

# Scrutiny Board

## (Neighbourhoods and Housing)



*Cllr Ralph Pryke  
Chair of Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing)*

### **Membership of the Board:**

Cllr Ralph Pryke (Chair)  
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Cllr Angela Gabriel  
Cllr Graham Hyde  
Cllr Mohammed Rafique  
Cllr Suzie Armitage  
Cllr Javaid Akhtar  
Cllr Penny Ewens  
Cllr Mark Phillips  
Cllr David Schofield  
Cllr Robert Finnigan

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

This year our programme has ranged from the highly strategic priorities of the Council to the study of the impact of frontline services on communities. We have discussed issues that are affecting vulnerable individuals and been involved in the discussions around fundamental structure shifts and broader partnerships such as Safer Leeds.

My colleagues on the Board have injected a great deal of compassion and understanding of individual topics, which has been of immeasurable value and has breathed life into some of the difficult subjects we have chosen to tackle as a Board. I have appreciated the personal illustrations that Members have shared, which have reminded us all that whilst we are discussing strategies and policies, there are real people with real issues at the end of the process. We have tried to make these links in our main inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck and our discussions around the ALMOs and Area Management.

We are grateful to the department for the amount of information they have produced and discussed in great detail with us. We all acknowledge that part of our job is to hold decision makers to account and to drive improvement in performance and we have undertaken this role with co-operation and good humour from officers and Members alike.

Our aim has been to challenge and hold to account the decision makers, and we were therefore pleased eventually to begin a meaningful dialogue with the Executive Board Member under our 'Members Questions' item. This resulted in a lively, incisive and informative session resulting in a number of suggestions for further scrutiny, particularly in the area of community safety. I am particularly keen to see this type of dialogue continue and deepen, as it is vital that Scrutiny Boards and the Executive Board both understand each other's issues.

I have included two detailed reports on items of work we have undertaken. One is the Inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck – a project that is likely to be raised in Scrutiny again. The other, the Respect Agenda, illustrates the link between a number of pieces of work and demonstrates how the issues discussed in Scrutiny are 'live' and impact directly on people's lives.

I would like to thank Members of the Board for the time and effort they have contributed to the Board this year in developing an interesting and stimulating work programme.

**Cllr Ralph Pryke**  
**Chair of Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing)**

## ***Inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck***

This year our main focus has been on regeneration. Whilst this is a huge topic, we felt it was important to look at the detail and the ‘nuts and bolts’ of a regeneration programme and physically see the outcomes of completed schemes. This gave rise to our inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck. We included a site visit in the initial stages, which rooted our discussions in actual places and programmes.

Another reason we chose this particular scheme was the potential PFI funding hoped for. We felt that it was important for Scrutiny to have some input into this process at the very beginning. We, like the officers, were disappointed that the initial bid did not generate the funds that were needed to underpin the major regeneration taking place. However, we understand that this project will be first in line for a future round of funding. Clearly, any future Scrutiny Board will seek to be kept informed of developments here.

Our report sets out a number of observations and recommendations. We are particularly interested in how affordable housing can be introduced into the area and the huge potential of the school site that is currently being prepared for development. Shaftesbury House is also a key building for the area and we look forward to this being a ‘flagship’ project.

“Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck has largely been housing based. We have seen at first hand the issues inappropriate housing raises, particularly for families. We hope that the regeneration activity goes a long way to remedying this.”

*Cllr Pryke – Chair*

That the department ensures that lessons from previous consultation exercises are applied to the ongoing communication and consultation within Beeston Hill and Holbeck.

Having emphasised the continued importance of Government financial support, we also wish to urge the Regeneration Board to continue with those activities that are still viable and to begin to seek contingency arrangements should future PFI credits not be forthcoming.

That the appropriate Scrutiny Board receives six monthly updates on the status of the funding streams on which the current level of regeneration activity depends.



### **Our main recommendations were:**

Shaftesbury House be used as a flagship for promoting the regeneration of the area.

That clear and regular communication is offered to residents currently not included in regeneration projects in order to keep them informed of progress and the likely timescale of future schemes and that the strategy for achieving this is reported back to the Board.

That the department report back to the Board outlining the benefits and risks of extending the licensing scheme to all private landlords

That the Regeneration Board make shop fronts a priority (where this has not already been done) and that such schemes include wider factors such as traffic and environmental improvements

That consideration is given to the appropriate development of the Matthew Murray school site. We recommend that the primary consideration should be the development of affordable housing.

That wherever possible, local businesses within the regeneration area are employed to undertake regeneration activities.

That the Regeneration Partnership Manager is proactive in promoting Social Enterprise support in Beeston Hill and Holbeck with the aim of increasing the number of social enterprise businesses being supported specifically in this area.

# **Respect Agenda**

Respect is a major government initiative that broadens the drive to address anti-social behaviour. This report outlines the Respect Action Plan and the activity underway in Leeds that contributes to this agenda. Leeds has been chosen by the government to be one of the pilot areas for implementing Respect. The Respect Action Plan builds upon the government's previous work to address anti-social behaviour and we were particularly keen to be involved in the discussions around how Leeds will be implementing this. We understood that the principles apply city wide.

At an operational level, we understand that there are a number of tangible examples of delivery. Significant investments have been made in a large anti-social behaviour unit (ASBU), in joint-funding PCSOs and in neighbourhood wardens. We have made great efforts this year to review and study these elements closely, not only to gain and understanding of the relationships between these various officers but also to influence the flow of information, particularly to Elected Members.

We have acknowledged that the Authority uses the full panoply of powers available – housing powers, ASBOs, dispersal orders, crack house closures, Drinking in Public Places Order (DPPOs), and so forth. We were particularly pleased to note that the use of multi-agency targeted operations was shortlisted for the Tilley Award for best practice in crime reduction. The Signpost project has also been a feature in previous scrutiny work and we have noted how this project engages with problematic households to address anti social behaviour.

We noted that a number of the five principles on which the Action Plan is built have been covered by work already done by the Scrutiny Board, including the establishment of a family intervention project and methods of tackling anti-social behaviour. Other issues likely to be raised at future Scrutiny Boards include how the authority is establishing parenting programmes for families at risk of behaviour anti-socially, how the Face the People Sessions will be facilitated as well as a continuing focus on the role of key landlords (an issue that has also been picked up as part of the Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck inquiry).

We have done significant work on the relationship between the Police and the Council, particularly with regard to the Safer Leeds Partnership and the performance indicators related to crime reduction and community safety. By discussing the Respect Action Plan we raised the issue of how this relationship and the engagement with the public can be further enhanced, particularly through the 'face the people' mechanism now being developed. This will be a future topic for Scrutiny in the months to come.

"We have done work previously on anti-social behaviour. The Respect Action Plan was of particular interest to us as it is an extension of the work already done by the department. We hope this initiative will provide a boost to the established process of dealing with anti-social behaviour."

*Cllr Pryke - Chair*

## **Respect your street... to fight the jobs**

LEEDS has been thrust into the forefront of Tony Blair's fight to stamp out the scourge of anti-social behaviour.

The city is one of 40 places nationwide which have been chosen as Respect Action Areas by the Government, it was announced today. Civic chiefs will now be able to tap into tens of

*The Respect Action Area has been covered in the local press*

## ***PCSO Evaluation***

The evaluation of PCSOs and their impact on the local communities was an item of work that began last year. A full study was commissioned by the Scrutiny Board and we received the results of this.

This study has found that PCSOs and wardens are highly valued and have generally made a significant impact in Leeds. We acknowledge that there is however ongoing debate regarding their roles and responsibilities, particularly in terms of environmental enforcement work. Currently PCSOs prioritise anti-social behaviour and intelligence gathering while wardens concentrate on tackling environmental issues. Both have made promising achievements in terms of public reassurance, although the study has identified differences between the impact of PCSOs in inner and outer wards.

We have discussed the communication mechanisms between PCSOs and other relevant officers and Ward Members at a local level. We have been particularly keen to evaluate the role of PCSOs, not only to ascertain their level of effectiveness in the community, but also how intelligence in a local area is passed between active personnel and the local Members.

This piece of work also linked in to discussions on tasking meetings, Wardens and how we as a Council deal with ASBO enforcement and breaches.

### **The Board's full work programme 2006/07**

**Inquiry into Regeneration in Beeston Hill and Holbeck**

**Partnership Working**

**Supporting People**

**Performance Indicators**

**Respect Agenda**

**Emergency Accommodation for Young People**

**PCSO Evaluation**

**EASEL Update**

**Lettings Policy**

**Ombudsman Briefing**

**Area Management Review**

**Social Enterprise**

**Wardens Briefing**

**Asylum Seekers**

**Prostitution Strategy**

**Single Regional Housing Pot**

**Demos Report**

**Monitoring Report**

**Communications Publications**