

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Cllr Barry Anderson
Cllr Sue Bentley
Cllr Judith Chapman
Cllr Bob Gettings
Cllr Ted Hanley
Cllr Andrea McKenna
Cllr Bill Hyde
Cllr Elizabeth Minkin
Cllr Ralph Pryke

The Chair's Summary

Because of the 'overview' remit of this Committee, our work this year has rightly focused on a number of operational matters and high level corporate performance management issues. This has to a certain extent restricted our ability to concentrate on a single topic of Inquiry. Nevertheless, I believe the Committee has undertaken a number of interesting and worthwhile investigations.

I am particularly pleased with the way in which we have embedded the performance management system this year. This process is now firmly established as part of the work programmes of Scrutiny Boards and will, I believe, inform the content of a lot of our future Inquiries.

Our involvement in the drafting of the Leeds Strategic Plan has been beneficial to its development. It is very important that Members are given the opportunity to shape the direction of the City. I now look forward to seeing Scrutiny Boards holding to account those who must now deliver our agreed objectives and targets.

It was pleasing that the Committee agreed two important documents this year, firstly the 'Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny' and secondly the 'Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds'. Both documents can be viewed on the Councils Internet.

As always I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for their attendance, contributions and hard work in making the year a success.

**Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny

The statutory relationship between the Executive Board and the Scrutiny function is clearly defined within the Local Government Act 2000.

However, this does not address the subtleties and nuances required to establish successful and robust scrutiny in a dynamic political environment. Since the introduction of the overview and scrutiny function there has been a continued national debate around the relationship between the two bodies.

Much of this discussion has alluded to the need to establish a culture of parity between Scrutiny Boards and the Executive Board in a way that allows robust challenge of decision making and also nurtures the ability of the Executive Board to sponsor elements of the work programme for the common good of the Council's policy making process.

The memorandum of understanding aims to set out a broad agreement which will underpin the relationship between the two functions ensuring the promotion of mutual respect to foster a climate of openness leading to constructive debate, with a view to ensuring service improvements.

"I want to argue that there is a perfectly respectable alternative career in public life and it is the job of holding powerful people to account"

Jeremy Paxman,
Writer and broadcaster
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual
Conference

Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill extends the powers that local authorities already have to scrutinise health services within their areas to the activities of a number of named public sector partners, as part of their wider community leadership role for the city.

The purpose of the protocol is to provide guidance and a common understanding for how scrutiny of statutory public sector partners will operate in Leeds. The protocol has been drawn up during the early stages of the new arrangements and may be amended and further developed as the relationship between scrutiny and public sector partners develops. The aim is for all parties to help ensure that scrutiny remains a positive and challenging process.

Performance Management

Performance Management is a key tool for holding the Executive to account for its activities. The Committee continues to receive high level performance information from which it can identify areas that require further Scrutiny.

The Committee's full work programme 2007/08

- Call In – Review of Parking Facilities including Adjustments to Prices
- Call In – Grant to Radio Asian Fever
- Personnel Panel Appeal Arrangements
- Scrutiny of the Budget and Quarterly Monitoring
- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Review of Planning Performance
- Review of the Disability Equality Scheme
- Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007
- Leeds Strategic Plan
- Development of a Protocol between Scrutiny and Statutory Public Sector Partners in Leeds.
- Direct payments
- Inquiry – Responding to the needs of Migrants and their Families
- Review of the Leeds Half Marathon
- Consideration of a number of Operational/Constitutional matters
 - Tracking and Monitoring scrutiny Recommendations
 - Responding to the Governments consultation document on Petitions and Calls for Action
 - Review of Call In Arrangements