

Scrutiny at Leeds City Council

Annual Report 2015/16



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Welcome

Welcome to the 2015/16 Scrutiny Annual Report. This report provides Council and members of the public the opportunity to review last year's activity within overview and scrutiny and to highlight some of the key achievements.

The last year has seen a continuation of the challenges facing local government in dealing with reductions in funding, rising demand, the impact of new legislation and the changing shape of partner organisations. I would therefore like to express my sincere thanks to all members involved in the scrutiny process for continuing to carry out effective scrutiny in this changing landscape. As I stated in my introduction last year, the scrutiny function provides elected members with a clear role in ensuring decisions made are made well and with the full knowledge of the impact of these decisions on our communities.

However, as resources within the Council shrink, it is unrealistic to think that scrutiny will be immune from the effects of those reductions, whether that is in terms of direct support or in terms of the capacity of directorates to respond to information requests. The challenge for scrutiny chairs will be to develop work programmes that acknowledge the resource pressures facing the Council and focus on those areas where scrutiny can have an influence and make a difference. The challenge for decision makers will be to be responsive to the legitimate, independent role of scrutiny. I remain confident that if these conditions apply equally, scrutiny will continue to demonstrate its value to the governance of the City.

As in previous reports to Council, key development areas for scrutiny are highlighted in this report.



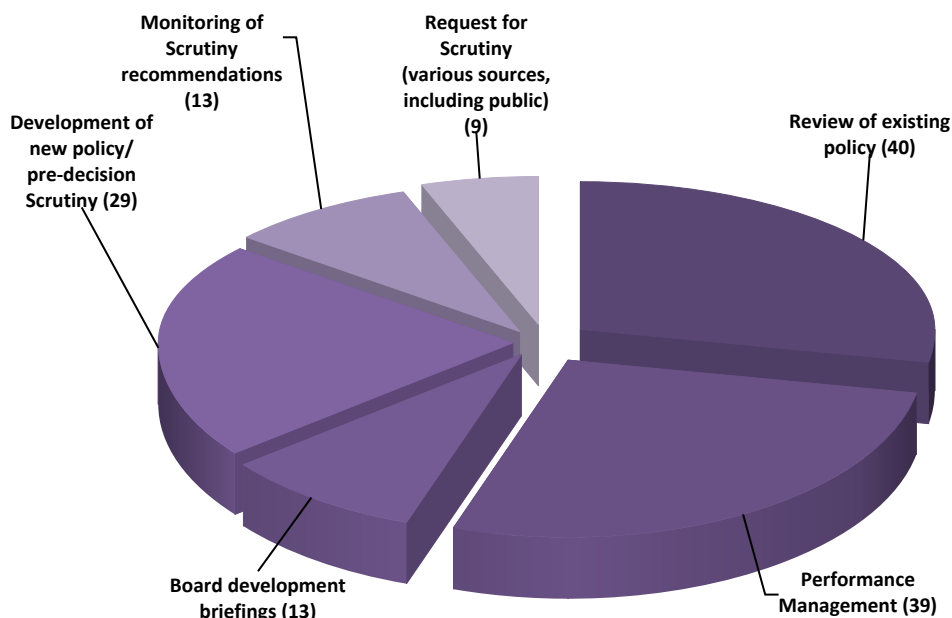
Councillor James Lewis
Executive Member for Resources and Strategy

*Find out more at www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny and follow Scrutiny on
Twitter: @scrutinyleeds*

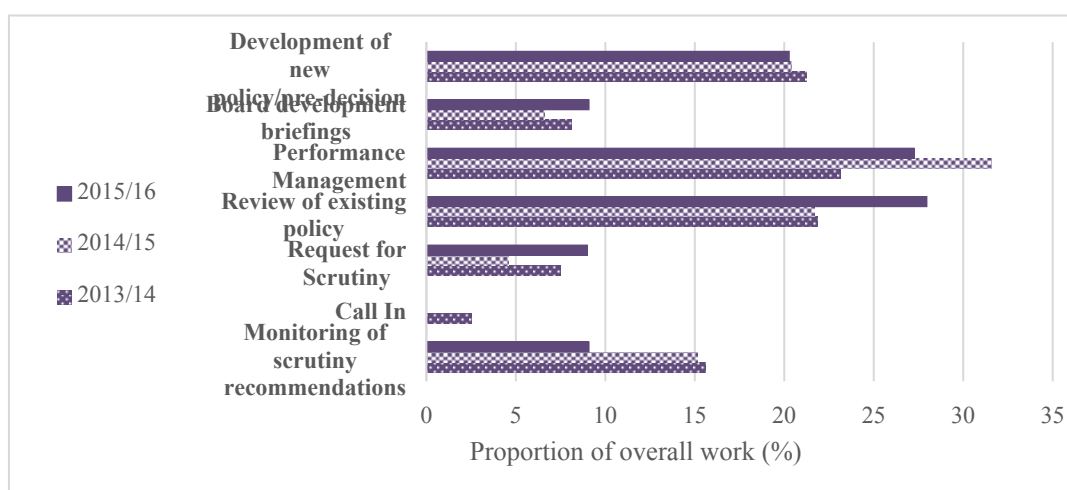
Summary of work 2015/16

The charts below highlight the type and proportion of work that the Scrutiny Boards have done this year and trends over the last 3 years.

Type and total number of scrutiny work items in 2015/16



Scrutiny work items 2013 - 2016









Key Observations

- There has been a slight increase in the number of work items relating to pre-decision scrutiny during 2015/16.
- No Executive Board or delegated officer decisions were Called In during 2015/16.
- Significant increase in work items relating to reviewing existing policy.
- Notable increase in public requests for Scrutiny.

Highlights and Achievements

A summary of the significant pieces of work undertaken by scrutiny over the last 12 months is presented below, including relevant links to published reports by Scrutiny. This snapshot identifies where Scrutiny has specifically added value linked to the 2015 -16 Best Council Objectives.

Best Council Objective	Areas of Scrutiny	Added Value/Impact
Building a child-friendly city	Learning for Leeds – sufficiency of school places and early years provision (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified that statutory requirements are being met and that there is sufficient school places across the City to meet demand in 2016/17 and plans in place to meet demand in future years.
	SEND Young People- what is it like Growing Up in Leeds? (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused on the voice of the Child and their families and the extent to which Children, Young People and their families feel informed and involved in decisions affecting their lives. Identified pathways for learning and achievement from year 9 onwards. Education settings and the opportunities for Children and Young people to obtain skills for life and qualifications. Evaluated the support available in preparing young people for adulthood including transition support.
	Reducing the Number of Young People who are NEET (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus on the implementation of a city wide strategic approach to reduce NEET and create pathways to education, employment or training for those at risk of becoming NEET including SEND young people. Provided challenge on the level and quality of information advice and guidance provision citywide.
	Improving School Attendance (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed decision making regarding the use of penalty notices for irregular school attendance.
	Safeguarding in Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (Adult Social Services, Public Health and NHS & Children’s Services Scrutiny Boards)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the work done in 2015/16, worked collaboratively with relevant directorates and Safeguarding Board representatives to consider planned measures, and actions already taken, in order to strengthen safeguarding for taxi users.
	SEN Post 16 School Transport (Children’s Services Scrutiny Board)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the preparation of consultation and ultimately revised policy which is fair and legally compliant. Facilitated additional focus on the mitigation of potential negative impacts.

Best Council Objective

Building a child-friendly city

(continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Best City for Learning – Education Strategy and Annual Standards Report

(Children's Services Scrutiny Board)



- Provided guidance and feedback on the content of the draft Best City for Learning Strategy 2016-2020.
- Provided the necessary challenge on the attainment data in the report and a focus on the improvement of education provision.

Youth Activity Funding

(Children's Services Scrutiny Board)



- Identified a need for further examination and dissemination of best practice with regard to the engagement of children and young people in the decision making processes.
- Recommended the simplification of the process and bringing the applications for Youth Activity Funding and Community Committee Wellbeing funding together.
- Identified the need for a review of engagement and marketing techniques to ensure that the maximum number of children and young people are made aware of activities.

Young Carers

(Children's Services Scrutiny Board)



- Provided challenge to the methodologies employed to identify young carers and the resources available to meet need.
- Recommended an approach with regard to engagement with schools in Leeds in order to develop a consistently robust supporting environment within education provision across the whole city.

Best Council Objective

Dealing effectively with the city's waste

Areas of Scrutiny

Peckfield Landfill Site

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Undertook robust monitoring of the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry last year surrounding the management of the Peckfield Landfill site.
- Considered more broadly the respective roles of the Council and the Environment Agency in relation to the general management of landfill sites and identified the need for improved contingency planning in the event of a site being abandoned, particularly in terms of sufficient financial security for restoration and other contingencies. Monitoring of progress in this regard is on-going.

Leeds Waste Strategy

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Continued monitoring of the Council's development and delivery of the City's Waste Strategy, which included a site visit to the new Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) in April 2016.

Best Council Objective

Delivery of the Better Lives programme

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Bereavement

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)
[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- Addressing continuing concerns highlighted by local members of the community.
- Engagement with all stakeholders regarding existing policies and procedures around the timely release of the deceased for the purpose of timely burials.
- Identified 'good practice' from elsewhere.
- Recommendations aimed at enhancing and improving current arrangements, particularly in terms of pathology services.
- Recommendations welcomed by members of the local community.

Cancer Wait Times in Leeds

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)
[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- Topic area with clear links to a general area of concern to the wider population.
- Specific recommendations aimed at continuing to raise awareness of cancer, its prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.
- Recommendations aimed at improving services to people beyond the Leeds boundary.

Involvement of the Third Sector in Leeds' health and social care economy

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Better understanding of the involvement of the Third Sector in Leeds' health and social care economy.
- Focus on improved relationships and capacity building in the context of reducing levels of funding.
- Involvement of statutory services and Third Sector organisations in identifying improvements.

Primary Care

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Constructive challenge in the development of primary care services across the City.
- Focus on 'core offer' and 'enhanced services'.
- Identified improvements to patient engagement and consultation practices.

Service Quality across Leeds' health and social care economy

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Better awareness and understanding of the 'quality landscape' of health and social care services across Leeds.
- Improved working relationship between the Scrutiny Board and the Care Quality Commission.
- Use of independently assessed quality to inform response to Adult Social Services service change proposal.

Safeguarding Adults

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Improved working relationship between the Scrutiny Board and the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Specific recommendation around making the membership of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board more representative of the communities in Leeds.

Best Council Objective

Delivery of the Better Lives programme (continued)

Areas of Scrutiny

Focus on specific service areas

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Ensuring a focus on specific service areas, including Maternity Services; Children and Young People's Oral Health; Autism.

Response to various consultations

(Adult Social Services, Public Health, NHS Scrutiny Board)



- Ensuring a broad consideration of issues and maintaining the profile of the Scrutiny Board by responding to a range of consultations including: Public Health budget reduction proposals; Care Quality Commission fee structure proposals; Development of Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016 – 2021); Care Quality Commission future strategy; Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust – proposed changes to service locations.

Best Council Objective

Promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth

Areas of Scrutiny

Housing Mix

(City Development Scrutiny Board)

[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- In conjunction with Scrutiny Board (Environment and Housing) developed a series of recommendations that help deliver Policy H4, that is, delivery, as expressed in the Core Strategy, of the right property type and tenure within criteria of affordability.

Housing on Brownfield Land – 5 Year Land Supply

(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Continuation of challenge and support as activity progresses to secure new housing developments on Council owned brownfield land.

East Leeds Extension and Orbital Road Progress

(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Provided advice with regard to the progress of the co-ordinated programme to deliver the East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road.

Powering Up the Leeds Economy Through Digital Inclusion

(City Development Scrutiny Board)

[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- Detailed consideration of the Leeds approach to reducing the digital divide and enhancing the economic prosperity of individuals and small enterprises.
- Analysed broadband infrastructure, internet access and connectivity across Leeds.
- Provided focus to improving digital literacy through education, learning and equipment to provide the necessary skills, confidence and support to embrace technologies.
- Engaged with other organisations to identify good practice in partnership working and the co-ordination of activity.
- Recommended the development of a robust Digital Inclusion Strategy that supports the city's aspirations for the citizens and communities in Leeds.

Best Council Objective

Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council

Areas of Scrutiny

Fees and Charges

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)

[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- Focused on the belief that a critical examination of fees and charges may be an effective way to help ease budget pressures and focus spend and subsidy on the highest priorities and therefore help deliver the Council's Best Council Plan. Proposed a number of areas where fees could be levied.
- Introduced a revised fees strategy which encourages services to look at how any subsidy might be targeted at priority groups in order to achieve specific council policies within the Best Council Plan.

ICT Resourcing

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Revised the manner in which project work is prioritised and agreed, identified actions to help with recruitment and retention.

Non/off contract

(Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board)



- Facilitated the collaborative working between the Systems and Information team, Category Teams within PPPU and Business Support Centre, Corporate Finance and the Directorates to reduce non/off-contract spend.
- Worked with Procurement to identify efficiency measures to reduce off-contract spend and improve contract planning to address unplanned extensions or waivers of contracts.

The development of Community Hubs

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)

[\(Click here for Scrutiny report\)](#)



- Evaluated the existing pathfinder Community Hubs and engaged directly with existing 'front of house' staff to identify best practice and lessons learned that will inform the future roll out of the Community Hub network across the city.

Leeds Community Lettings Policy

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Advised the Environment and Housing directorate surrounding new approaches to housing management and tenancy policy, including key principles surrounding the development of existing community lettings policies prior to wider consultation.
- The Scrutiny Board will be considering the results of the consultation and the final policy proposals prior to formal approval in October 2016.

European Capital of Culture, Culture Strategy Development

(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Evaluated and provided a view on the initial approach to developing the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030.

Best Council Objective

Supporting communities and tackling poverty

Areas of Scrutiny

Environment of Estates

(Tenant Scrutiny Board)
([Click here for Scrutiny report](#))



- Conducted an in-depth review of how localities manage and support improvement in estate environment. The review contributed to the harmonisation of estate walkabouts

The development of Community Committees

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)
([Click here for Scrutiny report](#))



- Evaluated the extent to which the Community Committee model is enabling local elected members to look at key local issues, local needs and aspirations, as well as genuinely involving the communities they represent in the decisions that affect them.
- Developed a series of recommendations aimed at supporting the development of a more consistent approach in tracking actions and reviewing, monitoring and challenging the progress made by the Community Committees.

Universal Credit

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)
([Click here for Scrutiny report](#))



- Facilitated the collaborative working between the Council's Citizens and Communities directorate, the Department for Work and Pensions and other key stakeholders to clarify roles and expectations; to facilitate effective information sharing; to evaluate the functionality of existing systems linked to Universal Credit and to inform early preparations for the delivery of Universal Credit in Leeds.

Migration

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)
([Click here for Scrutiny report](#))



- Collaborated initially with other Scrutiny Board Chairs to consider key issues surrounding migration in Leeds. This consequently led to a more in-depth evaluation of the growth of EU citizen migration and the impact this has on key local service areas. This also involved input from Migration Yorkshire.
- In particular, the Scrutiny Board identified a need to urgently establish a citywide Migration Strategy Group, involving other key Leeds partners, to provide a strategic and co-ordinated response to migration in Leeds based on robust local intelligence gathering and data sharing.

Leeds City Credit Union

(Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board)



- Engaged directly with the Chief Executive of the Leeds City Credit Union in exploring how the council can further support the Credit Union to significantly increase membership and lending capacity.

Police Community Support Officers in Leeds

(Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board)



- Engaged with the Director of Environment Housing; Chief Officer for Community Safety; and the Leeds District Chief Superintendent to help inform the direction of travel for the funding and allocation of PCSOs funded by the Council within the context of the changing and evolving policing structures in Leeds District and across West Yorkshire Police.

Best Council Objective

Areas of Scrutiny

Added Value/Impact

Supporting communities and tackling poverty
(continued)

Storm Eva and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Provided advice in response to the severe flooding caused by Storm Eva on the 26th/27th of December. The Board considered the Strategic Recovery Plan, infrastructure damage and overall cost to remedy, flood alleviation and community involvement.
- Evaluated the Flood Risk Management Strategy with a view to reducing risk under the requirements of sections 4 & 6 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Bus Provision in Leeds

(City Development Scrutiny Board)
(report to follow 2016/17)



- Engaged with operators and stakeholders to identify the provision and connectivity of Bus Services in Leeds, including sufficiency to meet the needs of people and business.
- Provided focus on the impact of bus services on social inclusion, poverty and the economy.
- Identified different models for investment and the delivery of strategic and operational improvement in bus services.
- Facilitated debate on the Buses Bill proposal. Further analysis of potential options will be undertaken in 2016/17 as the bill is published.

Road Safety and 20mph zones

(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- Engagement with stakeholders with regard to 20mph speed limits in Leeds and subsequent endorsement of the targeted approach for the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Leeds.
- Identification that road safety should be referenced in the Safer Leeds Strategy.

Leeds Cycling Starts Here

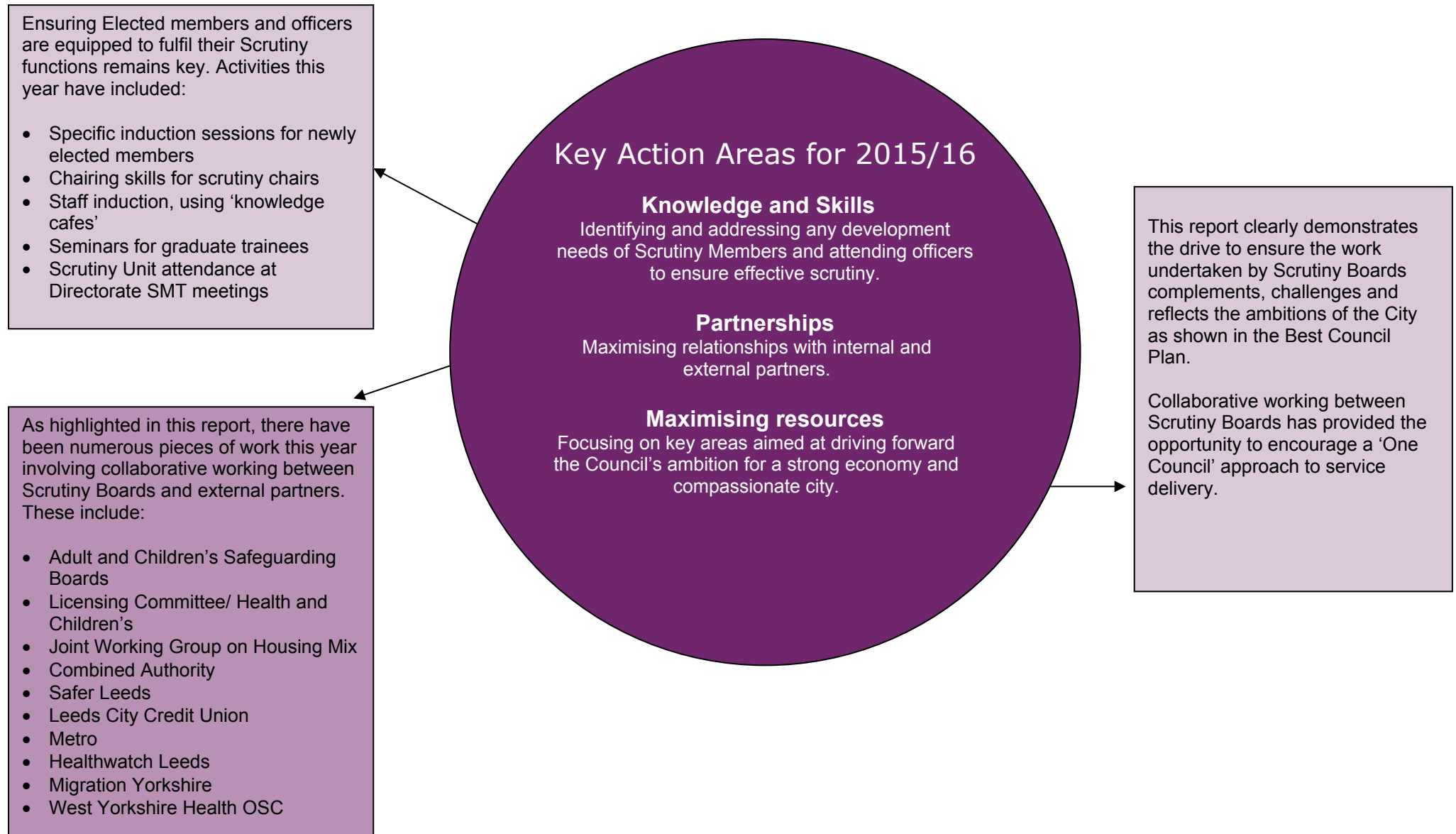
(City Development Scrutiny Board)



- During evaluation of the Leeds Cycling Starts Here draft strategy and action plan, it was identified that there was need for improved communication and promotion about City Connect and the cycle super highway, and a need to maximise opportunities within communities to strengthen Tour de France and Tour de Yorkshire legacies.

Reflecting on the Year

Last year we identified a number of key action areas to help develop the scrutiny function. Progress made in delivering these key actions is summarised below.



Planning for the future

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

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

Key Action Areas 2016/17

