



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held in Committee Rooms 6&7, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
on Tuesday, 9th October, 2007 at 10.00 am*
(* Pre – Meeting at 9.30am)

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

- P Grahame (Chair) - Cross Gates and Whinmoor
- B Anderson - Adel and Wharfedale
- S Bentley - Weetwood
- B Gettings - Morley North
- S Golton - Rothwell
- T Hanley - Bramley and Stanningley
- A Harrison - Garforth and Swillington
- W Hyde - Temple Newsam
- E Minkin - Kirkstall
- R Pryke - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

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A G E N D A

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1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p>	
2			<p>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC</p> <p>To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public</p>	
3			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes)</p>	
4			<p>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>To declare any personal/prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct</p>	
5			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p>	
6			<p>MINUTES - 11TH SEPTEMBER 2007</p> <p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2007 (enclosed).</p>	1 - 6

Item No	Ward	Item Not Open		Page No
7			<p>MINUTES - EXECUTIVE BOARD,11TH SEPTEMBER 2007</p> <p>To receive, for information purposes only, the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 11th September 2007 (enclosed).</p>	7 - 14
8			<p>LEEDS STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement).</p>	15 - 22
9			<p>PLANNING PERFORMANCE</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached report of the Chief Planning Officer.</p>	23 - 74
10			<p>DIRECT PAYMENTS</p> <p>To receive a briefing from Mike Evans, Chief Officer Adult Services.</p>	75 - 78
11			<p>SCRUTINY OF THE BUDGET - FINANCIAL HEALTH MONITORING 2007/08 - QUARTER 1 REPORT</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached reports of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development and the Director of Resources.</p>	79 - 86
12			<p>RECOMMENDATION TRACKING</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.</p>	87 - 90
13			<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>To receive and consider the attached report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development.</p>	91 - 110

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14			<p>DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Tuesday 6th November 2007 Tuesday 11th December 2007 Tuesday 8th January 2008 Tuesday 5th February 2008 Tuesday 11th March 2008 Tuesday 8th April 2008.</p> <p>All at 10.00am (Pre- Meetings at 9.30 am)</p>	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, S Bentley,
B Gettings, S Golton, T Hanley, A Harrison,
W Hyde and R Pryke

Apologies Councillor E Minkin

28 Declaration of Interests

The following Member declarations of interest were made:-

Agenda Item 11 (Minute No 34 refers) – Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds – **Councillor Anderson** – personal interest in his capacity as a member of the Environment Agency (Ridings Area)

Agenda Item 11 (Minute No 34 refers) – Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds – **Councillor Pryke** – personal interest in his capacity as a member of the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee.

Agenda Item 13 (Minute No 36 refers) – Recommendation Tracking – ‘When Contracts Go Wrong’ – **Councillor Grahame** – personal interest in respect of the Swarcliffe PFI contract in her capacity as a member of the Swardale Swarcliffe Eastwood Residents Association.

29 Minutes - 2nd July and 20th August 2007

Further to Minute No 19, 2nd July 2007, Councillor Hanley stated that he was not satisfied with the information provided in respect of debt rescheduling and requested that Members be supplied with further information and explanation regarding the dates that loans were taken out, paid off or rescheduled and how this had led to accumulated savings of some £21.8m. The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development undertook to pursue this on Members’ behalf.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July (x2) and 20th August 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

30 Minutes - Executive Board - 4th July and 22nd August 2007

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board meetings held on 4th July and 22nd August 2007 be received and noted.

31 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, June 2007

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development and the Chief Officer (Executive Support) submitted reports regarding the contents of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter dated June 2007, prepared by the Council's External Auditors, KPMG, which related to Council performance, its accounts, data quality and use of resources.

This document had previously been considered by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 29th June 2007, which had referred two specific items to OSC for possible further scrutiny – teenage pregnancy figures and worklessness.

Steve Clough, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement, and Richard Foster, KPMG, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main issues raised were:-

- **Teenage pregnancy rates** – Councillor Golton agreed that the Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care) should receive an update report on this issue. It was suggested that it might be helpful to invite back some of the witnesses who had presented evidence to the original Board Inquiry;
- The devolving of control of services to area level, e.g. the Youth Service, and the need for co-ordination to ensure that City-wide issues, such as teenage pregnancies, were not neglected in this process;
- **Worklessness** – It was reported that this was a key issue identified in the Local Area Agreement, and the Scrutiny Board (Resources), in consultation with partner organisations and large local employers, was investigating initiatives to improve the figures for the number of people in work, such as the **Jobcentre Plus 'Halfway Back to Work' initiative**. The **Aire Valley Development** was also aimed at tackling the problem;
- The reasons behind the City's ratings drop in the **CPA 'Culture' block**, due to a change in the scoring system relating to people's ability or otherwise to readily access library books, and what was being done to address the matter. The inherent tension between national targets and local priorities was remarked upon, and how these might be reflected back to the Government, as was Member involvement in the preparation and approval of the **Annual Library Plan** (reported to Council). Opening times of local libraries, and how the public might influence these, was also referred to;
- The unexpected increase in the **population weighting** element for Leeds and its impact on the CPA scores.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That subject to the above comments, the contents of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be received and noted
- (b) That Steve Clough and Richard Foster be thanked for attending the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments.

32 Performance Report - Quarter 1 2007/08

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 9th October, 2007

The Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement submitted a report updating the Committee on performance against targets across a raft of statutory and local indicators, involving all the Scrutiny Boards' areas of responsibility. The report contained **predicted CPA scores for 2007/08**.

Steve Clough, Head of Policy, Performance and Improvement attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary the main issues discussed were:-

- The performance report had been discussed with individual Scrutiny Board Chairs, to assist in identifying areas which might benefit from further detailed scrutiny;
- **BV204 – The percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications** – Performance against this indicator continued to cause concern, but due to the length of time taken to determine appeals, the effects of the recent training for Members in this area would be slow to show through in the performance indicators;
- **Waste and Recycling** – The performance figures for waste and recycling for the period 1st April to 30th June 2007 were very positive, with the highest rate of recycling and composting ever recorded. However, this was a tough target, the aim being to recycle over 50% of Leeds waste by 2020, and the penalties for failure to meet Government targets were swingeing.

Fly tipping was highlighted as an issue, and there was a specific performance indicator in relation to this issue, based on the speed with which the authority dealt with reported instances. It was suggested that this was an issue which the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) might wish to look at;

- **Direct Payments** – OSC to consider at its October meeting;
- **LKI-EO1 – Number of staff declaring that they meet the DDA disability definition as a percentage of the total workforce** – Identified as a hard to achieve target, which a Scrutiny Board might wish to pursue;
- The actual targets themselves – were they challenging enough?

RESOLVED – That the report be noted, and Scrutiny Chairs, in consultation with their Boards and the Scrutiny Support Unit, decide which key areas of under-performance they wish to investigate.

33 Consultation on Leeds Strategic Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) regarding recently approved changes to the Council's corporate planning framework, which involved the merger of the **Local Area Agreement** with the Council's **Corporate Plan** to form a single document to be known as the **Leeds Strategic Plan**. The report explained the implications for the scrutiny process.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That Option 3, as set out at Paragraph 3.3.4 of the report, be adopted, i.e. overall feedback to be sought from OSC, and on specific draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities from relevant Scrunity Boards.
- (b) That if necessary, working groups be urgently established by the Head of Scrunity and Member Development, to look at specific areas and submit their recommendations to the October cycle of Scrunity Board meetings.

34 Protocol between Scrunity and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds

The Head of Scrunity and Member Development submitted a report regarding the establishment of a proposed protocol between Scrunity Boards and the Council's statutory public sector partners in Leeds, in anticipation of the proposals contained in the **Local Government and Public Involvement Bill**, which when enacted would extend the Council's scrutiny role into the service areas of those partners.

The range of public sector partners covered by the Bill and the proposed protocol were:-

Environment Agency	Natural England
Fire and Rescue Authorities	Jobcentre Plus
National Park Authorities	Health and Safety Executive
Youth Offending Teams	Police Authorities
Chief Officer of Police	Local Probation Boards
Regional Development Agency	Joint Waste Disposal Authorities
Sport England	English Heritage
Learning and Skills Council	Highways Agency
Metropolitan PTAs	

Scrunity of the above-named public sector partners in Leeds would cover activities undertaken by them to deliver improvement targets in the **Local Area Agreement**. This included the planning, provision and operation of services commissioned and provided by these organisations.

Scrunity Boards would not inspect, audit or manage the performance of the named public sector partners, although performance information could be requested by a Board to inform an Inquiry. Arrangements for the inspection, audit and performance management of these organisations would continue to be carried out by the appropriate regulatory bodies or agencies, and would not be affected by the scrutiny function of the City Council.

In response to Members' queries and comments, the Head of Scrunity and Member Development indicated that it was not entirely clear at this stage whether the provisions would cover, say, just the Police Authority itself, or the actions of the Police, similarly whether it was just the Local Probation Board or the National Offenders Service. The list of bodies might also be subject to change as the Bill progressed through Parliament. It had been suggested that

the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) should look at one area affecting the Police, on an experimental basis, during the current municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the proposed protocol be approved.

35 Review of Call - In Arrangements

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report reviewing the Council's Call-In process, and in particular the current requirement for cross-party support before a matter can be Called-In.

The Chair undertook to seek urgent clarification regarding the alleged role of Party Whips in monitoring the current arrangements, and how this had come about.

Following significant discussion and detailed consideration of the evidence and options before the Committee, and on a split vote, it was ultimately :-

RESOLVED – That the present Call-In arrangements be re-affirmed i.e. two Elected Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from any two different political parties.

(NB: Councillor Golton left the meeting at 11.40 am at the conclusion of this item)

36 Recommendation Tracking

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report updating the Committee on progress in implementing its recommendations in respect of two Scrutiny Inquiries from 2006/07 – **'When Contracts Go Wrong'** and **'Think Big, Act Local – Narrowing the Gap'**.

Wayne Baxter, Chief Procurement Officer, responded to Members' queries and comments on the former Inquiry, and Kathy Kudelnitsky and Andrea Tara-Chand, Leeds Initiative, and Stephen Boyle, Chief Regeneration Officer, were present to respond to the latter Inquiry.

Wayne Baxter undertook to supply Members with details of the total cost of contracts awarded under £100,000 in value during 2006/07.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That in respect of the **'When Contracts Go Wrong'** Inquiry update, the actions taken to implement the recommendations be noted and accepted as achieved, with the proviso of a further monitoring report in six months time in respect of Recommendations 4, 5 and 6 and an invitation to Paul Langford, Chief Housing Services Officer, to attend a future meeting to respond to Members queries regarding PFI contracts

- (b) That in respect of the '**Narrowing the Gap**' Inquiry update, the actions taken to implement the recommendations be noted and accepted as achieved, with the proviso of a further monitoring report in six months time in respect of Recommendations 1, 4 and 5.

(NB: Councillor Pryke left the meeting at 12.02 pm during the consideration of this item)

37 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme and Draft Terms of Reference for Proposed Inquiries

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a copy of the Committee's work programme, updated to reflect decisions taken at previous meetings, together with a relevant extract from the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1st September to 31st December 2007. Also attached to the report were the proposed draft terms of reference for two OSC Inquiries in 2007/08 – '**Support to Group Offices**' and '**Responding to the Needs of Migrants and their Families**'.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That approval of the proposed Terms of Reference for the '**Support to Group Offices**' Inquiry be deferred pending the Chief Democratic Services Officer's review of this area;
- (b) That the draft Terms of Reference of the '**Responding to the Needs of Migrants and their Families**' be approved;
- (c) That a working group be established comprising the Chair and Councillors Hanley, Harrison and possibly Anderson (subject to clarification on his position reference his interest in this matter as a Director of Leeds West/North West Homes ALMO Board) to draft Terms of reference for the proposed **ALMO Structure Inquiry**;
- (d) That Mike Evans, Chief Officer, Adult Services be invited to attend the next meeting in October to discuss the proposed **Direct Payments Inquiry**;
- (e) That subject to the above, the Committee's work programme be approved.

38 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

Tuesday 9th October 2007
Tuesday 6th November 2007
Tuesday 11th December 2007
Tuesday 8th January 2008
Tuesday 5th February 2008
Tuesday 11th March 2008
Tuesday 8th April 2008

All at 10.00 am (pre-meetings at 9.30 am)

EXECUTIVE BOARD

TUESDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris in the Chair

Councillors A Carter, R Brett, J L Carter,
R Finnigan, R Harker, P Harrand, J Procter,
S Smith and K Wakefield

Councillor J Blake – Non voting advisory member

61 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:

- (a) The appendix to the report referred to in minute 68 under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interest of the Council, in relation to the disposal of this property or other similar transactions about the nature and level of offers which may prove acceptable to the Council.

It is considered that whilst there may be a public interest in disclosure, much of this information would be publicly available from the Land Registry following completion of this transaction and consequently the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information at this point in time.

- (b) The appendix to the report referred to in minute 83 under the terms of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) and on the grounds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information as disclosure of the shortlisted partners may be prejudicial to the competitive process resulting in a reduced income to the Council.

62 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Brett declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Children's Services and Children's Trust arrangements update (minute 70 refers) as the Chair of the Children Leeds Partnership.

Councillor J L Carter declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Development Proposals for Elland Road (minute 66 refers) as a member of the West Yorkshire Police Authority.

Councillor Harrand declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Future Ownership and Management of the Council's Small Industrial Unit Portfolio (minute 83 refers) as an unpaid Director of a company managing a group of small industrial units.

Councillor Harris declared personal interests in the items relating to Harehills Middle School and Hillside School, Beeston – Allocation of Grant to Tiger 11 (minutes 81 and 82 refer) as a Fellow of Leeds School of Entrepreneurship. He also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to the Development Proposals for Elland Road (minute 66 refers) in relation to his business interests.

A further declaration of interest made during the meeting is referred to in minute 70 (Councillor Harker).

63 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August 2007 be approved as a correct record.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

64 Governing Body Proposal to Close St Gregory's Catholic Primary School in August 2008 Following the Publication of Statutory Notices

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds submitted a report on the proposal by the Governing Body of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School to close the school.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the changes to the legal requirements for the determination of proposals on school organisation be noted.
- (b) That the Governing Body proposal on the closure of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School be referred to the schools adjudicator for determination.
- (c) That a further report be produced to determine the new arrangements for the determination of proposals on school reorganisation.

65 Vacation and Occupation of Chair

Councillor M Harris having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following minute vacated the Chair and left the room.

Councillor A Carter assumed the Chair.

DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

66 Development Proposals for Elland Road

Further to minute 215 of the meeting held on 14th March 2007 the Director of City Development submitted a report on the outcome of public consultation on the development proposals for the Elland Road site, presenting a proposed informal planning statement as a guide to future development proposals and on initial proposals for progress.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the outcome of the public consultation process on the development proposals for the Elland Road site be noted.
- (b) That the informal planning statement presented as a guide to future development proposals for the Elland Road site be approved and note that it may be necessary to review the content of the information planning statement dependent upon the outcome of the major leisure interest shown in the site.
- (c) That the exploration of the potential and the implications for the provision of a park and ride facility on the site be approved.
- (d) That in principle the sale of the former Greyhound Stadium site at open market value to the West Yorkshire Police Authority as a site for their new Divisional HQ, subject to the final terms being agreed by the Director of City Development be approved.
- (e) That a proportion of the receipt from the Greyhound Stadium site and others arising from the Council disposals in the area covered by the informal planning statement may be required to facilitate the reconfiguration of car parking and the implementation of any infrastructure proposals required to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of the Elland Road site be noted.

67 Re-Occupation of the Chair

Councillor Harris re-entered the meeting and resumed the Chair

68 The Former Headingley Primary School

The Director of City Development and the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on the request made by the Headingley Development Trust to transfer the former Headingley Primary School site to the Trust for less than best consideration for development as an enterprise and arts centre.

Following consideration of the appendix to the report designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED – That consideration of the request from Headingley Development Trust to transfer the former Headingley Primary School to the Trust be deferred to the November meeting of the Board.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

69 Proposal to Make a Prescribed Alteration at Harehills Primary School

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds submitted a report on the outcome of a formal consultation undertaken to make a prescribed alteration to permanently increase the admission number at Harehills Primary School from 60 to 90 reception places.

RESOLVED – That the publication of statutory notices to make a prescribed alteration to Harehills Primary School by permanently increasing the

admission number from 60 to 90 reception places with effect from September 2009 be approved.

70 Children's Services and Children's Trust Arrangements Update

Further to minute 182 of the meeting held on 9th February 2007 the Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the development, implementation and impact of new children's trust arrangements for Leeds

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the progress made in the implementation and impact of the children's trust arrangements in Leeds since the February 2007 report be noted.
- (b) That the forthcoming challenges and opportunities in progressing these arrangements, particularly in relation to preparations for the forthcoming Joint Area Review in Leeds be noted.

(Councillor Harker declared a personal interest in this matter as a member of the Children Leeds Partnership)

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING

71 Lease at Less Than Best Consideration - Agreement to Lease 23 Miscellaneous Properties to CANOPY on a 25 Year Lease Agreement

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on a proposal to grant a long lease at less than best consideration of 23 Council owned miscellaneous properties to Canopy, for the purpose of refurbishment and improvement for accommodation for vulnerable tenants.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the lease of the 23 properties listed in the report to Canopy Housing Project at a peppercorn rent for a 25 year period at less than best consideration be approved.
- (c) That formal negotiations commence to complete the leasing arrangements with Legal and Democratic Services and Canopy.

72 Update on the Regeneration of the Beverleys Area of Beeston

Further to the minute 182 of the meeting held on 19th January 2005 the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on the progress made on the Beverleys acquisition and demolition scheme.

RESOLVED – That the expenditure of £5,960,000 of Regional Housing Board grant funding be authorised in order to continue the regeneration of the Beverleys area as planned.

73 Gipton Home Buy Scheme

Further to minute 212 of the meeting held on 17th February 2006 the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on a proposed private equity model to fund an equity stake of up to 50% of the purchase price of a

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 17th October, 2007

property, dependent upon the applicant being able to fund a conventional mortgage of at least 50% of the market price to purchase a home on the new development on the former Amberton Road/Lower Gipton Crescent site.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That an injection of £1,308,014 fully funded by the sale of the land at Amberton Road/Lower Gipton Crescent to Gladesdale Homes be approved.
- (b) That expenditure of £1,308,014 be authorised.

LEISURE

74 Deputation to Council - Action Against Ragwort Group Regarding the Control of Ragwort

The Chief Recreation Officer submitted a report in response to the above deputation to Council on 18th July 2007.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted and the action taken to date to manage Ragwort and other invasive weeds on Leeds City Council land be approved.

75 The London 2012 Olympics - Opportunities for Leeds

The Director of City Development and Director of Leeds Initiative submitted a joint report outlining how Leeds can benefit from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and detailing the structure and resource implications of developing and implementing the proposals.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Council's role in maximising the benefits for Leeds that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games present be supported and approved.
- (b) That the additional financial requirements included in the report be noted, and that a source of funding will need to be identified from 2008/09 be noted.
- (c) That the future arrangements detailed in the report to take forward this project be supported and approved.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

76 Waste Strategy

Further to minute 96 of the meeting held on 18th October 2006 the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report on the Waste Strategy with particular reference to service developments proposed to enable Leeds to meet the combined recycling and composting rate of 50% by 2020.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That increasing the recycling target included in the Waste Strategy to 'greater than 50% by 2020' be approved.
- (b) That the proposed recycling service developments, in particular the commitment to weekly collections of food waste be supported.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 17th October, 2007

- (c) That the projected financial implications of the strategy be noted and that provision be included within the City Council's future financial plans, commencing in 2008/09 financial year, subject to regular review.
- (d) That the Outline Business Case for a residual waste treatment facility currently being developed be noted and that the approval for its submission to DEFRA will be sought from Members at their next meeting on 17th October.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING

77 WykeBECC (Built Environment and Catalyst Centre) - Seacroft

The Director of City Development and Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a joint report on a proposal to establish a Wyke Built Environment and Catalyst Centre on the site of the East Leeds Family Learning Centre and seeking to inject £1,295,000 into the City Development capital programme from the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative programme to cover the expenditure.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That an injection of an additional £1,295,000 into the City Development capital programme from the existing £15,600,000 LEGI programme be approved.
- (b) That the scheme as detailed in the report, at an estimated total cost of £1,295,000 be approved.
- (c) That the incurring of expenditure of £1,295,000 towards the purchase of the modular building, site preparation, fit out costs and associated fees to be met from the LEGI be authorised.

LEISURE

78 The Potential of Leeds Town Hall to become a First Class Concert Hall: Outcomes of feasibility study

The Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer submitted a report outlining the findings of the study into the feasibility of developing Leeds Town Hall into a first class concert hall and to identify next steps.

RESOLVED – That officers investigate the potential of putting together a mixed funding package to upgrade Leeds Town Hall to a first class concert hall and report back to Executive Board with the outcome of the investigations.

DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

79 Aire Valley Action Plan preferred options

The Director of City Development submitted a report on plans to consult on the Preferred Options for the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan Preferred Options for publication along with its Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents be approved.
- (b) That representations between 5th October and 16th November 2007 be formally invited.

80 Proposed Refurbishment of City Centre Public Realm

The Director of City Development submitted a report on the need for major investment in the city centre pedestrian area and adjacent streets on proposals for a co-ordinated strategy of refurbishment and maintenance.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (b) That the principle of a co-ordinated programme of maintenance and improvements for street and public space refurbishment in the city centre pedestrian area as indicated in the report be agreed.
- (c) That officers work up a detailed programme of works, and progress funding proposals in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules
- (d) That officers ascertain the costs and possible sources of funding of an enhanced maintenance and cleansing regime and an increased city centre patrol of uniformed Liaison Officers and report back to Executive Board on the outcome of these investigations.

81 Harehills Middle School

The Director of City Development submitted a report on a proposal to spend an additional £500,000 of the £4,700,000 of Local Enterprise Grown Initiative funding already included in the approved capital programme for a grant to allow Harehills Community Interest Company to refurbish Harehills Middle School.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the scheme, as detailed in the report, at a revised estimated total cost of £900,000 (£400,000 previously approved) be approved.
- (b) That the incurring of expenditure of £500,000 towards refurbishment of Harehills Middle School to be met from LEGI scheme 13303 in the approved capital programme be authorised.

82 Hillside School, Beeston - Allocation of Grant to Tiger 11

The Director of City Development submitted a report on a proposal to release an additional £400,000 of Local Enterprise Growth Initiative funding already included in the approved capital programme for a grant to allow Tiger 11 (Together in Growth and Economic Regeneration in Leeds 11) to purchase and refurbish Hillside School to provide workspace and meeting rooms in Beeston.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the scheme as detailed in the report, at a revised estimated total cost of £600,000 (£200,000 previously approved) be approved.

- (b) That the incurring of expenditure of £400,000 towards purchase and refurbishment of Hillside school to be met from the LEGI scheme number 13303 in the approved capital programme be authorised.

83 The Future Ownership and Management of the Council's Small Industrial Unit Portfolio

Further to minute 57 of the meeting held on 21st September 2005, the Director of City Development submitted a report on the outcome of the marketing exercise that was undertaken to establish the level of interest in the Council's small industrial unit portfolio with a view to forming a partnership with the public, private or voluntary sectors, for the future ownership and management of the portfolio.

Following consideration of the appendix to the report designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting it was

RESOLVED –

- (a) That officers report back to Executive Board with a recommendation for a preferred and reserve bidder.
- (b) That the outcome of the marketing exercise be noted and the three short listed organisations detailed in the confidential Appendix II be approved.
- (c) That the list of properties for inclusion in the portfolio as detailed in Appendix III be agreed and that the Council will reserve the right to remove or add further properties to the list where appropriate.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 13TH SEPTEMBER 2007
LAST DATE FOR CALL IN: 21ST SEPTEMBER 2007

(Scrutiny Support will notify Directors of any items called in by 12 noon on Monday 24th September 2007)

Originator:	Dylan Griffiths
Tel:	50401

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9 October 2007

Subject: Consultation on Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Cohesion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Narrowing the Gap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 11 September 2007 Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that overall feedback to the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11 would be sought from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and relevant Scrutiny Committees should be invited to provide feedback on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities proposed for the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 -11 with particular reference to their portfolio area.

This report provides the background to the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan and the planned consultation process. The accompanying presentation at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and the appendix to the report outline the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities proposed for the Leeds Strategic Plan.

It is recommended that the Committee considers and comments on the draft improvement priorities at this meeting and agrees to provide a detailed response on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities following consideration by all other scrutiny committees at its meeting in November.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details of the process for Scrutiny to consider the draft Leeds Strategic Plan and invites Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11. It will be accompanied by a short presentation.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1. On July 4th 2007, the Executive Board agreed to adopt a new corporate planning framework for the Council. At the heart of the new planning framework will be a Leeds Strategic Plan which will set out the strategic outcomes and improvement priorities for Leeds for the next three years with regard to what the Council will deliver by itself or in partnership with others.
- 2.2. The Leeds Strategic Plan is based on the themes established in the existing Vision for Leeds. It streamlines the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Area Agreement and the Leeds Regeneration Plan into one plan. This will provide an integrated framework geared to tackling neighbourhood needs and priorities, one of the recommendations of the Council's Scrutiny Inquiry into Narrowing the Gap.
- 2.3 The Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 – 11 will incorporate the requirements of the Council's duty to consult with named partners to draw up improvement priorities for the Local Area Agreement as outlined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill due to gain Royal Assent in autumn 2007.
- 2.4. The development of the Leeds Strategic Plan builds on the extensive consultation undertaken to develop the eight themes of the Vision for Leeds and also incorporates more recent evidence to help the Council determine its improvement priorities to achieve the Council's Mission 'to bring the benefits of a prosperous, vibrant, and attractive city to all the people of Leeds'. These include:
- Performance reported from existing city-wide plans including the Leeds Regeneration Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and the Local Area Agreement
 - Citizens views from the Annual Survey and surveys carried out in particular areas of the city
 - Demographic and economic trends in the city
 - Service knowledge and experience
 - Area knowledge and experience

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1. The Leeds Strategic Plan will shape the Council's priorities for the city. With their local knowledge and experience Members will have a key role in deciding the contents of the Leeds Strategic Plan thereby speaking up for their communities and shaping the future of the city as a whole.
- 3.2. The consultation process will provide the opportunity to 'check' with key partners

and stakeholders whether the right improvement priorities are covered, identify any gaps and explore views on how delivery can best be achieved over the next three years.

3.3. Other stakeholders to be engaged in the consultation are:

- Elected Members
 - Leeds Strategic Plan Member Reference Group
 - Scrutiny Committees
 - Area Committees
- Statutory Partners (designated by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act)
- Leeds Initiative
 - Going Up a League and Narrowing the Gap Executives
 - All Strategy and Development GroupsDistrict Partnerships
- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
 - Strategy Group
 - Theme Forums
- Representatives of the business community
- Representatives of Trade Unions
- Council Staff
 - Chief Officers
 - Employee Focus Groups
 - Team Talk
- Equality strands
 - Citizen Focus Groups (as appropriate)

3.4. Consultation on the draft improvement priorities is taking place between September and November 2007. From November 2007 the Council and its partners will negotiate with Government Office the improvement priorities to be included in the Local Area Agreement which will form part of the Leeds Strategic Plan. The final version of the Leeds Strategic Plan is due to be presented to the Council and the Leeds Initiative in March 2008.

Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Committees

- 3.5. The draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities are contained in Appendix 1 of this report and will be presented to the Committee at this meeting where there will be an initial opportunity to comment on these at the meeting. Relevant scrutiny committees will consider specific outcomes and priorities during October and feed these back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee before its meeting on 6 November 2007. Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to consider the views of the relevant scrutiny committees at that meeting and draw up a detailed response to the proposed strategic outcomes and improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan.
- 3.6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a further opportunity to consider and comment on the proposed indicators and targets to support the improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan at its meeting on 8 January 2008.
- 3.7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also wish to consider the budgetary

implications of the proposed strategic outcomes and improvement priorities. This would be in line with the proposals contained in the Committee's report on Performance Management and Financial Health Monitoring to the Executive Board.

4.0. Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1. The Budget and Policy Framework forms Article 4 of the Constitution which is a key part of Leeds City Council's governance arrangements. Leeds Strategic Plan must be formulated and approved in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules that require consultation, prior to consideration by Members of the Executive Board and final approval by Members of full Council.

5.0. Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1. The Leeds Strategic Plan will contain the Council's strategic outcomes and improvement priorities for Leeds for the next three years. This will set the policy framework for setting the Council's budget in future years.

6.0. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:
- i) consider and comment on the proposed strategic outcomes and improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan
 - ii) Agree to provide a detailed response on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities following consideration by all other scrutiny committees at its meeting in November
 - iii) Agree to providing feedback on the indicators and targets to support the Improvement Priorities at its January 08 meeting.

APPENDIX 1

Draft Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan

Vision Themes	Draft Strategic Outcomes - what we want to see by 2011	Draft Improvement Priorities - our focus during 2008-11
<p>Cultural Life: A city with a vibrant and distinct cultural life Leeds will be a city with a vibrant and distinctive cultural life – a welcoming city which is internationally recognised as a centre of cultural excellence and provides cultural opportunities for everyone</p>	<p>Enhanced cultural opportunities through encouraging investment and development of high quality facilities of national and international standing.</p> <p>Increased participation in cultural opportunities through engaging with all our communities.</p>	<p>Deliver three major cultural schemes of regional and international significance.</p> <p>Increase the number of facilities receiving accreditation for quality of service.</p> <p>Increase participation in culture by providing a range of activities which can be used by all our communities and visitors.</p>
<p>Enterprise and the Economy: Promoting Leeds as the regional capital Leeds will be a competitive international city. It will contribute to the national economy and will support and be supported by an increasingly competitive region</p>	<p>Increased international competitiveness through marketing and investment in high quality infrastructure and physical assets, particularly in the city centre.</p> <p>Increased entrepreneurship and innovation through effective support to achieve the full potential of people, business and the economy.</p>	<p>Increase international communications, marketing and support activities to promote the city and attract investment.</p> <p>Deliver three major projects to improve the city centre.</p> <p>Increase entrepreneurial activity in deprived areas.</p> <p>Enhance the skills of the current workforce.</p> <p>Increase our reputation as a centre for knowledge and innovation.</p>
<p>Learning: A leading centre of learning, knowledge and research Leeds will become a learning city. Businesses and individuals will benefit from accessible world class learning, creating a wealthier city and personal and social satisfaction. We will inspire young people to see learning as their route to success</p>	<p>Enhance skills of the current and future workforce through fulfilling individual and economic potential and investing in learning facilities.</p>	<p>Improve learning outcomes for 16 year olds.</p> <p>Narrow the gap in learning outcomes for 16 year olds.</p> <p>Improve learning outcomes and skill levels for 19 year olds.</p> <p>Reduce the proportion of vulnerable groups not in education, training or employment.</p> <p>Improve participation and early learning outcomes for children from the most deprived areas.</p> <p>Develop extended services, using learning sites across the city, to improve support to children, families and communities.</p>
<p>A Modern Transport System Safe, sustainable and effective transport – meeting people’s need to get about while affecting the environment as little as possible</p>	<p>Increased accessibility and connectivity through investment in high quality, integrated transport influencing others and changing behaviours.</p>	<p>Develop proposals for an enhanced transport system aimed at securing funds for delivery.</p> <p>Improve the condition of the streets</p>

		<p>and transport infrastructure by carrying out a major programme of maintenance and improvements.</p> <p>Improve road safety for all our users, especially motor cyclists and pedal cyclists.</p> <p>Improve the quality, use and accessibility of public transport services in Leeds.</p>
<p>Environment City : A reputation for environmental excellence Leeds will have a reputation for environmental excellence through the quality of our built environment, the use of our green space, the effective use of natural resources, clean air quality and waste management. It will be a place that joins economic, social and environmental objectives so that the action we take today does not limit the choices of future generations or others elsewhere in the world</p>	<p>Reduced ecological footprint through leading the response, influencing, mitigating and adapting to environmental and climate change.</p> <p>Cleaner, greener city and more attractive city through effective environmental management and changed behaviours.</p>	<p>Increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.</p> <p>Reduce emissions from public sector buildings, operations and service delivery.</p> <p>Undertake actions to improve our resilience to current and future climate change.</p> <p>Address neighbourhood problem sites and improve cleanliness of publicly owned land.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing: Creating a healthy city Leeds will be a healthy city for everyone who lives, visits or works here, promoting fulfilling and productive lives for all. We will reduce inequalities in health between different parts of the city between different groups of people and between Leeds and the rest of the country</p>	<p>Reduced health inequalities through the promotion of healthy life choices and improved access to services.</p> <p>Improved quality of life through maximizing the potential of vulnerable people by promoting independence, dignity and respect.</p> <p>Enhanced safety and support for vulnerable people through preventative and protective action to minimize risks and maximize wellbeing.</p>	<p>Reduce coronary heart disease.</p> <p>Reduce the number of people who smoke.</p> <p>Embed a safeguarding culture for all.</p> <p>Reduce bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Reduce obesity and raise physical activity for all.</p> <p>Reduce teenage conception and improve sexual health for all.</p> <p>Promote emotional well-being for all.</p> <p>Improve the assessment and care management of children, families and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Improve psychological and mental health services for children, young people and families.</p> <p>Increase the proportion of vulnerable adults helped to live at home.</p> <p>Increase the proportion of people in receipt of community services enjoying choice and control over</p>

		their daily lives.
<p>Thriving Places: A place of many parts Leeds will be a unique city with a strong identity and varied, stable neighbourhoods where people live out of choice not necessity, enjoying the high quality of life and range of opportunities that Leeds can offer</p>	<p>Reduced crime and fear of crime through prevention, detection, offender management and changing behaviours.</p> <p>Improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering good housing options and better access to services and activities.</p> <p>Increased economic activity through targeted support to reduce worklessness and poverty.</p>	<p>Increase the supply of homes meeting the decency standard.</p> <p>Increase the number of affordable homes.</p> <p>Reduce the number of homeless people.</p> <p>Reduce the number of people who are not able to adequately heat their homes.</p> <p>Reduce crime and fear of crime.</p> <p>Reduce offending.</p> <p>Reduce the harm from drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>Increase positive opportunities for children and young people.</p> <p>Reduce anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Reduce worklessness in deprived areas.</p> <p>Reduce financial exclusion in deprived areas.</p>
<p>Harmonious Communities: A rich mix of cultures and communities Leeds will be a city of equal opportunity where everyone has a fair chance and people from all backgrounds take part in community life creating a society that is varied, vibrant and proud</p>	<p>Improved community cohesion and respect through meaningful involvement and promoting equality and diversity.</p> <p>More inclusive, varied and vibrant neighbourhoods through empowering people to contribute to decision making and delivering local services.</p>	<p>Support local people to become active members of their local communities to meet local needs.</p> <p>Strengthen the role of elected members as community champions.</p> <p>Support a robust and vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector.</p> <p>Promote community pride, integration and a sense of belonging.</p>

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Report of the Chief Planning Officer

Scrutiny Board: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 9 October 2007

Subject: Review of the Plans Panels

Electoral Wards Affected:	Specific Implications For:
	Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/>
	Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/>
	Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to respond to the five key recommendations made in the Scrutiny Inquiry report into Planning Performance and update Scrutiny on the work undertaken so far.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Strategic Review of Planning and Development Services was undertaken last year. A report was presented to the Executive Board in June 2006, which endorsed the work undertaken so far. Five improvement themes were formulated, encapsulating the priority issues for the service. The improvement themes were identified as follows:-

1. *Capacity building and working with the private sector*
2. *Realising a definitive officer view*
3. *Development and support for Plans Panels*
4. *Information and communication technology*
5. *Improved customer services*

2.2 The Inquiry report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2007 made recommendations pertinent to all these themes, but paid the greatest attention to the development of and support for Plans Panels.

3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Through recent work carried out as part of the review of the Plans Panels, which is

described fully later in this report, the five specific recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been addressed:

Recommendation 1

Reporting progress to the appropriate Scrutiny Board on the improvement themes

Progress reports are presented to the City Development Scrutiny Board on a six monthly basis for Member consideration and comment on the implementation of solutions within the five improvement themes of the Strategic review of Planning and Development Services.

Recommendation 2

Development of non-compulsory training for all elected Members

Non-compulsory training for Ward Members who do not sit on Plans Panel, but who may wish to refer matters to Panel has now been developed. This is to help the non Plans Panel Members to gain greater understanding of the planning process. The first briefing is scheduled for 12th December 2007. A copy of the training schedule is included as Appendix 1.

Recommendation 3

Consideration of the appropriateness and legality of Members sitting on Panels which do not cover their Wards

Legal advice has been taken which has confirmed that it is not unlawful for Members to sit on Plans Panels which cover their wards. However, it is important that Members receive relevant training and clear guidance to ensure that they understand their 'dual role' and can act accordingly and measures to address this are identified later in this report

Recommendation 4

Develop new protocols for Ward Member consultation on pre-applications

The revised Code of Practice reflects the changes of the planning reform agenda and now encourages Panel and Ward Member involvement at the pre-application stage, in appropriate cases, subject to the necessary probity and pre-determination safeguards, as set out in the Code.

A protocol for a consistent approach to pre-application discussions is in the course of being prepared and will be reported back when finalized.

In the interim, a Government leaflet *Positive engagement, a guide for planning councillors* and diary insert describing the dos and don'ts of Members engagement in planning has been sent to Plans Panel Members for their information.

Recommendation 5

Consistency of approach to pre-application presentations to Panel

There needs to be more opportunities for pre-application presentations at all Plans Panels and for Members to be consulted on draft planning policy. The need for greater involvement in policy making reflects the recent Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) report *Councillor Involvement in Planning Decisions*, which recommends that “*authorities should consider the scope for Members of the Planning Committee to get more involved in policy-making, subject to their availability*”.

One way of achieving this is to reduce the number of smaller, or less sensitive applications which are currently going to Panel. This is a significant issue in creating capacity and will require changes to the Constitution, altering the circumstances where applications can be referred to Panels.

The changes have drawn on best practice from the City Centre Panel which already has robust processes in place for dealing with pre-application presentations. However, work is still ongoing to fully achieve this recommendation.

- 3.2 Additionally, in responding to the recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry report, the Chief Planning Officer indicated that a full review of the Plans Panel would be undertaken. The review would take a wider look at the processes and arrangements involved in the operation of the Plans Panels. Also, in doing so, it would feed into the other improvement themes.
- 3.3 The aim of the review is to improve the working relationship between all parties – the community, applicants, Officers and Members in relation to processes and outcomes to ensure confidence in the judgments made. This will be achieved through:
- A better decision-making process
 - Ensuring high quality decisions are achieved in a consistent way across the city
 - Ensuring the decision-making process is both cost effective and fit for purpose
 - Creating capacity for Members and Officers to engage in more pre-application discussions including for example more position statements and become more involved in shaping planning policies

The review reflects the desire of the service that the Panels should be a “shop front” for the development of Leeds which clearly communicates the ambition to “go up a league” and to signal a “can do city which is committed to delivering high standards of development.

If Plans Panels are to contribute to Leeds’ wish to “become an internationally competitive city with a high quality of life”, and to ensure that all the performance targets are met, this review must be owned and appreciated by the Plans Panels as well as Officers, Members and the development industry.

- 3.4 The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to continuous improvement and a number of changes have been implemented over the years and some more recently, since the Scrutiny Inquiry review. These include:
- Introduction of Central Plans Panel
 - Changes to the size of the Plans Panel to aid more effective decision making
 - Compulsory training for Plans Panel Members
 - Changes to the Code to reflect good practice in relation to Member attendance at site visits
 - Overhaul of delegation criteria to allow Panels to focus on the biggest and most

sensitive developments

- The review of public speaking and site visit protocols
- Development of pre-application presentations and workshops at Panel
- Investigation and trialing of alternate suitable venues for the Plans Panel meetings
- Provision of minutes of previous consideration at Panel meeting to the current Panel report as background papers
- Information to Panel Members on a weekly basis of new majors submitted and an estimate of the likelihood of it coming to Panel

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The review of the Plans Panels commenced in April 2007. The review has been very comprehensive and has used a range of methodologies including national guidance, Government advice and best practice from other planning authorities.
- 4.2 The Major Agents Forum and the Property Forum have also been consulted at various stages of the review.
- 4.3 There were two separate strands to the review, an in-house review taking into account the customers perspective of those who attend the Panel meetings through a customer satisfaction survey and a review with a wider remit undertaken by external consultants, Addison Associates.

Customer Satisfaction survey

- 4.4 The service undertook a customer satisfaction survey of all three Panels during June and July. The survey ran for two cycles of each Panel and tried to find out about the types of “customers” who attended the Panels and their experience of the Panels.
- 4.5 Fifty-eight questionnaires were returned and the main findings and analysis of the questionnaire is included as appendix 2.
- 4.6 A wide range of people completed the survey: developers, agents, interested parties, objectors, supporters and representatives of various interest groups.
- 4.7 There were several comments expressing satisfaction with the Plans Panels:
- *Support staff excellent, good reception facilities and efficient service*
- 4.8 On asking how their requirements were dealt with that day, customers commented:
- *Very efficiently and informatively*
 - *Clear cut, look forward to the next presentation*
 - *Very well thank you*
- 4.9 Nevertheless, despite the customers different interests and levels of knowledge of planning, a number of common themes emerged:

- Customers did not understand how the process worked
- Customers did not know who everyone was at the Panel meeting
- The need to focus debate on planning issues and ensure that balanced decisions are made on applications
- Audio and visual difficulties with the venue, depending on where people sat
- Uncertainty of the running order of the meeting

4.10 However, the main causes for complaint were that people did not understand the decision and that the meetings were too long and people did not know what time the items would be heard. In some instances, people who made this comment had to wait several hours for their application to be heard and were dismayed that they could not be informed even approximately when their application would be dealt with.

Consultancy

4.11 Addison Associates were appointed to assist in the review. They are a consultancy specializing in promoting best practice in planning, sustainable transport and development. They are also the RTPI Planning Consultancy of the Year and have experience of involving Members in service improvements and of looking at over 200 planning standards authorities. They were therefore able to provide an objective view of the Plans Panels and compare with national best practice.

4.12 Addison Associates undertook a range of research and analysis based on attendance at one of each of the three Plans Panels, interviews with Members and representatives from the private sector, discussions with Officers and a facilitated workshop between Members and Officers in June. A second workshop in September was used to feedback the draft results of their findings.

Attendance at Panel meetings

4.13 The consultants attended one of each of the Plans Panel meetings “incognito”, observing what went on and how business was handled. The Panel meetings were assessed against criteria for measuring what an excellent planning authority would look like.

4.14 The conclusions the consultants reached after observing the meetings unsurprisingly mirrored those from the customer satisfaction survey. However, additional comments were made about Member conduct (for example, leaving and returning to the room throughout the meeting), the quality of the Officer reports and presentations, and the need to focus debate on planning issues.

Initial Workshops

4.15 A workshop was run in June between Officers and Members to consider the key issues facing the Panels and the operational principles for Panels. This workshop was also the opportunity to report back on the Consultant’s perspective on each of the Plans Panel meetings.

4.16 Through the Officer and Member discussion the main issues emerged as:

- The volume of business on the agendas and the lack of time to deal with key

matters e.g. pre-application items, as well as the uncertainty of the length of the meetings and when items would be discussed

- The lack of consistency across the Panels and the way they operated
- The poor quality of the accommodation creating problems for Members and the public
- The conduct of the meetings and the quality of debate and information provided

4.17 The workshop session concluded with the agreement of a list of key priorities for the service:

- Improve the venue and particularly the acoustics
- Revise the procedures and protocols to ensure consistency and performance of decision-making
- Improve the relationship between Members and Officers to ensure that the planning process is seen in a positive light by developers, agents, the public and applicants
- Revise the agendas in terms of order, content, timing and matters taken to Panel
- Reconsider the site visit arrangements
- Better communication between Officers and Members on development proposals as they pass through the process

Thereby improving the experience of those attending.

Interviews

4.18 Addison Associates conducted a number of one to one interviews with some Members who were unable to attend the workshop. Additionally, representatives from the Property Forum were interviewed to gain their perspective on the operation of the Panels.

4.19 Addison Associates found that the stakeholder comments largely echoed each other in terms of the issues, although their perspective and the solutions they offered were different.

4.20 Members comments included:

- Inadequate time for pre-application discussion on more major and controversial schemes at the Panels and concerns about how Members could become effectively engaged at an early stage
- The uncertainty about the length of the meetings and when items were likely to be discussed
- The public and the applicants were very dissatisfied with the meetings, not only the arrangement of the agendas but the room, the acoustics, understanding what was happening and what decisions had been made
- The quality of the reports and information provided to Members was not always up to the standard required sometimes resulting in items being deferred for another meeting
- Officer and Developer presentations at meetings could be lengthy and poor: the main issues were not always identified
- Fewer applications should be on the agendas with a focus on those that are

significant and most controversial

- 4.21 The private sectors' main concerns were the wish for earlier engagement, more informed well-trained Members and Officers and a better understanding between Members of the Council and Officers about the complexities of the planning system.

Feedback workshop

- 4.22 Addison Associates produced a draft report describing their findings and during a workshop session in September, Members and Officers had the opportunity to comment and discuss the report. Largely, Members and Officers agreed that the recommendations and the areas for focus were the correct ones and agreed a number of key issues, including:

- Site Visits
- Pre-application protocol
- Creating capacity for pre-application presentations
- Rules of engagement for Officers and Members
- Presentations
- Members involvement in Policy Making
- Referrals to Panel of applications delegated to Officers
- Length of meetings

- 4.23 Addison Associates have now produced a final report and have been able to establish a number of principles, along with a series of actions and recommendations to address the issues. Appendix 3 is the full report from Addison Associates.

- 4.24 It was suggested that an action plan should be drawn up to progress the issues. A most positive outcome was the proposal that a joint Member and Officer working group would be formed to implement and monitor the action plan.

- 4.25 It was also agreed that a further feedback session for Members would be held to inform Members of the progress of the action plan and the review of the Plans Panel.

5. WORKSTREAMS

- 5.1 At an early stage of the review it became apparent that many of the issues raised from the various sources echoed each other, whether that was the customers, private sector, Members or Officers.

- 5.2 For purposes of implementation, these issues have been arranged into generic workstreams: Conduct of the meetings, Content of the meetings, Pre-application capacity, Improving the customer experience, Officer-Member communication, Member training, Site Visits, Performance Management and Policy Making. A draft action plan has been developed describing the workstreams and the activities needed to make the necessary improvements, along with an indication of a short/ medium/ long timescale for implementation. The draft action plan is included as appendix 4.

- 5.3 Some of the actions which require Constitutional changes will need to be approved by

the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and changes to the Code will also need to be approved by the Standards Committee.

- 5.4 Some work has already commenced on the scoping of the themes and implementation of the action plan and this are set out below .

Conduct of meeting

- 5.5 Practical measures regarding the length and organisation of the Plans Panel meetings, such as introduction of breaks and timing of items will be reviewed. As the Code of Practice for determining Planning Applications requires Members to be present to hear the whole debate on an application if they are to vote, more robust minute taking to record who is and who is not present for an application has been introduced. There will be greater input from the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance), in her capacity as monitoring officer, to ensure the Code is being adhered to so as to reduce the risk of challenge of a decision if a Members leaves the room part way through the discussion. Further advice and guidance will be given to Members on this aspect.
- 5.6 The role of Planning Officers will also be refined to ensure that they provide an overall summary of the main points made during speaking and discussion, before the Panel makes a decision.

Content of meeting

- 5.7 This will include a review of the format and content of Officer reports to ensure they address the key issues and all material considerations and are more concise and user friendly. There are best practice examples available which the service will take into account when developing a new report format. The report will include the reasons for approval or refusal and provide a full policy background.
- 5.8 Similarly, Officer presentations will be looked at to ensure that they are not a repetition of the reports, but will provide a brief introduction to site and development, key issues and an update of what's new. The starting point will now be the expectation that Members will have read the reports and be fully familiar with any previously circulated reports.
- 5.9 Also, a number of Officers have now attended a presentation skills course.

Pre-application Capacity

- 5.10 There are an increasing number of pre-application presentation requests to Panel. The value of a pre-application presentation is in the early identification of any issues Members may have and to achieve an early positive steer to the developer on key issues, which should be addressed in the preparation of their schemes and consultations.
- 5.11 The development industry is very supportive to the principle of further opportunities for pre-application presentations at Plans Panel meetings.

- 5.12 The increase in capacity at Panel will also make it feasible for the presentation of “position reports” on some of the Major applications

Pre-application Protocols

- 5.13 A “Charter” for pre-application discussions for the Strategic and Key Regeneration Projects is currently in draft form. This is based on the principles adopted in the Planning Performance Agreements, as advocated by the DCLG in the recent Planning White Paper. The Charter recognises that one of the keys to successful delivery of Strategic Developments and key regeneration projects is to improve communication between the Council, developers and other agencies involved in the development process to minimise delays reduce the possibility of receiving conflicting advice and to maximise certainty in the development process. Position reports on the Major applications subject to the pre-application Charter will also be presented to Members for information to achieve an early positive steer on key issues.
- 5.14 A protocol for charging for pre application advice for major application as defined by the DCLG is also being drafted. Its purpose is to improve the provision of advice to applicants and therefore lead to the submission of better applications.

Member training

- 5.15 The revised Code of Practice reflects the mandatory requirement for Plans Panel Members to undertake and complete training in planning matters. There will be an one off session for new Members, an *Introduction to planning* and two further sessions for all Plans Panel Members: Policy Update and Governance and Conduct Update.
- 5.16 Attendance at the training sessions will be monitored and fed back to the Member Management Committee.

Improving the customer experience

- 5.17 A number of changes will be introduced shortly including:
- An information leaflet for the public describing the Plans Panel process and what happens and showing who the Members are.
 - A Powerpoint slide showing the seating plan at Panel as the public enter the room
 - Chairs welcoming statement describing what will happen at the meeting
- Re-ordering of the agenda to ensure that those items with public speaking are dealt with first and items are not moved around on the agenda

Public Speaking Protocols

- 5.18 There will be a review of public speaking protocols to ensure they are fair and equitable for all parties. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring the public stick to the three minute rule and should clearly focus on planning matters and that the deadline for notification of the wish to speak is adhered to. It is intended to provide comprehensive information stating clearly what is the procedure for public speaking.

Site visits

- 5.19 Requests for site visits can occur at the Panel meeting, which causes a deferral and a

delay in the decision for that application. At Chairs briefing it will be decided which sites need a to be visited, meaning fewer “surprise” requests and therefore offers the potential for more timely decision making at the Panel meeting.

- 5.20 The Code of Practice has changed to strongly advise Members that they should attend all formal site visits if they wish to take part in the decision making process. A written record will now be maintained of which Members attends the site visits.5.21
- 5.21 The role of site visits and the requests for site visits from Ward Members will also be investigated to ensure that it is an effective use of resources.

Venue

- 5.22 An audit of alternate venues to hold the Plans Panel meetings has been initiated due to audio and visual problems in Committee rooms 6 and 7. Rooms other than Committee rooms 6 and 7 have been used in the past, all with varying degrees of success. There does not appear to be an “ideal” venue and so an investigation is underway to see if there are solutions to improving the audio and visual technology used in the existing rooms.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 In a bid to reflect the Council’s and services’ desire for *closer working, better services* it is the wish that a joint working group of Members and Officers is established to carry through the process and implement the previously described action plan. It is envisaged that the group will be a cross-party working group comprising Plans Panel Members and a non Plans Panel Member
- 6.2 Arrangements will be made for the monitoring and reporting of the progress on the action plan to both Plans Panels and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Considerable work has been undertaken to implement the recommendations made in the Scrutiny Inquiry report, though it is recognised there is still work to complete in the areas of pre-application protocols and presentations. Similarly, further investigation is required on the composition of the Plans Panels. Both pieces of work are included in the action plan for progressing in the short to medium term.
- 7.2 The review of the Plans Panels has shown the need to improve the working relationship between all parties- the community, applicants, Officers and Members, both in relation to processes and outcomes, to ensure confidence in the whole process. Whilst changes and improvements have been made in the past, through the review, there is now a clear plan highlighting the further actions needed to substantially improve the performance of the service and to realize the ambition of *going up a league*.
- 7.3 There is a great deal of work still to be undertaken, however, Members should be reassured to note that Leeds is some way down the line of its change programme to

develop and enhance the role of the Plans Panel.

7.4 Specifically though, Members are asked to:

1. Comment on and note this report
2. Agree to forward the report and action plan, along with comments from the Board to the Plans Panel Members for discussion and comment
3. Endorse the suggestion for a joint Officer and Member working group to monitor the action plan
4. Receive an update report to Overview and Scrutiny on the finalized action plan in 6 months time

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Department of Communities and Local Government *Councillor Involvement in Planning Decisions*, January 2007

Department of Communities and Local Government *Planning White Paper Planning for a Sustainable Future* May 2007

Development Department *Planning a better Future- A Strategic change programme for Planning and Development Services in Leeds*. June 2006 Strategic Review

Overview and Scrutiny Committee *Planning Performance Final Scrutiny Inquiry Report*, March 2007

**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (PLANNING) 2007/08
FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Thursday 20 September 07 (1000-1600 hrs)	Design Best Practice Conference (Facilitated by Concourse) (Joint Member/officer event)	Sullivan Room, Town Hall
Friday 28 September 07 (0915-1200 hrs)	Training for Councillors on Planning Enforcement (Presented by Vivien Green, Trevor Roberts Associates) (Event for all Members)	Carriageworks, Room 1
Wednesday 3 October 07 (1200 – 1300 hrs)	Annual Governance and Conduct Update (Compulsory for all Plans Panel and Licensing Committee Members and substitutes)	Committee Room 1, Civic Hall
Friday 5 October 07 (0915-1230 hrs)	Annual Planning Policy Update (Presented by Jed Griffiths, Trevor Roberts Associates) (Compulsory for all Plans Panel Members and substitutes)	Carriageworks, Room 1
Monday 12 November 07 (1700-1800 hrs)	Annual Governance and Conduct Update (repeat session) (Compulsory for all Plans Panel and Licensing Committee Members and substitutes)	Committee Room 1, Civic Hall
Wednesday 28 November 07 (0915-1230 hrs)	Annual Planning Policy Update (repeat session) (Presented by Jed Griffiths, Trevor Roberts Associates) (Compulsory for all Plans Panel Members and substitutes)	Carriageworks, Room 1
Wednesday 12 December 07 (0915-1200 hrs)	A Briefing on Planning for Ward Councillors (Presented by Jed Griffiths, Trevor Roberts Associates)	Carriageworks, Room 1

Findings from the Plans Panel Customer Satisfaction Survey

Background

In June and July a Plans Panel customer satisfaction survey took place. Surveys were made available to members of the public at two meetings of each Panel.

The forms were also sent to the Property Forum to get their views. The Property Forum indicated to which Panel their survey form related.

The survey attempted to find out a little about the types of customers who attend the panels and what they thought about the process.

It was hoped that the survey findings would provide useful evidence and information and show where a number of service improvements could be made. The survey feeds into the review of the Plans Panel project.

Results and main findings

A total of 58 forms were completed:

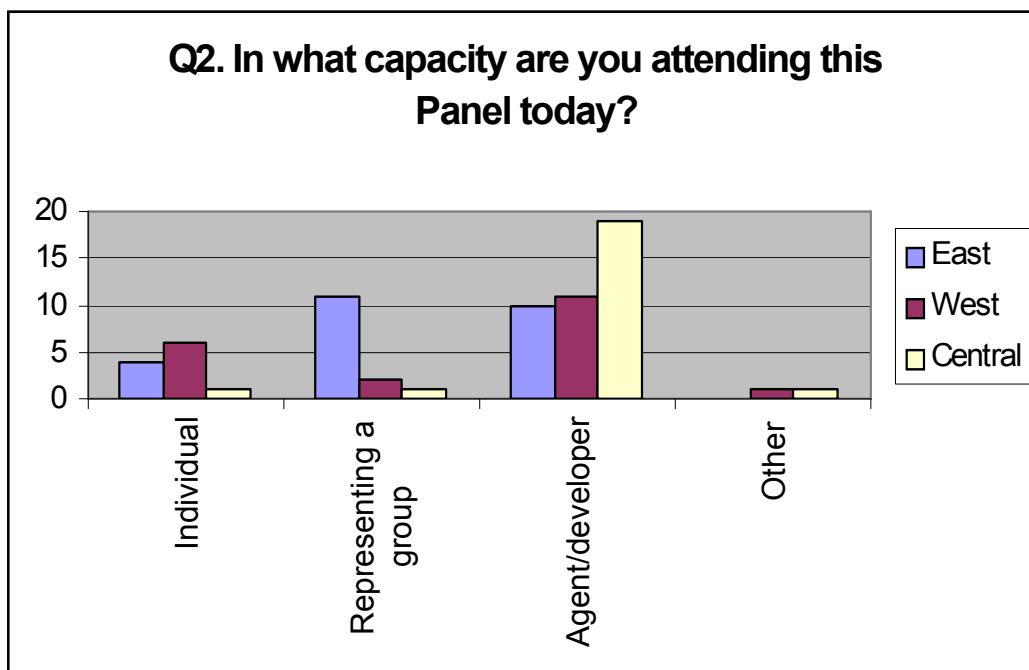
West 19	East 18	Central 21
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Q1. What was your reason for attending the meeting today?

The results showed that of those completing the forms it was almost evenly balanced with 46% saying that they were going to speak and 54% there as observers.

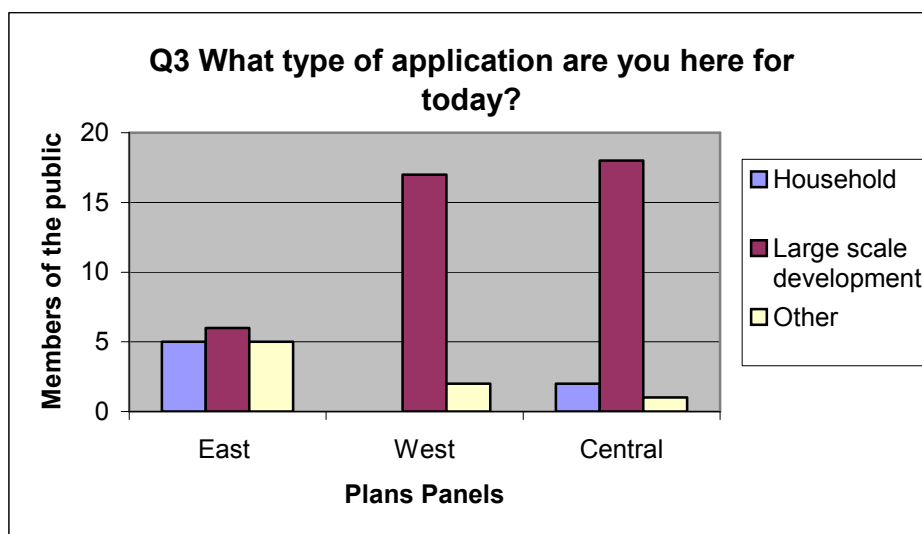
Q2. In what capacity are you attending this Panel today?

It is perhaps unsurprising to see the distribution of categories of people who were attending the Panels. There are high numbers of Agents/ developers present across all Panels, compared with individuals or representatives of groups. This can be seen especially at the Central Panel.



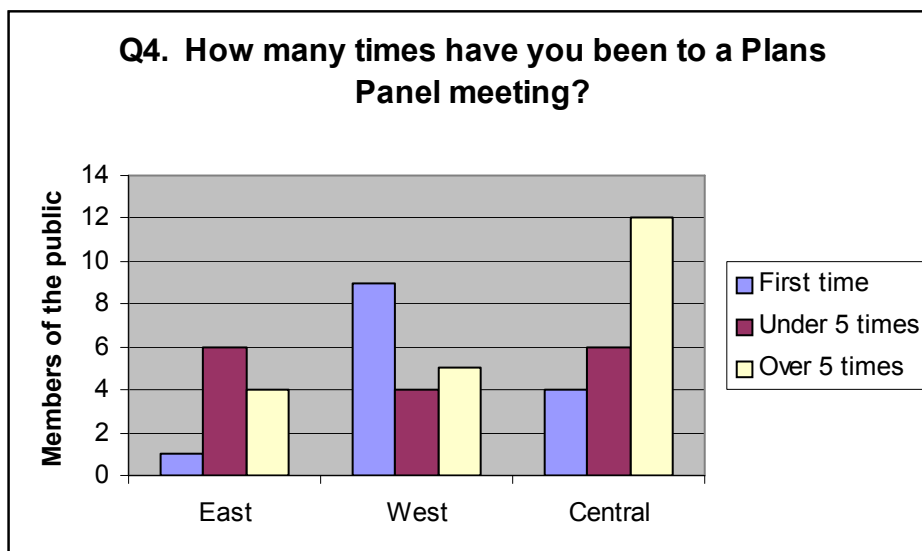
Q3. What type of application are you here for today?

Again it is perhaps unsurprising given the large numbers of agents/ developers completing the survey, they said they were there about a major application.



Q4. How many times have you been to a Plans Panel Meeting?

It appears that those completing the forms range from experienced Panel meeting attendees, usually the agents, who have been many times, to those for whom this was their first visit. This has implications for the type of information provided and how the meeting is run. Meetings need to be as customer focussed as possible and easily understood to cater for different needs- from those with limited knowledge of the planning system to those who are familiar with the process.



Question 5 asked if speakers received information on the format and organisation of the meeting and how useful this was. The majority of respondents said it was good.

Q6. Was there any other information about the meeting, which you would have found useful?

By far the most common responses were about timing and the format of the meeting. Comments received were:

- *Timing of agenda to avoid sitting through other applications*
- *Having a running order sent with the other information*
- *An indication of length of time of the whole meeting and when particular applications would be considered*
- *Timetable*
- *Full agenda with timescales*
- *Advance issue of running order of applications for consideration*
- *Timings of agenda to avoid sitting through other applications*
- *Indication of length of time application would be heard*
- *When the application would be dealt with*
- *Full format*
- *Earlier notice of the running order*
- *That we would not be called when needed but would attend the whole meeting.*
- *Information regarding the exact format and that lots of other applications are considered at the same meeting*
- *Yes, reports that are available to the development officer from highways, Yorks Water etc, that the public don't see and which the Dev Officer bases his opinion*

Q7. How long did you wait for the application to be dealt with today?

The vast majority of respondents answered that it was in hours, rather than in minutes.

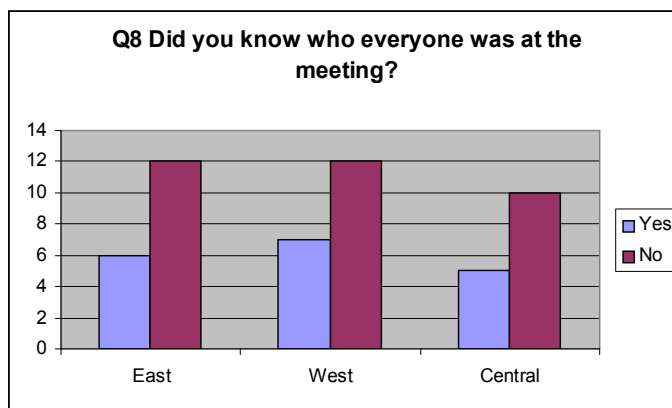
Connected to this issue, when asked for ways of making the process better several respondents further expanded on this point with the following:

- *Indication of the lengths of time*
- *An indication of length of time of the whole meeting and when particular applications would be considered*
- *Proposed timings for agenda items*

Time taken to hear the application, was the most frequently cited area for improvement.

Q8. Did you know who everyone was at the meeting?

Given the high number of people who had been before, it is quite surprising that the following responses were made:



Although the Members do introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting, clearly, the message is not getting to some of the audience, for whatever reason. Comments connected to this were:

- *Have a seating plan showing Councillors and Officer names/ capacities (cannot read name labels from the back of the room)*
- *A seating plan with Panel members' names and designations would help*
- *The people at the panel should introduce themselves so members of the public know who they are*

Question 9 asked respondents a series of questions and asked how strongly they agreed with them. Appendix 1 shows the results of East, West and Central responses. Anecdotally, we believe there is a significant problem with the venue generally and specifically in terms of hearing and seeing what is going on. The results show that the majority of respondents agreed with the statements *I was able to see what was going on* and *I was able to hear what was going on*. However, there were a few respondents who strongly disagreed with these statements and so it is justifiable to look at the audio-visuals in the room to find any improvements.

Some respondent did make the following comments:

- *Speakers/microphones didn't work*
- *It's fine as long as speaker is facing the mic and it is on*
- *Not good – struggled to hear- no mics on*
- *The venue is not good- too small, cannot view proceedings, no facilities and you cannot hear all that goes on*

Q10. Were there any parts of the meeting you found difficult to follow?

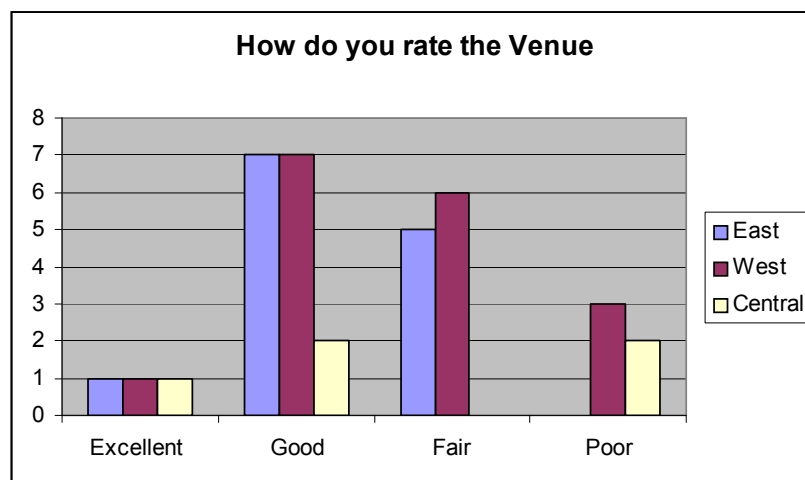
The following comments were made:

- *Final resolution*
- *Yes, continual jumping around on the agenda*
- *Whole process was very formal and intimidating*
- *That panel members too much influenced by central Government and grant monies. Panel members bias towards Government funding.*

Question 11 was another rating question, appendix 2 shows the result of this.

The main area that received a negative rating was the lack of satisfaction with the availability of refreshments. Presentations, facilities and the discussion about the application all came out reasonably well.

Again, rooms 6 and 7 is commonly cited as a problem. The results below and in appendix 2 do not fully bear this out. However one commented *The venue was appalling*.



Q12. Was the application in which you were interested approved, refused or deferred?

There appears to be no correlation between those whose applications decision “went against them” and providing a very negative set of survey responses.

Q13. Overall, how do you think we dealt with your requirements today?

1.1 The following comments were made:

- Very efficiently and informatively
- *Poorly*
- *Perfectly*
- *Very well indeed*
- *We would have liked a public meeting*
- *Support staff excellent, good reception facilities and efficient service, member service not satisfactory*
- *Clear cut, look forward to the next presentation*
- *Yes, fair and reasonable*
- *Poor*
- *The Panel missed the key point that the first floor extension is determined by the footprint of the ground floor*
- *Well*
- *Very well thank you*
- *The people making the decisions need educating, I understood the reason for the decision, but I’m not sure they did*
- *Not well*
- *Reasonably satisfactory other than timing and appalling decision (decision deferred)*
- *Very well thanks*
- *A very long wait for a very short consideration*
- *Ok, but the length of time objectors have to wait before speaking is too much. Many will have lost interest or had to go home before it is their turn to speak*

It is reassuring to see that about 50% of the respondent comments were positive, however, this obviously leaves about 50% who did not feel that their needs were dealt with satisfactorily.

Finally, respondents were asked for any further comments, these ranged from comments about their particular application and policy to specifically about the Plans Panel meeting proceedings:

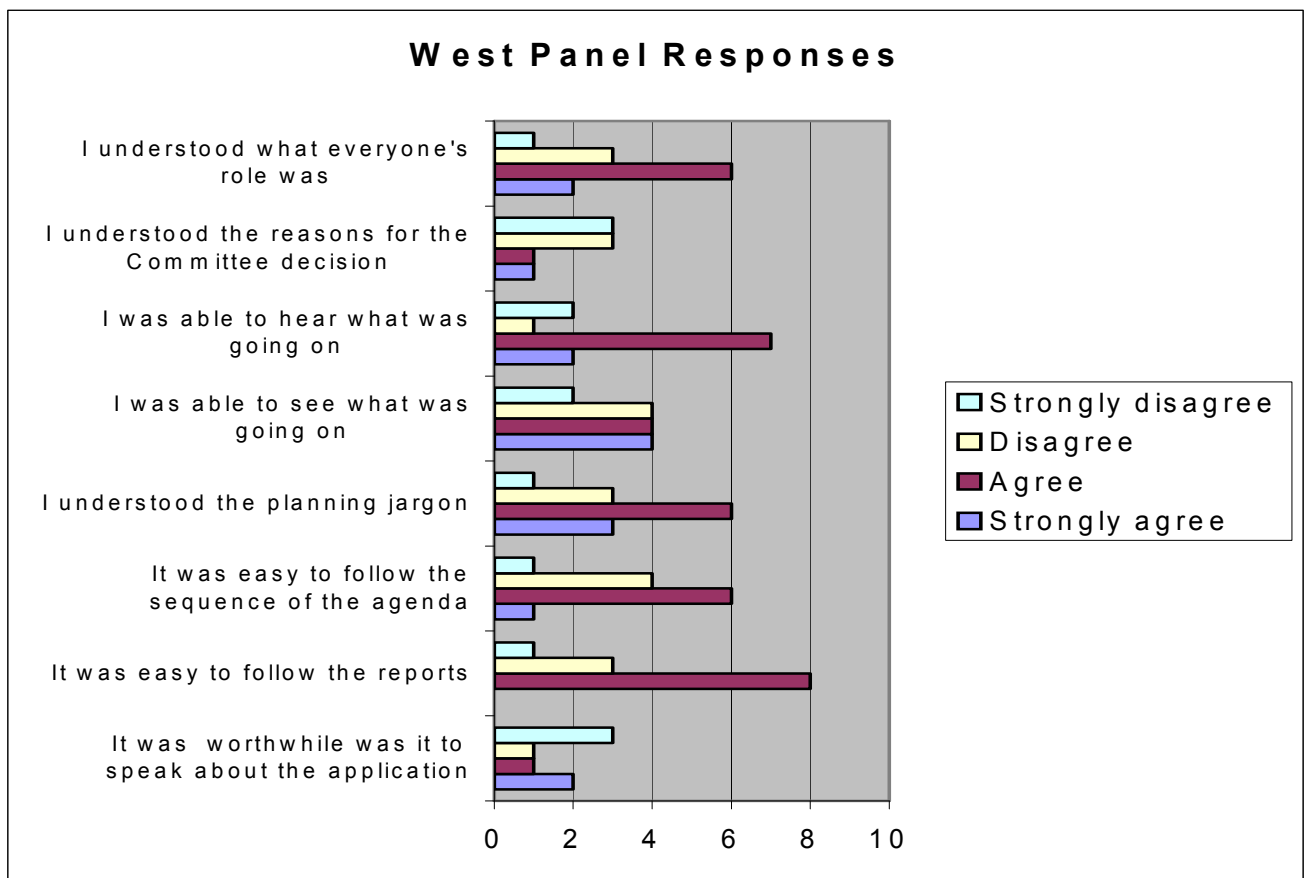
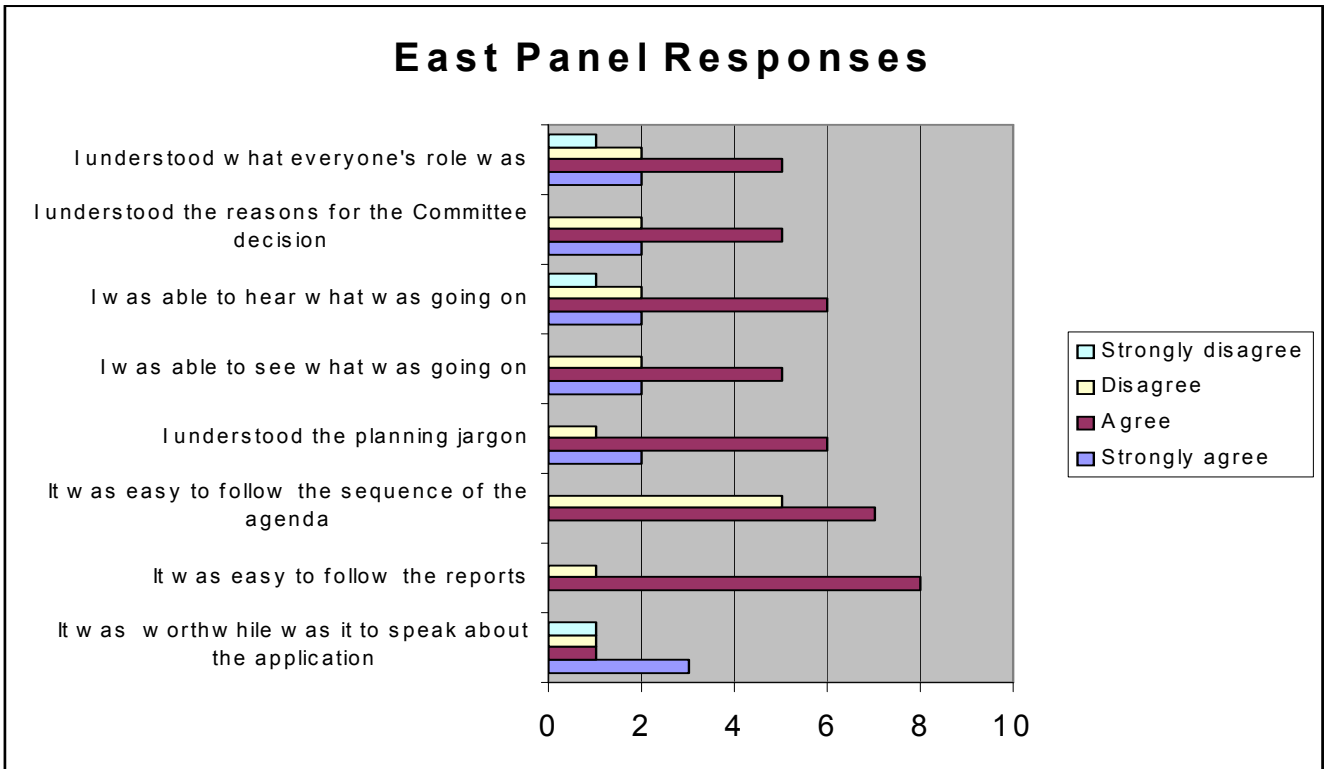
- *I do not like the delays at the start of these meetings, when I come to a meeting that starts at 1.30, I expect it to start at this time*
- *I found the meeting a bit confusing*
- *Limit the discussions by Panel to a certain timescale*
- *Not sufficient discussion on the pros and cons of the scheme and Panel not given chance to voice a change of mind for support of the scheme*
- *Good*
- *The whole planning process is a corrupt business stamping on the small occupants of Headingley- my objection letter was wiped from the folder. This process needs to be changed to be transparent (individual)*
- *I was not handed the documents when I entered the room and initially my colleague was refused until I insisted*
- *The Panel is bias towards low cost housing. This is a rubber stamp for any where, any reason if its low cost housing they will approve it*
- *Please get a coffee machine in this building!!*
- *Presentations are good provided they are permitted to finish their presentations without interruptions from Members*
- *There is sometimes clearly a distinct lack of understanding and knowledge by Members of the applications brought before them; and an inability to understand/ read drawings. All members should prepare for these committee meetings- committee members need to get rid of their subjective approach and be pragmatic and objective about urban regeneration in the City.*
- *Sitting in the audience is quite frustrating- sometimes one feels desperate to say something when listening to the Panel discussion!*
- *Very frustrating*
- *Plans Panels should be split into Major and Minor applications with different timings (same day if necessary). This would mean minor application parties do not have to sit through hours of contentious items before theirs are heard.*
- *Officers should take more of a leading role in advising on design matters to avoid design by committee in the worst taste. Leeds will not progress as an international city without improved design awareness.*

Conclusion

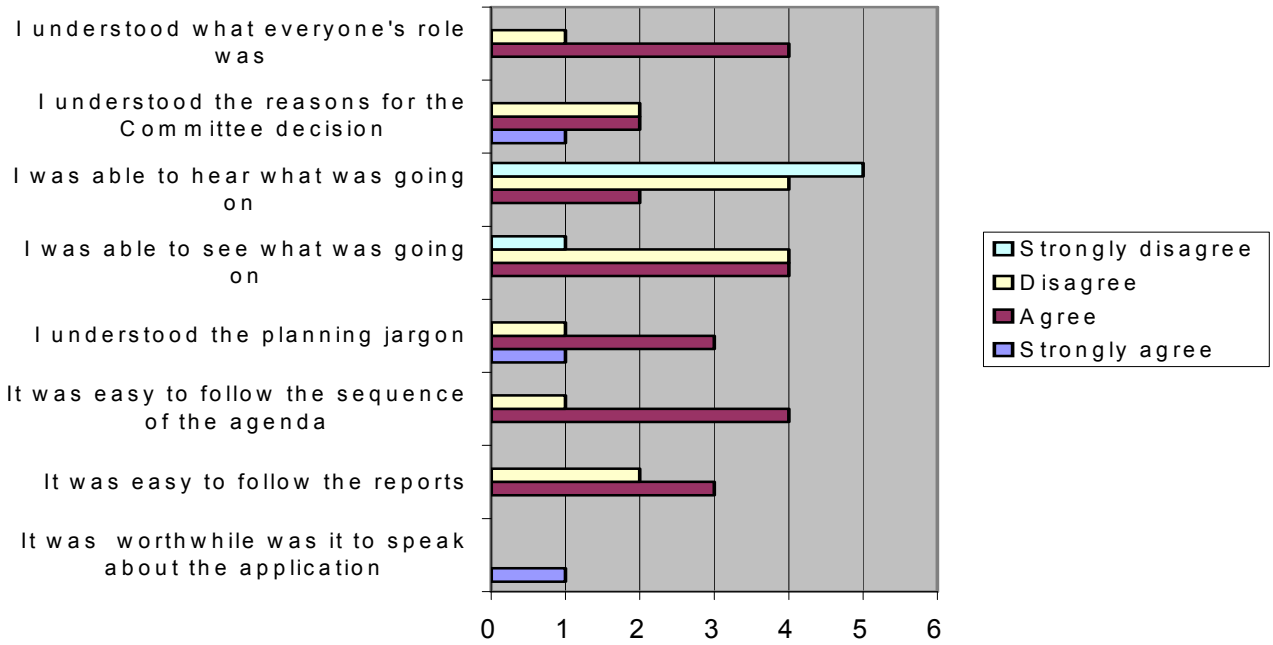
It is clear there are some clearly defined areas for improvement and these will be included in the service improvement action plan as part of the review of the Plans Panel.

Other criticisms may or may not be justified, however, this is the public's perception of the Plans Panels, and some work must be undertaken to address this poor perception.

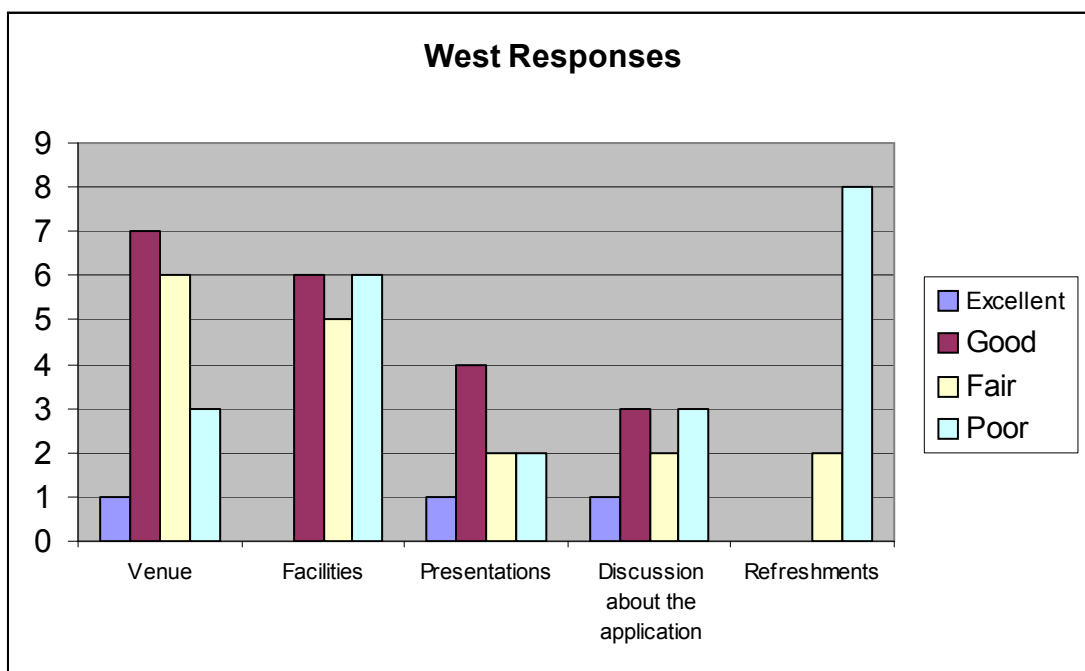
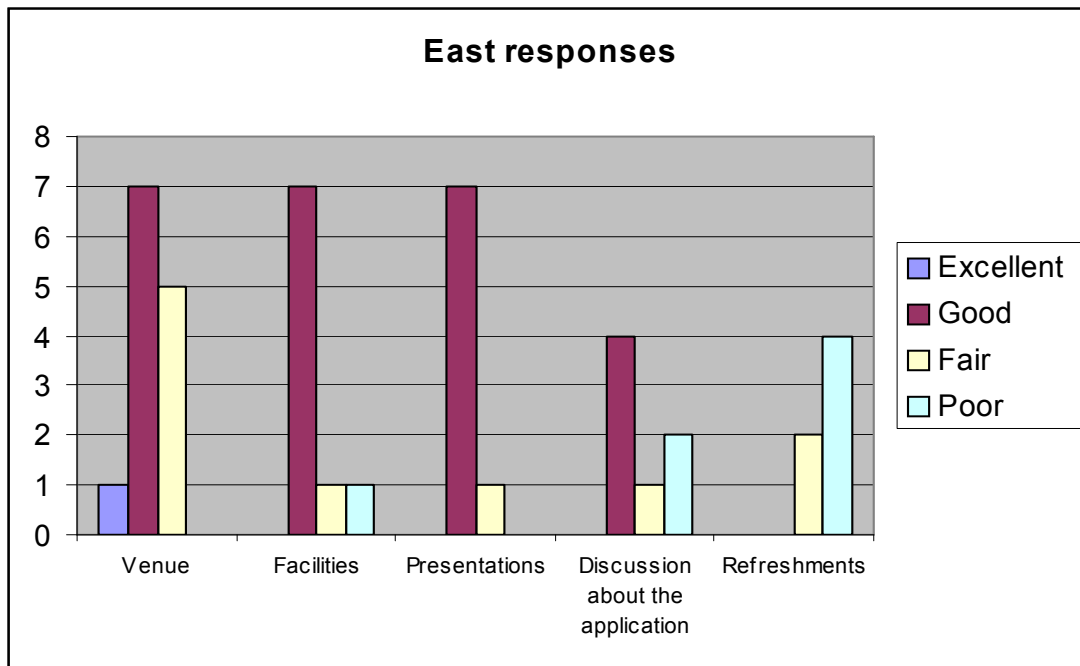
How much do you agree with the following statements?



Central Panel Responses



Q11. Please rate the following:



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Leeds City Council

Review of the operation of the Plans Panels and decision-making

Addison & Associates

1. Executive summary

Over a number of years there has been a change in the role that planning has to play at all levels. This has led to increasing expectations of what planning can and should deliver in Leeds by the local community, local members, stakeholders and the Government. As a service planning in Leeds has to be increasingly efficient and effective, to provide better quality customer care, produce faster decisions and higher quality schemes. These are increasingly complex and members and officers have to address issues ranging from aesthetic design to responding to climate change. As in all planning authorities, this has an impact on the skills required at member and officer level, the procedures that need to be in place and the level of resources applied. It is in this context that like many planning authorities Leeds is reviewing its approach to planning to match the current demands and improve it.

Leeds is the subject of substantial change and growth which is exerting considerable pressures on the planning service and it is likely that this will continue in the foreseeable future. These pressures have created some difficulties for the service which the authority has identified need to be addressed. Leeds has one of the largest and most demanding development control services in England dealing with some 8,000 applications annually of which approximately 230 are major applications as defined by the Government. Workloads in development control are high with average caseloads of about 180 cases per case officer against a benchmark used at national level of 150 cases per case officer.

The authority has recognised the need for change and has responded by instigating some reviews of which this is just one part. This review has taken as its benchmark the description of an ideal planning service¹ given Leeds's desire to provide an excellent planning service. The test is therefore hard and the focus has been on areas for improvement building on those already made. This review was instigated following work by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its report of March 2007. It has focused on the operation of the three plans panels and needs to be considered alongside other work being carried out internally

¹ Based on the IDeA benchmark for an ideal service

within the department. This review included a joint workshop with officers and members, observation at each of the 3 Plans Panels, a number of interviews and meetings with members and the private sector stakeholders as well as considering documentation. From these different sources there is a consistency of message both in terms of the issues facing the service but also some of the solutions that could be implemented. There are a number of quick and easy wins that could be implemented that would make a substantial difference to the perception of the service. These build on changes already made. There are also some more difficult decisions and aspects that are longer term as they are about attitudes and behaviour or resources. Cultural and behavioural change on the part of officers, members, applicants and community is normally slow but needs to adjust to meet the changing requirements of planning.

A key element identified is the nature of the relationship between officers and members in respect of some of the judgements made. This may reflect the skills of officers and members and the changing demands. The level of resource available is also a concern if the officers are to provide the quality of service required, given the workload, as is the roles of members and the Panels, particularly that of the Chairs.

Through the discussions held a number of principles have been established e.g. need for consistency between the panels, and a series of actions are recommended to address the issues identified. In summary the action cover the following aspects:

1. Agenda - format, order, content and style
2. Operation of Panel – Chairing, presentation of reports, summaries
3. Report formats
4. Protocols for site visits including timing, member role, engagement with stakeholders, pre-application discussions etc
5. Training
6. Call in procedure
7. Consultation on major applications

2. Introduction and context

This review was commissioned by the Chief Planning Officer in the context of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Planning Performance Final Inquiry Report March 2007. The review, to action recommendation 1 of the March report, was initiated in May 2007 as part of the wider review being undertaken by the Chief Planning Officer to follow through on the 5 improvement themes. Addison & Associates were asked to undertake an independent and objective evaluation of the Plans Panels. The review has focused, as would be expected, on those aspects of the service that would benefit from improvement against "an ideal service" and therefore the report highlights issues rather than good practice. The

service has already instigated a number of changes to improve the way it operates but like any good service it wishes to do more. It should be read in this context. The service has for example already instigated improvements in relation to presentations, pre-application discussions and dialogue with community groups.

In addition full account should be taken of the substantial pressure on both members and officers given the volume of work, the level of member and community interest, and the complex nature of much of the work underway. Leeds development control service has one of the largest volumes of work in England with some 8,000 planning applications of which approximately 230 are major applications as defined by the Government. Amongst those are a considerable number of large, complex and controversial schemes at any point in time. Both members and officers have heavy workloads as a result as demonstrated by the Panel agendas and the fact that officer workloads are approximately 180 applications per case officer against a benchmark maximum of 150. Leeds, like all planning services can continue to improve, but it is already clear that changes made in the recent past are delivering improvements to the service.

The evaluation began with key officer discussions in May and concluded with the presentation of the report to members and officers. It arose out of concerns expressed by the members and the community as to way in which the Plans Panels were operating and a view that, given the pressure of work, different arrangements were needed.

The planning function within the City of Leeds is and should be high profile. The City Council are keen to ensure that the service “goes up a league” in terms of performance and becomes excellent. The city is going through substantial change not only within the city centre but throughout the city and is seeking to establish itself as a major European city. Planning is the key council function which manages that change in terms of the shaping of the city and the outcomes of development: its performance and effectiveness are highly visible in shaping the way places look and are used, and as the local authority’s primary “shop window” given the public nature of planning. The pressure on the service in recent years has been intense and this is likely to remain so given the current national and local planning agenda.

The objectives of the review are to make recommendations that will:

- Make the decision-making process better for members, the public and development industry
- Ensure quality outcomes are achieved for the city consistently and sustainably
- Ensure the decision-making process is both cost effective and fit for purpose

- Create capacity for members and officers to engage in more pre-application discussions, including for example more position statements, and policy work

The evaluation was undertaken by Lynda Addison, Alison Blom-Cooper and Karen Moore of Addison & Associates. All three people are qualified planners and have worked in local government: Lynda is a former director of planning; Alison is a former planning ombudsman and inspector, and Karen a former a section leader in corporate strategy and performance. All three have been part of a team employed by the ODPM/CLG reviewing planning standards authorities (over 200 have been evaluated) and currently undertake work for the PAS reviewing planning services and supporting improvements in local planning authorities, producing best practice notes and providing training.

3. Key findings from review

This section sets out the key findings from the range of research and analysis undertaken. It is based on attendance at one of each of the 3 Plans Panels by a team member, a review of key documentation, interviews with leading members and representatives of the business community, discussion with officers, and a facilitated workshop with members and officers. The main issues to arise from these different sources are summarised below. In addition to our review the service has carried out a questionnaire survey of those attending the Plans Panel meetings to ascertain how they found the meetings. The outcomes from this research are also referred to below.

3.1 Review of the three Plans Panels

Our review of the Panels was undertaken in June and July by observing what went on at one of each of the Panels, how the business was handled, how it felt to be a consumer of the process, and the quality and suitability of the information provided to members. Not surprisingly the conclusions we reached mirror those from the questionnaire survey the service undertook but our range of areas of evaluation was wider. There were variations in the way the different panels operated but many of the issues were relevant to all Panels to a greater or lesser extent.

The size of the Panels had been reviewed just prior to the visits and had been reduced to 9 members: this size appears to operate well. Other changes are underway in some Panels to address some of the issues highlighted below. In addition the analysis covered only one of each of the Panels so that they could operate very differently at other times. The common issues across all the Panels were:

- The room used for the meetings was not suitable for the task: those in the public gallery had difficulty hearing, knowing who was who, who was

speaking, where you were on the agenda, what the decision reached was, seeing the plans – this is being addressed in part by current improvements by the Chairs

- The structure and content of the agenda meant that people had sometimes to sit for long periods of time waiting for their item which could then be deferred, and did not know how long they would be there: this also affected members as meetings could be 6 or 7 hours long with key strategic decision items being at the end of the agenda when some members may have left
- Other than the agenda no information was provided for the public as to who was present, how the committee would run, the arrangements for public speaking, on what basis site visits were requested, why particular items were on the agenda – this matter has now been partly addressed and new leaflets are being produced
- A substantial amount of time was spent on presentations by some officers, as well as by some developers, reports were often lengthy, and it was not always clear what was the scope of the decision to be made, the policy context and what the key issues were
- The role of officers attending was not always clear and they did not always fulfil the role one would expect e.g. who was taking notes, the role of the legal officer in providing advice, planning officers not always intervening to ensure the policy and factual position was clear, or responding to member concerns and to ensuring robust planning decisions were being made
- The chair and officers did not always ensure that time was used wisely: officers spoke on all items, sometimes at length, and not necessarily highlighting key issues, this issue was not only relevant to planning officers but other officers present; discussion was sometimes unfocused and repetitive; matters were deferred relatively easily for more information or a site visit whether this was or was not essential to make an effective decision and even after long discussions; officers read out all late comments; the rules for public speaking were not always adhered to; there was some lengthy debate on minor matters at the expense of other items; members engaged in discussion about matters of great detail
- The agendas included matters which would normally be expected to be a delegated decision and it was not clear why; in addition some items had been before the Panel on a number of occasions and again the reason was not clear why they had returned to the Panel and the scope of the discussion that should be pursued
- Advice on some key areas of concern was not always available: highways and transport issues particularly raised concern but planning and legal officers did not always respond to questions raised
- Members' conduct at the meeting was not always as business-like as to be expected or wholly consistent with the expected standards of behaviour in terms of attendance in the room and when speaking

3.2 Member workshop

A joint member and officer workshop was held on the 3 July 2007 to discuss the operation of the Plans Panels and the priorities for change. A total of 16 members and officers attended the debate. Many of the issues raised in the workshop echo those raised at the interviews and in the comments from the authority's own survey at the Panels. There was a considerable degree of consistency of view during the discussions, particularly on the issues, between members as well as between members and officers. Members were supportive of change and accepted the need for improvement. The agenda covered the following matters:

- The national context, good practice, and key issues from the evaluation to date
- What operational principles should be set for Panels?
- What key changes should be made?
- What are the priorities?

The major concerns of members and officers were:

- The volume of business on the agendas and the lack of time to deal with key matters e.g. pre-application items, as well as the uncertainty of the length of the meetings and when items would be discussed
- The lack of consistency across the Panels and the way they operated
- The poor quality of the accommodation creating problems for members and the public
- The conduct of members and officers at the meetings and the quality of debate and information provided

There was general acceptance that the operational principles should be:

- All Panels should operate consistently in terms of agendas, coverage, processes, procedures, policy, approach and chairing
- All Panel members should agree to abide by a set of approved protocols covering the approach to the full range of issues and these should be enforced consistently by the Chairs
- Officers should ensure that all relevant key information is available at the meetings, reports are clear and of a high quality, presentations where needed at short and cover key issues
- Fewer applications should be on the agendas with a focus on those that are important, the agendas should be reordered and timed and except in rare situations matters should not be deferred

In the light of these issues and operational principles the major conclusions in respect of priority actions were:

- Improve the room – the acoustics in particular

- Revise the procedures and protocols to ensure consistency and performance of decision-making at the Panels
- Take action to improve the relationships between members and officers to maximise effectiveness
- Revise the agendas in terms of order, content, timing and matters taken to Panel
- Improve the experience of those attending
- Reconsider the site visit arrangements

3.3 Interviews

A number of one-to-one interviews were undertaken together with a discussion with some staff as part of understanding the different perspectives on the service. The members interviewed came from different political groups and included the Chairs of some Panels. The outcomes from these discussions raised many of the same issues that had been highlighted in the member workshop and also were identified when observing the Panels in operation.

It was generally acknowledged that many of the problems reflected the growing workload and complexity of the tasks. It was also noted that Leeds had many competent staff but they were overloaded.

The main comments were:

- The image of the planning service had declined in recent years
- The three Panels operated very differently, they were inconsistent in decision-making and the quality of chairing of the meetings variable although improving
- There was a sense by some that the meetings were not as effective as they needed to be: members and officers were not spending their time wisely and focusing on key applications or issues
- The amount of time required by members given the length of the meetings, the volume of items, the establishment of the site visit process prior to the meeting and the length of the reports was putting substantial pressure on members: this resulted in some members not being able to effectively participate and also the arrangements for the “Panel day” created substantial logistical problems for members including even simple matters like getting refreshments
- There was inadequate time for pre-application discussions on major schemes at the Panels and concerns about how members could become effectively engaged: there was a need for a “safe” place to have discussions and to have more and better information earlier on major schemes – some changes have already been made to improve this
- The uncertainty about the length of the meetings and when items were likely to be discussed created difficulties for all parties: there was no time management of the agendas

- The public and the applicants were dissatisfied with the meetings, not only the arrangement of the agendas but the room, the acoustics, understanding what was happening and what decisions had been made – the latter issues are being addressed
- The quality of the reports and information provided by officers was not always up to the standard required sometimes resulting in items being deferred for another meeting
- Officer presentations at meetings could be lengthy and poor: it was often not clear what the main issues were
- Too many applications came back to the meetings on a number of occasions: many applications were taking much too long to determine, there was a tendency by officers sometimes not to refuse when they should but continue lengthy negotiations to seek to improve the scheme
- There was concern about the quality of the relationships between members and officers: the former did not necessarily believe that they could rely on all officer judgements: this was resulting in more applications being “called in” as well as members getting engaged in matters of detail, being “hands on” and it increased the demand for site visits
- Planning is a key public face of the authority and at the moment it is not giving the image desired: it should be about “shaping places” with the community
- Debates at the meeting could be circular: to change the way the Panels work and members and officers relate to one another behave will be a steep learning curve for some although the process is underway – training and development for officers and members will be important
- The Chairs of the Panels are not currently engaged with policy development given the organisational structures so there is not necessarily ownership of the policies which could be resulting in inconsistent decision and uncertainty for the community and applicants
- Given the volume of business on the Panels it was thought by some that consideration should be given to a fourth Panel as it was perceived that this would allow more time for pre-application discussions (see below)
- The political makeup of the authority as well as within the Panels could affect the performance of the Panels and planning
- There are inadequate links between planning and highways: there are sometimes issues that are not addressed by the highways section
- The current protocols and procedures were not always applied or applied consistently between Panel Chairs, by officers and over time within Panels – changes underway are seeking to address this
- There were concerns expressed that the nature of some of the changes that are needed could be difficult to implement as there could be some member reluctance so a strong and robust approach would need to be taken by the leadership and the Chairs of Panels – this will affect the delivery of the

vision as well as the operational changes: many of the current problems are longstanding patterns of behaviour

3.4 Private sector

A discussion was held with representatives of the business community and in addition some correspondence was examined relating to the service. The private sector were delighted that the review was underway and very positive towards their engagement in it. They have appreciated the opportunity to input their views and meet the Chairs of the Panels. They also have a high regard for many officers and acknowledge that some people within the private sector also need to raise their game. They acknowledged that changes in many of the areas of concern are already underway.

Their key concerns are:

- The need to improve members' skills and performance: they can change their mind, be inconsistent and easily become involved in considerable detail inappropriately, meetings can sometimes be not as business-like as needed
- That some applications are taken to committee e.g. 9 times, and can take years with issues changing or lacking clarity
- Senior officers do not attend Panel (above Area Manager) and no policy officers attend: the relationship between members and officers needs developing with members sometimes appearing to trust a lay person rather than officers
- A few of the reports are inaccurate with factual mistakes and there is no opportunity to correct them
- The physical facilities for the Panels are poor in layout and audibility
- The chairing of meetings is beginning to improve but it has often not been possible to understand what decision was taken
- A key concern is in relation to pre-application discussions as:
 - There are few planning briefs
 - There is little opportunity to seek members views and take stock but it was acknowledged this has begun to change recently
 - Members and officer views are not always consistent and sometimes out of date
- Members do not consistently apply agreed policy and policy is not always clear in the reports to Panels
- Policy is out of date and does not take account of market conditions and reality or practicality – the timescale for new policy formulation is considerable e.g. AAP covering regeneration aspects not due until 2009
- Site visits are important as some members can not read plans effectively
- Officers are overwhelmed with work but they are not always clear at meetings and can lack rigour and robustness; there is a tendency to ask for too much information with applications which is unnecessary and not

relevant but they sometimes take a “risk adverse” approach and ask for everything especially in the case of junior officers or new staff adding to the workload problem

- Senior officers do not appear to vet applications on initial submission to clarify what is required, whether a section 106 will be needed etc.: the latter is not instigated until well after committee when instructions are given the legal services, and support from the legal services is poor at the Panel, their capacity may be an issue – the practice in relation to section 106 and its instigation is changing
- Conditions are not enforced; there is no discharge of conditions even for remediation works
- There are limited pre-application discussions which could be as a result of inadequate capacity and it is often difficult to get a response from officers to queries and it is not unusual to get a different response from different officers – recent changes are seeking to address the capacity for pre-application discussions with members and officers
- The authority appears not to have as good a working relationship with some stakeholders as needed, which creates additional work for members and officers – however this may be changing given positive action
- There are considerable design issues for members and officers – a new design panel has been established but it is not clear how this will operate and whether there will be access for developers: there is a need to review implemented schemes and learn lessons which should feed into a design guide for the authority; there is also a need for more design qualified staff

The key changes with private sector would like to see are earlier engagement, more informed well trained members and officers and a better relationship developed between members and officers.

3.5 Review of Panel reports and other Leeds’ documentation

A selection of committee reports were reviewed from each of the Panels as well as the agendas. The style of the agendas, the order and the clarity of the content could benefit from some improvement to make it more effective, shorter in length and more efficient in terms of use of time and paper. The agenda could ensure key discussion items were first and those where there were public speakers as opposed to appeal decisions; it could include the recommendations and whether it was subject to a site visit (including the reasons why), a member call-in (including the reasons why); and the layout could be clearer e.g. on one page, by including the planning applications to be considered as part of it rather than separate and changing the layout. Some of these changes are already being considered or implemented. Many of the matters on the agendas were of a minor nature and it was not clear why they were included in the Panel agenda as they should have been suitable for delegated decision.

In the documentation received there was information on the site visits to be undertaken prior to the Panel. The correspondence gave no indication as to the reason for the site visit which can clearly consume a substantial amount of member and officer time. Given the demand this places on both parties, and the possible inconvenience for many members in devoting a working day to Panel business, it is clearly important that any visit is essential and adds value to the decision-making process. Some consideration of this aspect is underway.

There is growing best practice guidance that would suggest that where members are to make a decision on an application they will need to have been party to all the information provided and therefore have attended any formal site visit if they wish to vote on the matter. This could create substantial difficulties for some Panel members given the current tendency for site visits, a practice that is much more limited in many authorities. There appeared to be no provision for a break or refreshments as part of the timetable for the day as after site visits a presentation was sometimes organised prior to the beginning of the meeting. Again the papers received did not make clear why there was a presentation, who was giving it and what outcome was sought but this may be just those received. It was not included on the agenda but in the separate correspondence about the site visits.

The minutes of the meetings were clear but did indicate a tendency for deferrals for more information or even when the decision had been made e.g. to refuse. There were a number of reports on appeals determined presented to the Panels and these were first on the agendas seen. Some of these reports were extremely lengthy and it was sometimes difficult to extract the key information required by members easily: even where short. In others the entire inspector's decision letter was included. Given the overall length of agendas and the limited amount of time available to members (and officers in terms of drafting and checking) consideration could be given to the way appeals information is relayed to Panels, why and when. This is particularly important given Leeds' current appeals performance.

A number of planning applications reports were reviewed from the agendas received. The quality of the reports varied with some much clearer than others but the format, content and clarity overall could be improved in comparison to best practice. Some will be difficult to read as a lay person and do not seem to have been drafted with that in mind. Some reports began with a numbered list of items which it could be unclear as to what they were especially to anyone without inside knowledge. Some list policies but do not effectively clarify the relevance and weighting of their application. The main issues for consideration tend to be well into the report and not always clearly set out. On some reports officers had declined to give a clear recommendation or recommended deferral. In other cases, reports highlighted differences of view across different sections of planning i.e. local plans and development control. From these comments there

would appear to be a need for a better inter-relationship between policy and implementation and consistency of application of policy: it may be that some policy is out of date but it will be important not to give the impression that there are different interpretations of policy.

Performance on applications was reported to Panels but only in relation to the specific Panel i.e. no comparison or overall performance, and only the numbers were listed with no comment, evaluation or recommendation.

Overall there would be considerable benefits in reconsidering the whole agenda, its order, content, style and also what reports are submitted and in what form.

3.6 Workshops with members/officers to consider findings from the review

Member workshop

Six members were present to discuss the draft report. Members agreed with general thrust of the findings. During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- Should the Plans Panel include members from the home ward?
- There was a need for greater understanding by members of the public as to what the council can do in respect of planning applications
- Minimum standards for consultation on major applications need to be re-examined – at the moment some members are sending out letters to interested parties to advise them of the receipt of planning applications as they believe current council practice is to give notification by way of notices not individual letters of notification
- The need for a protocol for pre-application discussions was agreed
- Members would like to see the extension of the position reports and for members to be given additional information as to the progress of current applications and those the subject of pre-application discussions and to be involved in discussions on the priorities for section 106
- Members would like weekly lists to flag up those applications which will be considered at Panel and a target date
- It was agreed there was a need to free up time of the Panels in order to ensure capacity to provide pre-application advice
- Members wish to be seen as a resource rather than a threat to developers
- Although there are examples of good relationships between members and officers there are some issues which result in more applications being called into the Panel. Earlier involvement of members with officers would help these situations and hopefully avoid some applications going to Panel. In order to increase delegation more information needs to be provided to members. E-planning enablement would help this process when fully instigated.

- Members agreed there was a need for a better relationship with policy and implementation. Members feel that they are unaware of the latest guidance and advice. They are particularly concerned about advice from the highways section in relation to capacity given their local knowledge
- The room used for Panel meetings requires improvement. This is not just true for Panel meetings but also other public meetings and the council should invest in ensuring there is good provision.
- There is a need to educate members that site visits should be confined to those where there is added value. There should be clear criteria and visits should be agreed by Chair in conjunction with the CPO. This would require a change in the constitution.
- Members proposed setting up of a small working group of members and officers to draw up an Action Plan following the review and then monitor its implementation.

Officer workshop

Officers reviewed the report's conclusions and recommendations in detail. There was some concern that the report did not reflect the changes that had already been implemented and it was important to see the review of Panels as part of the wider ongoing improvement process. It was considered important to acknowledge that the workloads were high, officers were very stretched and this affected what could be achieved. There were some concerns about the practicality of implementing some of the recommendations but following the review of recommended actions it was not suggested that any be deleted.

3.7 Conclusions

Planning is extremely important to the image of the city in terms of both service delivery/process and the outcomes achieved. It is likely to be of growing importance. There is a clear view from all parties – members, officers and consumers – that at the moment the standard of the service and what it is achieving is not at the level required given the desire to be excellent and therefore changes are needed. The service has already initiated many changes. There are, however, a number of further changes that could be made relatively easily that could substantially improve performance. There are also a number of other changes that could substantially improve the service but are likely to be more challenging to implement. On the issues and the priorities for improvement there is substantial agreement.

The key overall concerns were:

- The need to improve the working relationship between all parties to the planning service – community, applicants, members – both in relation to processes and outcomes – this is to ensure confidence in the judgements made

- The culture of the authority is not as conducive as it needs to be to ensure an effective officer member partnership and both members and officers fulfilling their respective roles
- Workloads on members and officers are too high affecting the quality of the service and the outcomes
- The perceived quality of the service is affecting the image of the city and the council as it is a key shop window: the service to members, applicants and the community is not high as is now required
- Where protocols do exist they are not always consistently applied and the authority's policies are not also always being consistently applied: the Plans Panels are not engaged in the development of policy at present which may be part of the problem
- Members are tending to get engaged in very small scale developments and detail at the expense of other more strategic issues – to some extent undertaking the officer roles as a result of historic practices and given current member officer relationships
- Members tend sometimes to pursue their own interests rather than acting as quasi legal executive body and making decisions in the wider public interest based on sound professional planning advice: meetings are not as “business like” as needed given the role and pressure on the planning service

4. National good practice guidance

There is a considerable and growing range of good practice available about the role of members and their relationship to the planning process but little specifically on the operation of committees or Panels. Reference has therefore been made to The Code of Conduct, Guide for Members May 2007; Positive engagement – a guide for planning councillors (ODPM /PAS/ LGA/ RTPI/ AOCSS/ SBfE); Member enjoyment in planning matters – LGA; constructive talk – investing in pre-application discussions (by a consortium led by PAS); Councillor Competencies in planning (IDeA/PAS); and Area-based decision making - a PAS publication; as well as our own experience across the country.

From this range of guidance the following principles can be derived - the planning process must be and seen to be:

- **Transparent** – to members, the community and applicants of all types whether large or small, developers or householders
- **Fair** –to be applying the same rules, both process and policy, consistently across all Panels, with delegated decisions, between officers and members
- **Value for money** – efficient and effective: ensuring that time and money is spent to greatest effect and on the matters of key importance
- **Best practice** – evolves continually to ensure that it takes account of the changing requirements of the area and the system

- **Fit for purpose** – the planning process needs to meet the needs of the community, the authority and be set within the legal and performance framework
- **Be seeking excellence** – all authorities need to be continually improving across all services

The Planning Advisory Service undertook some research over the last two years reviewing area based committees and their operation. The **PAS report on area based committees** concluded from their research that the critical issues affecting the overall performance on development control were:

- Frequency of meetings
- Democratic structures and delegation
- Public participation
- Councillor roles in planning
- Training
- Resources

Considering these issues the guidelines produced suggest that where authorities have area based committees they need to consider whether:

- The committee cycle times facilitate the 8/13 week cycle. In Leeds the Plans Panels meet every month and the cycle is not considered to affect the ability to meet the targets.
- Ensuring effective use of delegation
- Ensure delegation means that decisions made at the appropriate level given the conformity of the proposal to policy
- Amalgamating areas to produce agendas of a reasonable length to complement the frequency of meetings
- Avoiding having all ward members on the area committee so that some can perform the representative role for local community interests
- Reduce or eliminate the right of call in or referral to improve performance and responsibility for the decision made
- Reduce the number of meetings to match the capacity of officers to adequately support them
- Provide regular, robust and compulsory training for members on planning committees and reserves
- Keep the business of determining planning applications separate from other council business in area committees, preferably a separate meeting

In the recent PAS pre-application guidance “Constructive Talk” and other recent guidance it is recognised that major applications are likely to be determined by members. It is also acknowledged that members have been advised in many authorities to withdraw from meeting with developers and/or interest groups given concern that they could not then act impartially when making planning decisions. Current government advice is quite clear that members **should** involve

themselves in discussions with developers, constituents and others about planning cases **provided** they observe the advice in the “positive planning” leaflet² at pre-application stage. They are advised, however, to exercise caution in doing so once the application is submitted.

A number of examples are given in the published document as to pre-application engagement by the authority at member and officer level including Waverley Borough Council’s development control forum, concept statements by Chelmsford Borough Council, following officer discussions at pre-application stage an issues report to members in Birmingham City Council, and a pre-applications meeting report in Camden.

The “do’s and don’ts” of member engagement in planning in the leaflet “**positive engagement**” are as follows:

DO		DON'T	
✓	Hold discussions before a planning application is submitted to the authority not after	X	Meet developers alone or put yourself in a position where you appear to favour a person, company or group – even a “friendly” private discussions with a developer could cause others to mistrust your impartiality
✓	Preface any discussions with a disclaimer – make clear at the outset that discussions are not binding	X	Accept gifts or hospitality
✓	Keep a note of meetings and calls	X	Expect to lobby and actively support or resist an application and still vote at committee (or even stay in the room during discussions)
✓	Recognise the distinction between giving advice and negotiation	X	Seek to influence officers or put pressure on them to support a particular course of action in relation to a planning application
✓	Structure discussions and involve officers	X	Invent local guides on probity which are not compatible with the current national guidance
✓	Stick to policies included in adopted plans but also pay heed to any other considerations relevant to planning	X	

² positive engagement: a guide for planning councillors – ODPM, PAS, LGA, RTPI, ACSS, Standards Board

✓	Use meetings to show leadership and vision	X	
✓	Encourage positive outcomes	X	
✓	Seek training in probity matters	X	

Many authorities have developed a specific planning protocol setting out in detail how they intend to operate the planning process, the member role and limitations, their engagement with stakeholders and have linked this to a range of published documents and leaflets clearly outlining specific service standards and protocols e.g. for pre-application discussions, member engagement in planning particularly as ward members or on decision-making bodies, the standard of performance, site visits, the operation of committees and member officer relations and their roles.

5. Suggested changes

In the light of the overall assessment it is suggested that a number of improvements and changes could be introduced which would be of benefit to all parties. The proposed improvements range from seeking to improve the working relationship between members and officers to increase its effectiveness through training and development for both members and officers, to changes in the operation of the Panels and the way they are serviced. They are aimed at meeting the following priorities and objectives:

- Improved decision-making both at the Panels and through officer delegation
- Increased user and community satisfaction
- More effective use of both member and officer resources
- Enhanced actual outcomes including increased predictability

From all the discussions and investigation carried out the above objectives were sought and agreed by all.

The areas of suggested change include:

A. *The operation of the Panels*

It is suggested that there should be a new set of protocols and procedures laid down for the operation of the Panels to ensure that their workload is more manageable; the quality of the result is better in terms of decisions and member/officer/attendee experience; the authority's resources at member and officer level are used more effectively. In detail this means short term improvements could include:

1. Panel agendas reordered so that items where the public are speaking come first or the items are of strategic importance or are of key public interest;

they should be timed with not only a consistently applied start time but also finish time which should be no later than 6pm.

2. The style of the agenda redrafted so that all matters are included in it i.e. so clarity about site visits, presentations, applications and officer recommendations on all items
3. A revised basis for member call-in of delegated items to Panel to reduce the volume of lower level work for Panels and give scope for shorter and more strategically focused meetings e.g. by changing the rules for call in and possibly introducing a vetting role by the Chairs in conjunction with the Chief Planning Officer. The criteria for delegation may also need to be reviewed to maximise the time for non minor matters and shorten the meeting.
4. A review of the basis on which site visits are held to provide for a tighter control of the number of site visits, their length and how they are run as well as a review as to the timing/day of the actual visit.
5. The formulation of a clear protocol as to the types of pre-application discussions to be presented to Panel and the form of the report, or reports, and their timing.
6. A revised form of officer planning application report to ensure clarity, consistency, ease of reading and overall quality. To ensure consistency there should be tighter quality control of the report by senior officers and a revised report template would be of benefit. In addition, the presentation of the reports by officers should be revised so that reports are taken as read unless they are significant and complex when a brief presentation should be provided which focuses on the key aspects for debate. Officers should ensure reports cover all the key facts and aspects, and their evaluation, and should be able to respond to any member queries at the meeting. Following member debate and prior to a decision officers should have the opportunity to summarise issues and conclusions, and highlight significant factors to ensure that there is clarity about the weighting and balance of the matters discussed.
7. The “rules of engagement” by members at Panels should be revised so that items are discussed if there are areas of disagreement otherwise be voted on “as on paper”; where there are presentations strict timetables should be maintained, then questions asked followed by a brief debate and conclusion; meetings should be tightly chaired including ensuring members don’t repeat matters already covered, any questions are clearly responded to, the outcome of discussion is summarised and recommendation moved, the outcome of votes is stated; members stay in the room during items or don’t take part in the vote and do not have conversations with other members or the attendees during debate.
8. The reports on appeals and performance should be reviewed so that they are brief; focusing on the key messages and action to be taken or recommended. For example, for appeals other than in cases where there are costs a quarterly report covering all the Panels’ activity may suffice which highlights any performance issues and subsequent proposed action;

for BVPI performance again a quarterly comprehensive report would be of benefit comparing Panels' performance and looking at all aspects of the performance together with suggested member and officer actions. Target dates in planning application reports would help this process.

9. To improve the customer experience and give better customer care it is suggested that at the beginning of meeting members and officers' state who they are, also the Chair could state who they are when inviting them to speak, and ensure that it is clear which item is under discussion and what the decision was when going through the agenda (where this is not already occurring).
10. In terms of public speaking on items it may be beneficial to review this protocol to ensure that the time is focused where it will add value to the decision and it is important that the time set aside is adhered to. Prior approval to speak, at least a few days before the meeting, should be required and there should only be one opportunity to do so on an application. In most authorities the Chair will agree a number of days prior to the meeting which items should be subject to this procedure following a request (often limited to 3 items and meeting clear criteria) with a maximum of 3 minutes for each side to be followed by member questions and then discussion. Leaflets on the way the Panel operates and who is there would help those attending, as would further improved audio visual arrangements, including the display of plans. Some of this work has already started and it is understood that a leaflet will shortly be available.
11. Some attention needs to be given to the number of deferrals and overturns and the reasons for it. The overall scale of this issue in terms of figures was not available prior to writing this report. Better officer reports should assist this as will a different approach by the Chair and members. However underlying it would appear to be a need for closer working relationships between members and officers and this will need to be subject to a longer term process of change.
12. Where there are late comments these should be written up and laid round the table as a supplementary note rather than delivered orally and they can then be referred to if raising new issues not covered in the report
13. Members or the community/applicant should be encouraged to contact the case officer in advance of the Panel meeting if they have queries not in the report, there are factual errors etc. so that these can be checked prior to the meeting and if necessary covered in the supplementary report on the day.
14. Reports should ensure they cover legal, transport and health impact issues effectively and officers present should ensure that they are in a position to deal with concerns or queries raised. Both should take a proactive role at Panel. Planning officers should also ensure they are proactive at Panel and that members are clear on the facts and issues, the implications of their decisions and any reasons for refusal where they determine it contrary to officer recommendation. Both the Chair and the lead officer need to provide leadership to the process of decision-making.

15. Reports should include the heads of terms of any section 106 agreement proposed and detail of other key documents required as part of the application e.g. travel plan. Where documents are critical but lengthy originals can be placed in the members' room for reference and summarised in reports.
16. More capacity should be realised through the above changes to allow Panels time to receive and debate Position Statements and for all Panels to have pre-application workshops as Central Panel already does but with clear criteria and protocols to ensure effective use of member and officer time and the process does not become too demanding and adds value. This would provide the opportunity for members and officers to actively debate key matters and recognise their importance to Leeds.

B. Training and development for officers and members

A number of the matters that have been raised in the discussions suggest a need for some member and officer development. At member level there are a considerable number of new national requirements and pressures and this is likely to continue. For officers it is also important to adjust and improve performance to match the increasing level of expectation of the planning service.

The requirement for member training and development for those engaged in planning is likely to become statutory if the current proposals in the Planning White Paper are implemented. It is important that the relationship between members and officers is as effective as possible and this review has indicated that there are areas which require improvement for Leeds to be an exemplar authority. There are a number of approaches that could be taken. The simplest matters could be carried out relatively quickly i.e. officer training on presentations and report writing; member chairing skills and member development on the new performance based planning system and probity/propriety requirements as well as a review on the development management process. In addition there is the new PAS publication on the skill requirements for members which could be used as the basis for development. PAS also has a number of member training packages which are available on their website.

It would probably be of benefit to arrange a facilitated discussion with members focusing on a number of aspects of the operation of the Panel to develop ownership of new "rules of engagement".

The suggested changes in this report will require agreement and support by officers and members. The proposal for a joint action group of members and officers to oversee an action plan and ensure its implementation is positive and should facilitate this process. Facilitated discussion and training could also assist with the development of new ways of working on such aspects as section 106, member officer interface, policy relationship with development management, pre-

application discussions, integrated working with e.g. transport, health and legal officers.

C. Resources

The pressure on members and officers is considerable. With some 8,000 applications of which about 230 are major applications, plus work on pre-application discussions, the discharge of conditions, enforcement etc. the service has a high workload. The above changes should alleviate some of the pressure for both parties but, in the context of officer workloads, there appears a need to review staffing levels. From work undertaken for the ODPM/CLG and subsequently for PAS we have devised a maximum caseload benchmark as 150 cases per case officer. This needs to be adjusted to take account of the nature of applications, the number of committee meetings and other pressures on officer time e.g. site visits, appeal and pre-application workload and also those matters outside the CLG development control statistics. It is understood that the figure in Leeds is approximately 180 cases per case officer which, given the nature of the workload, far exceeds the benchmark suggested. In these circumstances a review of resourcing levels including also skills could be beneficial to address some of the issues raised. The workload of servicing 3 panels for both professional and administrative/support staff is also significant and needs to be taken into account.

D. Community and member interface with officers

As part of improving the performance of planning it will be clearly important to enhance the relationship between the community and the service, both officers and members. It would appear that some of the reasons for applications being debated in Panels is to give confidence to the community and to provide a platform for members rather than because they are complex or controversial cases. It is important that the community perceive a quality officers member relationship so it is suggested that a programme be developed designed to enhance the relationships between community/applicant and officers as well as between members and officers.

The establishment of standards, publication of leaflets, clear criteria for engaging the community, opportunities for dialogue will all assist this process alongside quality advice and officer contact. The community need to be able to engage with officers as do members outside the Panel meetings so that as far as possible matters are resolved before Panel meetings or delegated decisions where appropriate. A system of member engagement outside the Panel may be beneficial as long as it accords with the guidelines set out earlier on probity and decision-making.

Such guidance could form part of a revised development management manual picking up many of the issues identified including consistency of action as well as ensure that Leeds development control service moves ahead into the new era of development management and achieves an excellent level of service. It could include arrangements for pre-applications discussions, development team meetings, engagement with other parts of the authority especially transport, policy and legal, use of Planning Process Agreements, section 106 procedures, protocols around conditions, new arrangements for vetting applications on arrival by senior officers, Panel and delegated report templates. Where appropriate such information can also be transformed into guidance for applicants and the community in the form of leaflets.

E. Plans Panel engagement with the LDF and policy development

Concerns were expressed about the inter-relationship of policy and development control. Panels are not engaged with the LDF, nor do they receive information about new national guidance, and development control officers are in a separate division to policy and local plans. In terms of the latter it is essential that members and the outside world see planning as an integrated whole so that arrangements need to be put in place to improve the operational working relationship and to ensure that there is cohesion between policy development and implementation. This will become increasingly important as the new planning system is imbedded and evolves. It is suggested that development control officers and Panel members are more effectively engaged in the LDF process, the development of planning briefs and Area Action Plans to minimise the current gap. Joint discussions, if not currently held, would help as would the attendance of policy officers with other key officers e.g. transport at the discussions that should be held with senior officers on draft application reports before sign off for Panel. Involvement of Plans Panels in the adoption of planning briefs also needs to be looked at.

Officers possibly need to review the mechanisms they currently have for dialogue at key stages with transport, housing and legal as well a policy. This should ensure more joined up thinking is presented to members and to the public through committee reports.

F. Number of Plans Panels, roles and coverage

It was suggested in discussion that an additional Panel may be the solution to the workload of the Panels. Given the way the Panels currently operate the likelihood is that the creation of an additional Panel would exacerbate the current problems in the operation of Panels. It is seeking to deal with the problem rather than the causes of the problem. It is suggested that the changes highlighted above should in time relieve the current issues and it would be preferable to seek this route, at least in the first instance. There is evidence from the research done for

PAS that the number committee meetings on development control has substantial implications for officer workloads as does the number of matters on the agenda. Given the current shortfall in resources, let alone the additional cost of another Panel, the established of another Panel is likely to reduce not improve service quality unless there is a substantial increase in staffing.

To fulfil the challenges raised by the review more focused agendas including some discussion on policy matters or briefing on LDF, pre-application discussions as well as key major planning applications and overall performance would seem appropriate. Many authorities succeed in this approach and have manageable agendas with debate focused mainly on areas of disagreement or choice even with one meeting. The scale of work in Leeds is substantial so this is unlikely to be practical.

A possible alternative is to establish a Panel dealing solely with the major applications with the other Panels covering the broader range as some authorities already do. Given the nature of applications and the number of major applications this may not be feasible in Leeds and would need further review. In addition it may again reinforce the nature of the agendas and discussion already in place in Leeds and not the desire to be more business-like and efficient.

Interviewees

Officer Group discussion

Phil Crabtree	Chief Planning Officer
Sue Wraith	Head of Planning Services
Martin Sellens	Area Planning Manager
John Redding	Area Planning Manager
Christine Naylor	Principal Planning Manager
Robert Wade	Section Head, Chief Executive's Department
Helen Cerroti	Development Project Manager

Member interviews

Councillor Elizabeth Minkin	Member of City Centre Plans Panel and West Plans Panel
Cllr Judith Blake	Labour Deputy Leader
Cllr Michael Lyons	Labour, member of East Plans Panel
Cllr Peter Gruen	Labour, member of East Plans Panel
Cllr Amanda Carter	Conservative, Chair of Central Plans Panel

Private sector interviews

Sue Ansbro	Director of White Young Green Planning, Chair of the Property Forum
Paul Morris	Director Commercial for Morris Property Trading Ltd representing the Property Forum

References

Documents provided by Leeds

1. Finding from the plans panel customer satisfaction survey
2. Leeds City Council – report of Director of Legal and Democratic Services 15 May 2003
3. Letter to Phil Crabtree from Simon Grundy Colliers CRE dated 18th June 2007 Planning & Regeneration within Leeds – Meeting 25 June 2007
4. Leeds City Council – Planning performance draft scrutiny inquiry report March 2007
5. Summary of comments from BVP111
6. Comments from the plans panels
7. Officers issues from meeting on 27 June 2007
8. Briefing note to staff by Phil Crabtree
9. Briefing note for Councillor G Driver by Phil Crabtree Role of plans panels
10. Briefing note for plans panel members by Phil Crabtree
11. Leeds City Council Governance of Plans Panels dated 16 May 2007 Executive Summary
12. Letter to Cllr Morton re Westward Care Ltd from Peter Hodgkinson dated 21 June 2007
13. Panel review: issues raised by plans panel members
14. Notes from conversation with Cllr Campbell 25 June 2007
15. Proposal for an amendment to the code of practice for determining planning applications – site visits
16. Code of practice for the determination of planning matters May 2007
17. Letter to Cllr Leadley re Carriageworks meeting 3 July 2007 by Phil Crabtree
18. Service improvement action plan draft v1
19. Leeds City Council Plan Panel (East) public document pack for meeting held at the Civic Hall on 7 June 2007 at 1.30pm
20. Leeds City Council Plan Panel (West) public document pack for meeting held at the Civic Hall on 14 June 2007 at 2pm

Publications reviewed

1. Member's guide to performance management by IDeA and Audit Commission
2. Positive engagement a guide for planning councillors by PAS, RTPi, ODPM & others
3. Councillor involvement in planning decisions by CLG January 2007
4. The impact of the Local Government White Paper on councillors on IDeA website
5. Simpler, clearer code of conduct for local councillors, CLG News Release 2007/0087

6. Area-based decision making (ABDM) for development control: a review by Andrew Ross for PAS
7. A councillors guide to performance management by IDeA
A councillor's guide to performance management by IDeA & Audit Commission June 2006
8. Elected member's planning skills framework by PAS
9. The political skills framework a councillors toolkit by Professor Jo Silvester for IDeA
10. Statutory Instrument 2007 No 1159 The local authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007
11. Constructive talk investing in pre-application discussions PAS
Chapter 4 Early Member involvement – Councillor involvement in planning decision 2007 DCLG

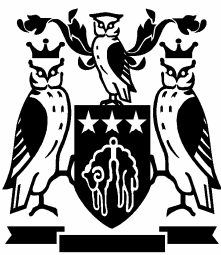
Review of the Plans Panels Action Plan (draft)

Activity	Action	Officer	Timescale Short/Medium/ Long
Conduct of the meetings			
Public speaking protocols	<p>Revise protocols to ensure fairness for objectors and supporters.</p> <p>Revise protocol on deadline for request for public speaking</p> <p>Review right to speak protocol/ criteria</p> <p>Repeat Speaking.</p> <p>Adherence to the three minute rule</p> <p>Clearer information for public speakers</p>		S
Summing up	By Officer, steer at end of discussion		S
Rules of engagement for Officers and Members	To be drawn up describing expectations of Officers and Members		M
Role of Legal Officer/ Corporate Governance	Monitoring role – Plans Panel Members attendance at meetings, absence during items.		M
Timing of items	Investigation of possible solutions. Other authorities best practice. Set tea/break times		S-M
Roles of Officers	Agree and publish finishing time of Panel meeting		S
Chairing	More defined roles, advisory role, summing up		M
Dealing with reports on an exception basis	Ensure debate is focussed on planning issues, discourage repeat discussions of same issues		M
Recording of items finally not determined at Panel	Identify applications that do not require a full presentation at the Panel meeting		S
Governance of Panels	Proforma created to go on file	HC	S
Agenda	Investigate appropriateness of Members on Panels which do not cover their wards		M
	Adherence to the agreed running schedule		S-M

Content of the meetings			
Layout of agenda	Clearer and more user friendly agenda papers prepared		S
Referral process	Changes to the Constitution regarding referrals. Criteria for call-in revised and used to assess all requests for items to Panel and used to determine by Chief Planning Officer and Panel Chair		M
Ordering of agenda	Re-order the agenda- investigation of best order for items, statutory items first, followed by other items? Controversial and large items attracting large numbers of the public dealt with first.		S
Officer reports	Officer reports need to be more concise and ensure all material considerations are addressed, together with a summary. Reasons for approval or refusal included. Provide Policy background		S
Officer Presentations	Presentations more clear, concise, kept to key issues and any updates. Presentation skills course for officers Starting point that Members have read the report Officer reports & deal with key issues only Brief introduction to site and development Update of what's new and not a repeat of the report Summing up prior to Panel decision by Officer Ensure presenting all the up to date relevant facts		S
Late Comments	Written up and given to Panel		S
Design Issues	Increased presence of Design Officer at East and West panels		S-M
Pre-application capacity			
Protocols for earlier Member involvement	Protocol required, including the recording, communication of and reference to the Panel's initial views at later decision making stages		M

Pre-application information to Panels	Position statements and workshops. Standardised format required.		S
Consistent approach to developer pre-application presentations	Protocol for developer pre-application presentations		M
Improving the Customer experience			
Venue	Investigate alternate venues, use of ICT in existing meeting room. Layout Corporate solution? Leaflets, on website		S-M
Information for customers		Margaret Horton HC	S
Members seating plan/ who Members are	Powerpoint	HC	S
Plans Panel Information for customers	On process, who's who etc	HC	S
A-V issues for presentations	Use of ICT for upgrade		M
Refreshments for the public	Investigate possibility of providing and cost		S-M
Introductions	By Members and Officers, including Landscape, Tree Officers etc		S
Chairs welcome	Standardised form of words or areas for all Chairs	HC	S-M
Officer/ Member Communication			
Panel Chairs and Chief Planning Officer meetings	Periodic meetings to share good practice, and for early alert of performance issues		S
Communication of progress on applications	Protocol for alerting Members to progress on live applications in their Wards Protocol for communicating progress to applicants and the community on applications as they pass through the planning process		M
Early alert of Major Applications to Members	List of Majors received to go to Plans Panel Members with indication of likelihood of going to Panel		S

Member Training		
Compulsory	Rolling programme of training to continue	
Non-compulsory	Programme developed	Sue Wraith
Monitoring of training	Production of periodic monitoring reports	Peter Marrington/ Chief Executives
Site Visits		
Site Visit protocol	Review of protocol	S
Site Visit records	Written record on file of what has occurred Members attendance recorded	S
Requests for site visits	Review process and purpose of site visits	M
Agreement prior to Plans Panel meeting	Agreement at Chairs briefing of which sites to be visited	S
Attendance at Site Visits	Adherence to the Code of Practice	S-M
Performance Management Information		
1/2 yearly report	Including: enforcement data, analysis of appeals, BVPI, improvement activity, S106, Achievements	S/M
Policy Making		
Member involvement	consider the scope for Plans Panel Members to get more involved in policy-making	M



Originator: P N Marrington

Tel: 39 51151

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th October 2007

Subject: Briefing on Direct Payments

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 2nd July 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to undertake an Inquiry into Direct Payments. This followed initial discussion in the previous June around Leeds' overall performance in terms of Direct Payment (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Members of the Committee wished to examine whether Leeds City Council was maximising the provision of Direct Payments and whether Direct Payments were benefiting users.
- 1.3 A Working Group was subsequently established to draft appropriate Terms of Reference for an Inquiry. This Working Group met on 20th July 2007 and following discussion concluded that prior to agreeing Terms of Reference the Committee should receive a briefing on Direct Payments. The Working Group was of the view that such a briefing may influence whether the Committee considers an Inquiry worthwhile or not. This approach was endorsed by the full Committee in September 2007.
- 1.4 Mike Evans, Chief Officer Adult Services, has been invited to today's meeting to brief Members on Direct Payments, the particular issues around Direct Payments and the current situation as it relates to Leeds.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to discuss with the Chief Officer the issue of Direct Payments and to consider whether further Scrutiny is required.

Performance Report – June 2007 - BV-201 (PAF C51): Direct Payments

This indicator measures the number of adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31st March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over.

Direct payments are intended to give the recipient greater control over their lives by providing an alternative to services provided by social services departments. Councils have a duty to provide these services where individuals consent to this and are able to manage them. The indicator shows how well authorities are able to implement direct payments.

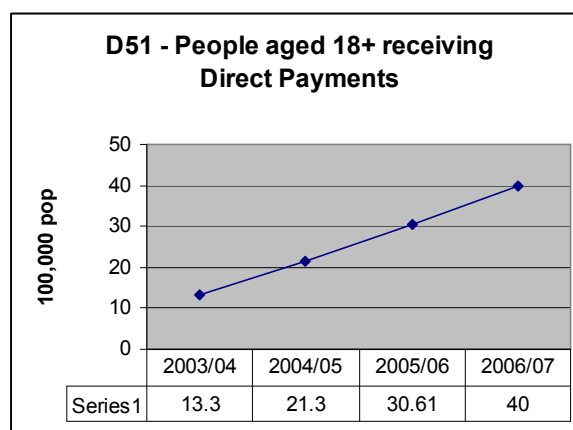
The issue

Performance has been improving since 2002/03 but at a significantly lower rate than comparator authorities. This indicator is a key threshold indicator. The threshold set for 2006.07 by the Government is greater than 15 per 100,000 pop. Aged 18+. The government has raised the threshold for 2007/08 to a rate significantly higher than current performance (60) and has announced its intention to increase the threshold to 70 in 2008/09.

Performance

Leeds performance for Direct Payments for 2006/07 is **40**. A target of 43 was set for the year. 2006/07 performance is rated in the third of five bands by the Department of Health. It is classed as “Acceptable”. The core city average for 2005/06 was 70. The Key threshold for this indicator rises to 60 in 2007/08 and 70 in 2008/09.

This area of work has been identified as a key service improvement area.



Current Improvement Plans

A two year direct payments improvement plan was implemented in April 2007. Its main components are:

- Update the department’s written direct payments procedures (Last updated 22/03/06).
- Review the direct payments pay rates.
- Promote and publicise direct payments in Leeds.
- Revisit training on direct payments for assessors/ care managers to raise awareness and improve understanding of direct payments.
- Direct payments user satisfaction survey (last completed in April 2004).
- Ensure that triggers in the assessment /care planning process are effective.

- Monitor performance against area targets.
- Properly identify direct payments spend.
- Ensure direct payments users are supported effectively by ASIST.
- To make direct payments as inclusive as possible through the use of user led trusts.
- To introduce a system of accurate performance management data collection in respect of direct payments.
- To introduce a system to Identify the number and value of direct payments packages being agreed for service users who are over 65 and service users who are under 65.
- Increase the use of direct payments to purchase items of equipment.
- Budgetary sign off responsibility re-assigned from Head of Service - Adults To Service Delivery Managers – Adults, for people over 65.
- To revisit promotion of direct payments to people from black and ethnic minority Communities.
- To introduce service user involvement in the Direct Payments Project Operational Group.
- To ensure the strategy for implementing access to direct payments for all those eligible to use them is approved by members and is led by all senior staff across the council.

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Originator: P N Marrington

Tel: 39 51151

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th October 2007

Subject: Scrutiny of the Budget – Financial Health Monitoring 2007/08 – Quarter 1 Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee now receives budget information on a quarterly basis. The attached report presents the Council's financial performance for 2007/08 quarter 1. Officers will be in attendance at today's meeting to answer any questions.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to note the Council's financial performance for 2007/08 quarter 1 and consider any potential areas for further scrutiny.

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Report of the Director of Resources

Executive Board

Date: 22nd August 2007

Subject: Financial Health Monitoring 2007/08 – Quarter 1 Report

Electoral wards affected:

Specific implications for:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the gap

Eligible for call In

Not eligible for call in
(details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the financial health of the authority after three months of the new financial year in respect of the revenue budget for general fund services and the housing revenue account.
2. The report identifies that a number of council services are continuing to face financial pressures in 2007/08, often reflecting pressures which impacted on the Council's 2006/07 outturn.
3. The net projected shortfall is £6.0m at this early stage in the year and it is crucial that all budget pressures are addressed by directorates who are required to continue to develop and implement action plans to manage identified pressures within available resources.
4. There are projected savings of £4.2m in capital financing costs and additional LABGI income of £1.5m following a Judicial Review of the scheme. It is however recommended that the capital financing savings are transferred to the earmarked reserve set up at the end of 2006/07 to meet future potential pressures, and the additional LABGI income is transferred to contingency to deal with new in year pressures as they arise.
5. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out for the Board the Council's financial health position for 2007/08 after three months of the financial year. The report covers revenue expenditure and income to date compared to the approved budget, the projected year end position and proposed actions to ensure a balanced budget by the year end. The report also highlights the position regarding other key financial indicators, including Council Tax collection and the payment of creditors. A separate report on the Capital Programme is elsewhere on this agenda.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that the net budget for the general fund was set at £505.2m, which provided for a contribution of £4.3m from reserves. As a result, the level of general fund reserves at 31st March 2008 were estimated to be £13.0m.
- 2.2. As reported in the 2006/07 outturn report to Board in June 2007, the net contribution to General Fund reserves was £6.3m in excess of the budget giving a balance carried forward of £23.6m. Taking account of the budgeted usage of reserves of £4.3m, the £0.67m approved by the Board at their meeting on the 4th April 2007 to support a number of one off initiatives, together with other potential liabilities, it is considered that this is a prudent level to ensure that reserves at 31st March 2008 will be capable of covering the estimated financial risk of the authority as assessed using the risk based reserves strategy.
- 2.3 Budget Monitoring is a continuous process throughout the year, and this report reviews the position of the budget after three months and comments on the key issues impacting on the overall achievement of the budget for the current year. However, it should be recognised that the forecasts are based on the position at a relatively early stage of the financial year.

3. MAIN ISSUES – General fund Services

- 3.1 Within Adult Social Services there is a projected overspend of £2.4m, which mainly reflects slippage in delivering some of the budgeted savings as well as some ongoing demographic pressures. The 2007/08 budget assumed savings would be made through transferring some home care provision from the directly provided service to the independent sector. The planned savings will not now be fully achieved, partly due to stability and capacity issues within the independent sector. The learning disability service is experiencing continued demographic pressures in line with national trends. This is impacting on the pooled budget in particular and budgeted efficiencies in the provision of transport are not now projected to be achieved in full. The growth in direct payments, a key performance target, is also presenting some financial pressures.
- 3.2 Within Children's Services a £1m pressure in respect of additional social care fieldwork staff has been met through a detailed review of other budget heads and a proposed £0.5m contribution from a higher than anticipated operating surplus identified by Education Leeds. After providing for this additional demand, Children's Services are currently projecting a net overspend of £1.7m. Key contributory factors include continuing pressures elsewhere within the social care staffing budget as well as a projected overspend on fees to carers and outside placements. The projected overspend mainly reflects increased numbers of children and individually agreed fees.

However these budgets are traditionally volatile and can vary significantly within the year. A further overspend is projected for the Director of Children's Services Unit unless further savings can be achieved in the current financial year through realignment of services across Children's Services. Work is continuing to identify any such possible realignment through more effective and coherent use of resources.

- 3.3 The budget pressures experienced in 2006/07 within the Parks and Countryside service of City Development are projected to continue in 2007/08. These amount to £650k and primarily relate to staffing, materials and transport. In addition a pressure of £400k is projected in respect of PFI and sport trust development costs within the Sport and Active Recreation service. Due to the recent flooding revenue costs of £188k for reactive and repair costs have been identified in respect of highways maintenance. The flooding also caused some damage to highway structures, two libraries, Thwaite Mills and Armley Mills and to various footpaths and the gorge at Roundhay Park. Additional capital spend is likely to be required in respect of this damage. These pressures have been partly offset by £300k following the invocation of penalty clauses in the Street Lighting contract due to the failure to achieve the column implementation programme to the agreed timescales.
- 3.4 At this early stage of the year staffing costs within Environment and Neighbourhoods are projected to overspend by £0.7m reflecting delays in the implementation of budgeted staffing restructures and a variation of £0.3m within Roseville Enterprises which reflects lower than anticipated turnover based on the trading position after three months.
- 3.5 Within former City Services the main areas of concern of £0.4m relate to Streetscene services where the projected outturn position reflects additional expenditure to be incurred on vehicles and waste disposal combined with a projected reduction in the amount of electricity to be generated from the closed landfill site at Gamblethorpe.
- 3.6 The Resources Directorate is projecting an underspend of £0.4m mainly due to additional grant funding from the DWP in respect of local housing allowances. Within Chief Executives additional income from local land charges is projected at £0.3m.
- 3.7 Savings in capital financing costs are projected at £4.2m and following the outcome of a Judicial Review of the LABGI scheme, the government will be making additional payments to eligible authorities for years one and two which will reflect increases in rateable value attributable to business expansion. It is estimated that this will result in £1.5m additional income to the Council. It is proposed that the capital financing savings are transferred to the equal pay reserve and the additional LABGI income is used to bolster the contingency fund. It is proposed that this additional provision within the contingency is used to meet some immediate pressures which will leave some balance to meet any further spending pressures which arise during the year. The immediate pressures are:-
 - Provision of £150k for Flood Alleviation. This has been enhanced by £100k by contributions from DEFRA and the Flood Defence Committee.
 - An additional £24k in respect of Youth Service budgets delegated to Area Committees. This will fund the part year costs of providing a minimum allocation of £70k per ward.
 - Additional costs of co – locating business and enterprise with the Chamber of Commerce £45k.

4 SCHOOLS

- 4.1 School reserves stood at £6.1m as at 31st March 2007. This comprised surpluses in primary and special schools and a deficit of £1.6m in the secondary school sector.
- 4.2 Schools which had deficits at the close of 2006/07 and were planning to set a deficit budget for 2007/08 are required to submit an action plan detailing how they intend to achieve a balanced position within three years. These have now been submitted to Education Leeds are currently being evaluated for their viability and will require approval of the Director of Resources in accordance with the agreed arrangements.

5 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING POSITION - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

- 5.1 After three months of the new financial year, income is projected to exceed the budget by £1.2m, reflecting additional property services income and a significantly improved voids position. This is partly offset by increased staffing costs, negative subsidy and additional management fees payable to the ALMOS by way of incentive payments, especially in relation to voids. An in year surplus of £0.2m is currently forecast which will be added to reserves.
- 5.2 Bad debts and disrepair claim costs continue their downward trend, and savings of £0.3m for the year are projected. This will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.
- 5.3 The projection reflects the re-distribution to the ALMOs of savings generated through a reduction in disrepair claims and bad debt costs in 2006/07, for which a specific provision of £1.0m was made at outturn, as reported to Members in the 2006/07 outturn report.
- 5.4 The working balance brought forward from 2006/07 was £3.7m. It is anticipated that the working balances carried forward into 2007/08 will be £3.7m and that the projected surplus will be used to maintain the working balance and reserves as required.

6 COLLECTION OF LOCAL TAXATION

- 6.1 The level of Council Tax collected at the end of June 2007 is 28.4% of the debit for the year of £226m. This is slightly behind the same period last year and the performance target for the year of 96.5% is being closely monitored.
- 6.2 The collection of non-domestic rates for the first three months is 33.5% of the current net debit of £288.5m, which is 0.6% below the same period last year. Again, the performance target of 98.6% is being closely monitored.

7 PROMPT PAYMENT OF INVOICES

- 7.1 A local target of 92% for paying all undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt of agreed terms was set for the year. For the period 1st April to 30th June the actual performance was 91.4%, the same as at the end of the first quarter of 2006/07.
- 7.2 The creditor payments function has now been centralised in the Business Support centre based in Belgrave House and it is anticipated that along with the continued development of electronic ordering and invoicing of goods, and expanding the use of purchasing cards, performance will improve.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Members of the Executive Board are asked to
- Note the projected financial position of the authority after three months of the new financial year
 - Agree the treatment of LABGI and capital financing savings and
 - Agree the use of up to £195k to fund new in year pressures being £150k for flood alleviation, £24k for the part year costs of increasing Youth Service budgets delegated to Area Committees, and £45k for the co-location of business and enterprise with the Chamber of Commerce.

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Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th October 2007

Subject: Recommendation Tracking

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee will recall that Scrutiny Boards receive reports every three months updating them on the implementation of the recommendations produced in their final reports. Members of the Scrutiny Boards received this information during their last meeting cycle and classified the progress made.
- 1.2 It has been previously agreed that should Members from the Scrutiny Boards identify areas of concern then these concerns would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.
- 1.3 The report is intended to give Overview and Scrutiny Committee an overview of all the concerns of the Scrutiny Boards in relation to progressing recommendations and improving the services provided to members of the public.
- 1.4 This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the recommendations tracked in the September cycle and brings to the Committee's attention any areas of concern.
- 1.5 The recommendation tracking process is intended to apply only to those recommendations which are accepted, and does not preclude any other forms of recommendation monitoring which Board members wish to undertake.

2.0 Process of assessing progress

2.1 Scrutiny Board members assessed the progress made with implementing their recommendations using the following classifications

1 – Stop monitoring

2– Achieved

3 – Not achieved (obstacle)

4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)

5 – Not achieved (progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)

6 - Not for review this session

Category 6 is used if the timescale was not yet reached for completion of the recommendation.

2.2 Members expressed concerns about the progress made with implementing some recommendations. These instances were recorded in the minutes, and are now referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration and action as Appendix 1.

2.3 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to take an overview of the areas of concern and consider how to take them forward. Members may choose to identify common themes and choose to scrutinise particular areas more closely. Members may also ask the relevant Executive Member to undertake an investigation.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to:

- 1) Consider the information provided on inquiry recommendations identified as potentially problematic
- 2) Consider how they wish to respond to the information contained in the report.

Recommendation Tracking – September 2007

Scrutiny Board	Inquiry Recommendations tracked	Concerns raised by the Scrutiny Board
Children's Services	Adoption In Leeds Catching the Bus Trust Schools Departmental Communications Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres	No issues No issues No issues No issues No issues
Health and Social Care	NHS Dental Contract Dignity in Care	Further clarification is being sought on the responses given to the Board's recommendations Further information is being sought in order to make an assessment on progress
Environment and Neighbourhoods	Bulky Items Collection Grounds maintenance Recycling Anti-Social Behaviour Affordable Homes	No issues No issues Subject to further Scrutiny Subject to further Scrutiny No issues

	Waste Solution	Subject to further Scrutiny
Culture and Leisure	No recommendations to track	
City Development	Flooding	Further information being sought from external agencies regarding certain recommendations
Resources	No recommendations to track <i>(new Board previous recommendations being tracked by OSC)</i>	

Categories

- 1 – achieved
- 2 – not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 3 – not achieved (obstacle)
- 4 - not achieved (Insufficient progress made. Continue monitoring)
- 5 – not for review this session.



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th October 2007

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The attached appendices provide Members with a copy of the Committee's current Work Programme (Appendix 1) and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions (Appendix 2).

1.2 The Forward Plan of Key Decisions covers the period 1st October 2007 to 31st January 2008

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee is requested to;

- (i) Receive and make any changes to the attached Work Programme following decisions made at today's meeting.
- (ii) Receive and note the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME - OCTOBER 2007

Item	Description	Notes	Type of item
Meeting date – 6TH November 2007			
Disability Equality Scheme	To receive a progress report on the implementation of the action plan.	The Committee has been reviewing the scheme. The Committee endorses the Council's approach to a combined equality scheme.	PM
Performance Management Information	The Committee will receive performance management information covering all departments.	Following receipt of this information the Committee may recommend areas for further Scrutiny.	PM
Leeds Strategic Plan	To formulate the combined response from all Scrutiny Boards		DP
Meeting date – 11th December 2007			
Scrutiny of the Budget			
	To receive and consider quarter 2 financial report.		PM
Recommendation tracking	To receive information from other Scrutiny Boards relating to progress on meeting recommendations made in 2006/07		MSR
Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their families	Undertake Session 1		RP

Key:

CCFA / RFS – Community call for action / request for scrutiny

RP – Review of existing policy

DP – Development of new policy

MSR – Monitoring scrutiny recommendations

PM – Performance management

B – Briefings (Including potential areas for scrutiny)

SC – Statutory consultation

CI – Call in

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME - OCTOBER 2007

Meeting date – 8th January 2008			
Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their families	Undertake Session 2		RP
Leeds Strategic Plan	To discuss targets and indicators within the Plan		DP
Meeting date – 5th February 2008			
Performance Management Information	The Committee will receive performance management information covering all departments.	Following receipt of this information the Committee may recommend areas for further Scrutiny.	PM
Scrutiny of the Budget	To receive and consider quarter 3 financial report.		PM
Recommendation tracking	Scrutiny Boards will track recommendations made in 2006/07	Recommendations tracked will be those made in the 'Narrowing the Gap' report.	MSR
Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their families	Undertake Session 3		RP
Meeting date – 11th March 2008			
Scrutiny of the Budget			PM

Key:

CCFA / RFS – Community call for action / request for scrutiny

RP – Review of existing policy

DP – Development of new policy

MSR – Monitoring scrutiny recommendations

PM – Performance management

B – Briefings (Including potential areas for scrutiny)

SC – Statutory consultation

CI – Call in

Recommendation tracking	To receive information from other Scrutiny Boards relating to progress on meeting recommendations made in 2006/07		MSR
Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their families	Undertake Session 4		RP
Meeting date – 8TH April 2008			
Annual Report			PM
Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their families	To agree the final report		RP
Unscheduled Items			
Direct Payments			
Working Groups			
Working group	Membership	Progress update	Dates of meetings
ALMO Working Group	To be determined		

Key:
 CCFA / RFS – Community call for action / request for scrutiny
 RP – Review of existing policy
 DP – Development of new policy
 MSR – Monitoring scrutiny recommendations
 PM – Performance management
 B – Briefings (Including potential areas for scrutiny)
 SC – Statutory consultation
 CI – Call in

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LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

For the period 1 October 2007 to 31 January 2008

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
Framework Arrangement for the Spot hire of Vehicles without Drivers To approve the use of a framework arrangement for the spot hire of vehicles without drivers.	Director of City Services	1/10/07	Procurement and Transport Services.	Tender Documents	Director of City Services
Framework Arrangement for Long Term Contract Hire of Vehicles To approve the use of a framework arrangement for the long term contract hire of vehicles	Director of City Services	1/10/07	Procurement and Transport Services	Tender Documents	Director of City Services
Contract for the Mixed Paper & Cardboard Collection & Recycling To award the Contract	Director of City Services	1/10/07	Market, Department, CPU and Legal Services	Award Report	Director of City Services

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
Contract for the Recycling of Scrap Metal and Lead Acid Batteries To award the Contract	Director of City Services	1/10/07	Market , Department , CPU and Legal Services	Award Report	Director of City Services
Leeds Sports Trust Approval to proceed with the Leeds Sports Trust project and the transfer of the current Sport and Active Recreation Service.	Executive Board (Portfolio: Leisure)	17/10/07	Considerable consultation already undertaken and ongoing with key stakeholder groups including - Service staff; Service users; the Unions; the general public; various LCC Members/ officers.	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Otley Civic Centre To approve the principles of a financial partnership with Otley Town Council to secure the refurbishment of the Civic Centre. This Council's contribution to the cost of works to be met partly through the Town and District Centres Regeneration Scheme.</p> <p>Also to approve the injection of the whole refurbishment scheme into the Capital Programme.</p> <p>(The proposal complies with the requirement of Executive Board that no new injections into the Capital Programme will be made without identifying new resources)</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Development and Regeneration)</p>	<p>17/10/07</p>	<p>Ward Members, Otley Town Council</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Director of City Development</p>

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
Mansion House, Roundhay - Third Party Operator To consider the nine options outlined in the report and to agree which option should be progressed further.	Executive Board (Portfolio : Leisure)	17/10/07		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development
Older Peoples Day Strategy To seek approval to implementing plans relating to Local Authority Day Services for Older People.	Executive Board (Portfolio:Adult Health and Social Care)	17/10/07	Service Users, Elected Members, Partner Organisations and other key stakeholders.	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Adult Social Services
Holt Park District Centre - Potential Regeneration To note the contents of the report and agree continuation of the project	Executive Board (Portfolio: Development and Regeneration)	17/10/07	Cabinet, Executive Member and Ward members	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development
Council Property Disposals and Restrictions Over Future Use Executive Board is requested to instruct officers with regard to whether property disposals should be conditioned so as to restrict future use.	Executive Board (Portfolio : Development and Regeneration)	17/10/07	None	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Area Management Review To consider a report covering proposals to develop area working across the City through the 10 Area Committees.</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Neighbourhoods and Housing)</p>	<p>17/10/07</p>	<p>All elected members have been consulted as part of this work</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods</p>
<p>Waste Solution For Leeds To agree the delivery strategy for key waste processing facilities (including approval of the PFI Outline Business Case to Defra for a residual waste treatment facility).</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Neighbourhoods and Housing)</p>	<p>17/10/07</p>	<p>Extensive public consultation has taken place on the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds during 2006. Delivery of a further extensive formal programme of consultation will be required on the emerging proposals, with a targeted communications plan to ensure engagement of communities in close proximity to the preferred sites for waste facilities.</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the Appendices will include the Outline Business Case to Defra for PFI Credits</p>	<p>Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing</p>

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Improvement Scheme Review 2007 Endorsement of changes to the register of Highway Improvement Schemes</p>	<p>Director of City Development</p>	<p>29/10/07</p>	<p>Traffic Management Teams; Highways Design and Construction Teams; Highways DC; Planning DC; Planning Policy; Asset Management; Members of LEDA; Area Management; Ward Members</p>	<p>Report entitled "Improvement Scheme Review 2007" plus appendices</p>	<p>Director of City Development</p>
<p>Home Energy Conservation Act 11th Report Approval for release to DEFRA, signing off by Chief Officer prior to release for the 30 November deadline and for information to the December Executive Board.</p>	<p>Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>1/11/07</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods</p>

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
Horsefair, Wetherby Permission to implement the scheme known as 'Pedestrian Improvements to Horsefair, Wetherby'.	Executive Board (Portfolio: Development and Regeneration)	14/11/07	Public consultation in support of the outline proposals was completed May 2006. Statutory consultation during detailed design.	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development
Beeston Hill and Holbeck Housing PFI Scheme To support the submission of the Outline Business Case to CLG	Executive Board (Portfolio : Environment and Neighbourhoods)	14/11/07	Ward Members, Aire Valley Homes Leeds, Residents (completed)	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Contract to allow advertising on a number of strengthened street lighting columns in Leeds The letting of a contract for advertising on a number of strengthened street lighting columns in Leeds(excluding the City Centre) 2007-2022.	Director of City Services	14/11/07	Legal and Democratic Services, PPU and all affected Members	Report to Executive Board 15 November 2006	Director of City Services

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Headingley Primary School To consider the request from Headingley Development Trust for the transfer of the ownership of the building subject to the Trust paying market value for the building or demonstrating how the Council can achieve revenue savings that would allow it to generate an equivalent amount through unsupported borrowing</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Neighbourhoods and Housing)</p>	<p>14/11/07</p>	<p>September – October 2007</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Director of City Development</p>

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Formation of the Garforth Schools Trust To note the formation of the Garforth Schools Trust and approve the transfer of land and premises assets from Council to Trust ownership.</p>	<p>Executive Board (Portfolio: Children's Services)</p>	<p>14/11/07</p>	<p>These proposals have been developed and pursued by the schools concerned, led by Garforth Community College. As part of the statutory process required for the change of school status and formation of the Trust, a detailed programme of consultation has been undertaken with (amongst others) local schools/educational establishments, the local authority, Diocesan representatives, staff, unions, LCC Scrutiny Board, Local Councillors and Members of Parliament. Responses were fed back to governing bodies and were overwhelmingly positive. Further details on the consultation process can be made available upon request. Proposals for asset transfer will be discussed by Education Leeds Capital Projects Board and LCC Asset Management Group prior to Executive Board discussion. The Councils Property and Finance Legal team and Asset Management team have been involved in the process throughout.</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Chief Executive of Education Leeds</p>

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
LEEDS/BRADFORD Corridor Project To support joint work with Bradford within the Leeds/Bradford corridor.	Executive Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing)	14/11/07	Already carried out with partner organisations eg METRO, WNW Homes Leeds, Firebird. All bodies are represented on the Partnership Working Group.	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Otley - Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic To seek approval for proposals for HGV Management in the Otley area.	Executive Board (Portfolio: Development and Regeneration)	14/11/07	Ward Members, Neighbouring Local Authorities	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development
Trinity Quarter To approve the transfer of the existing development agreement for the development of this site	Executive Board (Portfolio: Development and Regeneration)	14/11/07	Executive Member (Development)	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of City Development

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Town and District Centres Parking Strategy and Priorities</p> <p>To note the contents and recommendations of the Town and District Centres Parking Strategy and Priorities Study, and to approve recommendations for the development of local parking strategies for the centres identified in the report.</p>	<p>Executive Board ((Portfolio: Development and Regeneration))</p>	<p>14/11/07</p>	<p>No specific consultation is associated with the report. The development of strategies for the centres recommended in the report will be progressed subject to approval by Elected Members to the detailed consultation stage.</p>	<p>The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting</p>	<p>Director of City Development</p>

NOTES

Key decisions are those executive decisions:

- which result in the authority incurring expenditure or making savings over £500,000 per annum, or
- are likely to have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards

<u>Executive Board Portfolios</u>	<u>Executive Member</u>
Central and Corporate	Councillor Mark Harris
Development and Regeneration	Councillor Andrew Carter
Environmental Services	Councillor Steve Smith
Neighbourhoods and Housing	Councillor John Leslie Carter
Leisure	Councillor John Procter
Children's Services	Councillor Richard Brett
Learning	Councillor Richard Harker
Adult Health and Social Care	Councillor Peter Harrand
Leader of the Labour Group	Councillor Keith Wakefield
Leader of the Morley Borough Independent Group	Councillor Robert Finnigan
Advisory Member	Councillor Judith Blake

In cases where Key Decisions to be taken by the Executive Board are not included in the Plan, 5 days notice of the intention to take such decisions will be given by way of the agenda for the Executive Board meeting.

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DECISIONS

Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer

NOTES:

The Council's Constitution, in Article 4, defines those plans and strategies which make up the Budget and Policy Framework. Details of the consultation process are published in the Council's Forward Plan as required under the Budget and Policy Framework.

Full Council (a meeting of all Members of Council) are responsible for the adoption of the Budget and Policy Framework.

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