

Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities)

Year End Summary: 2023/24



Scrutiny at Leeds City Council



Purpose

Scrutiny is nationally recognised as an integral part of the improvement landscape for local government and forms part of governance arrangements for councils and some other local statutory bodies.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference that are applied to all Scrutiny Boards are set out in Leeds City Council's Constitution. The variations in the Scrutiny Boards' remits, together with any special responsibilities, are captured within Article 6 of the Constitution.

Article 6 also sets out the Council's agreed 'Vision for Scrutiny'.

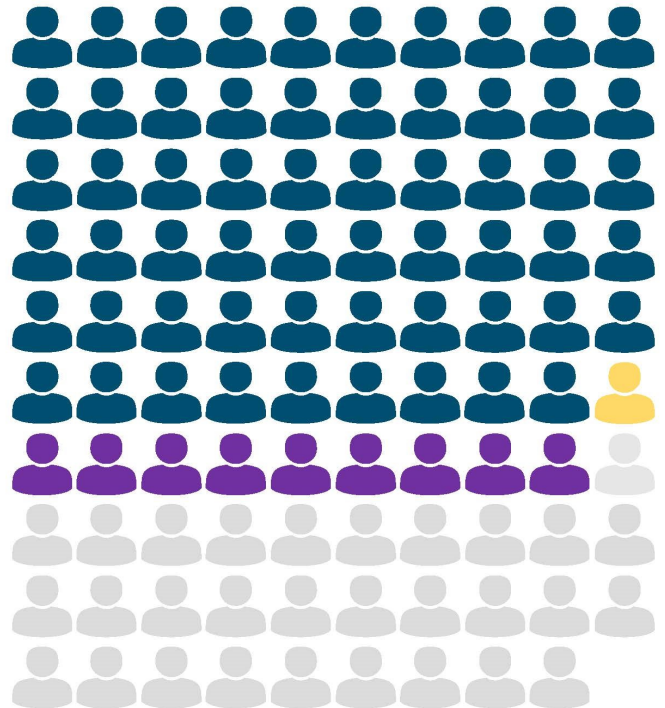
Transparency & Accountability

Scrutiny Boards usually meet in public, holding key decision makers to account, as well as providing 'critical friend' challenge and support for public service improvement and policy development.

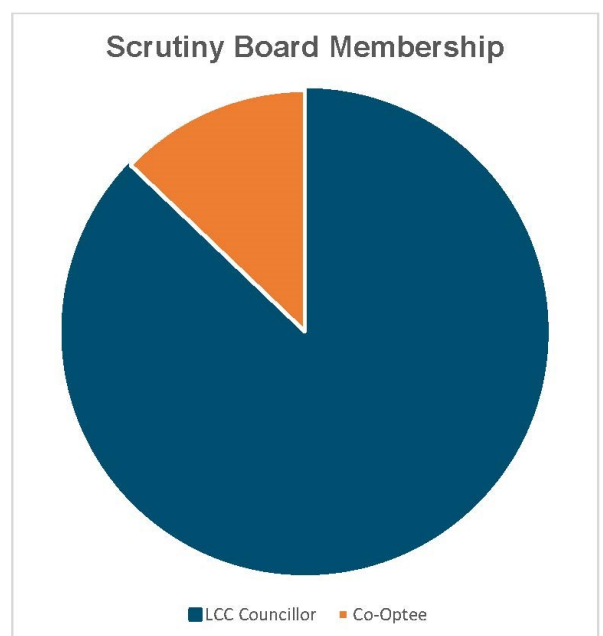
Membership

Membership of all Scrutiny Boards broadly reflects the political balance of the Council and cannot include members of the Council's Executive.

There is provision for Scrutiny Boards to appoint additional Co-opted Members.



Councillors who are Scrutiny Board members



Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board 2023/24



Cllr Barry Anderson



Cllr Javaid Akhtar



Cllr Stewart Golton
(Chair)



Cllr Pauleen Grahame



Cllr Abdul Hannan



Cllr Norma Harrington



Cllr Asghar Khan



Cllr Annie Maloney



Cllr Adrian McCluskey



Cllr Andy Rontree



Cllr Simon Seary



Cllr Penny Stables



Cllr John Tudor

Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board

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

Completed Work Schedule for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

Each Scrutiny Board schedules eight formal meetings throughout the course of a municipal year. The Local Government Act 1972 requires formal meetings to be held in person to enable members of the public to be admitted as observers wherever the meeting is being held. To further promote access and engagement, formal meetings are also webcast.

In addition, the Scrutiny Board may choose to carry out additional work using alternative methods including site visits, working groups and remote consultative meetings (consultative sessions do not constitute formal meetings but do enable public access via a webcast).

The completed work schedule of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) for the 2023/24 municipal year has been provided as part of this summary. This presents an overview of all meetings held throughout the year and the work items considered at each meeting. The work schedule also includes links to the agenda papers, minutes and webcast recordings of the Scrutiny Board's publicly accessible meetings.



Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Statement from the Chair



“Ensuring decision makers reflect the lived experience of citizens in Leeds has been a priority for our Scrutiny Board over the last year. Whether we have been examining policies on housing, parks, waste services or anti-social behaviour, we have challenged Executive Members, officers and partners to ensure that policies work well for those directly impacted by them—especially in the case of our most vulnerable citizens.

With that in mind, we have explored the accessibility of greenspaces for people with disabilities, considered what women have said about their safety in parks, and questioned how to achieve a more accurate understanding of the number of incidents of hate crime in Leeds given we know these are under reported.

There’s no doubt that hearing from people external to our own organisation has added significant value to our work. I want to thank all those people who have taken the time to engage with the Scrutiny Board over the last 12 months to share their insights and expertise.

Over the course of this year, the Scrutiny Board has reiterated the importance of collaboration and co-production of services, particularly as financial constraints increase. We have recommended that third sector groups play a greater role in the work of our community committees and have explored how strong partnerships can help tackle financial exclusion and reduce anti-social behaviour.

There’s no escaping the enormous financial challenges facing our organisation, partners and citizens alike. All Scrutiny Boards considered the Council’s budget proposals in December 2023 and January 2024. Our conclusions and recommendations were presented to the Executive Board to influence the development of the final budget proposals. This included a recommendation that Scrutiny members are engaged in early consultation about a future waste strategy for the city including options for glass recycling. With this in mind, it was therefore disappointing that proposals for the introduction of doorstep glass collection in 2024 were announced at the annual budget meeting without prior involvement with Scrutiny Board members.

As part of the Budget and Policy Framework we are required to carry out performance monitoring twice a year, to understand how key services are delivering against Council targets. Homelessness and the efficiency of housing repairs and maintenance were areas of particular interest for members and I have no doubt these matters will be revisited by the successor Scrutiny Board in 2024/25.

Finally, I want to thank Scrutiny Board members for their commitment, engagement and challenge during the year. Scrutiny provides an important forum to help strengthen decision making and transparency in the Council—and I’m proud of the way in which members of the Board have approached some very varied, and often sensitive, issues during this year.”

Councillor Stewart Golton
Scrutiny Chair



Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Work Schedule 2023/24

June	July	September
Agenda for 22 June 2023 at 10.30 am	Agenda for 20 July 2023 at 10.30 am	Agenda for 14 September 2023 at 10.30 am
Annual reports: Co-opted Members (DB) Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (DB) Potential Sources of Work (DB) Performance Update (PM)	Waste: Draft Waste Strategy / Route Review / future of waste services (PSR) Proposed review of community committee infrastructure, following recommendations of LGA Peer Review (PSR) Referral to Scrutiny: Impact of radon gas on social housing tenants (Cllr Dixon) (PSR)	Safer, Stronger Communities – Leeds Plan Update (PSR) West Yorkshire Police & Crime Plan 2021-2024 – Update (PSR) <i>ASB Ombudsman report to be attached to agenda for information.</i>
Working Group Meetings		
		21 September – Budget Briefing (remote) for all Scrutiny members [DB]
October	November	December
Agenda for 12 October 2023	Agenda for 6 November 2023	Agenda for 7 December 2023
Parks – Development of ‘Plan on a Page’ for city parks, including safe access for women & girls (PSR) Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 update (DB)	<u>Call In Meeting</u> Future of six high rise and resident rehousing - Bailey and Brooklands Towers, Ramshead Heights, Leafield Towers, Raynville Court and Grange	Reducing poverty and improving financial inclusion (PSR) Local Welfare Support Scheme Review Update (PSR) Update on Community Committee Review (PSR)
Working Group Meetings		
		2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) – 15 December 2023 9.30am -11am (remote)
January	February	March & April
Agenda for 25 January 2024 at 10.30 am	Agenda for 22 February 2024 at 10.30 am	Agenda for 21 March 2024 at 10.30 am
Performance report (PM) Financial Health Monitoring (PSR) 2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) Car Parking Charges Golden Acre and Otley Chevin (PSR)	Ensuring the future resilience of the Third Sector (PSR) Housing Activity Update (PSR)	Climate Emergency Update (PSR) Green Spaces - annual update on progress towards ambitions set out in the Parks & Greenspaces Strategy (DB) Community Committee Review Update (PSR) End of year statement
Working Group Meetings		
31/1/24 1.30-2.30pm: Lettings Policy Briefing		9/4/24 1.30-2.30pm: Regulation of Social Landlords

More information about Leeds City Council's Scrutiny Service, along with the activity and membership of individual Scrutiny Boards, can be found on the Council's committee webpages.

You can also follow @ScrutinyLeeds on X (formerly twitter).

