. These are to have a major role in identifying synergies in funding streams and service delivery and potential efficiencies through better alignment of resources.

93. These Plans are also seen as the means to bring together core delivery elements of existing strategies, for example from the Work and Skills Plan and Local Area Agreement, to form a single, coherent and delivery-focused Plan that identifies the roles of respective partners and what they will, individually and collectively, be responsible for undertaking.

94. It is anticipated that the first full Work and Skills Plans will be required to be in place for April 2011 and to cover the three year period to April 2014.

95. Government guidance suggests that, where local authorities and their partnerships are operating within a city region structure, there will be a joint Worklessness Assessment and Work and Skills Plan produced at the city region level. However, in view of the complexity and range of issues contributing to worklessness at the neighbourhood level, it is noted that an assessment and plan is clearly needed for the Leeds Metropolitan District. Every effort will need to be made to ensure that the plans and assessment at the Leeds City level will complement and add value to the City Region Assessment and Plan.

96. The Leeds City Region forerunner programme and the establishment of an employer led Employment and Skills Board will allow the potential benefits of greater influence and involvement in DWP and Skills Funding Agency commissioning linked to the production of Worklessness Assessments and Work and Skills Plans to be explored.

97. The development of a Works and Skills Plan for Leeds provides a valuable



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opportunity to respond effectively to the issues that have been raised during our review in terms of promoting a more joined up approach towards tackling worklessness. In particular, we believe that this Plan should also be used as a means of strengthening the links between employability support services for adults and young people.

Recommendation 10
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods leads on ensuring that the Leeds Works and Skills Plan

- a) complements and adds value to the Leeds City Region plan to make best use of resources;
- b) promotes a joined up approach towards tackling worklessness, with particular attention given to strengthening the links between employability support services for adults and young people.

Promoting positive achievements

98. Our review has also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the positive work that is being undertaken to help address worklessness in Leeds.

99. Within Leeds, we noted that there are 3 Area-based Worklessness Groups focused on inner city areas which are chaired by Jobcentre Plus and involve a wide range of key partners. Each group has developed an action plan to meet the needs of their particular areas and a number of positive outcomes have arisen from such targeted work.

100. Elected Members would benefit from learning more about such action plans and for the achievements arising from these plans to be publicised more effectively.

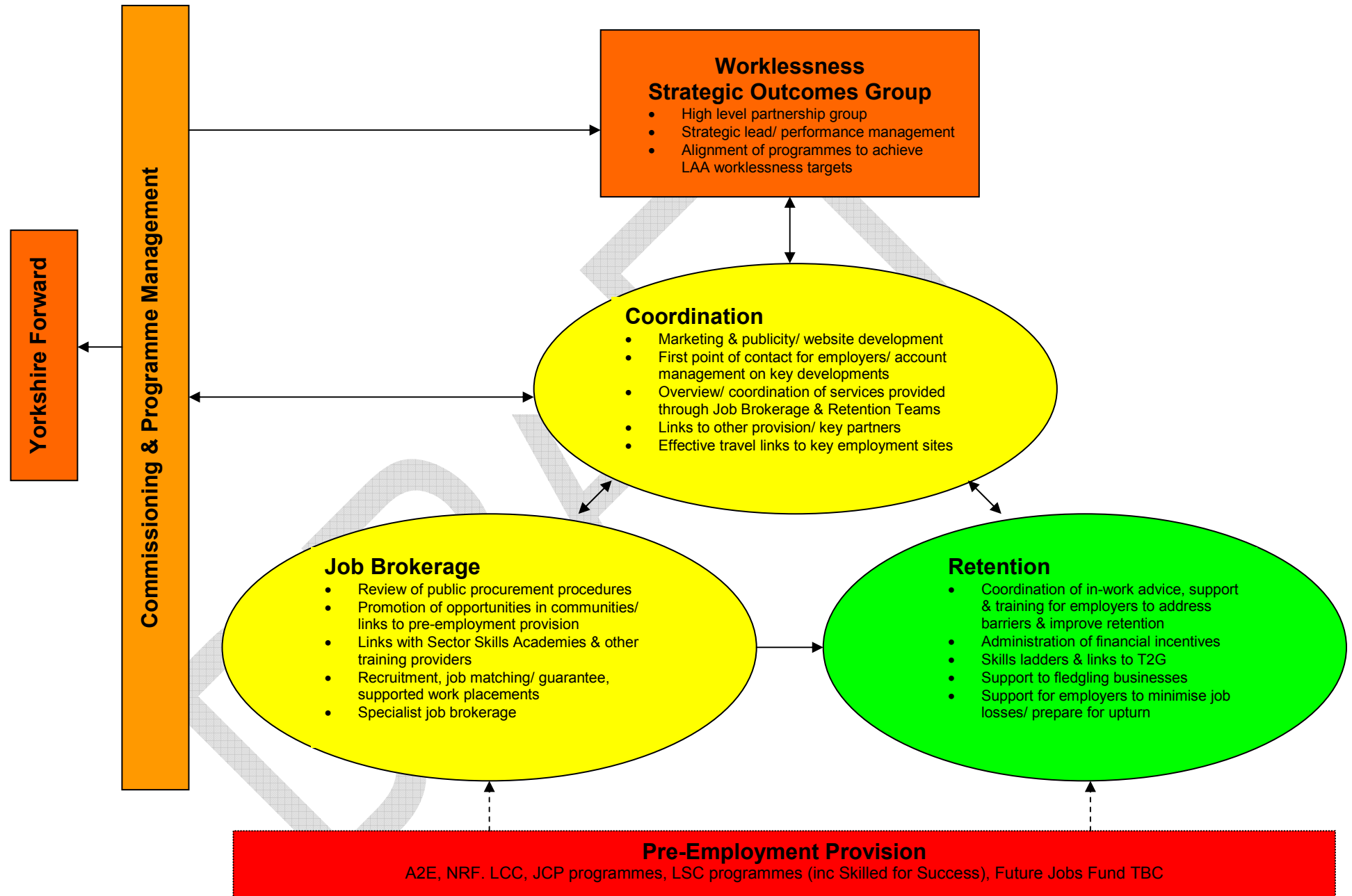
Recommendation 11
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that all Elected Members are made aware of the Area-based Worklessness Groups and advised on how they can be engaged in the work of these groups.

101. When monitoring the reduction of worklessness through the quarterly performance management process, we believe that such reports would benefit from the inclusion of more case study evidence demonstrating where actions and local initiatives aimed at tackling worklessness have proved to be successful.

Recommendation 12
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that future quarterly performance management reports include more case study evidence of where actions and initiatives aimed at tackling worklessness have proved to be successful.

102. We also believe that such positive publicity should also feed into the Employment Leeds model to help demonstrate to employers that the Council and its partners remain committed to improving the economic climate of Leeds and will continue to respond positively to the challenges presented by the current economic climate.

Appendix A





Appendix B

Preparing for Work

First Step Engagement/ Employability Support

- engagement with 'hard to reach' individuals in deprived communities to help address barriers to work
- practical assistance eg with childcare & travel arrangements
- Information, Advice & Guidance (nextstep)
- referrals to specialist services eg around debt, housing & health issues such as drug or alcohol dependency
- soft skills eg confidence building, social & personal development
- jobsearch, help with CV writing & interview techniques
- support for those being made redundant (particularly the lowly paid/ qualified) to help them return to work quickly
- volunteering, work experience, job creation & other ways of keeping people engaged/ skilled up in preparation for the upturn

Skills Development

- bespoke &/or sector specific training eg in Construction, Retail, Administration, Customer Services, Care
- links with Sector Skills Academies

Into Work

Employer Engagement/ Coordination

- more coordinated/ managed approach to inward investment & key developments/ regeneration schemes in order to maximise opportunities for the City
- single point of contact with employers & ongoing support through full life cycle of development
- branding/ marketing of 'Employment Leeds' Offer based on an enhanced LEP model
- effective travel links to key employment sites

Job Brokerage

- dedicated team to deliver the offer on key employment sites (eg Trinity & Eastgate, Leeds Arena, LBIA, Tesco) &/or within specific sectors
- review & revision of public sector procurement procedures to include robust community benefit clauses
- promotion of opportunities in communities eg through employment fairs, bus
- support for the employer to recruit suitably trained people who live locally (including pre employment training)
- employability skills sessions delivered by employers
- job matching to 'suitable' posts through job guarantee, apprenticeship schemes, supported work trials &/or volunteering opportunities
- specialist job brokerage eg in Construction, Retail
- continued support to clients once in-work

In Work

Job Retention

- support for the employer to develop flexible & diverse recruitment/ employment practices
- in work support to address ongoing barriers eg 'buddying' & mentoring schemes, training for supervisors
- financial incentives/ bonuses to help employers retain staff, including an Emergency Fund
- facilitate links to Train to Gain, Apprenticeships etc & create 'skills ladders' which will help to free up jobs at entry level
- enable & support fledgling businesses to grow by becoming first time employers (possible links to LEGI)

Economic Resilience

- help minimise job losses through specific support for employers to consider other options to closure/ redundancy eg reduced working hours, downsizing
- employment support & well-being service pre & during 'change management' (links to Advice Leeds)
- where feasible, support to develop & implement expansion plans

Journey to Work



Appendix C

Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment – summary of key initiatives aimed at young people.

On 15 December 2009, the Department for Work and Pensions published its employment White Paper 'Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment'.

Within this White Paper, young people are identified as the demographic group most exposed to the negative impacts of the recession. Three-quarters of the £400m programme over the next 18 months will therefore be invested in tackling youth unemployment.

The White Paper sets out new support for young people to get more of them back into work. This includes:

- a dedicated personal adviser from day one of their unemployment claim and more time with an adviser throughout their claim;
- extra support for 16–17-year-olds from Jobcentre Plus, working closely with local Connexions services;
- a new subsidy for employers taking on 16–17-year-old apprentices;
- a January guarantee for 16–17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) of an offer of an Entry to Employment place, and Education Maintenance Allowance to go with it;
- a new Young Person's Guarantee for 18–24-year-olds that, if they are still unemployed after six months, they will be offered a job, training or internship and will be required to take it up before they complete 10 months on JSA;

- the Graduate Guarantee that graduates still unemployed at six months will be offered a graduate internship or other support; and
- over 100,000 government-funded additional training and job opportunities, on top of the 300,000 already pledged for the next 18 months, to help deliver the Young Person's Guarantee.

DRAFT

**Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)
Worklessness Review
May 2010
Report author: Angela Brogden**



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Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods)



Councillor Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Environment &
Neighbourhoods)

Membership of the Board:

Councillor Barry Anderson (Chair)
Councillor Alan Barker – from February 2010
Councillor Ann Blackburn
Councillor Ann Castle
Councillor Ryk Downes
Councillor Jane Dowson
Councillor David Hollingsworth
Councillor Graham Hyde
Councillor Josephine Jarosz
Councillor Joseph Marjoram
Councillor Lisa Mulherin
Councillor Mohammed Rafique

The Chair's summary

It is my pleasure to present the 2009/10 annual report of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods). This report provides an overview of the Board's extremely busy work programme over the last 12 months as we have continued to address issues which remain key priorities for local people.

The Scrutiny Board oversees a wide range of services within the Environment and Neighbourhoods directorate. However, this year we have also welcomed the expansion of the Board's portfolio to act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee' as set out within the Police and Justice Act 2006. This involves scrutinising the work of the local Community Safety Partnership and the partners who comprise it in relation to its crime and disorder functions.

To help provide guidance and a common understanding of how crime and disorder scrutiny will operate in Leeds, a protocol has been developed jointly between the Scrutiny Board and the local Community Safety Partnership (Safer Leeds). In line with this protocol, we very much look forward to working more closely with the Partnership in future in ensuring that Scrutiny remains a positive and challenging process.

The Board has conducted seven separate pieces of Scrutiny work this year. These have focused on improving the long term recycling infrastructure for Leeds; improving the allocation and management of social housing tenancies; strengthening procurement practices within housing services and across the Council; reducing worklessness; delivering effective integrated offender management; procuring a future grounds maintenance service which best meets needs of local residents; and delivering the Council's most significant area based regeneration programme commitment to date, the EASEL Programme.

In view of what the Board has achieved this year, I sincerely thank my fellow Board Members, officers and other witnesses for their commitment and contribution to the Board's work.

I am also proud to acknowledge that the work of this Scrutiny Board continues to be recognised nationally. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has cited the Board's earlier inquiries into Private Rented Sector Housing and Older People's Housing as case study evidence within its publication 'global challenge, local solutions: the role of scrutiny, audit and inspection in tackling the recession'. In addition to this, references to the Board's inquiry into Older People's Housing will also feature within a forthcoming guide, commissioned from the CfPS by the Department for Work and Pensions, to help overview and scrutiny committees review how local areas are addressing the needs of older people.

Cllr Barry Anderson, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods)

Inquiry into the EASEL Regeneration Programme

Summary

The East and South East Leeds (EASEL) programme is the Council's most significant area-based regeneration programme commitment to date. However, in February 2009, the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) received a request for a Scrutiny inquiry to be undertaken into the EASEL regeneration programme following concerns that there had been delays in progress with the programme and that people living in the EASEL area were not being kept informed of what was happening.

In taking forward this inquiry, the main focus was about identifying opportunities for strengthening communication links with key stakeholders and the EASEL communities around the programme. However, since session one of our inquiry in April 2009, when we received an overview of the initial programme objectives and timeline, we have observed a significant shift in direction for the EASEL programme in light of the current economic climate.

The Council is faced with the existing challenge of working within a completely different economic climate where delivery models dependent on raising funding from land sales and speculative property development are no longer considered viable in the short to medium term. We therefore acknowledge that the Council and its partners have been forced to radically rethink its plans for bringing investment into the EASEL area. Consequently the timing and scope of the neighbourhood planning exercise and resultant community consultation remains under review. In view of this, we felt that effective communication with stakeholders and the public was even more relevant now that the recession has forced the Council to reassess the overall direction of the EASEL programme.

Whilst we do plan to continue with our inquiry and monitor progress with the EASEL programme through to the neighbourhood planning stage, we considered it appropriate to produce an interim report setting out our findings and recommendations at this stage.

Anticipated service benefits

Our recommendations have been formulated to assist the Council and its partners to move forward and provide assurance to the relevant stakeholders and the EASEL communities that the programme will remain a priority and that there will be effective community involvement in shaping the regeneration plans in neighbourhoods in the EASEL area.

Our main recommendations

To be added once finalised.

Inquiry into Recycling

Summary

Recycling continues to be an area of interest for Scrutiny. At the beginning of the municipal year, we received a referral from the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services to conduct a further inquiry into recycling that focuses on improving the long term recycling infrastructure for Leeds.

Whilst acknowledging that over 90% of residents have access to kerbside recycling, there remains significant scope for improving the recycling infrastructure and making recycling facilities more accessible to everyone. Based around the principle that 'one size does not fit all', the focus of this particular Scrutiny inquiry was to explore the different options available for collecting recyclables, taking into account the diverse range of communities and housing types that exist in Leeds. Attention was also given to producing high quality material streams to encourage the long term development and sustainability of secondary material industries.

“Engaging the public in their local recycling scheme has been shown to be essential to the success of a scheme. Whichever scheme is chosen it is important that it is designed to fit the needs of the local population and the houses they live in”.

WRAP. Guide to choosing the right recycling collection system (June 2009).

As part of our inquiry, particular attention was given to those areas across the city which do not have access to appropriate and convenient recycling facilities. However, we also considered the challenges presented by different property types across the city, which included flats, back to back properties, terrace housing and any other property types that have limited access to recycling facilities. Particular attention was also given to student properties within the private sector and during our inquiry we welcomed the contribution and advice provided by representatives from UNIPOL and the local Student Unions in terms of existing best practice for targeting this particular population group.

Whilst acknowledging the wide range of materials currently recyclable at household waste sorting sites and bring sites, we also explored opportunities to expand this range further (including more reusable materials). In doing so, we considered other regional and national approaches towards recyclable collection methods and sought the advice of external experts in this particular area of work. These included representatives of the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the Waste Regional Advisory Group (WRAG), CO2Sense and Leeds Friends of the Earth.

As part of our inquiry, we also considered the relationship between Environment and Neighbourhoods and City Development in ensuring that future recycling service proposals are reflected in planning policy and guidance and that developers are making adequate provision for recycling within their planning proposals.

Our main recommendations

To be added once finalised.

Anticipated service benefits

The findings and recommendations arising from our inquiry seek to complement the Council's Recycling Improvement Plan and highlight where long term improvements to the recycling infrastructure for Leeds can be made.

Inquiry into Integrated Offender Management

Summary

At the beginning of the municipal year, particular concerns were raised about the rise in serious acquisitive crime in Leeds and most notably domestic burglary. In 2008/09, there were 9,248 recorded domestic burglaries in Leeds, which is equivalent to a 9.5% increase (799 more offences) when compared with the previous year. It was therefore clear that reducing burglary would be critical to realising the overall target for serious acquisitive crime. In view of this, particular importance was placed on embedding local processes as part of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme and therefore we agreed to explore this further.

Integrated Offender Management is the process of developing and delivering a range of interventions for those individuals identified as of most concern to police and communities. With the overall aim of reducing or stopping such individuals offending, the 3 strands of the IOM model are based around the existing national Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) Strategy, which are Prevent and Deter; Catch and Control; and Rehabilitate and Resettle. In its broadest sense, the IOM model of working can be used to identify and deliver interventions for individuals, families or neighbourhoods and it is the Safer Leeds Partnership that is accountable for the overall development, delivery and performance of the Leeds IOM model.

As part of our inquiry, we considered the current IOM framework in Leeds, identifying any barriers or gaps in relation to the range of partners, interventions and resources available. Particular attention was also given to the role of Offender Health in Leeds.

In particular, we explored mechanisms for improving information sharing between partner agencies to ensure a successful IOM process in Leeds. In doing so, we welcomed the contribution of a wide range of services and organisations during our inquiry. These included Leeds Community Safety; NHS Leeds; Leeds Youth Offending Service; West Yorkshire Probation Service; Leeds Offender Management Unit; Crown Prosecution Service; DISC; and the West Yorkshire Drugs and Offender Management Unit. Whilst many of our meetings were held within the Civic Hall, we also took the opportunity to conduct a visit to the Leeds Integrated Offender Management hub, which is based at Mabgate Mills.



Visit to the Leeds IOM hub at Mabgate Mills

Anticipated service benefits

The term 'integrated' offender management suggests end-to-end management of an individual's case and whilst our inquiry has highlighted some excellent work arising from the Leeds IOM scheme, our recommendations seek to strengthen further existing partnership working and intelligence-sharing mechanisms. We hope to publish our final report and recommendations in June 2010.

Our main recommendations

To be added once finalised.

Other work of the Board

Call-In

A Call In meeting of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board was held on 3rd June 2009. This was to consider an Officer Delegated Decision of the Chief Housing Services Officer relating to a request to enter into a framework contract with Cascade Homes, Care Solutions and Green Investments (Jump) for the supply and management of temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and families for a period of 12 months, commencing in May 2009 at a cost of £2.6m per annum.

In consideration of this decision, we raised a number of concerns about the processes that were followed for this particular contract. In view of this, we referred the decision back to the Chief Housing Services Officer for reconsideration and were pleased to note that our recommendations were taken on board. Following this Call In, we also agreed to conduct a wider review into the procurement of housing contracts.

Review into the procurement of housing contracts

During this review, we welcomed the contribution of representatives from Environment and Neighbourhoods, Supporting People, Corporate Procurement, Legal Services and Internal Audit. In recognition of the strategic move towards adopting a more joined up approach for the procurement of housing provision for vulnerable clients, we also invited contributions from the Adult Social Care and Children's Services directorates.

Overall, this review enabled Scrutiny to observe how the lessons learned from the Call In had led to significant improvements within Environment and Neighbourhoods in terms of its procurement and contract management processes for housing and housing support services. However, it also presented opportunities to identify where procurement practices across the Council could be strengthened. Our recommendations therefore focused on improving data sharing on prospective contractors; sharing best practice models around contract management; and conducting more timely contract reviews.

Our main recommendations

- That the Chief Procurement Officer leads on developing a robust internal data sharing system/protocol to complement the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire process as part of any procurement exercise.
- That, as part of the ALITO system used by the Procurement Unit, all contract managers across the Council are prompted to conduct a review of a contract at least 12 months before the contract expiry
- That the Council's Monitoring Officer and Chief Officer of Human Resources explore ways in which the requirement for all Members and officers to formally register and declare any interests/relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors or potential contractors can be made more transparent as part of any contract review process.

Other work of the Board

Review into Housing Lettings Process

At the April 2009 Council meeting, concerns were raised about the current housing lettings policies. In response, the Executive Board considered a number of proposed options for change aimed at improving the management and allocation of tenancies and requested that these be developed further into recommendations for change to be incorporated into a revised Lettings Policy and guidance.

In acknowledgement of this, we also agreed to take a broad look at the housing lettings process, from the housing application stage through to tenancy management, to explore where improvements in partnership working and data sharing can be made to improve the allocation and management of tenancies. In doing so, we recognised the importance of ensuring that Scrutiny complements the wider piece of work being undertaken.

A wide range of services and external partners contributed to our review, including tenant representatives from the local ALMOs, BITMO and Leeds Tenants Federation. Overall, the findings from our review emphasise the valuable role that all key partners have in the housing lettings process in terms of sharing data that will help determine and address the housing support needs of prospective and existing tenants. Our recommendations therefore seek to strengthen such partnership working in the future.

Our main recommendations

To be added once agreed

Review into Worklessness

Helping people find work and stay in work is recognised as a priority both nationally and locally. However, within this policy area, we noted that both strategy and delivery is fragmented, with responsibility spread across a range of agencies and providers. In terms of the impact on employers in particular, they would often be approached by a variety of different agencies and this consequently leads to confusion and frustration by the employer. It was therefore considered appropriate and timely for Scrutiny to focus its review around the development of the new delivery model for work with employers – ‘Employment Leeds’. In doing so, consideration was given to the overall ‘journey to work’, from preparing individuals for work through to job retention.

It is clear that the way in which services are delivered and planned can have a substantial impact in helping workless people find and sustain employment and therefore our review findings and recommendations are based around the principles of adopting a more holistic approach towards worklessness, embedding a culture of partnership working both internally and externally, and delivering value for money through smarter targeting and improved coordination of services/resources.

Our main recommendations

To be added once agreed

Other work of the Board

Procurement of the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2011

In June 2009, a working group of the Board was established to oversee the procurement process for the new grounds maintenance contract for 2011. We set out to ensure that the recommendations arising from the earlier Scrutiny inquiry around grounds maintenance had been taken forward and that lessons learned from the existing contract were also being reflected in the new specification.

In January 2009, we produced an interim statement setting out our initial findings and recommendations relating to the procurement of the new contract for the attention of the Executive Board and the Grounds Maintenance Programme Board at that particular stage of the procurement process. Many of our recommendations sought to address concerns raised about the overall level of engagement with Elected Members and also local Parish and Town Councils throughout the procurement process. Local councils were invited to contribute to our review and as a result, we ensured that their views and concerns were reflected within our interim Statement.

We are pleased to note that our Statement was considered and welcomed by the Executive Board in March 2010. We will therefore be monitoring the implementation of our initial recommendations as we continue to oversee the procurement process for the new contract.

Our main recommendations

- That the Chair of the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that the relevant client groups actively engage with all Elected Members at key stages of the current grounds maintenance procurement project. We would advise that such engagement continues to be conducted through Area Committees.
- That the tendering process for the new grounds maintenance contract encourages a localised approach towards the delivery of the new service, and particularly if the service is to be packaged as one city-wide contract.
- That the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that each of the ALMOs and Highways Services works in partnership with Elected Members and local Parish and Town Councils to develop a framework for delivering more robust and consistent monitoring arrangements for grounds maintenance as part of the current procurement project.

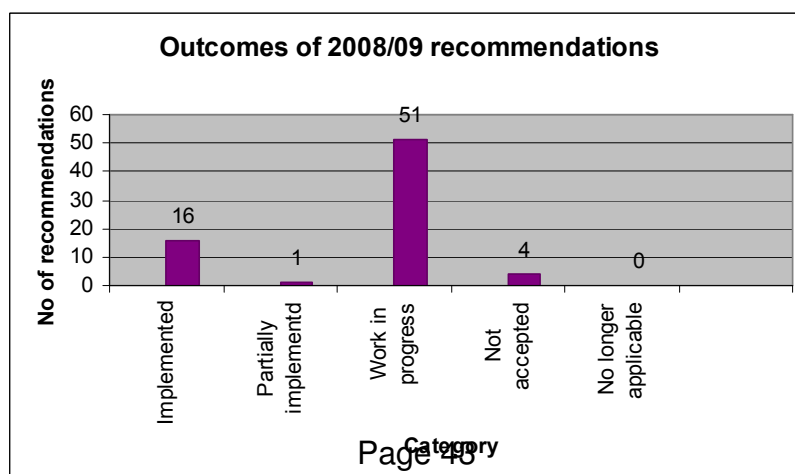
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny – Development of a joint protocol

Provisions in the Police and Justice Act 2006 further extend the remit of local authorities to scrutinise the local Community Safety Partnership in relation to its crime and disorder functions as from April 2009. As a result, the Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board was assigned to act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee'. In view of this, a protocol was developed jointly between the Scrutiny Board and the local Community Safety Partnership to help provide guidance and a common understanding of how crime and disorder scrutiny in Leeds will operate in practice.

Outcome of recommendations made in 2008/09

The Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods) carried out 5 inquiries in 2008/09, which resulted in 72 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 into Private Rented Sector Housing, one of our main recommendations was to establish a single point of contact within the Council to act as a conduit for both private landlords and tenants to gain access to accurate and timely advice, information and assistance. As a result, the Leeds Housing Options Service became the central contact service for both landlords and tenants, with an e-mail address also set up (landlordandtenant@leeds.gov.uk).
- With regard to our inquiry into Older People's Housing, we were pleased to note that many of our recommendations were taken forward and incorporated within the revised Housing Strategy and Action Plan for Older People 2009-2012. In response to a particular concern raised by the Leeds Older People's Forum, we recommended that its work on tackling social isolation amongst older people is embedded into existing training mechanisms for all relevant front line staff delivering services to older people. This has also been taken forward.
- Following our inquiry into Asylum Seeker Case Resolution, we learned that the UK Border Agency has developed a closer working relationship with the Council and that improvements have been made in communicating detailed projections and baseline data. UKBA also gave a commitment to developing project plans in partnership with the authority for the future of case resolution.
- As a result of our review into Dog Fouling Enforcement, we recommended that a Dog Control Strategy is developed for Leeds. In response, a Dog Warden Service Strategy was produced in October 2009 with a commitment to develop a more detailed Dog Control Strategy along with other key partners. A Multi Agency Project Board was also established to take forward our recommendations around additional Dog Control Orders for Leeds. Dog Control Orders are now to be implemented in two stages to help facilitate early delivery of the overall project. A full consultation will be undertaken following the Advertisement of Intent on 21st May 2010. This includes an online consultation and a dedicated web address has been set up to facilitate this (www.leeds.gov.uk/dogs). The consultation is due to close on 31st August 2010.
- We noted that the refuse collection strike action last year had consequently affected progress in implementing the recommendations from our Street Cleaning inquiry. In view of this, the Chair has continued to discuss progress with the Chief Environmental Services Officer and the Board will be closely monitoring this in the new municipal year.



The Board's full work programme 2009/10

Review of existing policy

- Integrated Offender Management
- EASEL Regeneration Programme
- Procurement of Housing Contracts

Development of new policy

- Dog Warden Service Strategy
- Recycling
- Response to the CLG Consultation around social housing allocations
- Worklessness
- Procurement of the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2011
- Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005-2035 – Revised Draft Action Plan
- Protocol for Crime and Disorder Scrutiny in Leeds

Monitoring scrutiny recommendations

- Street Cleaning
- Asylum Seeker Case Resolution
- Private Rented Sector Housing
- Older People's Housing
- Dog Fouling Enforcement

Performance management

- Quarterly performance management reports
- Performance Monitoring and Food Standards Agency Food Service Audit Update

Briefings

- Roseville Door Factory Closure – Update
- Housing Solutions/Mortgage Rescue
- Fuel Poverty

Call Ins

- Supporting People Request to enter into a framework contract with Cascade Homes, Care Solutions and Green Investments (Jump) for the supply and management of temporary accommodation for a period of 12 months