

Report of: The Director of Children’s Services and the Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 9th March 2016

Subject: The Best City for Learning Strategy



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Best City strategy will underpin the council’s ambition to deliver a strong economy in a compassionate city; acknowledging the centrality of children to the future growth strategy of Leeds.
2. The Best City for Learning Strategy will outline the four year plan to improve learning across Leeds from 2016 to 2020.
3. The strategy outlines where Leeds currently is as a city, where it aims to be and how it plans to get there.
4. The seven key priorities in the strategy were identified through the Big Education Debate events held throughout the city from September to November last year. Councillors, Principals, Headteachers, businesses, officers and education specialists and other stakeholders all contributed their ideas to define these priorities and further the development of learning and education in Leeds.
5. The strategy promotes learning as the key to a prosperous future for the children of Leeds.

Recommendations

6. The Executive Board is recommended to:
 1. Examine each of the seven priorities and feedback any recommendations that could be made.
 2. Consider the implications listed under each priority and comment on the vision for success in learning across Leeds.
 3. Support the actions recommended for each priority to enable the effective delivery of the strategy.
 4. Make recommendations as deemed appropriate on the future provision of ongoing support, challenge and intervention in Leeds to ensure that progress continues to be made.
 5. Note the Head of Learning Improvement is responsible for the implementation of the strategy.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the strategy is to define a clear vision of what we want learning to look like in Leeds by 2020 and the actions we will take in order to achieve this.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The strategy will be evaluated by The Annual Standards Report which will provide a yearly reflection of our progress towards becoming the Best City for Learning.

- 2.2 The Big Education Debates provided invaluable feedback which has formed the basis of this strategy. We compiled feedback from the first seven events in order to devise a final set of questions to focus on for the last event. These focus areas included:

- How can schools and settings engage and strengthen relationships with the community they serve?
- How do we enable our young people to be equipped with the right skills and aspirations that are relevant to a modern Leeds economy?
- How can schools and settings retain their individual identity, whilst ensuring all pupils achieve their best in a safe & secure environment?
- How can we develop 'well rounded' individuals who are equipped with the skills for life, whilst guaranteeing high standards?
- We know that gaps in achievement exist in different schools, so what can we do creatively & innovatively to address these issues?
- How do we create a broad and balanced curriculum that celebrates music, the arts, sport & culture, and ensure that we maintain high standards in schools?
- What needs to happen in our schools & settings for pupils to be able to use and apply the knowledge they acquire in a deep and meaningful way throughout life?
- How do we nurture leaders through challenge & support in order to provide inspiring learning in our schools & settings?
- What ambitious targets should we set for the academic standards of our children?
- How can the Local Authority work with all those involved in education to ensure the needs of all Leeds children are met?
- What unique approaches can be used to provide good quality provision for children with additional learning needs?
- How can we share the best the city has to offer across all schools and settings?

- What can we do to smooth the transitions across all learning settings and into adult life, to enable an uninterrupted continuum of learning?

3 Main issues

Please see below for a summary of the Best City for Learning priorities. The full document is available in the appendix.

- 3.1 **World Class Provision:** *"We need a collaborative approach that provides good quality provision to meet the needs of all Leeds children."* This priority covers areas such as: providing sufficient good learning places for all Leeds children, ensuring high quality alternative and specialist provision, and working with all 0-19 education providers, to ensure every Leeds child has good quality provision.
- 3.2 **Great Leeds Schools:** *"In such a diverse and vibrant city we need schools to be distinct environments in which all children are proud to succeed."* This will involve offering bespoke support to schools through tailored Service Level Agreement packages, supporting and challenging schools, strengthening collaborative relationships and developing our traded offer to schools.
- 3.3 **High Expectations for All:** *"Creative and innovative approaches need to be used to address the gaps which prevent children from achieving their potential."* This priority focuses on the equity of education in Leeds, acknowledging that not every child starts at the same point, so extra support is needed to ensure children who are disadvantaged have the same outcomes as their non-disadvantaged peers. We want the performance gap to be addressed in all its forms.
- 3.4 **Strong Attainment:** *"We must have high standards where the majority of children achieve age-related expectations."* Our aim is for progress and attainment at all stages of learning to be above national average, and ultimately in the first quartile.
- 3.5 **Inspirational Teaching and Learning:** *"Children need to experience an engaging and enriching curriculum that focuses on deeper learning."* We want to support and enhance learning in the arts, sports and music and ensure children are ready for learning through good school attendance and providing support if exclusions arise.
- 3.6 **Uplifting Leadership:** *"We need to nurture leaders through challenge and support in order to provide inspiring development opportunities within a collaborative community."* We want to expand and specialise the traded offer, to provide specialist, bespoke training around leadership and management for schools and settings.
- 3.7 **Fluid Transition:** *"We need to smooth transition across the whole learning continuum to enable children and young people to face the world."* Expectations, knowledge and understanding of each education phase will be developed among all providers and children & young people, to transform the learning journey from steep ascending steps to a smooth incline.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation and engagement took place in the form of the eight Big Education Debates held throughout the city last year. The feedback from these events was instrumental to writing the strategy. Where further information is required relating to consultation and engagement more details can be requested from the relevant services.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

4.2.2 Both the Best City for Learning and the Annual Standards Report address the issue of inequalities throughout the city in the 'High Expectations for all' chapter. This section reports on the performance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

4.2.3 Actions outlined to tackle underachievement include; Extra support will put in to 0-19 education providers to ensure equity of outcomes. Leeds will continue to work in partnership with schools, settings and partner head teachers to promote and progress bespoke projects to close the gap in Leeds. Partnership work with third sector groups, teaching schools and research partners will direct and support the needs of less advantaged individuals or groups within schools. Continue to monitor and record data on the performance gap to ensure focus on improvement and to target further action. Maintain and develop the work that is already being done to reduce the gap.

4.2.4 The Executive Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.

4.2.5 An equality impact screening has been undertaken for this report and is attached as an appendix.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 This strategy will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in The Best Council Plan 2013-2017, The Children and Young People's Plan 2015-19, The Best Start in Life Strategy, Child Friendly Leeds and the Leeds SEND Strategy 2014-17.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The level of investment in children and young people is considerable. The need to continue to improve learning and education across Leeds means that this must remain a high priority when allocating resources.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report is subject to Call In.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 None identified

5 Conclusions

5.1 In keeping with Leeds' ambition to have a strong economy in a compassionate city, it is important that the potential of our children and young people is maximised.

5.2 This strategy is a crucial part of proactive planning in the centrality of children to the growth strategy of the city.

6 Recommendations

The Executive Board is recommended to:

6.3 Examine each of the seven priorities and feedback any recommendations that could be made.

6.4 Consider the implications listed under each priority and comment on the vision for success in learning across Leeds

6.5 Support the actions recommended for each priority to enable the effective delivery of the strategy.

6.6 Make recommendations as deemed appropriate on the future provision of ongoing support, challenge and intervention in Leeds to ensure that progress continues to be made.

6.7 Note the Head of Learning Improvement is responsible for the implementation of the strategy.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.