



Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

2021/22 Municipal Year Summary Report

Introduction

The role of Scrutiny is recognised nationally as a critical and integral part of the overall improvement landscape for local government, including the general accountability and governance arrangements for local councils and some other local statutory bodies.

The general Terms of Reference for all Scrutiny Boards are set out in Leeds City Council's Constitution – available here: [Scrutiny Boards \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny-boards).

While general Terms of Reference is applied to all Scrutiny Boards, the variations in the Scrutiny Boards' remits, together with their special responsibilities, are captured within [Article 6 of Leeds City Council's Constitution](#).

Article 6 also sets out the Council's agreed 'Vision for Scrutiny' which follows the nationally agreed 'Four Principles of Good Scrutiny' and sets out a number of conditions that need to be present to enable the vision to be fulfilled locally.

Scrutiny Boards usually meet in public, holding key decision makers to account, as well as providing 'critical friend' challenge and support whenever service delivery outcomes and performance expectations are not being met.

Purpose of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

The remit of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) involves focusing on services and issues affecting the lives of citizens living and working in the council's neighbourhoods to monitor progress as a citizen focused city, prioritising environmental sustainability.

Membership

Membership of all Scrutiny Boards broadly reflects the political balance of the Council and cannot include members of the Council's Executive. There is also provision for Scrutiny Boards to appoint additional non-voting Co-opted Members.

For the 2021/22 municipal year, the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) included the following members:

- Councillor Javaid Akhtar
- Councillor Barry Anderson
- Councillor Ann Blackburn
- Councillor Kayleigh Brooks
- Councillor Rebecca Charwood
- Councillor Dawn Collins
- Councillor Robert Finnigan
- Councillor Angela Gabriel
- Councillor Pauleen Grahame
- Councillor Chris Howley
- Councillor Mirelle Midgley
- Councillor Denise Ragan
- Councillor Kevin Ritchie
- Councillor Trish Smith

Further information about individual Councillors can be accessed by clicking the names above.



Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board 2021/22 Municipal Year Summary Report

Principal Scrutiny Adviser: Becky Atherton

Telephone: 0113 37 88642 Email: Becky.Atherton@leeds.gov.uk

Scrutiny Board Chair

Councillor Barry Anderson was appointed as Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) during the Council meeting held on Thursday 20th May 2021.

A Statement from the Scrutiny Board Chair acknowledging key areas of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board during the 2021/22 municipal year is set out below.

Completed Work Schedule for the 2021/22 Municipal Year

Each Scrutiny Board schedules eight formal or 'consultative'¹ meetings throughout the course of a municipal year which are open to the public. The decision to hold any additional meetings is left to the discretion of each Board.

Scrutiny Boards also adopt other methods of evidence gathering outside of the public meeting setting, such as site visits and working group meetings. The primary purpose of a working group meeting is to obtain and/or develop information which cannot realistically be undertaken within the confines of a formally convened Scrutiny Board meeting. A working group cannot discharge the primary purpose of a Scrutiny Board i.e. it cannot undertake Inquiries independently from its parent Scrutiny Board, conduct Inquiries, issue reports/recommendations (other than to its parent Scrutiny Board) or in any way present itself to a third party as representing the views of the parent Scrutiny Board.

The completed work schedule of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) for the 2021/22 municipal year has been provided as part of this summary report. This presents an overview of all meetings held throughout the year and the work items considered as part of each meeting. The work schedule also includes links to the agenda papers, minutes and webcast recordings of the Scrutiny Board's publicly accessible meetings.

¹ Consultative meetings are held remotely and webcasted live to enable public access. However, they are not a public meeting held in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.



Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board 2021/22 Municipal Year Summary Report



Councillor Barry Anderson **Chair of Scrutiny Board** **(Environment, Housing and Communities)**

“One of the privileges of Chairing the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board is that the committee considers issues that directly impact upon the day-to-day lives of Leeds’ residents.

Support services for some of the city’s most vulnerable residents have been a particular theme for 2021/22. Scrutiny of the Council’s approach to reducing poverty and improving financial inclusion has been more important than ever. In addition, the Board has scrutinised the Local Welfare Support Scheme and action being taken to help residents at risk of, or already experiencing, fuel poverty.

The new Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime was invited to discuss community safety. Members have also examined the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021, considered the challenges and opportunities for LeedsWatch following a remodelling of the service, and have retained a watching brief on the implementation of recommendations that emerged from a review of Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Last Autumn the Board published its recommendations following an inquiry into the anti-social use of fireworks.

The Scrutiny Board has a responsibility to participate in the development of the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework and has provided recommendations to decision makers on key strategies including the 2005 Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy and the Safer, Stronger Communities City Plan. The Board engaged in the early stages of the Council’s Housing Strategy review and responded to proposals to introduce the Best City Ambition as the Council’s key strategic plan. The Scrutiny Board has had oversight of several key performance indicators and has been consulted about the Council’s budget proposals.

The challenge of climate change, and the city’s resilience to the consequences of climate change, have remained priorities for Board members. Linked to this agenda, Board members have scrutinised housing standards. This has included the action being taken to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency within the Council’s own housing stock, along with opportunities to help improve standards in the private rented sector.

As the city and Council have continued to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic the Board has explored the challenges and opportunities of the pandemic experience for public services. Members have also offered support for proposals to further develop the Council’s approach to Locality Working and Priority Neighbourhoods and have responded to local concerns about tree maintenance. Our scrutiny of the future of waste services will continue beyond 2021/22.

Effective scrutiny relies upon the expertise and advice of council officers, partners and others including members of the Executive Board. Thank you to all those people who have engaged with the Scrutiny Board over the last year. Discussions at our meetings are often robust. However, I believe the challenge scrutiny provides is an important way in which to hold decision makers to account, and therefore helps ensure the Council delivers the best possible outcomes for citizens.

Finally, thanks also to the members of the Board for your thoughtful contributions, commitment and enthusiasm over the last twelve months.”



SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

June	July	August
<u>Agenda, reports & recording Thursday 17 June 10.30am</u>	<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 15 July 10.30am</u>	No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.
CONSULTATIVE MEETING Performance Update [PM] Parking Strategy and Management update [PM] LASBT Review: update following the introduction of changes to the service in early 2020. [PSR] Terms of Reference and Sources of Work (DB)	**CONSULTATIVE MEETING** Safer Leeds: including Community Safety & Antisocial Behaviour Strategy Updates [PSR] Domestic Violence – update including impact of CV19 and Domestic Abuse Bill. [PSR] Co-optees report (DB)	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

September	October	November
<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 23 September 10.30am</u>	<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 21 October 10.30am</u>	<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 25 November 9.45am</u>
Waste Strategy – ToR and supporting statement. [PSR] Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy [PDS] Safer Leeds Strategy – post consultation (in line with BPF PR) [PDS]	Reducing carbon emissions across the Council's estate [PSR] Housing Activity Update [PM] Deputy Mayor (Crime & Policing): crime & policing priorities (post-devolution update) [PSR] Safer Leeds: Final Version for note [PDS] Fireworks response: to note for discussion in November	Locality Working & Priority Neighbourhoods [PM] Local Welfare Support Scheme Proposals [RT] Housing Strategy Review [PDS] Fireworks: incl. update on 2021 experience [PSR] Referral: tree maintenance (verbal response from officers) [PSR]
Working Group Meetings		
	19/10/21: draft Parks and Green Space Strategy: consultation [PDS]	3/11/21 Waste Inquiry Working group 1 [PSR]
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

December	January	February
No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.	<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 20 January 10.30am</u>	<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 24 February 10.30am</u>
	Reducing Poverty and improving Financial Inclusion – update report, including impact of Universal Credit. [PSR] Financial Health Monitoring [PM] Initial Budget Proposals [PDS] Performance monitoring [PM] Best City Ambition [PDS]	Standards in the Private Rented Sector – update [to include Selective Licensing] [PSR] Climate emergency: [PSR] ▪ CEAC update on progress and activity ▪ Annual Climate Emergency EB report LeedsWatch: Update on the implementation of new model [PSR]
Working Group Meetings		
10/12/21 – NR Tree Clearance [PSR] 17/12/21 – Budget Working Group [PDS]	21/01/22 – Tree Maintenance Working Group [PSR]	7/2/22 - Housing Strategy Review [PDS]
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

Work Schedule for 2021/2022 Municipal Year

March	Items for follow up
<u>Agenda, reports & recording for Thursday 31 March 10.30am</u>	2022/23 <i>JUNE 2022: Ensuring the future resilience of the 3rd sector Update (following 2020/21 volunteer hub) – deferred from February</i> Migration (as per ExB discussion Oct 21) Safer Leeds: Serious Violence Safer Leeds: Domestic Violence Selective Licensing Police: PCSO resources Future of Waste Services: awaiting detail from Government about the National Resources and Waste Strategy, assessment of carbon impact of different waste streams & outcome of the route review.
Fuel Poverty Update [PSR]	
Energy Efficiency in Council Housing Stock [PSR]	
Carbon reduction in the Private Rented Sector [PM]	
Working Group Meetings	
Site Visits	

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response