

Scrutiny Board (City Services)



*Cllr Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Services)*

Membership of the Board:

Cllr Barry Anderson (Chair)
Cllr Ann Blackburn
Cllr Christopher Beverley
Cllr Stewart Golton
Cllr Peter Gruen
Cllr Josephine Jarosz
Cllr James Mckenna
Cllr Thomas Murray
Cllr Frank Robinson
Cllr Linda Rhodes-Clayton
Cllr Paul Wadsworth

The Chair's Summary

It has been a challenging year for the Board as the department continues to develop a number of major initiatives and review the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance contract. We quickly established working groups to monitor progress with regard to the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance contract and the integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005 – 2035 and to carry out detailed work following the decision of the Board to undertake an inquiry into Crown Cuisine. Details of the working groups and the Board's final recommendations following completion of our inquiry into Crown Cuisine are set out later in this report.

We were pleased to be able to take scrutiny in to the community this year by holding a Board meeting in the Kippax and Methley Ward. We included an open forum item on the agenda and relevant officers from the City Services Department were in attendance to respond to comments and questions raised by residents. I was delighted that over 35 members of the public, local and Parish Councillors attended the meeting. It was very well received and we had a great deal of positive feedback from it. This is clearly an effective means of engaging the public in scrutiny. The Board is mindful of the increasing importance of this which is recognised in the recent Local Government and Participation in Public Health Bill.

We took the opportunity whilst visiting the Methley and Kippax Ward to see at first hand the work of the Catering Agency. We visited Brigshaw High School and Language College to see the initiatives being promoted by the Catering Agency to provide balanced school meals under the healthy eating initiative.

We visited the Scottish Electric Contracting (SEC) Ltd headquarters at Swillington and met with the Regional Director and their Operations Manager to discuss issues on the implementation of the street lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. This was highly beneficial to all concerned as it clarified the responsibilities and issues on all sides and how they were being addressed.

We received a number of Member briefing papers on a wide range of issues with a view to undertaking further scrutiny and details of some of these are set out in this report.

We are grateful to Councillor Steve Smith, the Executive Board Member who attended and discussed with us a number of key issues that were facing the department.

It has been a privilege to Chair the Scrutiny Board (City Services) this year. I am extremely grateful to my colleagues, officers, and other witnesses who are committed to improving services to the residents of Leeds.

Councillor Barry Anderson
Chair of Scrutiny Board (City Services)

Inquiry into Crown Cuisine

We undertook this inquiry in order to review the purpose, role and core business of Crown Cuisine. We agreed that our inquiry would only apply to the commercial side of the Catering Agency (trading as Crown Cuisine). It therefore excluded the school meals service. We established a working group to undertake a detailed investigation. As part of our inquiry we carried out a detailed customer satisfaction survey and found that customers of Crown Cuisine were pleased with the overall quality of the service they receive.

"We acknowledged that the decision by Crown Cuisine not to tender for the catering contract to service the prestige developments in the new civic cultural quarter encompassing the Town Hall, Art Gallery and Library, Carriageworks, New Museum and Abbey House Museum was a major turning point in the future of Crown Cuisine"

*Councillor Barry Anderson
Chair Scrutiny Board (City Services)*



Scrutiny Board (City Services)



Our main recommendation was:

That the Director of City Services commission a report into the future operation of the Commercial Section of the Catering Agency known as Crown Cuisine during the current budget review. This is necessary in the light of Crown Cuisine's reduced turnover from £2.222 million in 2003/04 to £980,000 in 2007/2008 and a projected operating loss in the next 2 years.

That in considering the future of Crown Cuisine the Director has regard to the options available including the 3 we identified.



Our other recommendations were:

- That the cafes in Learning and Leisure venues be supported to be economic and that the prices are monitored as part of the contract to make sure they are realistic and remain affordable.
- That the Director of City Services conveys the thanks of this Scrutiny Board to all the staff of Crown Cuisine for their professionalism and consistent high quality of service.

"I was concerned that whilst the introduction of new and improved catering facilities in our parks is to be applauded the Council should retain a public conscience by ensuring that park users have a choice of cheaper catering options wherever possible"

*Councillor Peter Gruen
Member of Scrutiny Board
(City Services)*

Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative

The Board recognised the importance of the Council's Street lighting PFI contract with Scottish Electric Contracting (SEC) Ltd and were concerned at the complaints some Members were receiving on this issue.

We visited the company's Headquarters, Swillington on 12th October 2006 and met with the Regional Director North and the Operations Manager SEC together with appropriate officers from the Council.

The meeting was extremely useful and we were able to raise a number of issues and concerns directly with the company and received assurances that these were being addressed. It also provided the company with an opportunity to highlight some of their operational issues.

We were impressed at the amount of investment that had been undertaken by the company for this contract and their commitment to Leeds.

We were particularly pleased that the company had a strong recycling policy and that we were able to see at first hand the arrangements in place for carrying this out.



Scrutiny Board (City Services) about to depart for Swillington



SEC depot Swillington showing some of their new vehicles



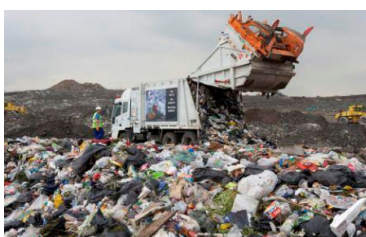
SEC's new depot Swillington



Recycling



Visit to Doncaster



Reduce the amount we bury in the ground

Working Group on the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005 - 2035

This issue has been a major piece of work for scrutiny over the last 2 years. We established a Working Group which met on three separate occasions during the year. The Board received regular progress reports in order to keep Members up to date with developments.

We received and commented upon the formal response by the City Services Department on the progress they had made in implementing the recommendations of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety) following completion of its Inquiry into the Council's waste solution strategy in April 2006.

We took the opportunity to comment on the report of the Director of City Services on the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005 -2035 which had been approved by Executive Board on the 18th October 2006 and the action plan for 2006/07-2008/09.

The Working Group visited Doncaster Council to see their Community Recycling Partnership in action.

Review of the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract



In view of Members' concerns last year with regard to this contract we established a Working Group to carry out a review of the progress made in improving the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract.

The Working Group met and considered the formal response of the City Services department to implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Community Safety) following completion of its inquiry in October 2005. These were subsequently reported to the Scrutiny Board.

In February 2007 we considered a report of the Director of City Services updating Members on the current position with regard to this contract.

We also received and commented upon the Service Improvement Plan for the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Plan which had been submitted by Glendale Managed Services for the period March 2007 to February 2008 and had the approval of the Executive Board.

Open Forum Methley and Kippax Ward



Open Forum Discussion

We were pleased at the success of a Scrutiny Board meeting held in the Methley and Kippax Ward which included an open forum item on the agenda.

Over 35 residents attended the meeting in January 2007. Local Ward and Parish Councillors took part in a lively and interesting debate covering a number of issues.

We were grateful to all the officers who attended the meeting from the City Services Department. Many officers met with residents after the meeting and in the following days to resolve a number of issues that had been identified during this session.



Residents at the open session

"I was delighted that the Scrutiny Board (City Services) took the decision to hold a meeting in my Ward. It gave local residents the opportunity to scrutinise the service provided by the City Services department and meet many of its most senior officers"

*Councillor Keith Parker
Methley & Kippax Ward Councillor*

The topics discussed during consideration of the open forum item included policies and procedures with regard to Streetscene, specific issues concerning refuse collection and recycling, highways maintenance matters, vehicles misusing private streets, ownership of trees, enforcement concerns and street lighting including the private finance initiative.

Members Briefing Papers

The Board requested a number of briefing papers on specific issues that Members had identified as areas of interest or concern and which might lead to possible areas for further scrutiny. These included:-

- *Highways Maintenance Funding*

We received a detailed report on the progress made by the department of City Services in reducing the backlog of highway maintenance repairs. Members also considered and commented upon the impact of high inflation and the Council's ability to achieve this agreed programme within its present budget.



Highway repairs Leeds

- *The School Meals Service*

We received a paper giving an overview of the school meal service provided by the Catering Agency. We considered the government agenda for improving school meals nationally and the pressures and opportunities facing the service.

Having studied details of the healthy eating initiative for schools, we visited Brigshaw high school to see how this is being put in to practice.



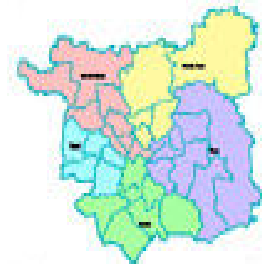
Brigshaw High School and Language Centre

- *Review of the Scheme to Control Litter by Restricting the Free Distribution of Printed Matter*

Linking in to other aspects of our work programme we reviewed how the scheme to help control litter from flyers was operating in the delineated area around the city centre and a corridor following Otley Road to the Shaw Lane/Otley Road junction, Headingley. We noted that the scheme had required intensive enforcement action in the initial stages.

- *Legislative Framework*

We considered a number of papers on the legislative framework affecting the City Services department. These included the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and the implications and progress made as a consequence of the Traffic Management Act 2004. We also looked at the services which had been delegated from the City Services department to Area Committees as set out in the Area Function Schedules 2006/2007.



Area Management Wedges

The Board's full work programme 2006/07

- **Inquiry into Crown Cuisine**
- **Progress reports from the Board's Working Group looking at Crown Cuisine**
- **Update from the Director of City Services and relevant Executive Board Member**
- **Highways Maintenance Funding – Impact of inflation on backlog of repairs**
- **Legislative framework affecting City Services**
- **The School Meals Service – The Catering Agency**
- **Implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005**
- **Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Street lighting – visit to the Scottish Electric Contracting (SEC) Ltd, Headquarters at Swillington**
- **Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)**
- **Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds 2005 – 2035 Progress reports by the Board's Working Group**
- **Streetscene Grounds Maintenance Contract Progress reports by the Board's Working Group**
- **Highways Maintenance & backlog of repairs**
- **City Services EMAS and actions taken to reduce CO2 emissions**
- **Performance Management Information 2nd and 3rd quarters**
- **Traffic management Act 2004 – implications and progress**
- **Review of the Leeds scheme to control litter from flyers and free printed material**
- **Catering provision in PFI schools**
- **Open Forum Kippax and Methley Ward**
- **Devolution of services to Area Committees from City Services department**
- **Narrowing the Gap**
- **City Services department awards and accreditation**
- **Staff Newsletter and magazine "City Scene"**