



---

## Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)

### General Purposes Committee

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011

Subject: Changes to the Budget and Policy Framework

---

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

---

### Executive Summary

1. This report proposes a number of changes to Article 4 of the Constitution, the Budget and Policy framework, which reflects changes to the city's partnership and planning framework as discussed at Executive Board in December 2010. These changes bring consistency to these arrangements and ensure that all of the city's strategic partnership plans are subject to full Council approval regardless of the varying legal requirements. This ensures clear democratic accountability in the setting of both the Council's priorities as well as those which it shares with partners across the city.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 To consider proposed amendments to the Budget and Policy Framework and make recommendations to full Council to amend Article 4 of the Constitution.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Constitution provides the framework within which the Council conducts its business and makes decisions. It describes who is responsible for making decisions, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Articles in Part 2 of the Constitution set out the basic rules governing the Council's business.
- 2.2 Article 4 contains the Budget and Policy Framework; this specifies which policies and plans should be approved by the full Council and cannot be delegated, nor approved by the Executive. Some of these policies are required to be approved by full Council by law, others are recommended to be included within non-statutory guidance and others have been adopted locally.
- 2.3 Increasingly, we do not have sole responsibility for the preparation of all plans and strategies as many are now prepared under partnership arrangements and include actions and targets to which other bodies contribute. However, we do have a lead role in co-ordinating such plans as well as providing leadership for the strategic partnerships arrangements.
- 2.4 The democratic accountability provided by subjecting these plans to full Council approval, particularly bearing in mind their impact on the people of Leeds, is very important. In addition, the requirements of the approval process also ensure consultation between the Executive and the relevant Scrutiny Boards during the development of the plans and strategies.
- 2.5 A number of changes to the city and council planning and partnership framework have been progressed over the past few months and this report sets out how these changes impact upon the budget and policy framework. The General Purposes Committee is asked to consider these changes and make recommendations to full Council for the amendment of the constitution. In addition there have also been a number of changes to the statutory requirements, and a number of other changes are proposed, which also need to be reflected in Article 4.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 As explained above it is important that certain key strategic plans and policies are subject to the right level of member involvement and scrutiny prior to their approval. These plans and strategies are listed within the Budget and Policy framework in Article 4 of the Constitution to ensure full Council is the only body which can approve these and to ensure full scrutiny of any proposals. This list needs updating in light of a number of proposed changes to the council and city planning framework.
- 3.2 In particular, a whole system approach has been applied through these amendments which better link the partnerships structures, strategic plans and performance management arrangements. This will in turn ensure that the Council is very clear about its own priorities, as well as those which it shares with partners across the city. It also seeks to bring some consistency in policy setting/planning across all of the strategic partnerships so that each one of these, regardless of any

specific statutory arrangements, are required to prepare a strategic plan setting out their priorities which is subject to the rigorous approval of being part of the budget and policy framework.

3.3 The revised planning framework for the Council/City is shown in appendix 1 and the role and function of the key strategic plans is set out below:

3.3.1 **Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030** - is the Leeds Sustainable Community Strategy which sets-out the long term ambition and aspirations for the city. It is being developed by the Leeds Initiative in conjunction with all local partners, including the public, private, and voluntary, community, and faith sectors. The draft Vision is currently the subject of an extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders through the 'What if Leeds' campaign.

3.3.2 **City Priority Plans 2011 to 2015** – these are new city-wide partnership plans which identify the key outcomes and priorities to be delivered by the council and its partners over the next 4 years. Collectively these plans directly replace the Leeds Strategic Plan and are aligned to the Strategic Partnerships which are listed below.

- Children and Families Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Sustainable Economy and Culture Board
- Regeneration Board
- Safer and Stronger Communities Board

3.3.3 These partnerships will own the plans and be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the agreed priorities. These plans will be restricted to a very small set of outcomes and agreed priorities so that they are the absolute must do's for each of the partnerships to move forward in delivering our long term vision for Leeds. For each priority, the plan will also include a list of the high level actions and these will be monitored through partnership performance management processes as well as being subject to the Council's Scrutiny process. In addition to the very focused City Priority Plans some of the partnerships have opted to, or are required by statute, to produce a much broader partnership plan eg the Children and Young Peoples Plan which covers all aspects of partnership working. Where these broader partnerships plans are in place then these will be included within the Budget and Policy Framework rather than the relevant City Priority Plan but within these plans it will be made very clear which parts of the plan comprise the City Priority Plan.

3.3.4 **Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015** – this is the single plan for the council that brings together all the priorities for the council alongside the medium term financial plan. It will have two main elements. A small number of cross council priorities and a set of directorate priorities. There will be a limited number of cross council priorities which will be clearly aligned to the council's values and their delivery will be measured through key performance indicators. The directorate element of the plan will outline their own priorities, and may include service transformation, service delivery and any major contributions to the relevant City Priority Plans. As such it will include the most significant 'must do' priorities which will have the biggest impact on the individual directorate and council-wide. Each priority will have a small number of clearly defined milestones and/or targets which can be used to monitor progress. It is envisaged that the business and financial plans of our key partners will similarly support the delivery of the City Priority Plans.

3.4 In addition there are a number of changes, and pending changes, to the legal requirements for local authorities and local strategic partnerships to have certain plans in place including:

- Recent regulations have removed the statutory requirement for a Children’s Trust Board to approve a Children and Young People’s Plan, and the Department of Education have stated that there is no requirement for local authorities to produce one;
- The Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (CDRS) – currently the Safer Leeds Plan – remains statutory although there are proposals within the Policing Reform Bill to remove this requirement. However, this is unlikely to come into effect until 2012. There are a number of specific requirements within the CDRS and these are fulfilled by the Safer and Stronger Communities Plan;
- The legal requirement to have a Local Area Agreement which was previously fulfilled by the Leeds Strategic Plan has been removed.
- From April 2012 there will be a requirement to produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.5 To provide some certainty to the policy framework and in order to ensure clear democratic accountability and transparency it is proposed that the following specific changes be made to the Article 4:

<b>Article 4 - Current Budget and Policy Framework</b>	<b>Article 4 - Revisions to Budget and Policy Framework</b>
Sustainable Community Strategy	This is the Vision for Leeds, so for transparency, it is proposed to remove the reference to the Strategy and refer explicitly to the Vision for Leeds.
Leeds Strategic Plan	To remove as this has been replaced by the 5 City Priority Plans.
Children and Young Peoples' Plan	To remain, but amend position to reflect that it is no longer statutory, and to indicate that this plan also fulfils the legal requirement to produce a Youth Justice Plan. In addition it will incorporate within it the Children and Families City Priority Plan.
Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (CDRS)	This will be fulfilled by the Safer and Stronger Communities Plan, which will also incorporate the Safer and Stronger Communities City Priority Plan.
Health and Well Being Plan	To be removed and replaced by the Health and Wellbeing City Priority Plan.
Economic Development Strategy	To replace with the Sustainable Economy and Culture City Priority Plan.
Leeds Housing Strategy	To replace with the Regeneration City Priority Plan.
Climate Change Strategy	Remove as this will be covered within the Sustainable Economy and Culture City Priority Plan.

3.6 These amendments are set out in Appendix 2.

3.7 As a result, a number of consequential amendments to the Constitution would be required, to reflect that the Leeds Strategic Plan has been replaced by the City Priority Plans. The following documents require the removal of the term “Strategic Plan” or “Leeds Strategic Plan”, as applicable, and insertion in its place of the term “City Priority Plans”:

- Part 1 Summary and Explanation
- Article 1 – The Constitution
- Area Committee Procedure Rules footnote 4
- Roles of Members and Officers in Decision Making
- Code of Corporate Governance

3.8 In addition, Members will note that the terms of reference of Scrutiny Boards, except for Scrutiny Board (Health), currently refer to the Leeds Strategic Plan, and it is proposed that item 1(g) in each of the terms of reference be amended to read as follows:

“To review outcomes, targets and priorities within any relevant City Priority Plans and to make such reports and recommendations as it considers appropriate;”

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 These changes ensure that the most important strategic policy and plans developed by the Council both on its own, and with its partners, are subject to full council approval. However, it is proposed that in year amendments would be suitably delegated in order to be able to ensure that the plans remain live and relevant.

#### **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 There may be further changes required in due course to reflect changes to the legal requirements to have certain plans and strategies. However, these amendments to Article 4 would bring consistency and transparency to our most important plans and strategies regardless of the differing legal requirements. It would also mean that Members time is used most efficiently so that where a broader partnership plan is in place which includes the City Priority Plan this is only considered once by Members.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 In conclusion this report sets out changes to Article 4 of the Constitution, and other consequential amendments to the Constitution, to reflect changes to the Council’s planning and partnership framework,

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 General Purposes Committee are asked to recommend that full Council approve the changes to Article 4, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, and the consequential amendments set out in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8, the amendments to be of effect from the new municipal year 2011/12.

## **8.0 Background Documents Used**

- Article 4 of the Constitution
- Executive Board Report on Planning and Partnership Arrangements 15 Dec 2010

# Appendix 1 – Council Planning Framework

