

Scrutiny at Leeds City Council



Annual Report 2005/06

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Foreword



Cllr Minkin, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Our Annual Report on the work of Scrutiny at Leeds City Council during 2005/06 combines a commentary on each Board's work, the Scrutiny Commissions, the results of the annual survey of elected Members and overall details of the Scrutiny function in Leeds.

For the first time, this year's annual report is available on CD-Rom and will have the added benefit of including links to final reports and other documents mentioned in the report. These are also available on the internet.

This municipal year Scrutiny Boards have been aligned to match the Council's corporate priorities. This has meant that, rather than mirroring the department structure, the remits of the Boards have covered the seven strategic outcomes detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan.

The driving force for these changes was the recent Corporate Performance Assessment of the Council which prompted us to think of ways in which the Scrutiny process could contribute to the good work which has taken place at a strategic level.

Whilst we are still getting to grips with these new arrangements I am confident that they provide elected Members with a real opportunity to hold the Executive to account for its performance and to shape the future policies of Leeds City Council. Certainly Scrutiny Boards have never been so busy. This year there are 29 final reports containing recommendations for change. In addition to the regular cycle of meetings, Members took part in 11 working groups and undertook 33 site visits.

Other changes this year have included the introduction of Scrutiny Commissions, which look at specific cross cutting issues; the strengthening of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's strategic role in work allocation and receiving requests for Scrutiny; and the way in which the Council deals with Call In.

Throughout the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has monitored these new arrangements, beginning in May 2005 with an away day for Scrutiny Board Chairs and culminating in March 2006 with an IDEa facilitated evaluation of the Scrutiny function in Leeds. An action plan arising from this event appears further on in this annual report.

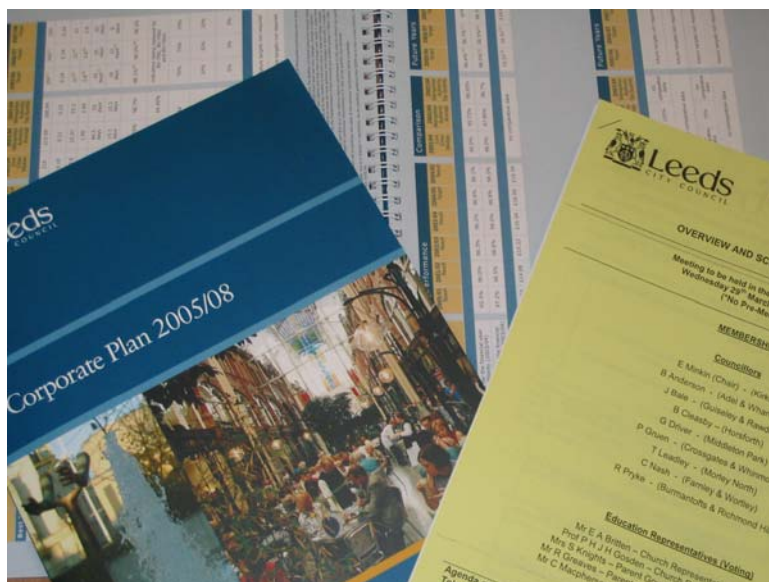
Whilst we strive to improve our own performance, others wish to learn from us. This year Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) hosted a visit from elected Members and officers from Newcastle, who were interested in learning how Leeds has scrutinised services for looked after children. The Scrutiny Unit also continues to meet with colleagues in West Yorkshire to exchange best practice.

One theme that has emerged this year is the increased involvement of young people in the scrutiny process. Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety) and Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) have both specifically sought the views and opinions of young people. Similarly the Scrutiny Commission looking at avoiding alcohol misuse received the views of young people.

A significant development was the setting up of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum. This forum, made up of members of the Youth Council, undertook an Inquiry into Fairtrade in schools. The detail of this can be found under the report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board

Scrutiny is an integral part of the Council's governance arrangements and it relies on cross party co-operation and consensus to maintain its independence and integrity. I would like to thank all my fellow Scrutiny Board Chairs and colleagues for their hard work and thoughtfulness in achieving this.

CLlr Elizabeth Minkin, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Work of the Boards

The Scrutiny Boards monitor decisions made by the Executive Board and Council officers. They contribute to the development of policies and review the work of the Council. They have an important function in providing checks and balances on performance and decision making. Scrutiny Boards therefore can be seen as having both a 'watchdog' and 'think tank' role.

Each of the Boards has produced a report on the work undertaken in 2005/06. Some inquiries have been highlighted to give a flavour of the recommendations that have been made and the issues that have been raised. All final reports which contain the Boards' discussions and conclusions can be obtained from the Scrutiny Support Unit and a list of these appears at the end of this report.

If you are using CD-Rom, use the links provided to go to the reports.

Scrutiny Boards also have powers to scrutinise the NHS and other outside organisations.

In 2005/06 there were 7 Scrutiny Boards:

- Scrutiny Board (City Development)
- Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)
- Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety)
- Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)
- Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)
- Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing)
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The remit of these Boards reflects the strategic outcomes within the Corporate Plan 2005/08:

The Strategic Outcomes of the Corporate Plan and the corresponding Scrutiny Boards are:

People and Culture – Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Transforming Our Services - Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)

All neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained – Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety)

All communities are thriving and harmonious places where people are happy to live – Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)

Our children and young people are healthy, safe and successful – Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)

At each stage of life people are able to live healthy, fulfilling lives – Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing)

Leeds is a highly competitive, international city - Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has three roles - an advisory, a scrutiny and an overview role.

Advisory

- Receiving requests for Scrutiny
- To develop common practice in relation to the discharge of the Overview and Scrutiny function
- Determining the most appropriate Scrutiny Boards for Inquiries.

Scrutiny

- Scrutinising matters falling within the Strategic Outcome 'people and culture'
- Scrutiny of the Budget, Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.

Overview

- To appoint Scrutiny Commissions
- Receiving performance management reports
- Call In
- Scrutiny of cross-cutting issues.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*Cllr Elizabeth Minkin
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Elizabeth Minkin (Chair)
Cllr Barry Anderson
Cllr John Bale
Cllr Brian Cleasby
Cllr Geoff Driver
Cllr Peter Gruen
Cllr Tom Leadley
Cllr Claire Nash
Cllr Ralph Pryke

Education Representatives (Voting)

Mr Tony Britten
Professor Peter Gosden
Mrs Sue Knights
Mr Robert Greaves
Mr Cluny Macpherson

The Chair's Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had an enhanced role this year.

In addition to its remit to scrutinise those matters falling within the strategic outcome People and Culture, it has been given a significant 'Overview' role.

The Committee has developed (in conjunction with the Council's Performance and Improvement Team) a methodology for scrutinising the Council's overall performance.

For the first time members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee have received high level performance reports which are of corporate significance and which impact upon the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, CPA score, and ability to deliver efficiency savings.

This approach reflects the role of Overview and Scrutiny as a forum for the discussion and consideration of key strategic issues whilst more detailed consideration of performance issues takes place at individual Board level.

We have also built on our new co-ordinating role by changing the focus of how we scrutinise the budget. Unlike previous years, individual Scrutiny Boards have not considered individual departmental budgets, as their portfolios are not aligned to any single department.

This year our focus has been to advise the Executive how the Council, in the longer term, could improve its budget setting process and realign service budgets to better reflect corporate priorities.

Other areas of work include a significant Inquiry into attendance management, the appointment of three Scrutiny Commissions, the consideration of 'requests for scrutiny' and the review of a number of constitutional issues in relation to Scrutiny.

The Committee has heard one Call In of an Executive decision this year. The decision was released for implementation.

I warmly acknowledge the support given to me by my colleagues on the Committee and thank them for their commitment and hard work.

Cllr Elizabeth Minkin, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Inquiry Into Safety, Wellbeing and Attendance

The driving force for undertaking this Inquiry was the acknowledgment that workforce absenteeism affects all staff. How the Council manages this directly affects the performance of staff and services to customers. The Committee wished to understand why the majority of staff do not have poor absence figures. In addition, we believe that Leeds City Council has an important role in using the workplace setting to contribute to the wider public health agenda.

"Sustained commitment from managers at the top level, delivering the right data and systems to support better attendance management and provide leadership and support for line managers."

Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector (ODPM)

Our main recommendations were:

That the Council's Happy, Healthy and Here Programme adopts a variety of tools and includes a number of strategies to address each of the indicators identified by the Health and Safety Executive.

That the Council continues to use initiatives such as staff surveys, work life balance surveys and stress audits to collect staff data and analyse the results.

That the Council revisits the performance targets under 'People and Culture' and sets more challenging and stretched targets for 2006/07. We would expect an indication of the Council's ultimate ambition in terms of achievable targets and an indicative timescale to meet those targets.

That further analysis of why the majority of the workforce do not have significant absence is undertaken, to include analysis by grade. That particularly work is undertaken to correlate the staff survey returns from departments operating flexible working schemes and from departments experiencing low absence figures.

That further work be undertaken regarding options for Pay and Reward incentives.

Our other recommendations included

That Corporate HR in conjunction with local HR managers and Care First undertake a sustainable awareness campaign.

That a cost benefit analysis is undertaken for the introduction of self referral for face to face counselling.

That the Department of Corporate Services supports the completion of an occupational health needs analysis.

That further work is carried out on the costs of a proactive Occupational Health service.

“Throughout this Inquiry we have noted a significant shift of emphasis and approach in dealing with sickness absence and this is personified by the Happy, Healthy and Here Programme. We wholeheartedly support this positive approach.”

Scrutiny Board Final report March 2006

Scrutiny of the Financial Plan 2005/08

Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a role to play in considering how the Council organises its budget setting process.

This is particularly relevant given the organisational emphasis now put on the Corporate Plan and Council Plan. In addition, the Government has recently issued a consultation paper on Local Government finance, which includes proposals to move to three year grant settlements. This provides an even greater focus on medium term financial planning.

Our view is that there is a need for greater clarity in the budget as to how the allocation of resources relates to the achievement of the Council’s strategic outcomes. The Committee accepts that this is a difficult issue to progress because budgets are organised departmentally. The Committee also acknowledges that there will be constant tensions between delivery of the strategic outcomes and the delivery of departmental services, which is further compounded by the limited discretion allowed authorities over spending.

“One of the potential roles for an overview and scrutiny committee is to ensure that, once priorities have been set, they are provided with adequate levels of funding.”

Centre for Public Scrutiny, *The role of overview and scrutiny in the corporate planning process*

The Committee made the following observations and recommendations.

- That the Director of Corporate Services reviews the budget setting process including the current timetable.
- That the Council should adopt a rolling programme of 'zero based budgeting', that is, to work up from scratch a true picture of a service budget. This should not be seen as a service cutting exercise, but a sensible review of a service area's financial requirements. This activity should take place outside of the normal budget setting timetable.
- That review mechanisms are put in place to assess the success or otherwise of financial injections into service areas.

In May 2005 the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee asked that the current Call In arrangements be reviewed after six months of operation. In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee extended this review to include other aspects of the new arrangements in place since May 2005, specifically the following:

- The current rule of no substitutions
- The format of Members' Questions
- A proposal that all Scrutiny Chairs sit on Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The Use of Working Groups.

In addition to reviewing the operational and procedural aspects of the new Scrutiny arrangements, a wider evaluation of the effectiveness of Scrutiny was undertaken using the *self evaluation framework* developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. The results of this exercise can be found later on in this annual report.

Inquiry into Energy and Water Management

On receipt of a request for Scrutiny from Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety), Overview and Scrutiny asked officers in which area could Scrutiny add value and assist the Council in achieving the objectives of the Council's five year Energy and Water Management Plan. Because of existing commitments and the limited time available, we decided early on to split the Inquiry into two, albeit related, sections. This municipal year we have focused on the following;

- reviewing the work undertaken by departments to improve energy efficiencies and consumption and water management
- reviewing the work of the officer Energy and Water Management Group and the role of training
- reviewing the scope to encourage efficiencies via the procurement process.

In the municipal year 2006/07 we would hope that Overview and Scrutiny Committee will complete the second element of this Inquiry by undertaking the following;

- reviewing the work undertaken by the city council in relation to the risks of future supplies and the development of alternatives.

Our Inquiry focused on the highest energy consuming departments in the Council: Education Leeds, Learning and Leisure, Social Services, and City Services and centred on the work undertaken to deliver energy efficiencies and reduce energy consumption, including:

- Amount of energy used
- Measures taken and planned to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency
- Implementation of the requirements within the Energy and Water Management Plan 2003-08
- Departmental targets for energy consumption and efficiency
- Identified good practice in reduction of energy consumption
- Resources and investment allocated for work on energy consumption and efficiency
- Any gaps in policies / plans etc

Our Main recommendations were:

That Departments identify within their Departmental Management Teams an energy and water management champion.

That more senior departmental representatives (DMT Champions) sit on the Energy and Water Management Group.

That an annual statement on energy saving achievements and progress be produced by each DMT.

That energy and water budgets be devolved to local managers of buildings in order to encourage responsibility for consumption.

That consideration is given to departments receiving a percentage of savings made through the reduction of energy and water management expenditure.

Our other recommendations were:

That a relaunched Energy and Water Management Group develops energy awareness campaigns including the development of staff and management training packages and promotes the roll out of the Energy Efficiency Accreditation Scheme (EEAS) standard.

That the activities identified within the Corporate Plan be reviewed to ensure that they are ambitious and appropriate.

The Committee's full work programme 2005/06

- Inquiry - Safety, Wellbeing and Attendance
- Performance Management 2004/05
- Scrutiny of the Financial Plan 2005/08
- Call In – Beckett Park Primary School
- Inquiry – Energy and Water Management
- Local Area Agreements
- Headingley Cricket Ground
- Review of the Personnel Panel
- Review of the 2005 Staff Survey Results
- Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny
 - Hawksworth Wood Children's Centre
 - Fire Safety Standards within Leeds Mental Health Trust PFI Buildings
 - Swarcliffe PFI
- Drafting of Scrutiny Commission Terms of Reference
 - Flooding in Leeds
 - Avoiding Alcohol Misuse
 - Workforce Planning
- Consideration of a number of Constitutional matters
 - Review of the Scrutiny function
 - Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules – Guidance Notes
 - Non Voting Co-opted members sitting on Scrutiny Boards
 - Forward Plan and consultation
 - Allocation of Budget and Policy Framework documents to Scrutiny Boards

Scrutiny Commissions

The Scrutiny Commissions were introduced this year as a way of enhancing the capacity of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and were chaired by three members of OSC. These Commissions have done inquiries into flooding issues, avoiding alcohol misuse and workforce planning and were chaired by Cllr Leadley, Cllr Driver and Cllr C Nash respectively.



Chairs of the Commissions Cllr Leadley, Cllr Driver and Cllr C Nash

Scrutiny Commission

Flooding in Leeds



*Cllr Leadley
Chair of Scrutiny Commission – Flooding in Leeds*

Membership of the Commission:

Cllr Tom Leadley (Chair)
Cllr Graham Hyde
Cllr Elizabeth Nash
Cllr David Schofield
Cllr David Hollingsworth
Cllr Stewart Golton

The Chair's Summary

Following two major sets of flooding incidents in Leeds, during August 2004 and May 2005, Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up this Commission to investigate the practical measures being put in place by the Council and its partners in the short and medium term to mitigate and respond to flooding incidents. We were also asked to assess how the Council deals with flooding and water management through the Local Development Framework and through the role of Land Drainage.

We received information from a wide range of witnesses. The Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, British Waterways and the Association of British Insurers attended our meetings and brought a great deal of expertise and knowledge to the inquiry. We were also pleased to welcome a number of contributions from members of the public who had been affected by flooding. Members appreciated the opportunity to understand the trauma and anxiety caused to individuals and the continuing issues they have faced in getting their lives back to normal. Our hope is that as a Commission we have enabled these issues to be fully aired and resolved wherever possible.



*Members of the Commission
deliberating*



We have noted the progress that has been made since the inquiry began, both in terms of physical flood defence work and in the work of the Water Asset Management Working Group, which is delivering a comprehensive work programme agreed following the last incident of flooding.

Our Commission has been well supported by Council officers, by external technical witnesses, and by members of the public who have given written, verbal and pictorial accounts of the flooding of their own homes. Commission Members thank them all for the time and attention which they have devoted to the inquiry.

Cllr Tom Leadley
Chair of Scrutiny Commission – Flooding in Leeds

Scrutiny Commission

Avoiding Alcohol Misuse



*Cllr Geoff Driver
Chair of Scrutiny Commission – Avoiding Alcohol Misuse*

Membership of the Commission:

Cllr Geoff Driver (Chair)
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr Christopher Townsley
Cllr Clive Fox
Cllr Brian Selby
Cllr Graham Kirkland
Cllr Gerald Wilkinson

The Chair's Summary

At its meeting on 3rd October 2005, Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed terms of reference for an inquiry into Avoiding Alcohol Misuse in Leeds. The Commission conducted a relatively short inquiry – we do not claim to have covered everything or have all the answers. We acknowledge that we have not discussed at any great length the impact of alcohol misuse within the family, its correlation to domestic violence or the growing concerns over the increase of 'silent drinkers' - those who drink in the home. These are important issues but not within the remit of our Inquiry

We have, however considered a number of extremely important issues and in doing so taken evidence from a wide range of stakeholders in the city. These have included: licensing, Social Services, the police, community safety and the Executive Member for community safety issues, the Health Service, young people, the Universities, city centre management, transport operators and METRO, Trading Standards and the Planning Authority. We are very grateful for the input and advice given to us by all our witnesses.

We have concluded that there are two main types of action needed to tackle some of the alcohol-related problems in Leeds: **practical measures** on areas such as transport home from the city centre, training for health and social care professionals, licensing conditions and alcohol education, among others; and the need for long term **strategic management** and co-ordinated action amongst all those agencies involved. We feel that there is particular scope for increased communication between the licensing and planning authorities on potential developments in the city to tackle any potential issues before they arise. It is hoped that the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for Leeds will support a more co-ordinated approach in the city.

Cllr Geoff Driver
Chair of Scrutiny Commission - Avoiding Alcohol Misuse

Scrutiny Commission

Workforce Planning



*Cllr C Nash
Chair of Scrutiny Commission
– Workforce Planning*

Membership of the Commission:

Cllr Claire Nash (Chair)
Cllr Michael Davey
Cllr Penny Ewens
Cllr Sharon Hamilton
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr Valerie Kendall

Co-opted Member

Alan Hughes, Regional Joint Secretary of Unison

The Chair's Summary

At the beginning of the municipal year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to appoint a Scrutiny Commission to undertake an inquiry into long-term workforce planning. Workforce planning is about analysing the current workforce, identifying any gaps and then extending that analysis to identify the skills which will be required to deliver future services. In acknowledging that significant work on this front was already underway within the authority as part of the emerging People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan, our inquiry focused upon future needs, scenario planning and gap analysis.

We recognised that these were areas which needed high level strategic input with a longer term vision of the needs of the city region. During our Inquiry, we therefore debated local, regional and national perspectives on workforce planning issues with a wide variety of witnesses, representing a range of perspectives and experiences. In particular, we received evidence from the Tavistock Institute and the Employers' Organisation which identified a number of key areas of importance for future local governance and service delivery. It is important that we respond to these pointers now in order to be prepared for the changed workforce demands in the coming period.



Members of the Commission

One of the issues that has become clear to us during our work is the number of local and regional bodies which have a stake in developing the skills of the workforce. Whilst the Council has historically been well represented on these bodies in terms of its contribution to improving the employment prospects of local residents, it has not traditionally participated as a major employer. We have therefore recognised the need for the Council to be represented as an employer on such bodies in order to enhance its wider strategic impact in relation to workforce planning matters.

Overall this piece of scrutiny work has been successful in bringing together a wide range of witnesses to inform strategic level thinking within the Council and we are very grateful to everyone who has contributed to our inquiry. We believe that our work is a springboard for more detailed work by officers. We also think that this is an interesting development in the way in which scrutiny can contribute to achieving the Vision for Leeds, and would commend this strategic approach for future scrutiny inquiries.

Cllr Claire Nash
Chair of Scrutiny Commission - Workforce Planning

Scrutiny Board (City Development)



Cllr Cleasby, Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Brian Cleasby (Chair)
Cllr Bernard Atha OBE
Cllr Andrew Barker
Cllr Terry Grayshon
Cllr Sharon Hamilton
Cllr Roger Harington
Cllr David Hollingsworth
Cllr Graham Latty
Cllr James McKenna
Cllr Andrew Millard

The Chair's Summary

I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report for Scrutiny Board (City Development). I am grateful to the members of the Board for their diligence and input and on their behalf I would like to thank all those who contributed to the Board's work throughout the year.

The constitutional changes agreed in May 2005 aligned Scrutiny Boards to the strategic outcomes within the Corporate Plan. This has given us the opportunity to focus our efforts on the major issues facing the Council at a strategic level. We have even looked beyond the Council's boundaries and begun detailed work on the City Region – an exciting and far reaching concept, which has kept us debating issues at a high level (the final conclusions of the Board will be published early in the next municipal year). We have also looked at major works being carried out within the city, such as the Carriage Works Theatre.

In this constantly moving and developing area we were keen to be kept informed of the work of various partnerships and we received presentations from Leeds Initiative, Marketing Leeds, International Relations and the Urban Renaissance project. These were extremely interesting and informative and have formed the basis for much of our work programme.

Of equal importance are the ongoing plans and strategies which provide a framework for many other projects. We received and commented upon the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011 and the Local Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement and Annual Monitoring Report.

This has proved to be a busy and productive year and we provide a brief summary of our work here. Our hope is that our achievements this year will provide a firm foundation and inspiration for the next Board's work programme.

Cllr Cleasby
Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Inquiry into the Development of the Leeds City Region

We agreed to undertake an Inquiry into the development of the Leeds City Region as an appropriate mechanism for furthering the economy of the area and in particular to develop transport and skills. We have received reports and presentations from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Northern Way and Birmingham Council which have set the scene for city regions in a national context for us. A number of witnesses including the Chief Executive of the Council and representatives from Harrogate Borough Council and Yorkshire Forward have also presented to us the concept of the City Region and what they believe it can offer residents and businesses and therefore the economic growth potential of the area as a whole. Whilst this is an ongoing inquiry, we have appreciated this year the huge undertaking that this agenda represents and the potential benefits for the region, though we have our concerns about some of the disadvantages that we have identified. We have recommended that further scrutiny work be undertaken on this.

"The Leeds city region partnership of eleven local authority members has been developing good working relationships"

Paul Rogerson, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council

"Strong cities and strong city regions are needed"

Fiona Bolam, Economic Policy Manager, Yorkshire Forward



Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study Recommendations

We received a report and supported the endorsement by the Executive Board of the Cultural Facilities Task Group recommendations into the future provision of concert, arena and other music related facilities. These recommendations were based on the main findings and conclusions of a feasibility study undertaken by consultants appointed by the Executive Board to advise the Council on the development of a delivery strategy for a proposed new arena and associated related facilities, and the retention of a design team to consider the potential options available to further improve the Leeds Town Hall.

The Executive Board had also approved expenditure totalling £200,000 on fees for both the appointment of a design team to undertake the initial feasibility study on the Town Hall and specialist advisers to prepare the delivery strategy for a new arena and related facilities.



Leeds Town Hall

"We expressed the view that expenditure on the feasibility study should be limited to upgrading backstage facilities and to undertaking further improvements to the front of house areas in the Town Hall but with the majority weighting being towards the arena."

Carriageworks Theatre

We visited the new Carriageworks Theatre and received the report of the Head of Internal Audit following completion of his investigation into the reasons for the increase in expenditure on the fit out for the Carriageworks Theatre scheme. This investigation had been requested by the Executive Board and we identified that there were problems with this project.

We raised a number of concerns including the

- risk assessment undertaken for this scheme and the role of the Project Board
- training of Project Managers and the skills shortage
- lack of a business plan during the first 5 months of the scheme
- lack of consideration by the Project Board of the Architect Design Services cost report
- finish in some parts of the completed building and location of some of the seating and sight lines in the main auditorium

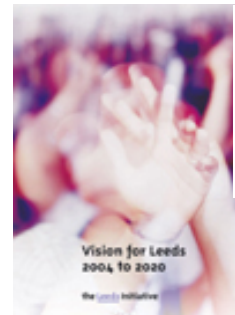


The Carriageworks Theatre

Presentations received by the Board

Leeds Initiative

The Director of Leeds Initiative outlined the Initiative's history, its partners, objectives, daughter strategies and achievements. The aims of the second vision for Leeds 2004 – 2020 of Going Up a League, Narrowing the Gap and developing Leeds' role as a regional capital were examined. We discussed a number of issues including performance measures.



Vision for Leeds



Marketing Leeds

We received details of the newly formed company Marketing Leeds. We discussed issues around the need to improve people's perceptions of Leeds and the need for the Council's website to focus more on the success of the city.

*"We recommended that Marketing Leeds continues to be scrutinised particularly from the 'value for money' aspect."
Cllr Cleasby, Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Development)*

Urban Renaissance Project

We heard from the City Architect who reported that the Urban Renaissance Project was a means of strategically aligning public sector partner investment to deliver those elements of the Vision for Leeds which focus on physical and spatial redevelopment. We raised a number of issues around transport and communication particularly for those communities on the outskirts of the city.

Presentations (Continued)

International Relations

We received from the Head of International Relations details of the work undertaken by his team and the Council's International Relations Strategy under the following broad headings:

- Helping local businesses to compete in a global economy
- Working with young people, schools and other organisations to internationalise their curriculum and foster relationships with Leeds' partner cities
- Working with Eurocities to lobby the European Union and national governments on policy issues



Brno city in the Czech Republic

We discussed in some detail the specific initiatives used to support businesses and how the young people of Leeds get involved with our partner cities overseas.

The Board's full work programme 2005/06

- Inquiry on Leeds City Region
- Presentation by the Director of Leeds Initiative
- Presentation by the Chief Executive of Marketing Leeds
- Members attended the launch of Marketing Leeds in the Victoria Quarter
- Celebrate Leeds 2007
- Organisations and Partnerships
- Leeds Supertram and alternative proposals
- Presentation by the Head of International Relations
- Performance Indicators and revised Air Travel Performance Measure
- Formal departmental response to the recommendations of the Museums Working Group established by the former Leisure Scrutiny Board
- Council's Asset Management Plan
- Presentation by the City Architect on the Urban Renaissance Project
- Local Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement
- Local Development Framework - Annual Monitoring Report
- Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study Recommendations
- West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011
- Carriageworks Scheme
- A6120 Ring Road Route Strategy
- Section 106 Agreements - calculating financial contributions
- Marketing Leeds
- Planning a Better Future – Planning and Development Services



Victoria Quarter

Leeds Bradford Airport



Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)



*Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Pauleen Grahame (Chair)
Cllr Javaid Akhtar
Cllr Denise Atkinson MBE
Cllr Ann Castle
Cllr Judith Elliott
Cllr Penny Ewens
Cllr John Illingworth
Cllr Adam Ogilvie
Cllr Alec Shelbrooke
Cllr Rev Alan Taylor

The Chair's Summary

The Board has been very busy this year completing five Inquiries resulting in the publication of a number of significant recommendations. In addition we have received a number of presentations and discussed a wide range of issues making for a lively and interesting Scrutiny Board.

The Board has also taken the opportunity this year to make a number of site visits, of particular interest were the visits to the City's One Stop Shops and a visit to Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People.

The range of our Inquiries has been wide and has included Information management, Translation Services and Bus Services.

Of particular interest was the presentation on Emergency Planning in Leeds. We also had presentations from the Police and Fire Services on emergency planning issues across West Yorkshire and how they work with this Council and other agencies in the event of a major incident. As a consequence of these discussions we undertook an Inquiry reviewing the Out-of-Hours service provision by departments, Education Leeds and Arms Length Management Organisations in support of the Council's Emergency Response Arrangements.

We have also completed an important Inquiry on How the Council Learns Lessons and Develops Best Practice if Contracts Go Wrong and we are particularly grateful to the Chief Procurement Officer for his advice and assistance during this investigation.

I would like to thank all Members of the Scrutiny Board for their encouragement and support during the year.

Cllr Pauleen Grahame
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)

Inquiry to Consider the Procedures and Consultation Arrangements which Bus Companies are Required to Follow when they wish to Change Bus Timetables and/or Bus Routes

The original driving force for this Inquiry was a growing number of reports being made by Elected Members of a reduction in bus services in a number of wards in the city. Whilst our intention was to take a strategic approach to this Inquiry it was helpful to us to consider a specific case discussed at the Council meeting on 22nd June 2005. We are particularly grateful therefore to the representatives of Scholes community for their help and assistance during our investigation.

“We believe that the way forward for the short to medium term is to focus on a sustainable transport policy based on buses, demand management and active travel in addition to safe, responsible vehicle use.”(West Yorkshire Transport Group 2000)

“Bus reliability is impossible with the current traffic congestion in the city.” (First Leeds)



First Leeds Bendy Bus

Our main recommendation was that:

Metro and the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority actively pursue the introduction of Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes and Quality Contracts as part of their bus strategy initiatives.

Our other recommendations were

- That we ask Leeds MPs to lobby and give support to changes in primary or secondary legislation which would simplify and give more control to local authorities to determine routes and frequency of bus services in their area.
- That Metro be requested to report all breaches of the “Code of Conduct on Service and Stability” to the Bus Partnership Forum.
- That Scrutiny Board (City Development) consider the Local Transport Plan in relation to congestion and the impact on economic competitiveness and the recommendations made by Transport 2000 West Yorkshire Group in this regard.

Links:

Corporate Priority

- Improve consultation about all aspects of service delivery
- Improve the whole customer services experience from beginning to end

Inquiry to Review the Out-of-Hours Service Provision by Departments, Education Leeds and Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) in Support of the Council's Emergency Response Arrangements

As a consequence of the terrible bombings in London we agreed to receive information on the Council's emergency planning arrangements. We undertook an Inquiry to review the out-of-hours support which should be provided by Council Departments, Education Leeds and the Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) to enable the Council as a whole to respond to major and other incidents.

Our main recommendation was that:

The Directors of Departments, Chief Officers of ALMOs and Chief Executive of Education Leeds, ensure that there are robust arrangements in place to mobilise specific key resources in the initial stages of a response.

"The duty to assess risk has recently been formalised under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and a comprehensive West Yorkshire Risk Assessment will be published early in 2006." (Head of Risk and Emergency Planning)

Links:

Corporate Priority

- Improve consultation about all aspects of service delivery

Other recommendations included:

- That all Chief Officers of ALMOs ensure their contractors are contractually obliged to participate in Leeds City Council's emergency response arrangements with suitable remuneration included.
- That the Directors of Departments, Chief Officers of ALMOs and Chief Executive of Education Leeds, ensure that departments assess what types of minor incidents they might need to deal with out-of-hours and set-up appropriate arrangements to respond to these without recourse to PEPU.
- That the Director of Corporate Services updates the resources in the Major Emergency Plan and liaises further with partners in the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum regarding pooled resources.



Inquiry into whether the Council and its wholly owned companies provide consistent interpretation and translation facilities

The initiative for undertaking such an inquiry was our concern that there was a need to ensure that the Council provided consistent interpretation and translation facilities. We considered this to



be essential for those at risk of social exclusion and disadvantage because English was not their first language or for those who had special needs because of visual and/or hearing impairment.

Our main recommendation was:

That the Chief Customer Services Officer moves towards a commissioning model for the actual interpreting and translation service whilst maintaining and extending a client function through CITU.

Link:

Corporate Priority

- We will improve the whole customer service experience from beginning to end

Our other recommendations included:

- The development of guidance for all departments on how to produce large print documents to enable this type of work to be done direct rather than through the Braille and Large Print Unit.
- The development of a policy on the charges to be made for non-Council business undertaken by the Braille and Large Print Unit, and where there are any other requests.
- taking steps to ensure that a consistent and explicit policy is developed covering all aspects of interpreting and translation, including meeting spoken language and sensory impairment needs.
- that the Co-ordinator for CITU continue with existing ongoing research into best practice with regard to partnership arrangements through networks such as RITAN.

Inquiry into Information Management in Leeds City Council

We acknowledged that, within the authority, there was a growing recognition of the importance of progressing effective information management. We agreed to undertake this Inquiry in the belief that improving the standard of information management within the Council will assist the Authority to achieve openness, accountability and accessibility, making it easier to comply with the Modernising Local Government agenda and with legislation, such as the Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Acts.

Links:
Corporate Priority

- We will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services



Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services)

Links:
Corporate Priority

- We will promote and support new ways of working and make the best use of technology to improve the quality and efficiency of services

Inquiry into How the Council Learns Lessons and Develops Best Practice if Contracts Go Wrong

We are particularly proud that the Council has been awarded Beacon Status in the category of "Delivery of Quality Services through Procurement". However, we took the view that there was always room for improvement in our procurement practices and that one contract going wrong was one too many, particularly where the underlying causes were similar to those experienced on earlier contracts. We were concerned from the evidence presented that there were clearly variations in approaches to project and risk management, and problems occurring with the clarity and understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Our main recommendations

- That departments, Education Leeds and ALMOs with the Chief Procurement Officer continue to develop a corporate approach in order to ensure clarity and understanding of roles and responsibilities and consistency in approaches to project and risk management.
- That the Chief Procurement Officer develops a corporate communication strategy to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on obtaining the views of end users, including Ward Members, when services are being designed and specified in service specifications.

Other recommendations included

- That the Chief Procurement Officer ensures that the initiatives being undertaken in "Delivering Successful Change" incorporate safeguards to manage potential conflict with contractors at an early stage.

Board's full work programme 2005/06

- Inquiry into Bus Services in Leeds.
- Presentation from the Head of Risk and Emergency Planning on Emergency Planning in Leeds
- Presentations from the Police and Fire Services on emergency planning issues across West Yorkshire and how they work with this Council and other agencies in the event of a major incident
- Inquiry on the Out-of-Hours Service provision in support of the Council's emergency response arrangements
- Inquiry into How the Council Learns and Develops Best Practice If Contracts Go Wrong
- Procurement Strategy 2005/2008.
- Inquiry on Consistent Interpretation and Translation Facilities Across the Council
- Inquiry on Information Management.
- Visited the East Leeds Contact Centre and the Armley and St George's One Stop Centres
- Development of a Communication Strategy
- Annual Report on the Council's Approved List of Contractors
- Customer Strategy 2005 – 2008 – Putting Customers First
- Monitoring of Contractors – Legal Approved List and Procurement Decisions Group (LAPD)
- Extension of contracts and waiver of Council Procedure Rules
- Visit Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People



Inquiry into Bus Services in Leeds



Scrutiny Board (Transforming Services) Meeting



Residents of Scholes attending the Bus Inquiry



Civic Hall



Inquiry on Interpretation and Translation Facilities

Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing)



*Cllr Brenda Lancaster
Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Health and Wellbeing)*

Membership of the Board:

Councillor Brenda Lancaster (Chair)
Councillor Sue Bentley
Councillor Ruth Feldman
Councillor Sharon Hamilton
Councillor Andrea Harrison
Councillor John Illingworth
Councillor Josie Jarosz
Councillor James Lewis
Councillor Claire Nash
Councillor Linda Rhodes-Clayton
Councillor Gerald Wilkinson

Co-opted Members of the Board:

Eddie Mack – Leeds Voice Health Forum Co-ordinating Group
Betty Smithson – Leeds PPI Forum City Wide Group
Joy Fisher – Service Users and Carers Alliance Group

The Chair's Summary

I am very pleased to present the 2005/06 annual report of the Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing). This year has seen a change to the Board's remit as all Scrutiny Boards are now aligned to the strategic outcomes within the Council's Corporate Plan. This Board is aligned to the Council's strategic outcome which states that 'at each stage of life, people are able to live healthy, fulfilling lives'. In broadening the remit of the Board, we feel that this has helped to encourage the much needed 'joined up' thinking between the NHS and the local authority.

This year has proved to be extremely busy and challenging for the Board. At the beginning of the municipal year we agreed to carry out three major pieces of work – covering Childhood Obesity, Adult Day Services and Older People's Mental Health Services. However, following a request from Council we also carried out an extensive piece of work investigating the fire safety standards of the Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust's PFI Buildings. In addition, we have contributed to the new NHS Performance Management process 'Annual Health Check', and considered the proposals to reconfigure Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and NHS Ambulance Trusts across the region. In view of such a heavy workload this year, I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Members of the Board for their commitment and contribution to the work of the Board. In particular, we continue to value the contributions made by our three co-opted members who have represented the views of Leeds Voice, the Service Users and Carers Alliance Group and the Leeds City Wide Forum for Patient and Public Involvement.

Next year also brings exciting challenges to the Board as the formal consultation process for the Making Leeds Better Programme is scheduled for early 2007. This programme clearly involves a substantial variation and development of health services in Leeds and therefore this will be a major piece of work. Following concerns raised about the new Dental Contract, we have also recommended that the new Board conducts an Inquiry into this as a matter of urgency. Finally, I look forward to seeing progress against our latest recommendations, and to the further development of Health Scrutiny in the future.

Cllr Brenda Lancaster, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing)

Inquiry into the Fire Safety Standards of Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust PFI Buildings

Following a request from Council, the Board agreed in October 2005 to consider the fire safety standards of the Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust's PFI Buildings. During our Inquiry, we did not receive any evidence that suggested that the buildings themselves were unsafe, nor that they contradicted fire regulations. However, we were very concerned to hear evidence about the lack of a consistent approach towards fire safety training for staff within the buildings. In view of the vulnerability of the client group, many patients rely on staff to evacuate them safely in the event of a fire. Fire evacuation procedures are therefore only effective if appropriate training is provided.

As a result of our Inquiry, we acknowledged the complexities surrounding the existing fire safety regulations and guidance for NHS buildings. We strongly believe that there is a lack of a sufficiently comprehensive approach nationally towards designing and implementing fire safety standards within NHS buildings. Importantly, our Inquiry highlighted that there is a lack of an independent inspectorate within the NHS structure to oversee the fire safety issues of an initial build and ongoing implementation and maintenance of fire safety procedures. In response to these issues we exercised our powers under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and wrote to the Secretary of State for Health to express our concerns. The Trust and Accent (PFI partner) have commissioned a further review on the design, construction and management of the three PFI buildings in respect of fire safety. The findings of this review will be reported back to the Board in July 2006.



Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust

“Our Inquiry has highlighted a lack of a sufficiently comprehensive approach nationally towards designing and implementing fire safety standards within NHS buildings. There is also a lack of an independent inspectorate within the NHS structure to oversee fire safety issues. We have therefore written to the Secretary of State for Health outlining our concerns and look forward to receiving a response from her on this matter”.
Cllr Brenda Lancaster

Our main recommendations were as follows:

- *That the Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing) writes to the Secretary of State for Health outlining the concerns raised by the Board about the lack of an independent inspectorate overseeing the design and operational elements of NHS buildings in terms of fire safety.*
- *We recommend that, for future Leeds NHS builds (including partnership builds), a clear and transparent process is established to specifically address issues of fire safety for all staff, users and visitors, and that this process is clearly documented.*
- *That the Trust reviews its contractual procedures in relation to the formal handover of new buildings to ensure that agreed specifications have been met.*
- *That the Trust and Accent carry out an audit of staff training immediately and report the findings of this audit to the Trust's Health and Safety Committee for consideration and action.*
- *That an update report on the matter of false alarms within the Trust's three PFI buildings is brought back to the Scrutiny Board (Health and Wellbeing) in 12 months.*

Inquiry into Childhood Obesity Prevention & Management

At the beginning of the municipal year, we identified childhood obesity as being a key public health issue both nationally and locally and therefore we agreed to carry out an Inquiry into this matter. As a result of our Inquiry, we have come to recognise that obesity is very much a complex condition that has contributing factors on a variety of levels. In view of this, we recognised the need to develop comprehensive and multi-level interventions that can be sustained over the long term. During our Inquiry, we followed the development of a new Leeds Childhood Obesity Strategy. We are pleased to note that the recommendations set out within this Strategy are targeted at addressing many of the concerns raised during

our own Inquiry. Our recommendations therefore focus on the need to raise greater awareness of the issues surrounding childhood obesity and to particularly strengthen the links between the planning agenda and health. Our main recommendations were as follows:

- *That all planners and providers of children and young people's services endorse the recommendations set out within the draft Leeds Childhood Obesity Strategy;*
- *That Children Leeds investigates the opportunities for formal and informal physical recreation and play in different areas of Leeds and varying take up in different social groups;*
- *That a representative from the Council's Development Department becomes a member of the Leeds Childhood Obesity Strategy Group to help strengthen the links between the planning agenda and health.*



The Board watches the DVD 'Can't Wait to be Healthy – A Plan for Leeds'. Produced with the support of young people, it addresses issues about obesity.

Adult Day Services Review

Day services for adults were established under legislation that is now over thirty years old. Whilst such services have evolved over the ensuing period of time, more recent reviews and national guidelines indicate that they need to be modernised further to reflect current needs and customer expectations. In view of this, we agreed to carry out a review of adult day services in Leeds. However, at the time of our Inquiry, we acknowledged that day services were undergoing a major modernisation programme in Leeds and that this was at various stages of development. During our Inquiry, we ensured that the views of service users and carers and the voluntary sector were considered. Overall, we concluded that a modern service should be designed around the needs of the individual, in non-stigmatised settings and where buildings are designed to meet the service requirements. In view of this, our recommendations were as follows:

- *That services should be less about Social Services and more about the Council as a whole, as all departments should be working together in a joined up way. This should be considered further by the Director of Adult Services who should in particular examine the potential of commissioning the Learning and Leisure Department to deliver more extensive city wide support for disabled adults.*
- *The Director of Adult Services should ensure that day services are 'person centred' and help people to achieve their personal objectives, promote independence and enable access to socially inclusive services. This will require that service users are given the opportunity and are empowered to plan and deliver more appropriate services.*
- *That the Council, with its NHS commissioning partners, works effectively with organisations representing the voluntary sector (e.g. Leeds Voice, Voluntary Action Leeds, Volition, the Learning Disability Voluntary Forum etc) to map all voluntary sector day services, and ensures that the potential of the voluntary sector is fully utilised as services are redesigned and developed.*

Inquiry into Older People's Mental Health Services in Leeds

It is recognised, both nationally and locally, that older people with mental health problems have not benefited from some of the service developments seen in younger adult health services or for those older people without mental illness. Whilst we acknowledge that improvements have been made in recent years to services for older people with mental health problems in Leeds, there was a clear message from key partners during our Inquiry that resources remain tied up to a disproportionate degree in reactive, acute and institutionalised services and that not enough is being targeted at preventative measures. In sharing this frustration with key partners, we are now pleased to note that the current redesign proposals for older people's mental health services in Leeds aim to address this issue. In successfully achieving the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP) funding bid in November 2005, we now expect to see this new resource being used to accelerate the whole system redesign needed to carry out the changes required and sustain the vision in the longer term for older people with mental health problems. As a result of our Inquiry we made a number of recommendations. These included the following :

- *That the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy for delivering the POPP Programme in Leeds is brought back to the Scrutiny Board at an appropriate time*
- *That the Leeds PCTs ensure that the Leeds Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression in Older People is shared with all GPs in Leeds for information and use. Also, details of where GPs can access further information and support on this matter should be made available.*
- *That the Older People's Modernisation Team leads on proactively seeking methods of raising awareness of older people's mental health services in Leeds.*

"The £4.1 million POPP bid funding is an excellent achievement for Leeds and we would like to congratulate everyone who dedicated their time and effort into producing the bid application.

We now expect to see this new resource being used to accelerate the whole system redesign needed to both carry out the changes effectively and sustain the vision in the longer term for older people with mental health problems".
Cllr Brenda Lancaster

Proposals to reconfigure Renal Services in Leeds

In March 2006, we considered the proposals of Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to reconfigure renal services in Leeds. We heard the views of representatives from the Trust, the Renal Services Strategy Group, Royal College of Nursing, UNISON and the LGI Kidney Patients Association on the proposals. Following concerns raised about the level of consultation carried out with patients and carers, we recommended to the Trust that further consultation is carried out with patients on the proposals and that this is conducted in an open and transparent manner. The Trust accepted our recommendation and therefore we will continue to monitor this matter in the new municipal year.



The Board considers the proposals to reconfigure Renal Services in Leeds

Ensuring a Patient-led NHS - Consultation Process

The NHS is undergoing major organisational changes in line with the Government's vision for a patient-led NHS. In January 2006, the West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority held a seminar in Bradford to discuss with Scrutiny Members the reconfiguration proposals for Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and NHS Ambulance Trusts in the region.

In March 2006, we considered these proposals in greater detail and provided a response to the West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority in line with its formal consultation process.



Members of the Board discuss the NHS reconfiguration proposals at a West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority Seminar in Bradford



The formal consultation process for the Making Leeds Better Programme is scheduled for early 2007. This programme clearly involves a substantial variation and development of health services in Leeds and therefore this will be a major piece of work for the Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year.

The Board's full work programme 2005/06

Main Inquiries:

- Inquiry into the Fire Safety Standards of Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust PFI Buildings
- Inquiry into Older People's Mental Health Services in Leeds
- Adult Day Services Review
- Inquiry into Childhood Obesity Prevention and Management

Previous Inquiries – Formal Responses and update reports:

- MRSA Inquiry
- Sexual Health Inquiry
- Delayed Hospital Discharges Inquiry
- Inquiry into Social Services Transport Arrangements
- Inquiry into Recruitment and Retention of Social Services Staff
- Smoking in Public Places Inquiry

Other:

- Proposed closure of East Keswick Branch Surgery
- Adaptations Agency – Annual Report and Progress Report
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – NHS Performance Rating 2004/2005
- NHS Annual Health Check
- NHS Dentistry
- Challenging Age Discrimination Scrutiny Group – Bi-monthly Update Reports
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – Update on the Trust's Financial Recovery Plans
- Food Safety Service Strategy
- Proposed changes to the configuration of PCTs in Leeds and regional Strategic Health Authorities and NHS Ambulance Trusts
- Proposals on the reconfiguration of Renal Services in Leeds
- Making Leeds Better – Pre-consultation engagement process
- Provision of Services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Leeds

Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)



Cllr Ralph Pryke
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)

The Chair's Summary

This has been an interesting year for the Scrutiny process. Our traditional alignment to a particular department has been replaced with a more cross cutting approach, aligning to the key priorities of the Council outlined in the Corporate Plan. For the Thriving Communities Board, this has meant our role has been to scrutinise how the Council has progressed towards achieving its strategic outcome that *'All communities are thriving and harmonious places where people are happy to live'*. Our remit has included a number of interesting areas of council work, such as 'narrowing the gap', homelessness, unemployment, decency in homes across all tenures, affordable housing, community cohesion, election issues, the library service and community facilities.

The Board has particularly focused on issues around housing and communities with our main Inquiry into Affordable Housing for Families being linked to work undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board. We were particularly keen to discuss the relationship between the success of the city and the resulting affluence and the remaining, if not growing, gap between house prices and the ability of families to afford good quality housing in areas of Leeds. The Board has recognised that this issue has repercussions on the ability of the city to retain the skills and experience of the Leeds workforce and on the ability of communities to remain thriving and vibrant. Further detail on this inquiry is included later in this report.

The Housing Act 2004 has featured in a number of discussions throughout the year, particularly with regard to those elements which have only recently been introduced. We have also considered the ability of the Council to impact on housing across all sectors, from licensing of rental properties, and bringing empty private properties back into use, to limiting development through restrictive covenants, and scrutinising the ALMO arrangements for enforcement of tenancy conditions in council housing.

Tenant involvement has been an important theme in our work this year. We considered the work of the Leeds Tenants Federation in some detail including the relationship with other housing providers. The ALMOs were also included in these discussions about tenant representation.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Members for their hard work throughout the year and the insights that they have brought to each subject we have discussed. I would also like to thank the many witnesses that have contributed to our discussions this year, without whom the varied and detailed reviews could not have taken place.

Cllr Pryke – Chair of Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Ralph Pryke
Cllr Angela Gabriel
Cllr Andrew Barker
Cllr Matthew Lobley
Cllr Robert Finnigan
Cllr Graham Hyde
Cllr Mark Phillips
Cllr Stuart Bruce
Cllr David Schofield
Cllr Mitchell Galdas
Cllr Mohammed Iqbal

Inquiry into Affordable Housing for Families

Our main inquiry this year was into Affordable Housing for Families. This followed on from a referral from Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) after a detailed inquiry into the impact of housing conditions on the welfare of children and young people. They identified a need for greater provision of affordable housing for families in the Leeds area and the Thriving Communities Board examined the issue of provision in greater depth.

Our inquiry focused on the Council's housing stock and lettings policy and the measures being introduced to match provision with need. We discussed how empty properties are dealt with (and the Council's performance in this regard), and provision of affordable homes through Housing Associations. We also considered the ways in which newly built properties can be made available at a lower cost and we have received some detail of the schemes taking place in Leeds. We have acknowledged that this is a complex problem and we have needed to take on board the current market trends, the economic success of the city and the potential for creating a gap between what the housing market is providing and the purchasing power of all sections of the community. This inquiry has highlighted the continuing and vital role of the Council and Housing Associations in managing the social housing stock within the city effectively, meeting the housing needs of a wide range of people, many of whom are key to the city's economic wellbeing.

Some of our main recommendations were:

That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing takes forward the proposal to promote moves for people under occupying council tenancies, and also that possible management incentives for ALMOs to sensitively promote the policy are considered.

That the Neighbourhoods and Housing department develop stronger links with RSLs, particularly in establishing nomination agreements.

That the Affordable Housing Task Group develops further affordable housing schemes in Leeds and takes note of key research findings and best practice being established nationally.

That clear criteria for access to affordable housing is developed for all schemes, which emphasise maintenance of local links and prioritise those who have been displaced through regeneration activities.

That the department considers the future funding arrangements for the Empty Property Team.

"The provision of affordable housing is a national and multi agency issue. We wanted to consider what is being done in Leeds, across a number of sectors, to provide affordable homes for families who might otherwise not be able to stay in our vibrant and successful city."

Cllr Pryke – Chair of Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)

Radical change urged to boost family homes

'Stop cities becoming grey deserts'

Yorkshire Post headline

An interesting aspect of the inquiry was the role of regeneration schemes in some inner areas of the city which are intended to encourage more sustainable communities. The low cost home ownership scheme in Gipton received our particular attention, as did the Golden Triangle Partnership of Leeds, York and Harrogate which aims to provide affordable housing in areas that would normally be beyond the economic reach of many.

We also considered how such schemes are being promoted and the criteria for eligibility for new build affordable housing. These were key themes which emerged during our inquiry.

Tenant Involvement

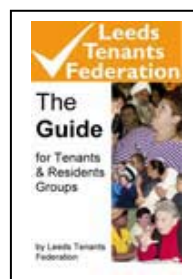
Some of our work this year has focused on tenant involvement. We wanted to scrutinise how tenants are involved in decisions which affect the way that their housing is run. We invited the Leeds Tenants Federation (LTF) and the six Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) in Leeds to a number of our meetings to discuss various aspects of tenant involvement. We were particularly interested in the impact and effectiveness of the LTF and the financial support that it provides to tenants and residents associations across Leeds.

We looked into the criteria for receiving this financial support and the arrangements for the LTF to contribute to discussions with the Neighbourhoods and Housing department at a strategic level.

Our discussions with the ALMOs focused on tenant representation, including consultation and monitoring arrangements and how ALMOs ensured that tenants were consulted thoroughly on issues of interest. This has been a particular issue during the ALMO review and we wished to establish how tenants were being consulted and communicated with. Our main concern was that the review was transparent and that tenants understood the options being considered. We were pleased to discuss these issues with the relevant Executive Board Member, which provided us with a helpful basis for our inquiries.

“We have taken the issues of tenant consultation and involvement on board this year and have had discussions with ALMOs, the Strategic Landlord and the Leeds Tenants Federation in order to establish how these organisations are working together for the benefit of tenants.”

Cllr Pryke, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)



LTF publications

Narrowing the Gap

The Narrowing the Gap agenda is acknowledged as a huge and complex one and we have aimed to stimulate the discussion in terms of how services are contributing. We received detailed information from the Learning and Leisure department on how arts and events, museums and galleries, libraries, parks and countryside and sport and active recreation all contribute to 'narrowing the gap'. We felt that it was an important discussion for the Scrutiny Board to have, particularly as we feel this aim will only be fulfilled if there is deliberate action at all levels of the Council. We noted some principles which appear to be the bedrock of narrowing the gap activity in Learning and Leisure: that many of the services are free at the point of use (or have concessions), that the LeedsCard and Breeze Card offer discounts, that the department aims to consult and engage with communities within areas of greatest identified need along with targeted programmes and that external sources of funding (including Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal) are aimed at areas of deprivation.

We have begun these discussions this year, but we acknowledge that this is only the beginning of the work which Scrutiny can undertake to examine how Council services are working to 'narrow the gap'. We expect that future Boards will be keen to carry this forward.

The Board's full work programme 2005/06

- Inquiry into affordable housing for families
- Review of election polling stations and districts
- Departmental performance information
- ALMO performance information
- Restrictive covenants
- Empty properties
- Community centres review
- Community cohesion
- Leeds Tenants Federation and tenant involvement in ALMOs
- National Library Standards and performance of Leeds libraries
- Fitness of private sector housing
- Asylum seekers
- Gypsies and travellers
- Hostel closures
- Area Delivery Plans
- ALMO review
- Local Education Authority inspection report
- ALMO enforcement of tenancy conditions
- Implementation of the Housing Act 2004
- External audit – Review of district partnerships
- External audit – Review of partnership working
- Narrowing the gap

“All communities are thriving and harmonious places where people are happy to live”

We will narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged people and the rest of the city

We will reduce unemployment amongst major target groups

We will enhance Leeds' town and district centres and city centre

We will develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

We will create a sense of belonging for all communities and encourage active involvement in community life

We will make sure our community facilities meet the needs of local communities now and in the future.



Scrutiny Board

(Children and Young People)



*Cllr John Bale
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)*

Membership of the Board:

Councillor John Bale (Chair)
Councillor Richard Brett
Councillor Penny Ewens
Councillor Ronald Feldman
Councillor Kabeer Hussain
Councillor Valerie Kendall
Councillor Lisa Mulherin
Councillor Tom Murray
Councillor Karen Renshaw
Councillor Brian Selby

Mr Tony Britten
Prof Peter Gosden
Mr Robert Greaves
Mrs Sue Knights
Mr Cluny Macpherson
Ms Georgia Cooper
Ms Celia Foote
Mr Paul Gathercole
Mr Tim Hales
Mrs Sandra Hutchinson

The Chair's Summary

It has been both a privilege and a challenge to chair the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) in its first year: a privilege to work with so many colleagues, both on the Board and as participants in our inquiries, who are genuinely committed to a better future for our children and young people; and a challenge to make the best use of our limited resources trying to focus on a small number of key issues, yet at the same time retaining a broad overview of the world of children's services.

There is further work to be done to improve our capacity to meet these challenges, but I have no doubt about Board Members' commitment and appetite to ensure that scrutiny of this crucial area of the council's responsibilities is carried out effectively.

We have had to be extremely rigorous and focused in our choice of inquiries this year. We undertook four major pieces of work - influenced by a combination of national and local factors - covering the Children Act, secondary achievement, housing conditions and the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) which have replaced special schools in Leeds.

The Board worked hard, and I believe successfully, to ensure that its work programme crossed the whole range of services to children and young people, and not to fall into the trap of being an education scrutiny board with extra bits added on. We have had quite a strong focus on the needs of looked after children, and have also considered youth justice and the youth service over the course of the year.

We have found the introduction of the "Members' questions" agenda item to be a useful way of developing a positive ongoing dialogue about current topics with senior officers, without the need for detailed work on every issue. This has helped us to manage our work programme more effectively, although we have still required five additional meetings to complete our inquiries. I would like to thank all members of the Board for their commitment to these meetings and the additional work undertaken through working groups and a total of 18 visits. These extra activities play a vital role in presenting a more rounded picture in our inquiry reports, balancing the strategic overview with practical activity on the ground.

A particularly exciting development this year has been the direct involvement of children and young people in our work, ranging from a group of young people who met with councillors to talk about their experiences of secondary education to the Young People's Scrutiny Forum, who carried out their own inquiry into fair-trade in schools. We have also been happy to welcome parents and carers to participate directly in some of our work, notably on the SILCs and the Children Act. This is just a beginning and I look forward to seeing such participation becoming a more regular feature of all our work.

My special thanks are due to the officers whose professionalism and commitment has enabled us to complete what seemed at the outset to be a dauntingly ambitious programme of work.

Cllr John Bale
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)



The Young People's Scrutiny Forum



Report of the Young people's Scrutiny Forum

Fairtrade in Schools

In November 2005 the Youth Council presented their manifesto to the full Council. The main target was supporting Fairtrade. As a result the Scrutiny Board set up the Young People's Scrutiny Forum to look at ways in which schools could be encouraged to become more involved in Fairtrade. The inquiry was carried out entirely by young people, supported by Scrutiny Unit and youth work staff.

The main recommendations from the Inquiry were:

- That Education Leeds and City Services undertake an awareness raising campaign with schools about changes that can be made within catering contracts;
- That Education Leeds investigates the use of 'sale or return' for Fairtrade vending machines;
- That Education Leeds encourages and supports all schools in putting Fairtrade on the curriculum including undertaking assemblies on Fairtrade
- That schools are encouraged to: consider becoming Fairtrade schools; review their food suppliers; join together to develop Fairtrade ideas; and sell Fairtrade products at school fairs and events.



Holly Dixon and Simon Dowling presenting the Fairtrade report to Cllr Bale

"We would like to thank the City Council for giving us the opportunity to undertake this work and for arranging for us to speak to different people. It has taught us a lot about how the Council works and how young people can play an important role in influencing decisions. It has also been fun."
 Young People's Scrutiny Forum

Inquiry into the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres

The original trigger for this piece of work was the budgetary and staffing difficulties faced by the North West SILC immediately after it opened in January 2005. The Scrutiny Board (Lifelong Learning) carried out some initial scrutiny in this area in April and May 2005, but recommended that a fuller inquiry should be undertaken in the autumn, focusing on any lessons to be learned from how the process of transition from three special schools to one SILC was managed.

One of the strong messages coming from this early scrutiny was the high financial cost of the SILC partnership approach. Therefore, in agreeing to take up this suggested area of scrutiny, the Board decided to look not just at the lessons to be learned from the establishment of the North West SILC, but also at the long-term sustainability of the SILC policy in Leeds.

The Board's Inquiry took place over four sessions, with over forty witnesses giving evidence at Board meetings. In addition, members carried out eight visits to SILCs and partnership schools and received a large number of written submissions from various stakeholders.

Our main recommendations were

- That the funding model be reviewed
- That further analysis of projected pupil numbers be carried out
- That consideration be given to the location of SILC units on mainstream sites as a future accommodation model
- The need for better information for, and communication with, parents and other professionals
- That the number and location of SILC partnerships with mainstream schools be reviewed
- That change management needs to be adequately resourced
- That the North West SILC receives ongoing support from Education Leeds

“Education Leeds sees the scrutiny inquiry as an essential element of the work of revising and updating the special educational needs and inclusion policy. The proposed timetable is perfect and should help us to refine and develop the policy for submission to Executive Board early next year.”

Chris Edwards, Chief Executive, Education Leeds



Participating in the Board's discussions on the SILC Inquiry



The South SILC

Secondary Achievement

Below average levels of achievement at secondary level has been a key issue for the education service in Leeds for a number of years, and was again highlighted last year by Ofsted in their reinspection of the LEA. The Scrutiny Board therefore decided it was timely to undertake an inquiry into secondary achievement. We focused on attainment at 16, in order to keep our inquiry manageable, but we were adamant that we wanted to look at achievement for all, and not make judgements based on the national mantra of 5*A-C GCSEs. This was another inquiry which included a number of visits, to see good practice in schools.

Our main recommendations were

- That more work placements are sought, including holding an employer awareness event
- That Education Leeds considers whether it would be more beneficial to co-ordinate the work placement programme locally
- That the Board receives further information about the future funding of vocational and practical learning programmes
- That Education Leeds ensures that secondary schools receive timely information on pupils transferring from primary schools
- That a 'transfer entitlement' is developed for pupils and parents



Cockburn College of Arts



Young people from the Theatre for Change project talk to Board Members about their experience of secondary education

Implementing the Children Act in Leeds

Our work on the Children Act was organised around three themes:

- Structure – the council's officer and member arrangements for delivering children's services
- Involvement – how children and young people, their parents and carers are involved in the policy development and decision making process
- Culture – how the new multi-agency delivery of children's services is developing on the ground

In this instance we issued two formal reports. The first, interim, report dealt with structural issues and the second report covered the other two aspects of the inquiry.

Our main recommendations were

- That the Chief Executive reviews the Executive Member structure in relation to Children's Services, and shares his findings with all Councillors
- That a more systematic approach is taken to considering the impact of policies on children and young people at an early stage
- That the new consultation and engagement strategy being developed by the council includes the routine involvement of children and young people and their parents and carers
- That the Scrutiny Board continues to monitor progress in implementing the Children Act

The impact of housing conditions on the welfare of children and young people

We decided to undertake some work on housing conditions, in recognition that our role should not be limited to just those services whose obvious main focus was on children and young people. We quickly identified a strong concern about inadequate levels of affordable family housing in the city, and as a result, we asked the Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities) to take up this issue in more depth, due to their expertise in this area.

Our main recommendations were:

- That Neighbourhoods and Housing take a more strategic approach to the supply of affordable family housing
- To promote moves for people under occupying council tenancies
- To improve the tracking of children and young people in vulnerable housing situations
- To look at ways in which the allocation policy can support split families
- That the Development department develops a more strategic approach to affordable family accommodation
- That all major housing developments include provision or funding for affordable housing

"It is important to look at how housing allocation can be to the benefit and security of children and young people. This is a substantial subject and I hope that the scope of the inquiry is kept within a manageable size to achieve tangible recommendations."

Councillor J L Carter, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods & Housing



Members of Newcastle's Scrutiny Commission visit to discuss scrutiny of services for looked after children

The Board's full work programme 2005/06

Main Inquiries

Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres
Implementing the Children Act in Leeds
Secondary Achievement
Impact of Housing conditions on the welfare of children and young people
Fairtrade (conducted by the Young People's Scrutiny Forum)

Outstanding Inquiries from 2004/05 completed in 2005/06

Extended Schools
Looked After Children
School Places

Performance Management and Monitoring

Education Leeds contract monitoring
Monitoring Framework for support to looked after children
Performance Management information
Post Inspection Action Plan for Leeds Youth Service
Education Post Inspection Action Plan
Action Plan in response to the Behaviour Support Inquiry

Budget and Policy Framework

Youth Justice Plan
Children and Young People's Plan

Other

Transfer from primary to secondary school
Recruitment, Retention and Workload of Children's Social Workers

Scrutiny Board

(Environment and Community Safety)



*Cllr Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Barry Anderson (Chair)
Cllr Suzi Armitage
Cllr Gareth Beevers
Cllr Graham Kirkland
Cllr Richard Lewis
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr James Monaghan
Cllr Rachel Procter
Cllr Ralph Pryke
Cllr Mohamed Rafique
Cllr Frank Robinson

The Chair's Summary

This year has been an interesting learning curve for all those involved in the Scrutiny process. We have established the relationship between Scrutiny and the Council's key priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan, which for the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Board has involved broader thinking and working across departmental boundaries. The remit of this Scrutiny Board this year has been aligned to the Council's strategic outcome that 'all neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained' and throughout the year we have maintained our focus on this part of the Corporate Plan. This has involved the Board tackling some major service priorities such as anti-social behaviour, based in Neighbourhoods and Housing and waste management, based in City Services. We have also examined the strategic approach to green and open spaces by receiving the various strategies being produced by the Learning and Leisure department. This approach has strengthened our ability to examine cross cutting issues and whilst this has at times been challenging, we have been able to influence Council services and policies at a more strategic level and establish a relationship with the relevant Corporate Priority Board.

As well as receiving performance, budget and service delivery information, we have conducted three major inquiries this year: an Inquiry into the Council's Waste Solution; an Inquiry into the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract; and an Inquiry into Anti-social Behaviour Interventions. Our choice of topics was influenced by Members' concerns and the concerns of the public on some issues, especially in relation to Anti-social Behaviour and the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract.

We have particularly focused on widening our contact with stakeholders during the Inquiries. We spent time with young people discussing their views on anti-social behaviour and we have spoken to local environmental groups regarding how we deal with waste as a city – this approach has given us new and varied insights into a number of issues.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board Members for their hard work and the time they have committed to the Scrutiny Board this year. I would also like to thank those who have contributed to our programme of work, particularly those people external to the Council who have been willing to share in our discussions.

Cllr Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety)

Inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions

Anti-social behaviour is an issue which has been prominent in the news in the last few years. This coverage seems to have particularly focused on young people and therefore our inquiry focused on this age group. Our question was, how do the Authority and its partners tackle the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour and put preventative measures in place. We consulted with a wide range of service providers across the Council and, importantly, we spent time with a group of young people at the receiving end of various mechanisms employed in response to anti-social behaviour. This gave us an important insight into perceptions and needs of various groups of people and our conclusions and recommendations have reflected this.

Whilst we reminded ourselves of the Anti-social Behaviour Order mechanism, the thrust of our inquiry was the opportunity the Council and its partners have to discourage anti-social behaviour and tackle the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour. We discussed in detail the innovative approaches being employed by a number of Council departments, particularly the schemes in place to work alongside young people in positive ways.

“This inquiry gave us a unique opportunity to interact with young people at the receiving end of the Council’s policies. Not only did we discuss local democracy and intergenerational relationships – we had a lot of fun too!”
Cllr Anderson – Chair

Our challenge during the inquiry was to balance the need to protect the wider community from distressing and intimidating behaviour with the need to understand varying levels of tolerance and the misconceptions that are widely circulated, particularly between different generations. We took as our foundation the definition of anti-social behaviour as; *‘Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not in the same household’*.

We agreed that the capacity for diversionary, supportive and preventative measures is key, and should be maximised. Our key message was that there are a range of measures to deal with anti-social behaviour and ASBOs should only be used when other interventions have not been successful.



One of the collages that came out of the workshop some young people ran for us.

Our main recommendations were:

That the Neighbourhoods and Housing department consider how other measures are utilised before ASBOs are put in place in order to preserve the ASBO as a measure of last resort, in most cases. We also recommend that ASBOs are not used routinely in circumstances involving domestic violence or where there are mental health issues.

That the Director of Children’s Services and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit consider and review the implications of the Children Act with regard to anti-social behaviour measures, and update the appropriate Scrutiny Board of any issues arising.

That consideration is given to the provision of additional PCSOs and Neighbourhood Wardens throughout the city to support the various strategies for tackling anti-social behaviour.

*This inquiry is linked to activities described in the **Council Plan 2005-06** which states that this year, the Council will ‘reduce anti-social behaviour and improve the local environment through a combination of early intervention, diversion and enforcement, using targeted multi-agency intervention programmes across the city’.*

Inquiry into the Council's Waste Solution

This inquiry focused on the Council's decisions around providing a Waste Solution for the city's municipal waste over the next thirty years. We particularly focused on recovery technology and meeting targets for the diversion of biodegradable and recyclable waste from landfill, and our concern was how the Council would avoid the potentially large financial penalties for exceeding landfill quotas. The inquiry aimed to consider the Council's technical options for the sorting and disposal of waste and to discuss the various elements of the waste management process and how each could be provided. The inquiry also considered how the Council could divert waste from landfill, particularly with regard to meeting the targets set within the Landfill Directive and Waste and Emissions Trading Act.

Since starting the inquiry, ideas have formed into proposals and the Executive Board has received information on a potential sustainable energy and resource park. This is something we recognise as potentially bringing economic and environmental benefits to the area of Leeds in which it is sited.

Whilst we have expressed some reservations throughout the inquiry, we have agreed that the most viable option for the Council is a combination of materials recycling and energy from waste. We stress throughout our comments and recommendations that consultation, education and Member involvement at ward level is the key to any project. We have been acutely aware that issues relating to collection and disposal of waste are high profile and impact directly on the residents of the city – our main message to the department is to prepare carefully and undertake as much public and Member consultation as possible.

"This inquiry is welcomed and will support the decisions which need to be taken in order to develop a long term waste solution for the city."

Randal Brown, Director City Services



We met with Leeds Organic Growers during the Waste Solution Inquiry



Some of our main recommendations were:

That the department undertakes an analysis of the amount of waste required to ensure the Energy from Waste Plant is sustainable. We recommend that this does not affect recycling targets.

That the department considers the relationship between the waste solution and the Integrated Waste Strategy and ensure that there is scope for future consideration of the Council's role in dealing with all the city's waste.

That when the specification is agreed, consideration be given to potential future capacity, to allow for the possibility, for example, for a contribution to a regional waste strategy.

That full public debate takes place regarding the potential sites and that Ward Members are included in this at an early stage.

That the department considers the ways in which social enterprises and community based composting schemes can contribute to the waste management process and in particular contributing to educational initiatives.

The Board's full work programme 2005/06

- Inquiry into Anti-social Behaviour Interventions
- Evaluation of Police Community Support Officers
- Closure of Public Rights of Way for the Purposes of Crime Prevention
- Road Safety Issues and Reduction of Adult Road Casualties
- Streetlighting Private Finance Initiative
- Inquiry into the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract
- Parks and Green Space Strategy
- Allotments Strategy
- Fixed Play Strategy
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Sports Pitch Strategy
- Inquiry into the Council's Waste Solution
- Contaminated Land
- School Travel Plans
- Performance Information
- Use of Section 106 Money
- Monitoring of recommendations made previously
- Budget information



“The Scrutiny Board’s contribution to the Council’s strategic aims is where our focus should be, helping to drive forward long term strategies and providing a critical eye on the cross cutting nature of our corporate priorities. In the final analysis, however, this should be borne out in the excellence of the delivery of the everyday services which the residents of Leeds need and value.”

*Cllr Barry Anderson, Chair of Scrutiny Board
(Environment and Community Safety)*

Supporting Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Support Unit is part of Legal and Democratic Services. This group of officers is a dedicated resource for the Scrutiny Boards with each Board having a Principal Scrutiny Adviser assigned to help manage the Board's work, liaise with departments and offer advice on protocol and the constitutional requirements of the Scrutiny Process. The Unit also provides induction training for new Members and training programmes for all Members.

The Unit assists the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop protocols and guidance notes which are in place to provide a framework for the Boards. These guidance notes currently cover:

- Arrangements for Call In
- Receiving requests for Scrutiny
- Presentation of evidence and reports to the Boards
- Minority Reports
- Working Groups
- Scrutiny of Outside Organisations.

This information can be found in the Constitution.

The Scrutiny Support Unit has also produced a '**Guide to Scrutiny**' along with accompanying leaflets for officers, Members and the public when contributing to or attending Scrutiny Boards. Copies of these can be obtained from the Scrutiny Support Unit or can be downloaded from the website page.

The Unit is increasing its regional role, developing links with other authorities, particularly through the Health Scrutiny function and has also worked closely with the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Improvement and Development Agency in developing the scrutiny function and establishing good practice.

Historically the various teams which make up Democratic Services have surveyed Members' opinions individually as part of our commitment to continuously improve the services we provide.

This year we have produced and distributed a combined Democratic Services questionnaire.

Included in this Annual Report are details of Democratic Services' performance management information relating to Scrutiny and plans to improve how the Scrutiny process is supported, particularly in regard to the mission statement of Democratic Services:

'To ensure that the Council's democratic arrangements are developed and supported in such a way as to provide open, responsive and accountable decision making by the Council for all the people of Leeds.'

Survey Results

Each year as part of our commitment to continuously improve, Scrutiny Support surveys Members' opinions of the services we provide. This year, as part of a departmental drive to improve communication, and in response to Members' comments last year with regard to the number of questionnaires they were asked to fill in, we produced and distributed a combined 'Democratic Services' questionnaire. This included a number of questions relating to services the Scrutiny Support Unit provide.

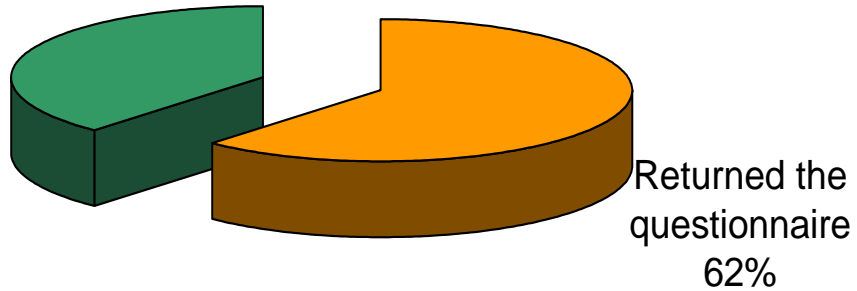
We received an excellent response to the survey with 62% of Members completing a questionnaire. Overall, we were very pleased with the results which show a very high level of satisfaction with the services we provide.

The specific issues which were raised in response to the questionnaire will be dealt with individually or fed into the Scrutiny Support and/or Democratic Services improvement planning process as appropriate.

Many thanks to everybody who filled in a questionnaire. The results are on the following pages.

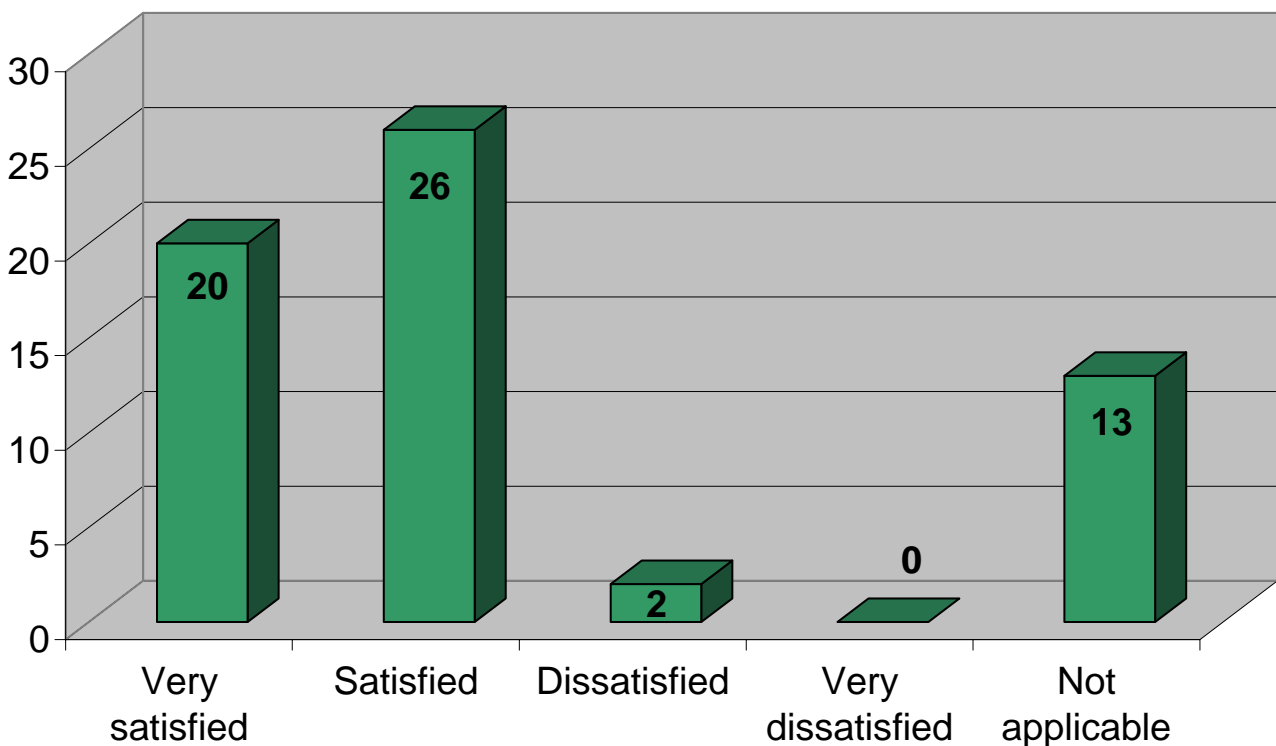
62% of Members returned the questionnaire

Did not return the questionnaire
38%

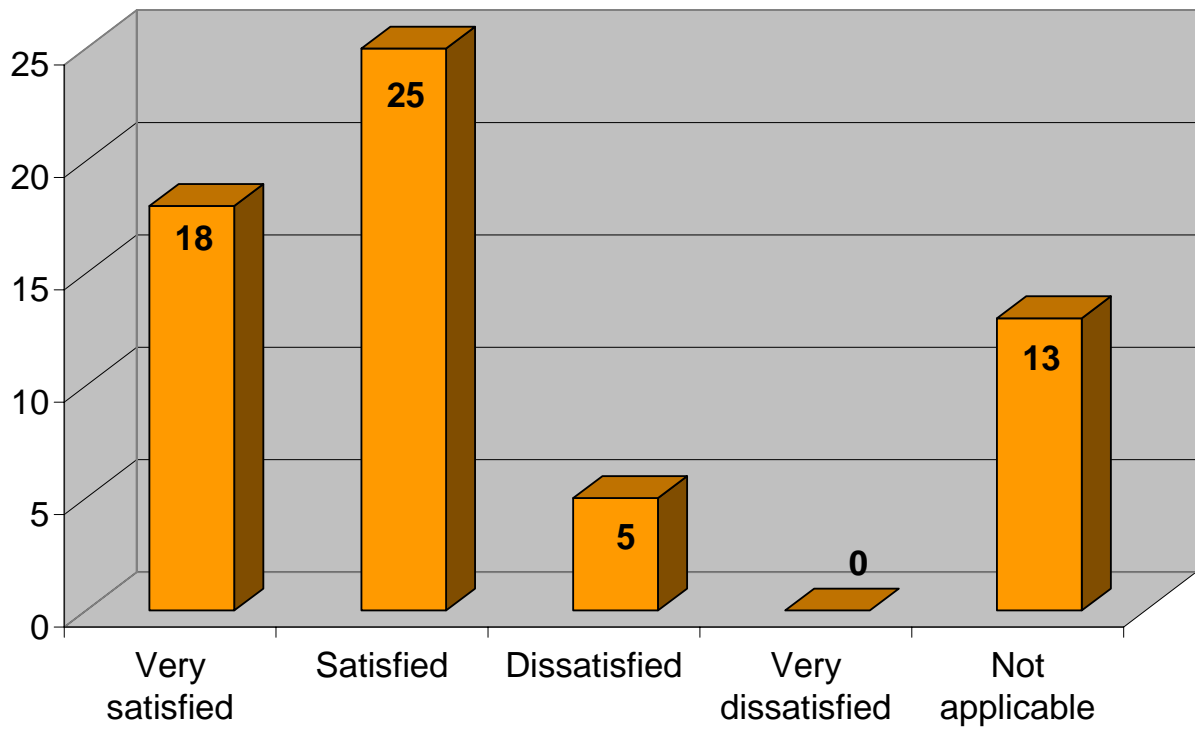


96% of Members were satisfied with scrutiny staff overall

How satisfied are you with the quality of support provided by scrutiny support staff overall?



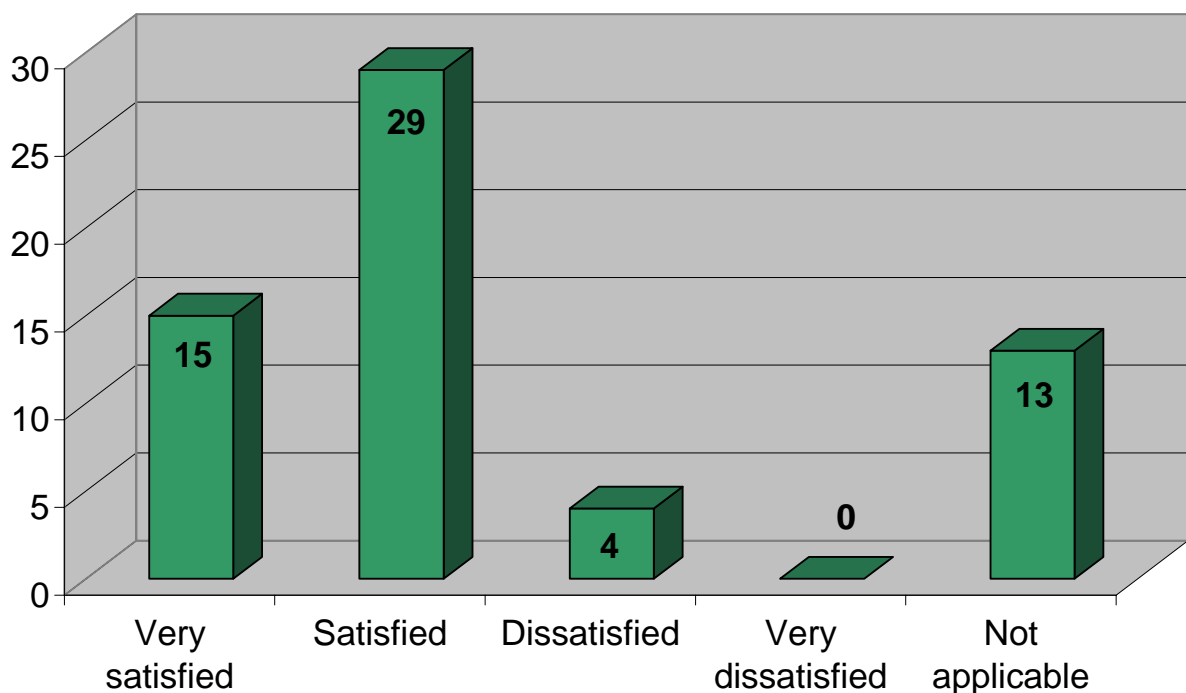
How satisfied are you with the quality of final inquiry reports?



90% of Members were satisfied with the quality of final inquiry reports

92% of Members were satisfied with the collation and presentation of evidence

How satisfied are you with the collation and presentation of evidence?



Development of Overview and Scrutiny

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states:

“To achieve enhanced accountability and transparency of the decision making process, effective overview and scrutiny is essential. Overview and scrutiny committees are the key element of executive arrangements. Their role should, therefore, include both:

- *Developing and reviewing policy; and*
- *Holding the executive to account.”*

Whilst members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree wholeheartedly with these words, it is no surprise, given the relatively short period of time since the introduction of the Scrutiny system compared to the time in which the committee system was operating, that Scrutiny is still working towards achieving its full potential. Since 2000 the Council has striven to identify pitfalls or risks which have hindered the development of Scrutiny and to come up with practical solutions to promote continuous improvements. Nevertheless we are aware that as a maturing process new issues will constantly emerge which require addressing. Some of these are a result of new service delivery arrangements, for example Overview and Scrutiny's relationship with Area Committees and the developing Local Area Agreements. Others are the result of conflicting definitions of Overview and Scrutiny, busy work programmes and a natural tension between the Executive and Scrutiny.

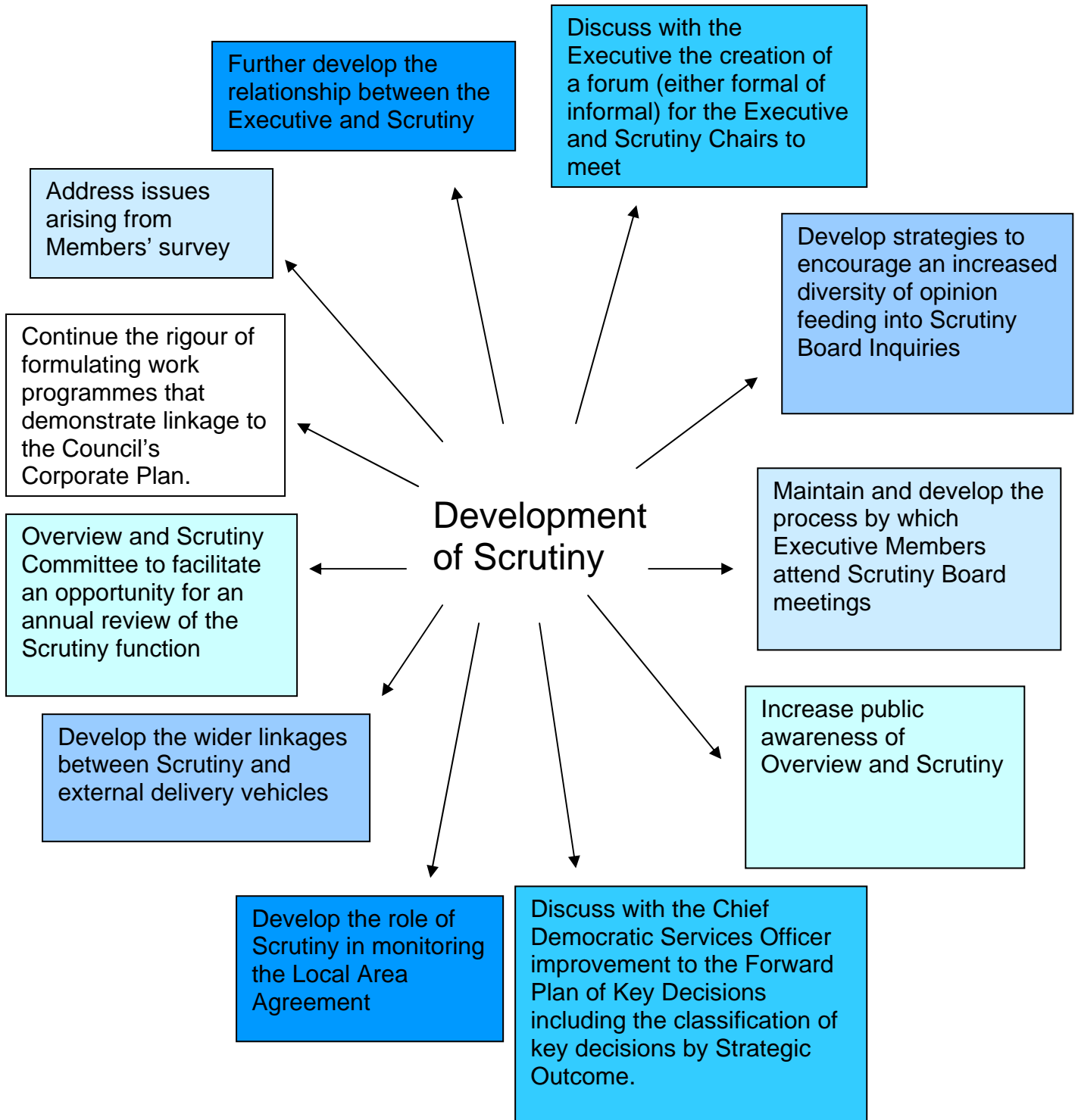
This year as in previous years we have seen a number of issues emerge. Some operational issues have been dealt with as and when they have arisen, for example our reaffirmation of support for the current Call In arrangements and suggested changes to the presentation of final reports.

Other issues however are more substantial and these relate to dialogue and engagement between the Executive Board and Scrutiny. Scrutiny needs to be seen by Members and officers as a legitimate and valuable function and a role that ultimately has parity of esteem with the Executive.

To help us crystallise our thoughts about this and other issues facing Scrutiny we asked the I&DeA and an accredited Member peer to facilitate an evaluation workshop. The remit for the session was to *discuss and demonstrate achievements, identify areas for improvement, and highlight potential barriers to the improvement of Scrutiny at Leeds City Council.*

Arising from that session Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Chairs have agreed an Action Plan of areas for improvement, our overriding priority being the further development of the relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive. We have also identified those actions to be taken to address issues arising from the survey.

Action Plan



List of publications available from the Scrutiny Support Unit

Guide to Scrutiny – comprehensive publication

Information Leaflets:

Guide to Scrutiny – officers

Guide to Scrutiny – Members

Guide to Scrutiny – external witnesses

Final Reports issued in 2005/06:

- Adult Day Services Review
- Affordable Housing
- Anti-Social Behaviour Interventions
- Childhood Obesity Prevention and Management
- Contract Management
- Energy and Water Management
- Extended Schools
- Fairtrade in Schools
- Fire Safety Standards of Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust's PFI Buildings
- Implementing the Children Act - Interim Report
- Implementing the Children Act
- The Impact of Housing Conditions on the Welfare of Children and Young People
- Looked After Children
- Older People's Mental Health Services in Leeds
- Out of Hours Service
- Procedures and Consultation Arrangements for Bus companies changing timetables and routes
- Recruitment, Retention and Workload of Children's Social Workers
- Safety Well being and Attendance
- Secondary Achievement
- School Places
- Scrutiny of the Financial Plan
- Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres
- Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract
- Translation Services
- Waste Solutions
- Flooding in Leeds
- Workforce Planning
- Avoiding Alcohol Misuse

A list of all final reports since 1999 can be found on our internet site.

www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny

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