



Making a request for Scrutiny

This leaflet is designed to give guidance to anyone considering making a 'request for Scrutiny' at Leeds City Council.

What is a Scrutiny Board?

Scrutiny Boards are largely made up of Elected Members of the City Council and their role is to examine, review and challenge the work and performance of the Council – in essence, a watchdog role.

What can Scrutiny Boards do?

- Challenge and review decisions made by the Council
- Review the performance of the Council and its partners
- Consider representation from groups outside the Council
- Consider individual requests for inquiry
- Help develop new policy areas

What are the powers of Scrutiny Boards?

- To make recommendations to the full Council, to the Executive Board, Area Committees or to departments
- To co-opt non-Councillors to the Board to offer additional expert advice
- To invite others outside the Council to attend as 'witnesses'
- Scrutiny Boards cannot make decisions

How do I make a request for scrutiny?

If you want to suggest an issue for a scrutiny inquiry you will need to make a written request to the scrutiny support unit who will get in touch with you regarding the arrangements. Your request should include a brief summary of the issues that you wish to raise. This will help to ensure that it is considered by the most appropriate Scrutiny Board, depending on the issues you raise. It will also help board members

to think before the meeting about some of the questions they may wish to ask you.

You will be invited to attend the relevant Scrutiny Board meeting to explain the reasons for your request. The amount of time you will be allowed to address the Scrutiny Board will be at the chair's discretion. Once you have outlined your request, the members of the Scrutiny Board may ask you questions. You may bring others to the meeting, either as observers or to help you respond to any questions.

Requests for scrutiny will normally be refused if they relate solely to the interests of one individual or company. Requests relating to matters of purely local concern will normally be referred to the relevant Area Committee.

If you need any help or advice in preparing your request for scrutiny, please contact the scrutiny support unit on (0113) 395 1151.

What happens next?

The Scrutiny Board may decide to undertake an inquiry as a result of the matters you have raised. This will follow the inquiry process outlined in our 'Guide to Scrutiny' leaflet. The Board may decide to ask the relevant department, or NHS body if you have raised a health issue, to deal directly with the matters

that you have raised. If the Board feels that, having heard your request, another Scrutiny Board is more appropriate to deal with the matter, then it may refer your request to a different Board for action.

Will I have to attend?

If a request for scrutiny is to be followed up by the Board, relevant witnesses are asked to attend. If a request has been submitted by a group from outside the



Making a request for Scrutiny

Council, the Board's Scrutiny Adviser will liaise with the designated spokesperson to identify who should speak on the group's behalf. Anyone may attend the meeting to observe. It may be appropriate for officers of the Council to attend and offer information for the same item. The Board's Scrutiny Adviser will be available to discuss the details with anyone invited to attend a Board meeting.

Where can I find further information?

Please feel free to contact the Scrutiny Support Unit:

Peter Marrington
Tel. (0113) 3951151
peter.marrington@leeds.gov.uk

You may also find our website helpful at
www.leeds.gov.uk/scrutiny

The scrutiny unit publishes a monthly bulletin called Scrutiny News. You can read this on our website, or join our mailing list by contacting the unit staff.