



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 5th February 2008

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry – Responding to the need of migrants and their Families.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Committee's September meeting terms of reference were agreed for an Inquiry into 'Responding to the need of migrants and their Families'.
- 1.2 The first session of the Inquiry was held at Primrose High School where Members had the opportunity to discuss with those who deliver services the challenges this topic brings to the City.
- 1.3 Members were also able to discuss with Senior Policy Officers a report which provided the following;
- Contextual information about new migration in the UK
 - An overview of the data and intelligence available to the Council and its partners on new migrants in Leeds
 - An overview of the current position in Leeds
 - A summary of current work to develop an improved understanding of the situation and respond to emerging needs
 - An outline of issues to consider when assessing local impacts of migration
- 1.4 Of particular interest to Members was the work of the 'Migrant Communities Task Group'. Detailed below is an extract from the December report outlining this Groups work.

NEW MIGRANT COMMUNITIES TASK GROUP

Was established in the summer of 2007 in response to the need to understand and respond effectively to the emerging new migration situation.

It is convened by the Council's Regeneration Service and brings together colleagues from the Council, Health, Police, Education, Voluntary Sector and Universities.

The key aim of the Task Group is to bring together key stakeholders from the Council and other local agencies and the regional migration partnership to:

- *share existing knowledge, undertake research and improve systems to gain a better understanding of issues relating to new and emerging communities resulting from increased migration, and*
- *enable and support partners to respond individually and collectively to emerging and changing needs and circumstances*

The Task Group's work programme covers:

- ***Drawing together existing knowledge and data, including:***
 - *existing dataset review*
 - *literature review – analysis of reports, best practice and guidance*
 - *snapshot exercise – to collate information from frontline workers*
 - *developing information and other interventions for services and newly arrived communities based on recent experience with the Polish Community*
 - *continuing the work of the Polish Community Task Group*
- ***Qualitative Research to understand:***
 - *the experience of migrants, what information and support they may need to settle, integrate and be independent and contribute positively to Leeds*
 - *the experience of services and the impact recent migration is having on them*
 - *the perspectives of the established communities and the impact on community relations and cohesion*

This research is currently being commissioned and it is anticipated that the consultants report will be available by March 2008. It is planned to have an event for a range of stakeholders in Leeds to discuss the research findings.

- ***Developing communications to dispel myths and ensure that the appropriate information is available to assist temporary or permanent settlement of new citizens to Leeds***
- ***Improving data, intelligence sharing and monitoring arrangements***
- ***Providing a clearing house for information exchange and a route for providing co-ordinated updates for the council and local partners***

1.5 With knowledge of the Migrant Communities Task Group, the Committee resolved at its January meeting not to progress its Inquiry along the lines originally detailed within the Inquiries terms of reference. The rationale behind this decision was that many of the objectives for the scrutiny Inquiry were the same as those of the Migrant Communities Task Group. Members felt therefore that it would be inappropriate to duplicate this work and hinder progress on this important matter by diverting officer resources and efforts.

1.6 It was agreed however that it was important for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to keep a watching brief on progress and be used where appropriate as a 'sounding board' for relevant policy initiatives. To this end the Director of Environment and

Neighbourhoods has been invited to today's meeting to discuss with the Committee the work programme of the Migrant Communities Task Group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to;

- (i) Receive and note this report
- (ii) Discuss with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods the work programme of the Migrant Communities Task Group
- (iii) Agree with the Director the most appropriate dates for receiving progress reports.