

**Statement of
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
Consultation on Strategic
Outcomes and
Improvements Priorities
for the Leeds Strategic
Plan**

Introduction



Introduction

- 1 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. Scrutiny Boards would also 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.
- 2 Discussion on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities to be included in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11 took place in the October cycle of meetings. This statement provides the Scrutiny Boards' initial observations.
- 3 A number of Scrutiny Boards have stated that they wish to make further comment on the draft and to see whether their comments have been taken into account.
- 4 The 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.

Comments and Recommendations



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1 Members would wish to make an initial general comment. A key recommendation made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year was in relation to Corporate Planning and budget setting.
- 2 It is the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that budget making should be within a strong, policy-led rather than finance-led, corporate planning framework, which draws on other processes within the council, i.e. corporate planning and performance management arrangements. Best practice guidance from the Audit Commission advises that policy led budgeting is the route to ensuring that financial resources are directed towards organisational goals
- 3 It is acknowledged that the Council has not yet fully achieved synergy between budget setting and strategic planning. However Members would strongly recommend that this takes place.

Recommendation 1

That budget making should be within a strong, policy-led rather than finance-led, corporate planning framework, which draws on other processes within the council, i.e. corporate planning and performance management arrangements.

- 4 In terms of the draft Plan, Members were anxious that it was a relevant and accessible document which would engage not just the Council and its partners but also the general public. Members stressed the need therefore for the ambitions within the Plan to be appropriately disseminated to the people of Leeds. This would include the use of plain English and the removal of jargon. This concern was raised by a number of Scrutiny Boards.
- 5 Scrutiny Board (Resources) has recommended that the Youth Council be consulted on the Plan.

Recommendation 2

That the Youth Council be consulted on the strategic outcomes and priorities.

Comments and Recommendations



- 6 Members are aware that a document of this type needs to be robust in describing objectives however Members were anxious that the delivery of the objectives should not be overly prescriptive and that service deliverers should be given freedom to exercise local discretion.
- 7 Members are aware that the Plan rightly focuses on the highest of priorities. It is acknowledged therefore that this will result in some service areas or priorities not being explicitly mentioned in the Plan. (Yet still significant in terms of service delivery.) However that said, Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with other Scrutiny Boards have identified areas they feel are important enough to warrant mention in the Plan.
- 8 One such area is transport. Members feel that the importance of transport has been played down in the document. A discussion was held on the importance of attracting big money schemes but also the need to carry out local initiatives which cumulatively would make an impact. Particular mention was made about the need for the Plan to place more emphasis on the introduction of more local park and ride schemes within Leeds to encourage the use of public transport. This was also mentioned by Scrutiny Board (Resources). There was also a general consensus that the Plan did not emphasise the need to ensure appropriate and safe pedestrian facilities. Mention was also made of the need to raise the profile of cycle paths in the Plan.
- 9 Health and Adult Social Care Members firmly believe there is a correlation between good transport and good health, particularly in terms of accessing services.
- 10 Overview and Scrutiny Members believe there is a lack of reference to several issues which Members regarded as vital components of a Plan of such strategic importance.
- 11 Generally there was a feeling that the Plan was too adult orientated and more references should be made to children and the role of the family in reducing and combating a number of social problems.
- 12 There was no mention of substance abuse which was an omission. This was also mentioned by Scrutiny Board (City Development)
- 13 Explicit links should be made between diabetes, heart disease and strokes and childhood obesity (The latter was also

Comments and Recommendations



discussed at Scrutiny Board (City Services)

- 14 Objectives should be set around the impact of refugees and asylum seekers on Council services.

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

- 15 The Scrutiny Board recognised the strong links between the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and the draft strategic outcomes, whilst acknowledging that in the context of the strategic plan most of the outcomes were applicable to the general population of Leeds rather than children and young people specifically.
- 16 This was seen to reflect the hierarchical nature of the planning framework, and the respective positions of the two plans within that hierarchy.
- 17 Members stressed that they were particularly interested in the more detailed targets and measures showing how these outcomes would be achieved.
- 18 In terms of specific observations, the Board made the following comments:
- 19 The 'Every Child Matters' agenda is so important and so widely

recognised that consideration should be given to finding some way of referencing it *explicitly* in the Plan. (This is notwithstanding the Board's recognition that the aims of Every Child Matters are consistent with the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities.)

Recommendation 3

That the 'Every Child Matters' agenda is explicitly referenced in the Plan.

- 20 The Board asked that consideration be given to a specific reference to improved outcomes for Looked After Children, possibly under the health and wellbeing theme relating to assessment and care management.

Recommendation 4

That consideration be given to a specific reference to improved outcomes for Looked After Children.

- 21 Learning is a route to cultural wellbeing, through better understanding of both one's own culture and the diverse cultures that make up the city. Members felt that this should be reflected in the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities.

Comments and Recommendations



Recommendation 5

That the importance of learning as a route to cultural wellbeing is reflected in the Plan

22 The Board was disappointed that there was no mention of the private sector's impact on the environment. Members felt that the draft plan should take a broader focus, recognising the need for the behaviour of all sectors to change in order to improve the city's environment.

Recommendation 6

That the Plan recognises the need for the behaviour of all sectors to change in order to improve the city's environment.

23 The Board decided that it wished to see the revised draft of the Plan, in order to see how its comments had been taken into account. This will be scheduled for the January 2008 meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care)

24 Whilst supportive of the Plan, Members of the Board cautioned against assuming that all departments within the Council understood or championed 'corporate' priorities, primarily

due to their own day to day service pressures. Members acknowledged therefore the importance of the 'One Council' approach to working.

25 The Board recognised that many of the activities proposed within the Plan had significant resource implications, for example *"increasing the proportion of vulnerable adults helped to live at home"*. It was acknowledged that funding such priorities would be a challenge particularly with the latest settlement and increased Gershon efficiency requirements. This latter point was also made by Scrutiny Board (Resources). Members also acknowledged that whilst some of the themes can be easily measured (i.e. numbers of teenage pregnancies) others can't ("promoting emotional wellbeing for all")

26 Following a review of the priorities Members made a number of specific comments and recommendations. In relation to improving psychological and mental health services for "children, young people and families" Members felt that older people had been left out. It was the view of the Board that this needed to be amended.

Comments and Recommendations



Recommendation 7

That older people are included in psychological and mental health services

27 Members also noted that loneliness wasn't acknowledged in the Plan. This was seen as an omission as loneliness is a huge problem for some people and has significant influence on a person's mental health.

Recommendation 8

That the Plan acknowledges the impact loneliness has on individuals and the need to address this in service planning.

28 The Board notes that there is currently no specific mention of carers (within families) yet this group of people save the City Council and partners thousands of pounds by looking after their relatives. This needs to be acknowledged and the carers supported.

Recommendation 9

That the plan acknowledges and supports carers

29 In terms of implementation Members are of the view that the priorities and outcomes in the Plan should be somehow

indexed so that reports, decisions and actions undertaken can be cross referenced, providing an audit trail of focused activity.

Recommendation 10

That the priorities and outcomes in the Plan be indexed so that reports, decisions, actions etc can be cross referenced providing an audit trail of focused activity.

Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)

30 The Board made the overall comment that the benefits of the strategic plan must include the whole of Leeds and not just concentrate on the centre. (This view reflects the Council's Mission Statement). This was echoed by Scrutiny Board (City Services) who held a full discussion on the allocation of resources within the City.

Scrutiny Board (Resources)

31 In addition to the observations and recommendations made by this Board highlighted in paragraphs 5, 8 and 25, Members noted that no mention was made in the Strategic Plan to the new Business Plan

Comments and Recommendations



2008/2011. This was considered an omission.

Recommendation 11

That the Strategic Plan makes cross reference to the new Business Plan 2008/2011.

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

32 In addition to the observations highlighted in paragraphs 12, 13 and 30, Members of the Board made a general comment about the need to ensure that progress on meeting the Strategic Plan is robust and uses quantitative as well as qualitative information to make progress judgements.

33 The importance of reducing worklessness and the need to ensure it remains a high priority was acknowledged by the Board.

Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

34. The strategic importance of green spaces within the city, linking in to a number of Strategic Outcomes including the quality of the environment. Members of the Board felt that more emphasis could be placed on preserving the current green spaces and proposals for extending this provision.

35. Members of the Board also wished to see an emphasis on

literacy and numeracy skills for primary school children.

36. Relating to the Narrowing the Gap principle, Members felt that the regeneration work achieved and being planned should be promoted at a strategic level. Members acknowledged that projects were being undertaken, but wished to see this being emphasised.

37. The Board was concerned that the ageing demographic should be reflected at a strategic level. Members recognised that this is an issue that in time will affect the provision of a wide range of services, particularly in terms of care. Members felt that the Strategic Plan should generally reflect the challenges of an ageing population, particularly where different parts of the city are likely to be more affected. Members felt that risk management and service planning needed to focus on this issue at the most strategic level.

Recommendation 12

That the Strategic Plan emphasises the importance of regeneration activities

Recommendation 13

That the Strategic Plan takes into account the ageing demographic