

# Scrutiny Board (City Development)



*Cllr Ralph Pryke  
Chair of Scrutiny Board  
(City Development)*

## **Membership of the Board:**

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)  
Cllr Geoff Driver  
Cllr Jack Dunn  
Cllr Penny Ewens  
Cllr Janet Harper  
Cllr Mathew Lobley  
Cllr James Monaghan  
Cllr Rachael Procter  
Cllr Brian Selby  
Cllr Neil Taggart  
Cllr Paul Wadsworth\*

Cllr Alec Shelbrooke\* was a member until  
Cllr Wadsworth was appointed on 20<sup>th</sup>  
February 2008

## ***The Chair's Summary***

I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). My thanks go to all colleagues on the Board who have faced the challenges of the year with their customary enthusiasm, good humour and rigour throughout the year.

This year the Scrutiny Board considered two requests for scrutiny concerning disposal of the former Miles Hill and Royal Park schools. As a consequence of these requests we agreed to undertake an inquiry on the consultation processes used by the Council in respect to such disposals. We also decided to widen this inquiry to incorporate a case study specifically to review how the City Development department had consulted with regard to the Aire Valley Area Action Plan. We identified a number of issues and recommendations as a result of our endeavours.

We considered a request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers concerning the City Development department's proposals to increase the use of "shared space" between pedestrians and vehicles in the form of shared surface, shared area and home zones. We received a large number of letters, emails and telephone calls from a number of groups representing the blind, partially sighted and other disabled people on this matter. We were able to make two interim recommendations and agree that a formal inquiry should be carried out once the City Development department was able to give advice on how it wished to proceed having undertaken further work to identify best practice and the results of new emerging studies.

We received two very interesting and useful presentations on the Leeds Initiative and the work and responsibilities of the Chief Officers within the City Development department.

We have actively monitored and challenged the performance indicators of the City Development Department particularly those which could impact on the Council's CPA score.

In particular we reviewed the work being undertaken to improve the performance on planning appeals (Performance Indicator BV204).

Our aim has always been to challenge and hold to account the decision makers, and we were therefore pleased to have a meaningful dialogue with the Executive Board Member under our 'Members Questions' item.

We have continued to review, monitor and challenge the development of policies within the City Development department. In particular, along with other Scrutiny Boards, we commented on and contributed to the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan.

We have also commented on a number of ongoing plans and strategies which provide a framework for many other projects, such as the Local Development Framework which will soon replace the Unitary Development Plan.

All members can bring individual concerns to Scrutiny, and this year we spent some time on a disagreement between ward members and officers on the need for planning permission in addition to the deemed consent to construct bus lanes in Kirkstall, on the implementation of 20 mph limits near schools and in residential areas, and the lack of progress in opening Park and Ride services or agreeing a successor "Plan B" for the rejected Supertram proposal.

Under the new tracking arrangements we reviewed progress on implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission's Inquiry into the impact of flooding events on the Leeds district.

The City Development department in 2007 took responsibility for the Council's highways and leisure functions and we acknowledge the challenge of managing such a demanding and wide ranging portfolio.

In 2008/09 sections of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act will come into force and this will affect how scrutiny operates in the future. We will need to engage with our partners much more and scrutinise performance against the targets set in the Local Area Agreement.

## ***Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes***

We agreed in developing our work programme to undertake an inquiry to review some of the consultation processes in the City Development department to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Subsequently and before agreeing our terms of reference for this inquiry we received two requests for scrutiny from Councillor Jane Dowson and Councillor David Morton concerning the lack of consultation in respect of the former school sites at Miles Hill and Royal Park respectively. We decided to widen our inquiry beyond the City Development department and include consultation on the disposal of school buildings and land involving Education Leeds and Environment and Neighbourhoods department.

We decided to focus our inquiry on two specific case studies :-

### ◇ Case Study 1

To review the consultation processes applied by Education Leeds, the City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods departments when school buildings and land are declared surplus to requirements using Miles Hill and Royal Park as case studies.

### ◇ Case Study 2

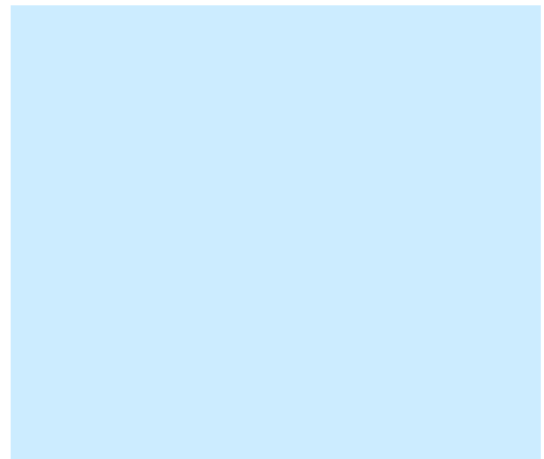
To review the consultation processes applied by the City Development department on the development of the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan.

### **Our Main recommendation**



Scrutiny Board (City Development)

### **Our other recommendations were:**



## Request for Scrutiny: Shared Spaces & the New Street Design Guide

We considered a request for scrutiny from the Deputy Chair of the Alliance of Service Users and Carers, Mr Keith Spellman. It concerned the City Development department's proposal to expand the use of shared spaces between vehicles and pedestrians. This had been incorporated into the new draft Street Design Guide which was out for consultation.

We received a great deal of correspondence on this matter from a range of organisations including the National Federation of the Blind, Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People, Talking Newspaper, Otley and the Leeds Jewish Blind Society.

"The National Federation of the Blind is totally opposed to shared spaces which are being introduced by local authorities."

Jill Allen-King and Barry Naylor  
National Federation of the Blind.



Shared space street in a new development

### Initial Recommendations

(1) We suggested that because of the complaints made to the Board about organisations who allegedly had not being consulted on this matter that the consultation period be extended by at least 4 weeks and this was agreed by the Director of City Development.

(2) We were subsequently advised by the department that it needed to give further consideration to the issues raised with regard to "shared space" in the context of national best practice, new government guidance and emerging studies. We therefore agreed that a scrutiny inquiry should be undertaken on "shared spaces" in the new municipal year once the position became clearer.

## Request for Scrutiny: A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment

We considered a request for scrutiny from Councillor John Illingworth, Member for Kirkstall Ward, concerning the A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment.

Before determining his request we received legal advice from the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) with regard to planning applications, permitted development rights, the Council as highways authority and details of Counsel's advice received. We also obtained evidence from the City Development department on the cumulative impact assessment that had been undertaken with regard to this scheme. We considered past, present and future consultation opportunities that had been given regarding the A65 Quality Bus Initiative.

We decided on the basis of the evidence presented to us not to undertake further scrutiny of this matter.



A65 Kirkstall Road

"We were grateful to Councillor Illingworth for raising this issue but, having taken into account all the evidence presented to us and received officers' assurances regarding measures to consult with the 140 householders who were directly affected by the scheme, the Board voted not to proceed with a formal inquiry"

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)

## Presentation and Reports

We received during the course of the year a number of wide ranging reports and presentations as part of our monitoring and review role. These included:

- *Leeds Initiative*

We received a detailed presentation from the Director of Leeds Initiative and members of her team on the progress being made to restructure this organisation to meet the changing needs and expectations of the Council and of its partners.

We were particularly interested to hear about how the Local Agreement and local area partnerships were influencing these changes and the issues involved.



- *20mph Zones*



*Typical entry to a 20mph Zone*

We reviewed the rationale behind the strategy for introducing 20mph zones in certain parts of the city. We noted that Leeds requires that there must be put in place a significant number of speed reducing features such as speed humps so that speeds are reduced and kept down to 20mph throughout the zone, although this is not required elsewhere (notably Portsmouth). The department's resources in this regard are targeted towards areas where there have been accidents. We noted that frequent changes in speed limits can be unnecessarily confusing to drivers.

- *Flooding Events*

We spent some time reviewing the progress which had been made on implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Scrutiny Commission Inquiry into flooding within Leeds.

We were particularly interested in the partnership working through the Aire Action Leeds, the flood resilience scheme and the additional staffing resources provided to the land drainage section.



*Flooded Road*



*Land Drainage Works*



- *Planning & Development Services*

The City Development department in 2007 undertook a strategic review of its planning & development services which identified five improvements themes to consider, namely

- ◇ capacity building & working with the private sector
- ◇ realising a definitive officer view
- ◇ development and support for Plans Panels
- ◇ information & communication technology
- ◇ improved customer services

We received a report from the department on the progress which had been made to date in implementing solutions within these themes.

We also received a specific report outlining and analysing planning appeals against the BV204 performance indicators and the work being undertaken to improve performance in this area.



City Square



Planning Application

Partnerships



- *Local Area Agreement*

We focused our endeavours on the performance management arrangements that have been or are being put in place as targets within the Local Area Agreement and which fall within our area of responsibility.

- *Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative*

We reviewed progress in delivering “Sharing the Success”, the Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. We were delighted to hear that 20 projects are up and running, including two flagship projects as a result of this initiative.



Housing in City Centre

- *City Centre Area Action Plan*

We identified and discussed a number of issues arising from a paper submitted by the Director of City Development summarising the scale and nature of the responses received during the formal consultation stage on the City Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options.

- **City Centre Housing**

*We considered some of the trends affecting the demand for and supply of flats and houses in the City Centre, vacancy levels and the infrastructure required to support a mixed population in the city centre.*

*We were concerned at the lack of facilities within some of these flat and housing developments in the city centre. Clearly, there was a danger that market forces were dictating the type of city centre population and the facilities that they need rather than trying to plan for more sustainable and mixed communities providing the necessary school places, doctors, dentists and shops early in the process. We recognised that this was a difficult balance to achieve.*

*We received some anecdotal evidence of the reluctance of older people, seeking to down-size, to move into the city centre.*



K2 City Centre



Off Millennium Square



University of Leeds



Leeds Metropolitan University

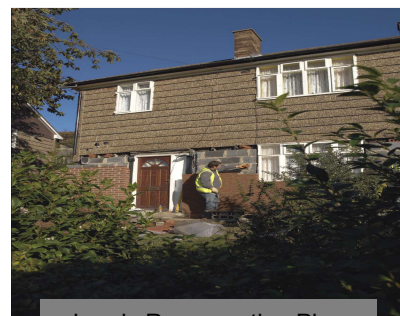
- **The Local Economic Impact of Students on Leeds**

We received interim papers outlining the work currently being undertaken in conjunction with the local Universities to try to identify the economic impact of students, and the Universities themselves on the local economy.

The impact is significant and growing, and we thought further study into this together with their indirect economic effects could lead to better understanding, and therefore potential mitigation of real and perceived problems for all residents and businesses.

- **Town & District Centre Regeneration**

The City Development department updated the Board on the operation and achievements of the Town & District Regeneration Scheme since its inception in 2005



Leeds Regeneration Plan  
2005 -2008

## **The Board's full work programme 2007/08**

- **Request for Scrutiny A65 Quality Bus Initiative Environment Assessment**
- **Impact of Flooding Events on the Leeds District**
- **Request for Scrutiny - Former Miles Hill and Royal Park Schools**
- **Inquiry to Review Consultation Processes**
- **Update on the Strategic Review of Planning and Development Services**
- **Request for Scrutiny regarding the increased use of Shared Surfaces under the Council's new Street Design Guide**
- **Presentation by Chief Officers of the City Development Department**
- **Strategy for Introducing 20 mph Zones**
- **Questions to the Member with portfolio responsibility for Development and Regeneration**
- **Presentation on the Leeds Initiative current work and future development plans of the organisation**
- **City Centre Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Consultation Responses**
- **Consultation on the Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan**
- **Leeds Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) - Sharing the Success**
- **Performance Management Indicators for Quarters one, two and three**
- **Detailed look at Corporate Plan Indicator (i) ED50 Businesses satisfied with the Council in helping to create a good business environment (ii) BV165 % of Pedestrian Crossings with facilities for disabled people and (iii) BV204 Performance on Planning Appeals**
- **Introduction and Questions to the Chief Highways Officer**
- **Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report**
- **Presentation from the Chief Planning Officer**
- **Update on the Strategic Review of Planning & Development Services**
- **Housing Mix, Vacancy Rates and Infrastructures - City Centre**
- **The Local Economic Impact of Students in Leeds**
- **Section 106 Planning and Section 278 Highways Agreements**
- **Traffic Congestion – Key Locations**
- **Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme**
- **Review of the Conservation Team**
- **The Local Economic Impact of Students' at Leeds Two Universities**
- **Budgetary Issues and Considerations**
- **Review of Enforcement of Planning Conditions in the City**
- **Local Area Agreement Performance Management**