



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

scrutiny

Annual Report 2021 - 2022



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Introduction

This Annual Report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the scrutiny function in Leeds during the 2021/2022 Municipal Year and highlights key achievements of each Scrutiny Board.

The Scrutiny Boards have targeted their work at driving forward the council's ambitions and making a real difference to the people of Leeds. Across the five Boards 146 work items were considered. 57 of the Council's 99 Members sat on Scrutiny Boards, supported by 4 voting co-opted members and 4 non-voting co-opted members.

The Best Council Plan is the council's strategic plan, setting out the authority's ambitions and priorities for both the city (working in partnership) and the organisation. An updated [Best Council Plan 2020-2025](#) was launched in September 2020, placing emphasis on the role of the Council's priorities in establishing a 'new normal' for life in Leeds after COVID-19.

As well as having a key role in influencing the content of the Best Council Plan, Scrutiny plays a fundamental part in reinforcing partnership working between the Council and stakeholders to meet the Best Council Plan outcomes. This Annual Report illustrates how the work of Scrutiny has particularly contributed towards the key priorities set out within the Council's Best Council Plan.

Leeds remains committed to providing dedicated officer support to the scrutiny function. Like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function continue to be under considerable pressure. This is acknowledged in the Council's 'Vision for Scrutiny' agreement and there has been continued effort to maximise available resources and prioritise areas of work that will add value towards the delivery of the Best Council Plan and other strategic policy drivers.



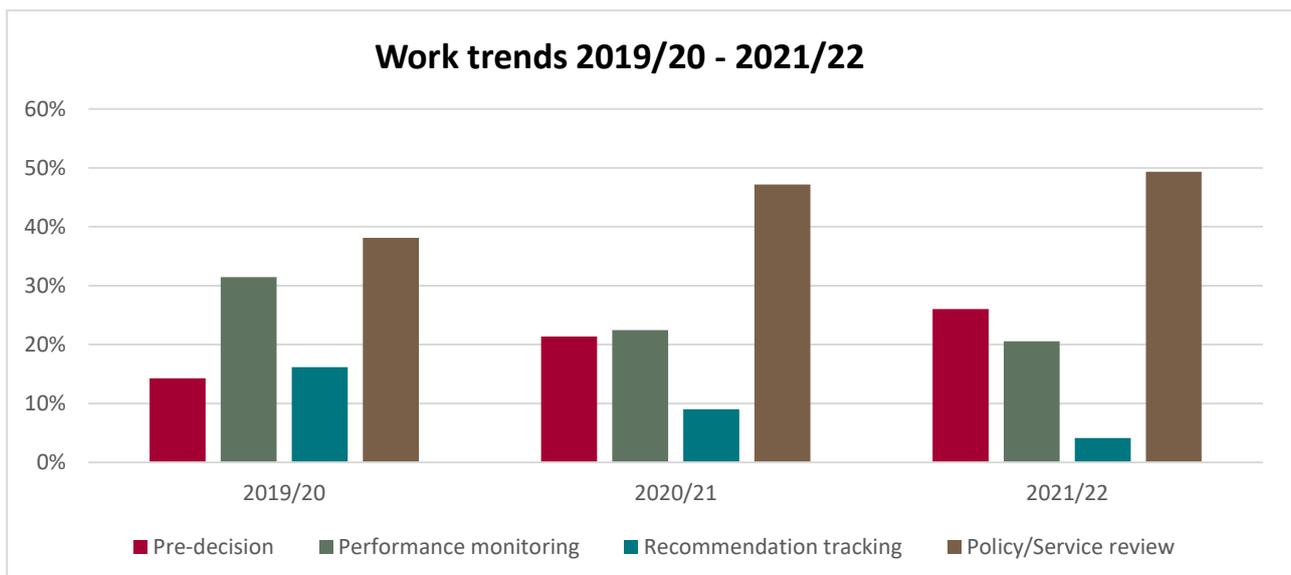
Summary of 2021/2022

The following section summarises Scrutiny Board activity during the 2021/22 municipal year (June 2021 to May 2022).



PROVIDING SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE FOR THE FOLLOWING OUTPUTS

A summary of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Boards during 2021/22 is set out below. Trends over the last 3 municipal years are also presented.



Raising the profile and using technology

Webcasting

Part of the legacy of working through the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the continued use of live streaming, or webcasting Scrutiny Board meetings. This allows all stakeholders the opportunity to observe meetings as they happen, but also view proceedings after the meeting via YouTube – at a time and location that is convenient to them.

With over 4300 webcast views across all Scrutiny Board meetings, the chart below provides a monthly analysis throughout the course of the municipal year¹.



Webcasting Scrutiny Board meetings is now part of the standard operating procedures, subject to the meeting venue and availability of technology.

Social Media

Scrutiny Board meetings are also promoted through social media – specifically Twitter, through the @ScrutinyLeeds account. During 2021/22 there have been over twenty thousand profile visits. In terms of reach, further analytics show over forty-four thousand tweet impressions during the course of the year.

¹ Notes

- (1) In July 2021, the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board held two consultative meetings
- (2) In September 2021, the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board held two formal Scrutiny Board meetings.
- (3) In January 2022, the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board and the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board meetings were held in alternative venues and viewing figures are not available through the Scrutiny YouTube Channel. Archived webcasts for those meetings can, however, still be accessed via the Council website.

Collaborative working

Scrutiny of the budget

All Scrutiny Boards are consulted annually on the Council's initial budget proposals and any proposed changes to the Best Council Plan prior to formal approval. Observations and recommendations are reported back to the Council's Executive Board as one composite report.

In line with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework all five scrutiny boards considered the Proposed Budget 2022/23 during their January cycle of meetings.

Prior to this, and in line with the approach taken the previous year, officers and Executive members attended working group sessions with each Board in December.

During the consultation process members have reflected upon the future engagement of scrutiny in the organisation's financial planning and how board members might best add value to the budgetary process. The Boards collectively felt, given the cumulative total of savings classified as 'Business As Usual,' that in future such efficiencies be detailed within the Budget Proposals to ensure transparency.

Also, given the complex challenges facing the council in the coming years, which will all involve financial pressure for the Council, the scrutiny boards have reiterated the importance of their members working collaboratively with decision makers at the earliest possible opportunity within the financial planning process.

Regional Health Scrutiny

The West Yorkshire and Harrogate Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) continued to maintain oversight of arrangements to formally establish the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, the continuing development of the overall West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership and a range of associated programme areas.

Support for the management and administration of the JHOSC continued to be provided by Calderdale Council with Councillor Vanda Greenwood (Bradford Council) elected as Chair for 2021/22.

The JHOSC met on three occasions, and full details of the matters considered are available from the lead Council's website (Calderdale MBC), using the links below:

- [20 July 2021](#)
- [30 November 2021](#)
- [29 March 2022](#)

The JHOSC arrangements have continued to enhance the collaboration between local authority health scrutiny functions across West Yorkshire and Harrogate.

Highlights and Achievements



**Chair –
Councillor A Marshall-
Katung**

Focusing on services for adults and public health services to monitor progress towards improving health, lifestyles and quality of care across the city; and providing oversight of service integration and partnership working within and between health bodies. The Board also oversees the sport and active lifestyle related functions and activity across the city.

Topic Area	Added Value/Impact	Associated Best City Priority
1. Development of the local Integrated Care System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board considered the implications of the new Health and Care Bill (now Act) in context for health and social care in West Yorkshire and Leeds. With the expectation that new Integrated Care Systems would be put onto a statutory footing in July 2022, the Board primarily focused its attention this year on the development of the local Integrated Care System (ICS). Linked to this, the Board utilised its meeting in January 2022 to consider and provide feedback on the draft constitution of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) as part of the broader consultation process being led by the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. In acknowledging the intention of the West Yorkshire ICB to discharge duties through delegation to place-based committees, the Board also monitored the development of the Leeds Committee of the ICB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Working as a system to ensure people get the right care, from the right people in the right place. ➤ Ensuring support for the health and social care sector to respond to and recover from COVID-19. ➤ Reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the poorest the fastest.
2. Community neurological rehabilitation service redesign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In October 2021, the Board considered key themes and emerging priority areas stemming from the engagement with patients, carers and staff in relation to plans to redesign the Community Neurological Rehabilitation Service in Leeds. The timeliness of this meant that the Board was able to share its views on the identified themes and emerging priority areas that would inform the developing model of delivery for the Community Neurological Rehabilitation Service. A Statement document setting out the Board's observations, conclusion and recommendations was submitted to the Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group prior to a final decision on the model being agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Working as a system to ensure people get the right care, from the right people in the right place. ➤ Supporting self-care, with more people managing their own health conditions in the community
3. Access to local NHS dental services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Having previously engaged with NHS England back in September 2020 to consider the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the provision and accessibility of local dental services, the Board undertook further scrutiny work in February 2022 to understand the current position surrounding access to local NHS dental services from the perspective of primary, community and secondary care services, including urgent dental care services. A summary note of the main issues and recommendations arising from this piece of scrutiny work was produced in March 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the poorest the fastest. ➤ Ensuring support for the health and social care sector to respond to and recover from COVID-19.
4. Active Leeds and Physical Activity Ambition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board considered and welcomed the development of the Physical Activity Ambition for Leeds that is being led by Active Leeds and Public Health together with partners across the city. Keen to understand the offer being provided across different communities, Board Members also carried out site visits to some Active Leeds facilities across the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles

Highlights and Achievements



Children and Families

Chair –
Councillor A Lamb

Focusing on services affecting the lives of children and families across the city to monitor progress towards becoming a child friendly city, putting children first and developing active citizens.

Topic Area	Added Value/Impact	Associated Best City Priority
1. Notification of Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An urgent matter of business was brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Board in February 2022 when the Chair explained that he had been made aware of instances where differing views were evident within the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) on whether to categorise a case as a notifiable Serious Child Safeguarding Incident. The Independent Chair of the LSCP was given the opportunity to share her views and concerns on the matter and explained that she had commissioned a local review of the notification arrangements, which had commenced in December 2021. In May 2022, other partner members of the LSCP Executive provided an update to the Board and also gave a commitment to share the full report on the outcome of the notification review with the Scrutiny Board once complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable. ➤ Supporting families to give children the best start in life.
2. Leeds Children's Services and the findings of Ofsted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board considered the findings of Ofsted inspectors following a two-day focused visit to Leeds Children's Services in July 2021. While no areas of serious weakness were identified, Members noted the three identified areas for improved practice and had maintained a watching brief of progress against the associated Improvement Action Plan. In May 2022, the Board also considered the findings of the Ofsted inspection of children's social care services during late February/early March 2022 as part of the 'ILACS' inspection framework. The Board congratulated all staff for maintaining an outstanding rating and also welcomed the recognition given to the role of scrutiny by Ofsted in terms of being robust and challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable. ➤ Supporting families to give children the best start in life.
3. Youth Work Review and Future Vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board considered details of the new youth work delivery model informed by the findings of the youth work review. Members endorsed the three strands set out within the future vision - a core offer of universal youth work undertaken by youth work services within the local authority, additional third sector provision for greater demand, and a small grant scheme for smaller organisations with alternative reach. Following the implementation of the new model in April 2022, the Board agreed to maintain a watching brief of progress moving forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. ➤ Helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work.
4. Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-Rolling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Statement document was produced in May 2022 summarising the progress made with the Board's Inquiry work, which included preliminary findings stemming from the evidence to-date and an overview of key national developments and considerations to help inform next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes.

Highlights and Achievements



**Environment,
Housing and
Communities**

**Chair –
Councillor B
Anderson**

Focusing on services and issues affecting the lives of citizens living and working in the council's neighbourhoods to monitor progress as a citizen focused city, prioritising environmental sustainability.

Topic Area	Added Value / Impact	Associated Best City Priority
1. Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members examined the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021, considered the challenges and opportunities for LeedsWatch following a remodelling of the service, and retained a watching brief on the implementation of recommendations that emerged from a review of Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The new Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime was invited to discuss city-wide community safety priorities with members. The Board published the recommendations of an inquiry into the anti-social use of fireworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping people safe from harm & protecting the most vulnerable. ➤ Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour ➤ Promoting community respect and resilience.
2. Reducing poverty, improving financial inclusion and supporting safe communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scrutinising the ways in which the Council can work with partners to support the city's most vulnerable residents remains a longstanding priority. Scrutiny members examined the Council's approach to reducing poverty and improving financial inclusion, considered the Local Welfare Support Scheme and explored action being taken to help residents at risk of, or already experiencing, fuel poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Helping people out of financial hardship. ➤ Targeting interventions to tackle poverty in priority neighbourhoods
3. Carbon reduction, energy efficiency & Housing Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board has scrutinised housing standards within the context of the city's resilience to the consequences of climate change. Members considered the action being taken to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency within the Council's own housing stock, along with opportunities to support improvements in standards in the private rented sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving air quality, reducing pollution and noise ➤ Improving energy performance in homes, reducing fuel poverty
4. Strategic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Scrutiny Board has provided recommendations to decision makers on key strategies including the 2005 Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy and the Safer, Stronger Communities City Plan. The Board engaged in the early stages of the Council's Housing Strategy review and responded to proposals to introduce the Best City Ambition as the Council's key strategic plan. The Scrutiny Board has had oversight of several key performance indicators and has been consulted about the Council's budget proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping people safe from harm & protecting the most vulnerable. ➤ Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities

Highlights and Achievements



**Chair –
Councillor P Truswell**

Focusing on development and infrastructure functions and services to monitor progress in relation to transport and planning, regeneration and housing growth. The Board also oversees economic growth functions and services to monitor progress towards being a strong and compassionate city, promoting opportunities for access to learning, skills and employment for all.

Topic Area	Added Value/Impact	Associated Best City Priority
1. Preventing deaths and serious injuries on the Leeds roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Scrutiny Board conducted an in-depth Inquiry into the prevention of deaths and serious injuries on Leeds roads. Members considered evidence from local and regional stakeholders, including road safety campaigners. The interim inquiry report was submitted to support proposals for Leeds to move towards adopting a ‘Vision Zero’ approach to preventing road deaths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
2. Inclusive Growth & Digital Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inclusive Growth is a ‘golden thread’ running through the Board’s work. The Board examined support for local business recovering from the pandemic, the future of town and district centres, and proposals to help Leeds residents access skilled jobs in the city. Members considered potential barriers to growth including digital exclusion and public transport connections. The Board also explored how the impact of interventions designed to deliver inclusive growth could be measured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting the city’s recovery from COVID-19 and building longer-term economic resilience ➤ Supporting growth and investment, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential ➤ Supporting businesses & residents to improve skills, helping people into work and into better jobs
3. Advancing Bus Provision and improving connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transport infrastructure and the accessibility of public transport connections have been recurring themes in the Board’s wider work on inclusive growth. Members brought partners together to examine the new regional Bus Strategy and to consider future funding models for bus providers still adjusting to new post-pandemic patterns of usage, The Board explored progress with the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and the way in which the Council engages with local communities affected by major infrastructure projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability
4. Sustainable Development: Housing Mix & Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board has continued to track the recommendations of its Housing Mix inquiry, focusing on the delivery of affordable housing in appropriate locations. Members have also considered how the planning system can support the delivery of community infrastructure. The Scrutiny Board continued to examine the Flood Risk Management plan, with particular interest this year in how natural engineering interventions can help to prevent flooding while also delivering wider environmental benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing of the right quality, type, tenure and affordability in the right places ➤ Improving the resilience of the city’s infrastructure and the natural environment, reducing flooding

Highlights and Achievements



Strategy and Resources

Chair – Councillor A Scopes

Focusing on the council's central strategic and regulatory functions, including financial services, human resources, digital and information services, elections, registrars, licensing, local land charges and council tax processing. The Board also oversees cultural related activities to deliver the city's cultural ambitions.

Topic Area	Added Value/Impact	Associated Best City Priority
1. Agile working, Estate Realisation and becoming an inclusive employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Scrutiny Board provided a public platform for our staff networks to share their views about how Leeds City Council could improve diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. The Board considered the need for an individualised approach to flexible working and examined an increase in home working within the context of the city's ambition to reduce carbon emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Making the best use of our resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our people - Our money - Our digital capabilities - Our land and buildings - Our evidence and insights - Our communications
2. Integrated Digital Services, self-service and the customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members examined the measures that can be put in place to improve the experience of people contacting the Council, with members highlighting the importance of all services 'buying in' to the importance of getting front line customer contact right first time. ➤ The role of IDS in driving organisational change and transforming public services has been a recurring theme in much of the Board's work. The Board has examined the potential impact of increased automation and self-service on customer experience and improving outcomes for citizens. Members also considered workforce planning in the context of ensuring IDS can meet increasing demand for services over the next 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear focus on delivering high quality, locally integrated public services ➤ Effective partnership working and commissioning
3. Leeds 2023, culture and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Over the last year members have explored the contribution culture can make to the city's economic recovery post-pandemic. The Board has received updates in relation to significant milestones associated with Leeds 2023 and examined the potential opportunities for Leeds that it is hoped will arise from the Year of Culture in 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhancing the image of Leeds through major events and attractions
4. Financial Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board has continued to focus on financial health, with members seeking reassurance that budget management is robust and promoting long term sustainability. Members scrutinised the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and contributed to the consultation on the annual budget proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting the city's economic recovery from COVID-19 and building longer-term economic resilience

