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**Report of the Director Leeds Initiative**

**City Development Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 24th July 2007**

**Subject: Leeds Initiative- Vision, structure and Local area agreement background paper**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

All



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**1.0 Purpose of the report**

Officers of the Leeds Initiative and the Local Area Agreement team have been asked by the board to provide a presentation about progress with the Vision for Leeds; the recent restructuring of the Leeds Initiative; and progress in developing the local area agreement.

**2.0 Background information**

Founded in 1990 by the council and Chamber of Commerce, Leeds Initiative is one of the most well-established LSPs in the country. It has become a strong partnership which has championed key developments, including the bid to attract the Royal Armories, the '24-hour city' initiative, promoting the city as a centre for financial services, media and manufacturing, and attracting investment through every round of the Single Regeneration Budget. The partnership has grown organically over the years since its inception and now embraces all aspects of city life expressed through the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020. Its membership is broad-ranging representing private, public, community and voluntary sectors with over 600 organisations involved in a wide range of partnerships which sit under the Leeds Initiative umbrella. In 2002, the Initiative became accredited for the first time by government as the local strategic partnership (LSP) for the Leeds district.

### **3.0 Main issues**

#### **3.1 Leeds Initiative**

In 1999, Leeds Initiative published the first Vision for Leeds which helped to shape the long-term priorities for the city. In 2004 the second Vision for Leeds was published setting out more clearly defined aims, themes and priorities. Fulfilling government's requirements for local authorities and their partners to develop a sustainable community strategy, the Vision was the subject of one of the most extensive consultation exercises ever undertaken... Independent analysis confirmed that the consultation had reached 71% of the population of Leeds. This included special activities which targeted particular communities of interest and "hard-to-reach" groups. Additionally, an evidence-based approach assisted in determining the needs of the city - drawing on existing research sources and, where necessary, commissioning new research to analyse both positive and negative aspects of the city's progress. The Vision was independently appraised for its longer-term sustainability. It was adopted by full council in April 2004 with cross-party support. It was subsequently approved by the Leeds Initiative Board in May 2004 and is supported by all partners.

Since its publication, the Vision has guided the council and its partners to achieve common objectives and to prioritise decisions about what action is needed to achieve the core aims of the Vision - going up a league; narrowing the gap; and playing a stronger leadership role within the wider region. These three aims enjoy common currency across the council and more widely across partner agencies and the structures of the Leeds Initiative have been designed to promote these aims; the eight vision themes; and the twelve priority projects listed in the Vision document.

In 2002, the Leeds Initiative was accredited for the first time by government as the LSP for the Leeds district and in each of its annual performance assessments has scored 'green' in the traffic light system adopted. A strategic, inclusive, action-focused, performance managed approach to partnership working in the city has developed, engaging additional stakeholders and creating the family of partnerships which have produced strategies and plans to make sure the Vision is delivered.

#### **3.2 Progress with the delivery of the Vision**

##### Indicators and measures

There is no simple way to easily measure progress in achieving the Vision in a reliable way. A traffic light system has been developed so that performance can be regularly reviewed and reported against the aims; the eight themes; and the twelve priority projects. It is recognised that over time, a more substantial review will be required in order to objectively review progress and where necessary re-cast priorities and objectives. The latest review using the traffic-light system is summarised below. A more detailed report can be made available should any members wish to be provided with this.

The summary provides an overview of progress recording the measures where data is available

Vision Themes	SCORE
Green	19
Amber	23
Red	3
White	0

Priority Projects	SCORE
Green	17
Amber	20
Red	1
White	2

In general terms, the review shows good progress although on some of the priority projects, positive developments have not as yet fully materialised, for example, in the case of the arena. The review concludes that the Vision has led to progress moving in the right direction, but that more needs to be done to achieve outcomes and to fully instill confidence across the business community and among the general public.

### 3.3 Leeds Initiative re-organisation

The following factors have influenced the need to revising the structure of the initiative:

- In August 2005 the Audit Commission issued guidance to local authorities entitled “Governing Partnerships -Bridging the Accountability Gap”;
- In March 2006 Leeds Initiative and Leeds City Council signed a local area agreement with government- representing a new way of working in partnership with government to achieve outcomes for communities and draw down funding from central government. Specific partnership arrangements were put into place to manage this work;
- In September 2006 Leeds City Council put into place its children trust arrangements as a response to its statutory obligations under the children’s bill 2005;
- In November 2006 the department for local government and communities published the local government white paper “Strong and prosperous communities”;
- Current work through the council’s ‘one-council change programme’ to develop the structure of the council; and
- Partners’ views about the effectiveness of the structures

### 3.3.1 The thematic layer

The new list of partnerships is as follows

Strategy and development partnerships	Rationale
Children Leeds	Created to meet the requirements of the children act- - specifically mandated in the white paper
Skills and economy	Merging adult learning and skills with the economy partnership- white paper identifies skills and economy as issues for LSPs to co-ordinate
Culture	No change- The white paper identifies culture as an issue for LSPs to co-ordinate
Community Safety	Given the importance of the issue it is felt that this partnership should be at the strategy level- This is specifically mandated in the white paper, already statutory
Neighbourhoods Policy Group	A new group building on existing work within the Neighbourhoods and Housing Department and through district partnerships on integrated neighbourhood management and its implications for mainstream service delivery- The white paper encourages local partnerships to consider neighbourhood management as a response to underperformance.
Health	No change - specific mandate in the white paper, to establish statutory health and wellbeing partnerships.
Transport	No change –The white paper identifies this as an issue for LSPs to co-ordinate
Climate change	Replaces the existing environment partnership. The issue of climate change will be a major focus for partners in the next few years (e.g. the references in the local government white paper, the Nottingham declaration etc) Making climate Change a strategy group removes potential duplication. The white paper identifies this as an issue for LSPs to co-ordinate
Crosscutting Partnerships	Rationale
Harmonious communities	White paper encourages partnership action within LSPs on community cohesion. Need to build on the work of the equality cross-cutting theme of the LAA
International Leeds	No mention in the white paper – remains a key area of work for the Initiative for both Going up a league, and Narrowing the gap agendas

### 3.3.2 The corporate structures

Having now completed the restructuring of the thematic layer of the partnership, attention has now turned to the overarching corporate layer comprising the Leeds Initiative Board and its two executives. The board began the review in March 2007 and agreed to bring forward firm proposals by October 2007. A series of options have been developed to guide thinking and wider consultation on how the corporate structures now need to evolve to drive accelerated progress in delivering the Vision. The four suggested options are set out in the table below.

Option	Summary description
<p><b>Option 1</b></p> <p>To retain the current structure</p>	<p>one large board            one narrowing the Gap Executive            one going up a League Executive</p>
<p><b>Option 2</b></p> <p>Assembly, two boards and a chair's liaison group</p>	<p>evolve the board into an "assembly" expanded to engage a wider grouping to meet twice a year to discuss key issues facing the city            "standing-conference" approach            evolve the executives into boards:            The Narrowing the Gap Board            The Going up a league Board, (could be renamed)            establish a linking body – Chair's Liaison Group</p>
<p><b>Option 3</b></p> <p>The assembly, a single board and two executives</p>	<p>Evolve the board into an assembly            Establish a single smaller board to drive forward the narrowing the gap and going up a league agendas            Retain the executives feeding into the new board</p>
<p><b>Option 4</b></p> <p>The two boards and chair's liaison group</p>	<p>Do away with the Board            Evolve the executives into boards as in option 2            Establish a Chair's Liaison Group to link as in option 2</p>

### 3.4 Local Area Agreement

Local Areas Agreements are promoted by government as the "delivery plans" for sustainable community strategies. Within the Leeds context, this needs to be interpreted as providing a clear connection between the Vision for Leeds and the local area agreement

The Leeds local area agreement (LAA) was signed by Leeds City Council on behalf of Leeds Initiative and its partners, on the one hand, and Government Office on the other, in April 2006. The Local Area Agreement brings together a number of separate funding streams and grants from several Government departments into four Blocks around the themes of

- Children and Young People
- Healthy Communities and Older People

- Safer, Stronger Communities
- Economic Development and Enterprise

This gives the local authority and its partners greater flexibility about how to use these funds to achieve improved outcomes for the people of Leeds.

The LAA contains a number of targets within each Block to focus activity around our priorities. The priorities in the LAA are drawn from the Vision for Leeds and other plans and strategies like the Leeds Regeneration Plan. It builds on these plans, acting as a catalyst to:

- accelerate delivery of key priorities and programmes of change in these plans and strategies, and;
- develop multi-agency work to deliver more lasting change in impact on a number of issues where individuals, families and communities face particular obstacles that prevent them from living lives that are happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the affects of poverty.

The approach taken to the LAA in Leeds has been distinctive, concentrating on:

- people - concentrating on issues that impact most on quality of life;
- individuals, families and communities; and
- a focus primarily, but not exclusively, on areas of deepest deprivation – the 31 super output areas that fall within the country's worst 3% in a context of maintaining and improving the quality of life for all.

Performance against the targets in the LAA is monitored. The end of year performance for the first year of the LAA is now available. Overall, 60 per cent of indicators where a year on year comparison could be made were on targets and 65 per cent of indicators showed an improvement on the previous year. Comparative figures could not be collected for a number of indicators where the performance data had not been measured previously.

For 2007/8 the LAA has been refreshed with the value of grants pooled within it more than doubling to £37 million and the number of targets reduced to give a sharper focus to the work of the partners in the LAA.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill will introduce a number of changes to LAAs. From April 2008 every local authority in England will have a duty to prepare a Local Area Agreement which will become the delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy (Vision for Leeds). Area based funding from Government will be pooled into a single pot which can be used to achieve any target in the LAA and auditing requirements for funding will be simplified.

At the core of new LAAs will be up to 35 targets negotiated and agreed with central Government drawn from the new national indicator set to be published in autumn 2007. These will reflect a shared understanding of what are the most important challenges and opportunities for Leeds over the next three years. There will also be a number of local targets negotiated and agreed with local partners reflecting local priorities.

Several public sector partners will have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in negotiating and agreeing the targets and have a duty to have regard to the targets in the LAA when setting their own plans and budgets. This will further strengthen partnership working in Leeds.

Leeds has been selected as one of 17 feasibility pilot authorities nationally to test the process for negotiating new Local Area Agreements. Meetings have been held to explore potential priorities like reducing bullying, getting long term unemployed people back into work and making drug rehabilitation treatment more effective. There have also been meetings with Government Office civil servants to discuss how Government Office will assess the performance and priorities for authorities like Leeds.

Government has said that in future Local Area Agreements will be the only channel to discuss and agree new priorities for local authorities. Local Area Agreements are potentially very significant for both Leeds City Council and the Leeds Initiative.

Insert here

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

Scrutiny board members are invited to comment on this report and the associated presentation to be delivered at the meeting.