

Report of the Director of Resources and Housing

Report to Council

Date: 27 February 2019

Subject: Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. This report seeks the approval of Council to adopt the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 at the recommendation of the Executive Board which considered the Plan at its 13 February meeting. The Plan has been prepared in the context of the initial proposals considered by the Executive Board in December 2018, taking account recent engagement with Scrutiny Boards, ongoing organisational development and improvement activity, the latest Best Council Plan annual performance report and socio-economic insight gained from the recently updated Joint Strategic Assessment.
2. The updated Best Council Plan maintains much of the current Plan, notably the ‘Best City’ ambition, outcomes and priorities, with the city’s Inclusive Growth and Health & Wellbeing Strategies as key drivers in tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. However, it strengthens the environmental aspects of sustainable development by establishing a ‘Sustainable Infrastructure’ priority (replacing 21st Century Infrastructure) and highlighting linkages across all priorities. It also introduces a new ‘Age-Friendly Leeds’ priority, based on the existing, well developed strategy. The ‘Best Council’ ambition of being ‘An Efficient and Enterprising Organisation’ is kept but extended to include ‘Healthy’, adding further focus to the health and wellbeing of staff, and with updated detailed narrative on how the authority will enact this in support of the Best City ambition. The Best Council Plan key performance indicators are also updated.
3. The revised Plan underpins the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22 approved by the Executive Board in July 2018 and the Revenue Budget and Council Tax proposals for 2019/20 being considered today.

Recommendations

1. Council is asked to adopt the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 at Annexe 1.
2. Also to thank Scrutiny Boards and others for their comments throughout the consultation process that have informed the proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21.
3. Council is asked to note that further development and graphic design work will take place prior to publication of the updated Best Council Plan in April 2019.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report presents the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 for Council's consideration and approval. It provides the strategic framework for the authority's 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Council Tax proposals, the financial expression of the council's priorities.

2. Background Information

Developing the Best Council Plan

- 2.1 On 19 December 2018 the Executive Board agreed an approach for refreshing the Best Council Plan. The Best Council Plan is Leeds City Council's strategic plan, both bringing together and also informing and being informed by the aspirations from a range of supporting council and partnership plans to set out the authority's overall ambitions, policy direction and priorities for city and organisation. It underpins the council's budget-setting and financial strategies, helps our staff understand how the work they do makes a real difference to the people of Leeds and shows our partners how we contribute to city-wide issues. Whilst the Best Council Plan is written as a multi-year, long-term strategic document, as with the council's medium-term financial plan, it is reviewed and refined annually as needed.
- 2.2 The proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 has been prepared in the context of the initial proposals considered by the Executive Board in December 2018, and taking account of recent engagement with Scrutiny Boards, ongoing organisational development and improvement activity, the latest Best Council Plan annual performance report and socio-economic insight gained from the recently updated Joint Strategic Assessment.

Retaining the Best City Vision and Ambition

- 2.3 A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) analyses the health needs of populations to inform and guide commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services within a local authority area. In Leeds, we have over the last decade adopted a wider approach to the JSNA, extending the analysis to cover the wider determinants of health, not only to ensure we gain a deeper insights into the relationship between health, wider-wellbeing, the economy and environment, but also to inform the Best City strategic framework. The findings from the 2015 JSNA – which incorporated socio-economic and health data - informed the 2016 updates to the Best Council Plan as well as key 'city' plans, notably the Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.4 The JSNA has recently been updated for 2018 based around the Best Council Plan 'Best City' priorities. In 2018 we have adopted a wider approach to this work, focusing not only on need but also the key assets of our communities: as such, we are terming this as a 'Joint Strategic Assessment' (JSA).
- 2.5 The findings from the JSA 2018 highlight the city's socio-economic diversity and some intensification of inequalities. The analysis confirms our broadly strong economy with some genuine areas of excellence and competitiveness, but also identifies some challenges in terms of productivity, linked in part to growth in 'lower productivity' sectors such as consumer-services.
- 2.6 In terms of service provision, the JSA also confirms the very dynamic and multi-faceted challenges often in our most deprived communities and the requirement for the council and our partners to respond more collaboratively, particularly at either end of the age spectrum.

- 2.7 In summary, both the Annual Performance Report and the JSA confirm that the Best City vision and ambition '*Leeds ... A Strong Economy and Compassionate City*' remain highly relevant and corroborate the rationale for Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth as the primary strategies in achieving our Best City ambition, therefore this headline strategic framework is retained.
- 2.8 However, the revised Plan strengthens the environmental aspects of sustainable development by establishing a 'Sustainable Infrastructure' priority (replacing 21st Century Infrastructure) and highlighting sustainable development linkages across all priorities. It also introduces a new 'Age-Friendly Leeds' priority, based on the existing, well developed strategy. The 'Best Council' ambition is kept but with further refinement and more detailed explanation of how the authority will enact this in support of the Best City ambition.

3. Main Issues

Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 Summary of Changes

- 3.1 An updated **Foreword** from the council Leader and Chief Executive.
- 3.2 A new **Sustainable Infrastructure** priority, replacing the priority on 21st-Century Infrastructure, better reflecting the environmental ambitions of the city and council, particularly as the socio-economic pillars of sustainable development are already well covered in the Plan. The new priority draws on existing activity, but also draws out the sustainable development impacts and opportunities of key areas such as transport, housing, digital technology and flood defence. In addition, the opportunities to promote and progress sustainable development across all priorities is reinforced throughout the Plan (e.g. air quality and health and wellbeing).
- 3.3 A new **Age-Friendly Leeds** priority, based on the existing, well developed ambition for Leeds to be the best city to grow old in, a place that both values older people recognising the contribution they can make, but also prioritises their needs. The key elements underpinning the priority are: a focus on social networks; promoting social capital and participation; age-proofing services; tackling inequalities; and challenging social structures and attitudes. Again, the opportunities to promote and progress this agenda across all priorities is reinforced throughout the Plan.
- 3.4 A revised **Best Council Ambition: An Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation**, which maintains the focus on organisational development, culture change and efficiency, but adds further focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff without whom the outcomes and priorities set out in the Best Council Plan could not be delivered. The key elements of the revised Best Council Ambition are: improving staff health and wellbeing; our organisational culture; managing our finances; and, delivering digital solutions.
- 3.5 The Best City and Best Council **key performance indicators** have been updated to ensure they remain up-to-date and focus on the overarching vision to tackle poverty and inequalities.
- 3.6 **Annexe 1** sets out the draft Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 which is intended to provide long-term strategic direction rather than being a detailed delivery or action plan. The annexe includes:
- An updated foreword from the Council Leader and Chief Executive.
 - An updated 'Plan on a Page' setting out our vision, ambitions, desired outcomes and the revised 'Best City' priorities.

- Draft narrative for the new proposed priorities on 'Age-Friendly Leeds' and 'Sustainable Infrastructure' that provides an introduction and signposts the reader to the key supporting strategies for further information. The narrative for the other 5 Best City priorities will largely remain the same as in the current 2018/19 to 2020/21 Best Council Plan with minor amendments to the wording, KPIs and key statistics to update them as needed prior to publication of the updated Plan.
- An updated 'Best Council' section, explaining our approach to being an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation with our council values encompassing everything we do and how we work.
- A set of 'Best City' and 'Best Council' key performance indicators.

3.7 The Board is asked to note that the draft Best Council Plan at Annexe 1 is currently in text-only version. The final published version will be more visual, incorporating a strong graphical element with a range of related facts and statistics to break up the text, and will be widely communicated using both online and offline channels.

Performance Reporting

3.8 The Best Council Plan sits at the top of a range of supporting plans and strategies, each with their own KPIs and performance arrangements, including the role of Scrutiny Boards and partnership boards. As a more strategic, cross-cutting document, the Best Council Plan draws on these arrangements and incorporates those KPIs most relevant to the Best Council Plan outcomes and priorities.

3.9 The Best Council Plan KPIs are reviewed quarterly with performance scorecards published. This is supplemented by an annual performance report that looks back on progress in delivering the Best Council Plan over the previous year. Both the scorecard and annual reports are publicly available on the leeds.gov website (accessible [here](#)) and, for staff and elected members, on the council's intranet site. Operational performance management arrangements are in place at service levels.

3.10 These arrangements will continue into 2019/20 with further consideration as to how the strategic focus on delivering better outcomes as articulated in the Best Council Plan is delivered and impacts at more local levels.

3.11 Following approval of the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21, the 2018/19 Plan will be closed down with an annual performance report later this year provided to the Executive Board looking back on progress on its delivery.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 The outcomes and priorities within the Best Council Plan are drawn from existing and developing plans and strategies, themselves subject to extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement, including the 2019/20 Budget which has undergone a consultation process with the public, elected members and council officers.

4.1.2 The proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 has been subject to consultation with the Executive Board, all Scrutiny Boards, Community Committee Chairs, the Corporate Leadership Team and other senior officers.

Scrutiny Board Consultation

4.1.3 The observations and recommendations from Scrutiny Board discussions can be read in full at Annexe 2. The Boards made 4 key recommendations which are presented below with our responses:

- **Recommendation 1:** That the Executive Board supports the new focus on the City's ageing population within the refreshed Best Council Plan.

Response: this is reflected within the proposed new priority on 'Age-Friendly Leeds'.

- **Recommendation 2:** That the Executive Board reflects again on the recommendation put forward by Scrutiny last year and supports the need to make 'supporting healthy, active lifestyles' a Best Council Plan priority or city-wide obsession in accordance with existing efforts to develop a sustainable whole systems approach towards physical activity for Leeds.

Response: dating back to the Best Council Plan update in 2016/17, one of its eight outcomes has been that we want everyone in Leeds to 'Enjoy happy, healthy active lives'. 'Supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles' is also a major focus within the Best Council Plan priority on 'Health and wellbeing', featuring on the Best Council Plan on a Page and measured through the Best Council Plan key performance indicator, 'Percentage of physically active adults', with links also to the indicator on 'Children who are a healthy weight at age 11'. Alongside the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy is the primary strategy to help deliver the 'Best City' ambition set out in the Best Council Plan. This Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out five outcomes - one of which is that, 'People will live full, active and independent lives' – and 12 priorities, including 'Getting more people more physically active more often'. We therefore consider the emphasis on healthy, active lifestyles to be well represented and articulated within the Best Council Plan itself and one of its two key supporting partnership strategies, the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- **Recommendation 3:** That the Executive Board support the proposal to expand the Best Council 'efficient and enterprising' strapline to incorporate 'healthy', encompassing a focus on health across the council's workforce.

Response: this is reflected in the proposed extended Best Council ambition, to be a more 'efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation'.

- **Recommendation 4:** That the Executive Board is again requested to ensure that sustainable development has prominence in the Best Council Plan, to reinforce focus on the environmental and social needs of communities, so that poorer communities are not disproportionately disadvantaged by housing and infrastructure growth and in addition, to ensure that all Leeds residents can enjoy the advantages delivered through economic development.

Response: while the purpose of the whole Best Council Plan is to tackle poverty and inequalities, the explicit emphasis on 'sustainability' has been strengthened in amending aspects of some of the existing priorities and through the proposed new priority on 'Sustainable infrastructure', replacing the current priority on '21st-century infrastructure'. A report on how this agenda will be further progressed will be presented to the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board at its April 2019 meeting.

Budget Consultation

4.1.4 The public consultation on the council's Initial Budget Proposals for 2019/20 took place between 20th December 2018 and 20th January 2019. Though focused on the budget, the survey presented findings from the previous year's consultation exercise and explored whether the public's views and perceptions of the council's priorities had changed in that time. As such, the results of that consultation exercise are relevant to the proposals to update the Best Council Plan. In summary:

- The consultation was primarily carried out through an online survey that was advertised on the council's website and social media sites, via email to partner organisations, Equality Hub members and the Citizens' Panel, and circulated to staff; paper versions were also available. The challenge of balancing the budget was also the theme for the Equality Assembly Conference in November 2018, and a broad range of issues were raised.
- A total of 1,241 surveys were completed, across a range of respondents from different age groups, ethnicities and genders, which generally represented the population of Leeds (as measured against the Census 2011). Responses from younger (18-29 years) and BAME people were found to be slightly underrepresented, however statistically significant numbers were received from each group. In total, 94% of respondents said that they live in Leeds, almost half (49%) work in Leeds and around 1 in 7 (14%) said they work for Leeds City Council.
- In our budget consultation last year we asked people to rate some of our service priorities by how much they matter to them personally, and by how much they think they matter to the city of Leeds. Fifteen priorities were identified with 'Keeping children safe' ranked as the top city priority, followed by 'Supporting older and vulnerable people' – though when it came to rating the priorities at a personal level, 'Keeping streets and neighbourhoods clean and dealing with waste' was ranked top, followed by 'Working with police to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour'.
- This year we listed the priorities in a chart showing the percentages of people's previous responses and asked whether any of the services should be ranked higher or lower as a priority for the city. We received 1,225 suggestions from 649 people. Three quarters of the comments (942) were to suggest a service should be ranked higher up the list of priorities, with the rest saying a service should be ranked lower (283). The majority of these related to services in the middle of the rankings (8 to 10).
- The following table shows the services in the order that they were ranked from last year, along with the number of comments received this year suggesting the rank should go up or down. The services with the greatest numbers of comments saying to either increase or decrease a rank have been highlighted in red and green.

Service priority ranking from 2018/19 consultation	Lower	Higher
1. Keeping children safe	28	0
2. Supporting older and vulnerable people	9	37
3. Working with the police to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour	16	58
4. Keeping streets and neighbourhoods clean and dealing with the city's waste	24	32
5. Making roads safe, reducing congestion and making it easier to get around	35	59
6. Working with schools and families to help children to do well in learning	15	49
7. Helping people earn enough to support themselves and their families	19	53
8. Helping people to live in good quality, affordable housing	7	80
9. Protecting the environment and improving air quality	16	96
10. Preventing and tackling homelessness	9	175
11. Supporting people into jobs, training and apprenticeships	11	71
12. Investing in parks and playing facilities	11	60
13. Encouraging people to live healthier lifestyles	40	81
14. Investing in sport and leisure facilities	15	54
15. City wide cultural events/festivals	28	37
Total Comments	283	942

- Participants were informed that last year the majority of respondents agreed we should balance the budget by reducing or cutting some services and increasing tax and charges, and asked whether these changes have affected them personally. In total, 646 comments were made by 507 people, of which the highest reported issues were:
 - Increased Council Tax (163) – of which a quarter said they are noticeably worse off (42) and some said that they struggle to pay (19).
 - New charges at recycling depots (88) – of which nearly half reported a noticeable or perceived increase in fly tipping (39).
 - Roads and Highways (57) – most of which were about the general condition of roads.
- Thinking about making efficiencies, participants were asked for suggestions on how the council can save money. In total 635 comments were received from 541 people, of which the largest numbers referred to:
 - More efficient work practices and staff arrangements (85), including some referring to a need for more collaborative working (16).
 - Reduce staff, management and salaries (67).
 - That tax and charges should be increased (37).
- Participants were asked how much they agree or disagree with our approach for increasing Council Tax in 2019/20:
 - Over 3 in 5 agreed with our approach (62%)
 - Those that disagreed were asked why (498 comments from 427 people):
 - Over a quarter of comments said the increase is already too high or increasing beyond wages and inflation (131).
 - A quarter of comments were concerned with affordability (121), over half worrying about the impact on others (75) and the rest saying they will struggle to pay (46).

- 1 in 5 comments were concerns around how we spend money (98), with most of these stating that further efficiencies can be made (60).
- Participants were asked how much they agree or disagree with how we propose to spend the money we receive:
 - Over three quarters said they agree with our proposed revenue budget (77%).
 - A similar number agreed with our investment plans laid out in our capital programme (75%).
- We also received 621 comments from 497 respondents around how we propose to spend money, which covered a range of services and themes, including:
 - City Development, roads and transport (154) - of which half said to prioritise these (76). Some commented there have been poor decisions around transport infrastructure (27) or that we should prioritise healthier / green transport initiatives (24).
 - Housing (104) - of which two thirds said this is a priority (69).
 - Adults and Health (46) - of which two thirds said we need to challenge or reduce spending (30)
 - The Environment (38) – of which over half said this is a priority (24)
- We will be carrying out additional work to gain further insight from considering survey responses by different demographic groups to identify their different service priorities. This is likely to provide useful evidence to support future strategic planning.

4.1.5 Following approval, staff and member engagement channels will be used to share the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 more widely.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 A joint strategic equality impact assessment (EIA) of the proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20 has been carried out and this is attached at Annexe 3. Additional EIAs have been carried out on the key supporting plans and strategies.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 This report proposes the Best Council Plan for 2019/20 to 2020/21, continuing to provide a framework for the council's approach to responding to the inequality challenges in Leeds through growing the economy while being a compassionate city. It has been developed in consultation, in accordance with the council's Budget and Policy Framework (Article 4 of the council's Constitution) and the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Part 4 Rules of Procedure).

4.3.2 Detailed delivery plans and key performance indicators are in place for the range of supporting plans and strategies that sit beneath the Best Council Plan. Accountability for monitoring and managing these falls within existing governance arrangements – for example, with partnership boards and project boards and additional scrutiny via Scrutiny Boards – with escalation processes as required to members and the Corporate Leadership Team.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The refreshed Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21 sets out the council's priorities aligned with the medium-term financial strategy and annual budget. Developing and then implementing the Best Council Plan will continue to inform, and be informed by, the council's funding envelope and staffing and other resources.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 This report has been produced in compliance with the council's Budget and Policy Framework. As such, it is not eligible for call-in in line with Executive and Decision-Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2.
- 4.5.2 There are no specific legal implications and all information within this report is available to the public.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The council's strategic and directorate risk registers will be reviewed in light of the revised Best Council Plan to ensure that the key risks that could impact upon the priorities are appropriately identified, assessed and managed. A full risk assessment will also be undertaken of the council's financial plans – which support the delivery of the Best Council Plan – as part of the normal budget process.
- 4.6.2 An assurance report on the authority's strategic risk management arrangements will be presented to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee this summer to inform the council's Annual Governance Statement.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed Best Council Plan for 2019/20 to 2020/21 continues the council's aim of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities through a sustained focus on working with partners, organisations and communities to both grow the economy and doing this in a way that is compassionate and caring. It articulates this based around inter-connected priority areas of work with the city's Inclusive Growth and Health & Wellbeing Strategies as key drivers. At a time of continued financial pressures, it is also important the council continues to play its part to support the 'Best City' vision by becoming a more efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Council is asked to adopt the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 at Annexe 1.
- 6.2 Also to thank Scrutiny Boards and others for their comments throughout the consultation process that have informed the proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21.
- 6.3 Council is asked to note that further development and graphic design work will take place prior to publication of the updated Best Council Plan in April 2019.

7 Background documents¹ - 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.

Annexe 1: Proposed revisions to the Best Council Plan

A: Introduction [*pages 1-4 within graphic design version*]

Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21

BEST CITY • BEST COUNCIL

Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities

Our vision is for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate and caring with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities. We want Leeds to be a city that is distinctive, sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all with a council that its residents can be proud of: the best council in the country.

About Leeds

Leeds is a growing city with a population estimated at 785,000 (ONS 2017), an increase of more than 30,000 people since the 2011 Census. However, it is the shift in the make-up of our population, particularly at local levels, that is most striking. There have been rapid demographic changes during this time, particularly in some of our most deprived communities, with many of these communities being the fastest growing and with the youngest age profile.

This population increase reflects the success of the Leeds economy: driving growth from the centre of the UK, the city is an economic powerhouse predicted to grow by 50% over the next 20 years, outperforming the national economy. Our region is one of the youngest in the UK, providing a talent pool that is digitally skilled and enterprising and helping create a vibrant, youthful environment that gives Leeds a crucial competitive edge. Ambitious investment plans for Leeds Station and the South Bank will double the size and economy of the city centre, boosting economic participation across the North and in our local communities. We enjoy the advantages of being a big city, with five universities, a thriving job market and access to culture, sport, food and retail at the heart of a clean and walkable city centre. Our city has fantastic green spaces, including award-winning parks, with the Yorkshire countryside and two national parks right on its doorstep. With so much to offer, Leeds continues to attract tourism – a record high of 29 million visits in 2017 (the most recent figures) -, graduates – year-on-year we have more undergraduates and graduates moving into the city than leaving, a ‘brain gain’ -, and investment with a standout success in October 2018 being the decision by Channel 4 to choose Leeds for its new national headquarters.

Leeds is also built on a rich tradition of social enterprise and a pioneering social model that harnesses the energy of our communities and a strong charity sector. Leeds is now ranked highest among the largest cities outside London for health and wellbeing with more adults active, fewer people smoking and fewer obese children than before. Our innovative work on healthcare and technology is helping more people worldwide live healthier, more productive lives.

[Infographic with 5 headline messages:

- *Leeds is driving growth from the centre of the UK and the heart of the northern and national economies*
- *Leeds is young and getting younger*
- *In Leeds we put people first, with a proud record of working together to deliver for everyone*
- *People enjoy living and working in Leeds*
- *Leeds is powered by innovators, entrepreneurs and social pioneers]*

However not everyone is benefiting fully from these successes. There are still significant issues of poverty and deprivation in Leeds with more than 170,000 people living in areas ranked amongst the most deprived 10% nationally and a growth in in-work poverty affecting more than 70,000 working age adults across the city. Despite high employment rates, low pay is an increasing problem, with people caught in a trap of low pay and low skills, with limited opportunities for career progression. Childhood poverty is a particular concern with lifelong implications: one in five of our city's under 16-year olds – 28,000 children – are estimated to live in poverty compared to 17% nationally with a sharp rise in the number living in our most deprived communities: in the last five years, the number of 11 year-olds in Leeds has grown by 9% but the poorest ten per cent of neighbourhoods have seen an increase of 33%, a figure that rises to 91% in the poorest three per cent of neighbourhoods. Our education and skills system does not work for everyone, and we need to continue to make progress in improving our schools so that they are equipping all young people with the learning, attainment, attributes and awareness of opportunities they will need to succeed in work.

Levels of health and wellbeing are inextricably linked with deprivation within the city. Local mapping highlights these issues and emphasises the different rates of progress between different communities across the city, although targeted interventions have meant that some inequalities are reducing more quickly in our most deprived areas.

[\[Map of Leeds showing levels of deprivation\]](#)

Looking forward, overall the prospects for future, more inclusive economic growth in Leeds remain robust but we will only fulfil this potential if we maintain the progress we are making, and by taking action on areas where we could perform better. This includes thinking beyond the city's boundaries in harnessing the region's economic and social capital; we are actively participating in the work of the city region and pressing for a Yorkshire devolution deal. At a national level, we work closely with government departments and institutions such as the King's Fund and Joseph Rowntree Foundation to influence future policy with Leeds' Council Leader the current chair of the Core City (the largest cities outside London) network of local authorities. Working with partners in all sectors, we are also planning for all Brexit eventualities and we will do what we can to make sure the city is ready for them. Leeds is a resilient city with a diversity of people, opinions and cultures and it is these very strengths that will help see us through.

Best City

The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 maintains our long-term 'Best City' strategic focus on tackling poverty and inequalities through a combination of strengthening the economy and doing this in a way that is compassionate and caring, allowing us to support our most vulnerable children and adults.

Building on the key council and partnership strategies in place and in development, this Best Council Plan update sets out a number of interconnected priority areas of work that flow in particular from our two main cross-cutting strategies: *Inclusive Growth* and *Health and Wellbeing*. This year, we have added a new 'Age-Friendly Leeds' priority: based on our well-developed ambition for Leeds to be the best city to grow old in, the priority centres on the great work we are doing to make this a place where older people are valued, feel respected and appreciated and are seen as the assets they are, but also prioritises their needs. We have also revised the previous '21st-Century Infrastructure' priority to 'Sustainable Infrastructure', better reflecting and helping to promote and progress the environmental ambitions of the council and the city.

Taken together, a focus on these eight 'Best City' priorities will deliver improved outcomes for everyone in Leeds:

- Inclusive Growth
- Health and Wellbeing
- Child-Friendly City
- Age-Friendly Leeds
- Safe, Strong Communities
- Housing
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Culture

The following pages briefly explain the priorities and set out the key performance indicators we use to track progress. We have also signposted the most significant 'Best City' strategies and action plans to read for more detail on both the issues and the collaborative and innovative work that we and our partners are doing in response – and in which the whole city is invited to play its part.

Best Council

At a time of unprecedented financial challenges and demographic pressures, we are continuing to work hard for the people of Leeds: maintaining high performance on key city-wide services such as bin collections and street cleanliness; using our capital programme to maintain and improve vital infrastructure such as roads and bridges; further progressing locality working through our targeted investment in neighbourhood priority areas; and supporting our most vulnerable residents through preventative interventions and restorative approaches. This people-centred way of working underpins the eight-year improvement journey we have made in the services we provide for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers: in December 2018, Ofsted rated these as 'outstanding', making Leeds the only 'core city' to achieve such a high rating under the inspectorate's new framework.

We are justifiably proud of our progress but we are not complacent: we recognise the complex challenges facing the city, as outlined above, and that the council has a major place-shaping and leadership role to play to help address them through strong partnership working and engagement with organisations across all sectors and our diverse communities. We also appreciate the impact on our workforce of ever increasing demands on public services alongside reducing resources: whilst continuing our ongoing programme of organisational development and cultural change and further exploiting the opportunities the digitisation agenda can bring to streamline our systems and processes, this year therefore sees us strengthening our health and wellbeing offer to staff. To highlight its importance, this update of the Best Council Plan extends our Best Council ambition to be a more 'Efficient, Enterprising **and Healthy** Organisation', with our values remaining at the heart of what we do and how we work.

The vision, ambitions and priorities set out here would not be achievable without close partnership working, effective community engagement and the dedication of councillors and staff: the elected members who serve the city, our partners and everyone who works for the council plays a vital role in delivering the Best Council Plan. We thank you all.

[Pull-out with pictures of Cllr Blake and Tom Riordan]

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Best Council Plan **2019/20** – 2020/21

Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities

LEEDS' BEST CITY AMBITION

Best City A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City

BEST CITY OUTCOMES

We want everyone in Leeds to...

- Be safe and feel safe
- Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
- Live in good quality, affordable homes within clean and well cared for places
- Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
- Enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts
- Earn enough to support themselves and their families
- Move around a well-planned city easily
- Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

BEST CITY PRIORITIES

What we and our partners are focusing on *in 2019/20* to improve outcomes with the city's Inclusive Growth and Health & Wellbeing Strategies as key drivers

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

- Supporting growth and investment, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
- Supporting businesses and residents to improve skills, helping people into work and into better jobs
- Targeting interventions to tackle poverty in priority neighbourhoods
 - Tackling low pay

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the poorest the fastest
 - Supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles
- Supporting self-care, with more people managing their own health conditions in the community
- Enabling people with care and support needs to have choice and control

CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY

- Supporting families to give children the best start in life
- Improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
 - Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- Helping young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work
 - *Enhancing the city now and for future generations*

SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

- Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
 - Helping people out of financial hardship
 - Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities
 - Promoting community respect and resilience

AGE-FRIENDLY LEEDS

- *Developing accessible and affordable transport options which help older people get around*
- *Making Leeds' public spaces and buildings accessible, safe, clean and welcoming*
 - *Promoting opportunities for older people to be healthy, active, included and respected*
- *Helping older people participate in the city through fulfilling employment and learning*

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability
 - Improving air quality, reducing *pollution* and noise
 - *Improving the resilience of the city's infrastructure and the natural environment, reducing flooding and other risks from future climate change*
 - *Promoting a more competitive, less wasteful, more resource efficient, low carbon economy*
- Strengthening *digital and data* 'Smart City' infrastructure and increasing digital inclusion

CULTURE

- Growing the cultural and creative sector
- Ensuring that culture can be created and experienced by anyone
 - Enhancing the image of Leeds through major events and attractions

HOUSING

- Housing of the right quality, type, tenure and affordability in the right places
 - Minimising homelessness through a greater focus on prevention
- Providing the right housing options to support vulnerable residents to remain active and independent
- Improving the energy performance of new and existing homes and reducing fuel poverty

LEEDS' BEST COUNCIL AMBITION

Best Council An Efficient, Enterprising *and Healthy* Organisation

OUR VALUES

Encompassing all we do and how we work

- Being open, honest and trusted
- Treating people fairly
- Spending money wisely
- Working as a team for Leeds
- Working with all communities

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C. New proposed Best Council Plan priorities

Sustainable Infrastructure

Like other growing cities, Leeds faces a number of significant challenges, including improving air quality, adapting to future climate change, linking people to services and employment, and increasing the numbers of people choosing active travel and public transport.

[Infographics:

- *Congestion is an issue on busy junctions causing journey time delays and contributing to air quality issues.*
- *Traffic on major roads in Leeds has increased by around 18% between 2000 and 2016 (Source: Department for Transport)]*
- *City centre district heating will pipe lower cost and lower carbon heat from the perimeter of the city to businesses and residents in dense urban areas*

To address these challenges and support our Best City ambition, we require modern, sustainable infrastructure. A resource efficient and climate resilient city will not only be a better place to live, it will also be more competitive and better placed to ride out future economic shocks. This means further integration in planning, funding and delivering improved infrastructure for Leeds that will help us support growth and improve connectivity, bringing new markets within reach for business, new jobs within reach for people, and a wider workforce within reach for employers.

[Infographic: City centre district heating will pipe lower cost and lower carbon heat from the perimeter of the city to businesses and residents in dense urban areas]

Our approach needs to go beyond a narrow pursuit of growth; rather we need to do this in a way that ensures Leeds is liveable and healthy, as well as prosperous. A step change in the level of public transport use is needed; employment and housing growth areas in the city need to be advanced and problems such as poor air quality need to be tackled. Local and regional solutions need to be aligned with national projects such as HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail to spread the benefits.

[Infographic: HS2 map]

The renewed commitment to HS2, the Northern Powerhouse agenda, the potential of further devolution deals and the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy create the appropriate context to set a new strategic transport approach for the city. We have a unique opportunity to invest in new transport initiatives to support growth in the city using government funding originally earmarked for the New Generation Transport (NGT) trolleybus system. With local and private sector contributions the total investment package is worth almost double.

[Infographics:

- *Investing in a new Leeds High Frequency Bus Network, aiming for over 90% of core bus services running every 10 minutes between 7am and 8pm.*
- *Reduced bus delays through signal technology and bus priority measures, reduced waiting times and improving stop facilities.*
- *New buses that meet Euro 6 Air Quality standards and offer a better passenger experience by 2020.]*

We want Leeds to be a healthy city in which to live, work and visit. Working with partners to reduce transport emissions will bring about health and wellbeing benefits. We are introducing a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) that will charge buses, HGVs, taxis and private hire vehicles that fail to meet the latest

emissions standards for entering a defined area within the city and we are providing assistance and advice to local organisations to help them prepare for the CAZ.

Leeds' digital infrastructure is vital to our future success. This connectivity underpins growth, not only in our flourishing digital sector but across all parts of our economy. Our Smart Cities work is a key priority, working with business, universities and local partners in establishing Leeds as a leader in the application of big data, building on the assets such as the Open Data Institute, Data Mill North and Leeds Institute for Data Analytics (LIDA).

[Infographic: 11,000 people employed in the digital sector (Source: ONS 2015)]

For more detail on the issues, planned activity and work in progress, please refer to:

- Leeds Transport Strategy
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy
- West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan
- Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan

Age-Friendly Leeds

Leeds wants to be a place where people age well: where older people are valued, feel respected and appreciated and are seen as the assets they are.

[Presented infographically]

The 2011 Census indicated that 232,000 people in Leeds (31% of the city's population) was aged 50 and over, 110,000 (almost 15% of the total population) people were aged 65 and over, with nearly 15,000 (just under 2% of the city's residents) being aged 85+.

The most recent 2017 mid-year estimates from the Office of National Statistics highlight the increase in these figures in line with the city's population growth: of our estimated 785,000 total population, more than 250,000 people (32% of the city's population) are now aged 50 and over; 122,000 people (15.5%) are 65+ and 16,000 (2%) are 85+.

These numbers will continue to rise: looking forward to 2021, the ONS projects the total Leeds population will increase to more than 803,000 with the number of people aged 50+ expected to grow to 262,000 (33% of the total population); the 65+ age range to exceed 126,000 (15.7%) with those aged 85+ increasing to nearly 17,000 (2.1%).

The opportunities and challenges presented by an ageing population are well-rehearsed. Older people contribute in countless ways to Leeds' rich and vibrant communities – through the skills and knowledge that they bring to their local communities, high levels of volunteering, acting formally and informally as community connectors, intergenerational interactions, unpaid caring roles, and through the skills and experience they bring to their workplaces. However, we also know that many older people are also more likely to have multiple long-term health conditions with inequalities disproportionately affecting the poorest in our city. Inequalities in older age are cumulative and have a significant impact on a person's health, wellbeing and independence. As the baby-boomer generation grows older, there will be a range of implications for public sector service provision.

[Infographic]

The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015) estimated that of the 170,000 people estimated to be living in the 10% most deprived areas of Leeds, 25% (nearly 43,000 people) were aged 50 years or more; 11% (19,000 people) aged 65+ and 1.5% (2,600 people) aged 85+.

Our approach to making Leeds the best city to grow old is one of citizenship and applies to the whole population. The approach:

- Ensures there is a strong focus on social networks within neighbourhoods and the city
- Promotes social capital and participation
- Age-proofs and develops universal services
- Tackles inequalities and reduces social exclusion
- Aims to change social structures and attitudes

A lot of good work already takes place in Leeds but we recognise there is an opportunity for this to have a clearer, strategic context. We have therefore developed an Age Friendly Strategy and action plan which cuts across all our Best Council Plan priorities. This focuses our work around six topic areas adapted for Leeds from the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly City domains:

- Housing
- Public and civic spaces
- Travel and road safety
- Active, included and respected
- Healthy and independent ageing
- Employment and learning

[Presented infographically]

Cross-cutting themes across these topics are:

- ***Engagement with older people*** – *involving and consulting with older people on the development, delivery, management and evaluation of those services and projects which affect them.*
- ***Effective communications*** – *promoting ageing positively and providing information about services and activities in a format that older people can easily access and which suits their needs.*
- ***Access to digital technology*** – *help and support for people who want to use digital technology to make their life better.*

Partnership working underpins our Age-Friendly approach:

- The Age Friendly Board (Making Leeds the Best City to Grow Old In) provides strategic leadership and oversight and is supported by a broader Age Friendly Leeds Partnership, co-led by the council and Leeds Older People's Forum. The partnership brings together statutory, voluntary and private sectors to address the priorities identified by older people themselves to help make Leeds a more age-friendly city, build awareness of these priorities and resulting actions and support age-friendly initiatives.
- In October 2017, the Centre for Ageing Better entered into a five-year partnership agreement with the council and Leeds Older People's Forum with an aim of enabling Leeds to adopt evidence-based practice and pilot innovative approaches to help generate new evidence of 'what works' for ageing well that can be shared throughout the country and

beyond. Three initial priorities for this partnership were agreed: (1) Addressing older people's housing information and advice needs; (2) Addressing gaps in public transport by developing innovative community transport solutions; (3) Undertaking community research to explore the motivations, barriers and enablers that older people face in contributing to their community.

- At national and international levels, Leeds is a member of: the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities – a group of communities from across the UK collaborating to bring about change in the way we respond to population ageing; the Eurocities Urban Ageing Forum, a forum dedicated to raising awareness and improving strategies for age-friendly environments in cities; and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Cities, which was established to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide.

For more detail on the issues, planned activity and work in progress, please refer to:

- *Age Friendly Leeds Strategy [Please note, at the time of writing, this Strategy is still draft pending consideration by the Age Friendly Board at its meeting on 8 February 2019]*

D. Updated Best Council narrative

[Displayed infographically] **Our Values – encompassing everything we do and how we work**

- Being open, honest and trusted – *I can be my best*
- Treating people fairly – *It feels like I count*
- Spending money wisely – *I make every pound go further*
- Working as a team for Leeds – *I am part of a team with a ‘can do’ attitude*
- Working with people, engaging all communities – *I am proud to make a difference*

Best Council Ambition: An Efficient, Enterprising & Healthy Organisation

Our ‘Best Council’ ambition has for many years been aimed at becoming a more efficient and enterprising organisation, centred on an ongoing programme of cultural change. This has enabled us to manage significant financial pressures and increased demand for our services whilst minimising as far as possible the impact on the citizens of Leeds. This 2019/20 update explains our organisational priorities for the future with a particular focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff, without whom the outcomes and priorities set out in the Best Council Plan could not be delivered.

Improving staff health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of staff has always been important to Leeds City Council; the impact this can have on productivity, engagement and sickness absence is well understood. The challenge now is to ensure that wellbeing is consistently embedded, particularly at a time of ever-reducing time and capacity.

Leeds has introduced a range of initiatives over the years with this work recognised nationally and comparing well against other large organisations. For example, to support improved mental health and wellbeing, the council signed up to be a Mindful Employer back in 2011, enabling access to an array of resources and training; we established a Healthy Minds group in 2012 to provide peer-to-peer support, run events and workshops and in 2017 initiated a programme for training Mental Health First Aiders; our in-house Occupational Health Service offers pro-active and reactive advice and support; we have also had an Employee Assistance Programme for well over a decade that provides 24/7 telephone support for staff and their immediate families on a range of issues with self-referral for face-to-face counselling. To support improved physical health and wellbeing, we have over 100 active Wellbeing Champions across the organisation to lead on wellbeing initiatives and signpost people to information; all staff can sign up to join the Public Health Resource Centre, enabling access to a wealth of free guidance and practical tools; in 2016, we introduced direct physiotherapy referrals to help reduce and manage musculo-skeletal injuries; free ‘flu vaccinations have been offered to frontline members of social care staff for several years and targeted blood pressure testing was introduced last year. Supportive HR policies such as flexible working, special leave for extenuating circumstances and appropriate time off for volunteering and to attend staff networks, are also hugely beneficial to both mental and physical health and wellbeing.

However, more can be done to strengthen the health and wellbeing offer, and to ensure that all staff know and understand what support is available and how to access it. To highlight its importance, this 2019/20 update of the Best Council Plan therefore extends the Best Council ambition to be a more ‘Efficient, Enterprising **and Healthy** Organisation.’ A range of further practical activities are now underway and planned, including: improved communication and awareness with guidance made more accessible, current and evidence-based; training up to 500 more Mental Health First Aiders; closer collaboration with partners such as the Health and Social Care Partnership to provide

joint solutions to shared issues and the Business Disability Forum which is providing a range of tools and support; continuing work around low pay and financial wellbeing – we are proud to continue paying our staff at the Real Living Wage level; targeted activity with services experiencing the highest sickness absence related to mental health and musculo-skeletal disorders; introducing the concept of ‘wellbeing conversations’ linked to staff appraisals; and implementing a new overarching approach for Supporting Colleagues at Work. We have also agreed health and wellbeing champions at a senior management level across the organisation.

Our organisational culture

We strengthened our Organisational Development (OD) approach in 2018 which helped to articulate the focus of our next phase of culture change work: keeping the Best City / Best Council ambitions as key drivers for further improvement with our Values underpinning everything we do and how we work, to continue concentrating on staff wellbeing and inclusion and getting the basics of good people and change management right. Investing in training and skills for all staff will remain a key part of this, and our push on Management Development will continue.

Our emphasis on inclusion and diversity aims to eliminate barriers, celebrate differences and create a workforce more representative of our communities. Significant progress was made in 2018 in particular thanks to our 7 staff networks: the Disability & Wellbeing Network (DAWN), relaunched in 2018; Early Careers Network – representing colleagues in the early stages of their careers; Healthy Minds; Women’s Voice; Carers’ Network; and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME); and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans+ (LGBT+) network whose work was influential in helping us re-enter the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index top 100 employers. Throughout 2018 the networks have been laying the foundations for closer working across the groups of staff they represent, in recognition of the strength found in the partnership working approach to tackle common challenges and support individuals within the organisation. The coordinators of each network all meet on a monthly basis to discuss their projects, and provide a ‘first stop’ engagement forum for the organisation to consult with the representatives on changes in service delivery or staffing matters before potentially reaching out across the wider groups of colleagues. Whilst each of the seven networks has set out its aims for 2019, three cross-cutting priorities have been collectively agreed across the partnership:

- Career progression and equity of opportunity;
- Inclusive workplaces, where individuality is acknowledged and respected; and
- Challenging the digital divide and increasing engagement with frontline colleagues.

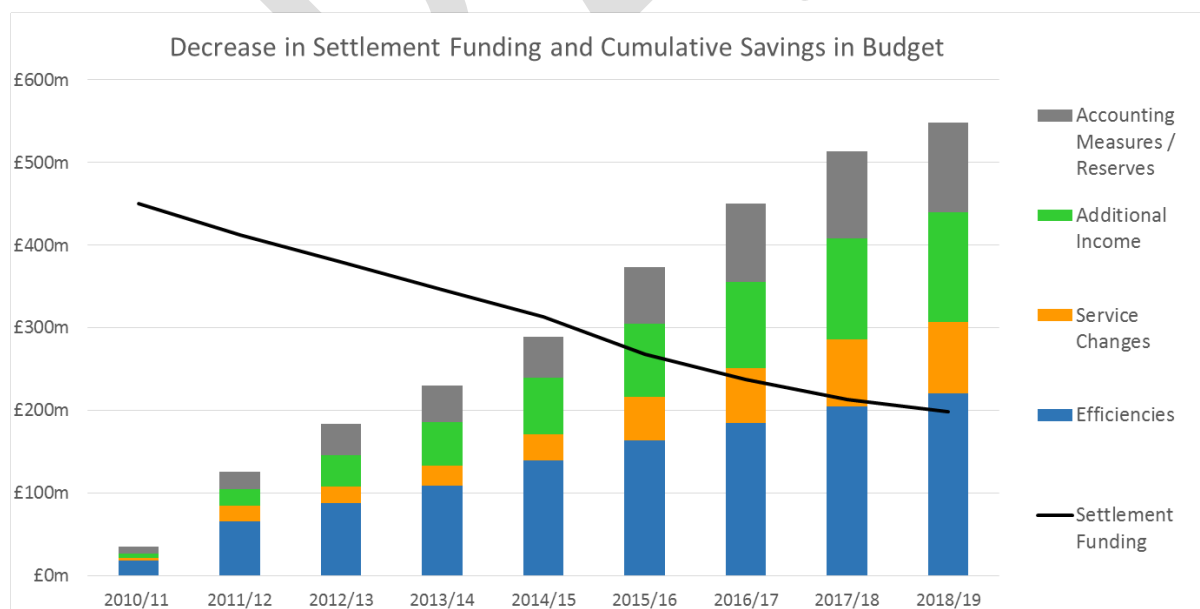
Work against these priorities will be delivered across the partnership and in conjunction with council staff, including the wider senior management teams. The partnership is also supporting work to increase levels of disclosure: with an improved understand of the workforce makeup, we can better identify and tackle issues such as potential barriers to career progression for certain staff groups.

Our ‘Team Leads – Can Do’ theme remains central to the OD approach, helping staff to feel more confident and empowered. In the coming year, we will build on the set of improvement tools we already draw on, such as outcomes-based accountability and restorative and strengths-based working which have proved so successful in our work with vulnerable adults and children, and further develop our skills and practice around people-centred design so that this approach becomes more regular, widespread and routine practice. We will also review the skills and capacity for delivering change and improvement, both at a premium, but with the investment we are making in our graduates, first time managers and strong take-up of leadership and management apprenticeships, this change resource will grow.

Scenario planning around future workforce levels and skills requirements remains a top consideration in light of shifts in demand, external factors such as Brexit, ongoing budget pressures and changes in the way we work. Our comprehensive staffing information and data will provide a good basis for this but additional work will be carried out during 2019/20 to better understand the medium- to longer-term requirements to enable the right balance between succession/capacity planning and workforce redesign. This will incorporate the impact of digital transformation which is shaping all workplaces and sectors, with the automation of basic tasks sitting alongside different ways of delivering products and services. New job and skill mixes will continue to be explored which could impact on job numbers and role design and so a range of responses will be used to help manage these changes, such as natural turnover, the council's Early Leavers Initiative, redesigning more administrative roles and reskilling and flexibly deploying staff; the use of apprenticeships to develop new skills and talent is an increasingly important part of our workforce strategy. We will finalise the review to introduce a more efficient, streamlined and inclusive recruitment process, including the introduction of a new e-recruitment system and some fresh options around high volume recruitment areas. Running alongside this we will develop an Employer Brand for the council to aid attraction and retention.

Managing our finances

Between 2010/11 and 2018/19 our core 'settlement funding' from government was reduced by around £250m, nearly 60%. At the same time, we have seen increasing costs and demand for services, particularly due to a growing and ageing population. We have so far met these challenges by stimulating economic growth, finding ways to increase our traded and commercial income, growing council tax from new properties and a significant programme of organisational efficiencies: over the last 8 years, we have reduced staff numbers by over 3,200 full time equivalent posts and also significantly reduced the number of buildings we use. The chart below shows the decrease in settlement funding and savings that we have made to balance the budget year on year.



Through targeting resources into preventative services, we have ensured that the implications of demand and demographic pressures that have resulted in significant cost pressures in other local authorities have so far been contained. For example, in 2017/18 we spent £700k on 61 households registered in temporary accommodation compared to Birmingham's £23m (15,481 households) and Manchester's £21m (3,948 households). Similarly, since 2010 the rate per 10,000 of children looked

after has decreased in Leeds by 18.3% whilst the national average has gone up by 12.7% thanks to a concerted effort to improve outcomes for all children and families, culminating in an overall 'outstanding' OfSTED inspection rating in December 2018 for children's services social care.

However, the financial outlook for 2019/20 and beyond remains challenging: our government settlement funding for this year has reduced again by around £15m and, with continued cost pressures, the council anticipates needing to deliver more than £24m of savings by March 2020. Our medium-term financial strategy approved in July 2018 estimated a funding gap between 2019/20 and 2021/22 of £97m with 53% (£52m) of this projected to hit in 2020/21 and 32% (£31m) in 2021/22. The Strategy indicates the range and scale of challenge and a direction of travel rather than a precise forecast of resources and will be updated again in summer 2019 but there remain a number of risks and uncertainties, particularly within the national and economic environment, not least against the backdrop of Brexit. The results of government's Fair Funding Review of local government finances are anticipated this autumn, informing the level of resources available to support budgets from 2020/21 onwards. Whilst transitional arrangements are anticipated to be put in place, the Review could result in significant changes to the funding baselines of local authorities in comparison to the current methodology used. During 2019 the government will also carry out a departmental spending review across all departments and the long-awaited Green Paper setting out proposals to make the social care and support system more sustainable is, at the time of writing, due to be released for public consultation. The issuing of a Section 114 notice by Northamptonshire Council in February 2018 imposing emergency spending controls and the subsequently commissioned Best Value inspection, has increased the focus on local authorities' financial resilience.

In the context of these uncertainties and financial challenges, the council will need to continue to make difficult decisions around the level and quality of services to ensure we keep delivering the ambitions and priorities for the city and the organisation set out in the Best Council Plan. In line with our vision to tackle poverty and inequalities, we will continue to target our resources towards the most vulnerable in our society with nearly two thirds of our 2019/20 budget funding adult social care and children's services. We will also continue our locality working model with a specific focus on a small number of 'priority neighbourhoods' (those defined as being in the most deprived 1% of neighbourhoods nationally), engaging with communities and with partner organisations to better understand and tackle issues relating to poverty and inequality in more co-ordinated, joined-up ways. Linking in with our Community Committees, Neighbourhood Improvement Board and a strategic delivery team, core teams consisting of residents, elected members, local partners and service managers are helping to develop and deliver very localised actions plans that increasingly offer opportunities for innovative ways of working and supporting different models of service delivery.

At an organisational level, we will continue to review services to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies – both financial and staff time -, making better use of available financial and performance benchmarking information and prioritising a number of cross-cutting, major programmes and projects. These include the next phase of an ongoing 'Changing the Workplace' review of our buildings, disposing of those that are no longer fit for purpose and reducing vacant capacity, and exploiting a range of digital solutions.

Delivering digital solutions

In July 2018, Leeds City Council, alongside a number of other local authorities, sector bodies, the Government Digital Service (GDS) and the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), was a co-publisher and signatory to [The Local Digital Declaration](#). This

document affirms a collective ambition to maximise the use of digital tools and technology to further improve and transform local public services, based around 5 principles:

1. To redesign services around the needs of people using them, prioritising those needs above any organisational, technological or professional silos.
2. To use open data standards and incorporate modular IT solutions that are more flexible, better value for money and can be joined up more effectively.
3. To design secure ways of usefully sharing information to build trust with partners and citizens, better support the most vulnerable and more effectively target resources.
4. To demonstrate digital leadership, helping create the environment for organisational transformation and also challenging the people and organisations we work with to embrace the Declaration too.
5. To embed an open culture that supports, values and expects digital ways of working across all members of staff and that facilitates cross-organisational collaboration.

These principles articulate the approach we are taking in Leeds: that in order to deliver improved public services, 'digital' is an essential tool but it cannot be considered in isolation. It must instead be integrated within the council's overarching approach to improving services and delivering efficiencies, through organisational development and cultural change and also close partnership working. We are working in particular in collaboration with NHS colleagues to develop a shared, connected digital infrastructure for the city to enable professionals to work more seamlessly together and people to manage their own health and care needs: for example, through widening the rollout of a single health and care record that can be continually updated by both professionals and individuals, not only does this create more opportunities for joined-up care, but also modern technologies such as artificial intelligence can be used to analyse the data and provide new insights to inform decisions around prevention, treatment and future research. The council has access to an Innovation Lab which has successfully aided the delivery of a number of new digital products and services, such as the bin app and council housing matching facility (the 'Social Housing Picker'), through bringing together users and experts to co-create solutions. We will further promote this work in 2019/20 and beyond, exploiting opportunities for grant funded bids: for example, in January 2019 the council was successful in its bid to the new GovTech Catalyst Fund which invites proposals from public bodies to identify potential digital solutions for the public sector where the technology does not currently exist. The Leeds bid relates to collecting damp monitoring data in social housing, helping us more proactively maintain our property portfolio and ensure homes, particularly for more vulnerable members of society, remain healthy environments.

Across the organisation, we will focus on a number of priority service areas to challenge how services are provided and the underlying processes and systems. Incorporating user-centred design to ensure the 'customer experience' is the starting point, we will identify opportunities to streamline and redesign processes, using digital solutions where appropriate. One example cross-council review is 'Mail and Print' which has an important digital element – such as digitising incoming mail, replacing outgoing mail with digital alternatives and replacing IT software and hardware in the medium- to long- term – but as part of a wider consideration of the whole function. The council is also undertaking a significant programme to upgrade, replace and possibly consolidate a number of applications but again through rethinking about what we do and how we can improve the service, rather than merely replacing legacy IT systems: a 'Core Systems Review' is underway, assessing options across several cross-cutting functions. Digital also has a key role to play in our focus on improving staff health and wellbeing: better automation will create time-saving opportunities and digital assistive technology can both prevent and support musculo-skeletal injuries.

To support our staff on the digital journey, we will establish a digital coaching initiative to help managers understand more about how technology could help them deliver their services in more innovative, cost effective ways and develop a 'Directory of Digital Innovation', enabling decision-makers to access information in one place about technology advances that could aid service modernisation. Over time, we want all our staff to understand the opportunities that digital can provide in service delivery, with it being as much a part of decision-making as, for example, finance, staffing, consultation and equality considerations. We will also continue to promote tools such as the 'Learn My Way' platform to help staff develop their digital skills, part of our broader 100% digital literacy ambition for the whole city. There will be opportunities to learn and share with others too: for example, the Government Digital Service (GDS) is developing learning offers on digital leadership skills and service/user-led design and the Greater London Authority is piloting a digital leadership programme which, when complete, will make all content freely available to other public sector bodies.

Underpinning the digital agenda is our ongoing work to improve the quality and availability of information provided to customers, staff and elected members based on a range of intelligence. We remain committed to 'open data' where possible in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and privacy standards: ensuring that confidential information remains secure whilst enabling better analysis to prioritise interventions and resources to where they are most needed.

E. Refreshed Best Council Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Notes:

- *Most of the Best City KPIs are cross-cutting, relevant to a number of the priorities. They are split out here purely for ease of reading at this draft stage. When the Best Council Plan graphic design version is produced, all KPIs will be combined into a single collective set.*
- *Notes in italics next to a KPI indicate a change from the current 2018/29 Best Council Plan. Those KPIs with no notes against them will be rolled forward into 2019/20.*

The set of key performance indicators (KPIs) below helps us measure progress in delivering our Best City and Best Council ambitions, outcomes and priorities. They are strategic indicators that we track over the long-term and report on regularly. They can change in-year so please check the online Best Council Plan for the latest version. Detailed performance information for both the Best Council Plan as well as the range of supporting and related strategies and plans is available on the council's leeds.gov.uk website.

Best City KPIs - How we will measure progress and achievements in delivering our Best City ambition and priorities.

Inclusive Growth

- Jobs change in the Leeds economy - *Revised to: 'Private sector employment in Leeds'*
- Productivity forecast – GVA per head - *Revised to: 'GVA (Gross Value Added) per head (balanced approach)' – slight amend to reflect the change in methodology in measuring GVA*
- *In the 2018/19 Best Council Plan update we noted that a KPI on inward investment would be developed. Due to the complexities and sensitivities around the potential data, this is still being worked on.*
- Number of new business start-ups and scale-ups
- *New KPI: 'Business survival rate'*
- Business rates growth - *Revised to: 'Change in NNDR payable since 2017 revaluation'*
- Visitor economic impact for Leeds
- Percentage of working-age Leeds residents with at least a Level 4 qualification
- Number of people supported to improve their skills
- Leeds as a destination for higher education leavers - *This KPI will be removed as the methodology is changing and the next results will not be available until 2020/21.*
- Percentages of Leeds residents and Leeds workers earning below the Real Living Wage
- Claimant rate for Employment and Support Allowance – *This KPI will be removed as, with the rollout of Universal Credit, it is becoming less relevant. It will be replaced with the KPI 'Number of people supported into work'*
- Number of adults of working age affected by in-work poverty

Health & Wellbeing

- Infant mortality rate
- Percentage/proportion of children maintaining a healthy weight at age 11
- Percentage of physically active adults
- Percentage of adults who smoke
- Avoidable years of life lost
- Suicide rate
- Percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Reduced rate of early death for people with a serious mental health illness - *At present, there is no data available to measure this. However, the recently published NHS 10-year plan states the need to*

introduce new mental health indicators so we will retain a note in the Best Council Plan 2019/20 update that a mental health KPI is in development and continue to lobby national bodies (such as Public Health England and NHS Digital). As and when national KPIs and datasets become available, we will evaluate the relative merits and include the most relevant in the Best Council Plan.

- Percentage of CQC-registered care services in Leeds rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'
- Number of permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes (a) for people aged 18-64 including 12 week disregards; (b) for people aged 65+ including 12 week disregards
- Proportion of people who use social care services who have control over their daily life

Child-Friendly City

- Number of children who need to be looked after
- Number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan
- Attendance at primary and secondary schools
- Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 (end of year 6)
- Progress 8 score for Leeds at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of year 11)
- Percentage and number of young people who are not in employment, education or training or whose status is 'not known'

NEW priority: Age-Friendly Leeds – new KPIs will be developed for this proposed new priority

The council is working closely with key partners including the Centre for Ageing Better to develop an evaluation framework for this new Best Council Plan priority. KPIs will be added during 2019 to help establish baselines for future monitoring of progress against the areas outlined in the Best Council Plan on a Page, including the number of people who:

- *Are identified as isolated or lonely*
- *Live independently in a place of their choice*
- *Feel that public spaces are safe and accessible*
- *Can travel around the city to the places they want to go*
- *Feel valued and a part of their community*
- *Have good health and wellbeing*
- *Have a job which is meaningful and rewarding*

Safe, Strong Communities

- Percentage of people with a concluded safeguarding enquiry for whom their desired outcomes were fully or partially met
- Self-reporting of domestic violence and abuse incidents
- Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic ~~accidents~~ collisions (total number and the number of children)
- Council tenant satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live
- Percentage of Leeds residents who say they feel safe in their local area
- Number of reported anti-social behaviour / nuisance incidents
- Number of reported hate incidents

Revised priority: ~~21st Century Infrastructure~~ Sustainable Infrastructure

- Satisfaction with a range of transport services
- Number of passengers boarding buses in the Leeds district
- Increase in city centre travel by sustainable transport (bus, train, cycling, walking)

- Percentage of waste recycled
- *Potential new KPI on air quality to be developed*
- Carbon emissions across the city
- Level of CO2 emissions from council buildings and operations
- Number of residential and commercial properties moved to a lower level of flood risk
- Percentage of adults in Leeds who have all 5 basic digital skills - *Currently we have no way of gathering sufficient data for this indicator. In the interim, a proxy indicator will be added to the Best Council Plan: 'Increase in tenants' digital skills/confidence, access to equipment and motivation' [based on the Annual Home Visits Survey of council housing tenants]*
- Percentage of adults in Leeds who have not been online in the last 3 months - *Currently there is no way of gathering data for this indicator so it will be removed.*

Housing

- Growth in new homes in Leeds
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Number of new units of extra care housing
- Improved energy and thermal efficiency performance of houses
- Number of households in fuel poverty
- Number of homeless preventions and number of rough sleepers
- Percentage of housing adaptations completed within target timescale
- Percentage of council housing repairs completed within target

Culture

- Number of visitors at a range of venues and events
- Number of employees in the creative industries in Leeds
- *In the 2018/19 Best Council Plan update we noted, 'The Leeds Culture Strategy is in development at the time of writing; this may lead to additional KPIs being added to the Best Council Plan in-year in relation to this priority.' No new KPIs are currently available so this note will be removed in the 2019/20 BCP update.*

Best Council KPIs - How we will measure progress and achievements in delivering our Best Council ambition

- Workforce more representative of our communities - *During 2018/19 this KPI was based on assessing the council's workforce against the results of the 2011 Census. However, the Census is now very out of date and so from 2019/20, we will instead measure the direction of travel over time using April 2018 baseline figures of the makeup of the workforce.*
- Number / percentage of apprentices employed by the council
- Score out of ten given by staff for working for Leeds City Council [part of staff survey]
- Average staff sickness levels [reported overall and broken down into Mental health; Musculo-skeletal disorders and Back & neck; Heart & blood pressure]
- Reduction in workplace accident and incident reports [with a specific reduction in absence related to violence & aggression and manual handling]
- *Potential new KPI: Increase in collaboration between the council and Health & Care providers across the city around Mental Health First Aid*
- Number of employees who believe that their immediate manager/supervisor looks out for their general health and wellbeing
- Percentage of staff appraisals and mid-year reviews completed

- Gender pay gap across council staff
- Level of projected over/underspend for this financial year
- Collection rates: council tax, business rates and council housing rental
- Percentage of orders placed with local suppliers and with small and medium-sized enterprises
- Prompt payment of invoices against target
- Percentage of ICT service desk calls fixed at the first point of contact
- Level of customer complaints
- Proportion of customers using self-service when getting in touch with the council
- Percentage of information requests received responded to within statutory timescales (Freedom of Information, Subject Access Requests *and Environmental Information Regulations*)

DRAFT



Best Council Plan Refresh 2019/20 – 2020/21

Summary of Scrutiny Board comments.



Report of the Scrutiny Boards
Statement for Executive Board – February 2019
**Best Council Plan Refresh
2019/20 – 2020/21**

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 19th December 2018, the Executive Board considered a report by the Director of Resources and Housing setting out initial proposals for refreshing the Best Council Plan for the period 2019/20 – 2020/21, taking into account progress in delivering the Plan's priorities. Further engagement was then sought with Scrutiny Boards on the emerging refresh of the Best Council Plan.
2. This engagement process took place over a series of meetings in January 2019, as follows:
 - Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board – 9th January 2019
 - Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles – 15th January 2019
 - Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board – 21st January 2019
 - Children and Families Scrutiny Board – 23rd January 2019
 - Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board – 23rd January 2019
3. Each of the Scrutiny Boards received a copy of the Executive Board's report and considered the initial proposals in the context of Quarter 2 Performance data presented at the same meeting. This included specific Best Council Plan indicators relevant to each Scrutiny Board.
4. Consideration of the initial Best Council Plan proposals benefited from the input of Executive Board Members, Directors and other Senior Council Officers.
5. This summary note sets out the key observations made by individual Scrutiny Boards as well as detailing any concluding recommendations put forward by Scrutiny for consideration by the Executive Board during its meeting on 13th February 2019.

Key observations by individual Scrutiny Boards

6. In consideration of the initial proposals for refreshing the Best Council Plan for the period 2019/20 – 2020/21, the following key observations were made by the Scrutiny Boards:

Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth (09/01/2019)

7. The Board noted that the focus of the Best Council Plan remains on “being the best city...” and welcomed the opportunity the refresh provided to reference digital solutions and bring an emphasis on the health of the workforce and financial health of the Local Authority within the wider City framework.
8. The Board acknowledged that in response to the Sustainable Development Inquiry in 2018 sustainability had been incorporated into the Inclusive Growth Strategy. However, the Board identified that more needed to be done to reflect Sustainable Development in the Best Council Plan with consideration to be given to the development of KPI(s) relating to economic, environmental and social sustainability.



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Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles
(15/01/2019)

9. The Board was very supportive of the overall approach and proposals; and particularly welcomed the emphasis on the health and wellbeing of the workforce. The Board also welcomed the overall increase in care providers rated 'good' and 'outstanding' across the City and plan to visit the nursing care home that recently received an 'outstanding' judgement. Discussion at the meeting also referenced current performance across a range of Best Council Plan indicators that fall within the Board's remit.
10. The Board welcomed the significant improvement in the percentage of adults who are physically active and the plans in place to continue this upward trend; however recognised the concern that a correlation remains between low levels of physical activity and the more deprived areas of the city.
11. The Board welcomed the reduced smoking prevalence in Leeds and the focus in the report around the benefits for personal finances as well as health. The Board indicated that it would be helpful to report and compare smoking prevalence across specific localities in order to better inform resources. Additionally, concern was expressed over the prominence of 24 hour off-licences selling cheap alcohol and cigarettes in deprived areas of the City, and the impact this has on communities. The Board was informed that Public Health work in partnership with Licensing and Planning teams, as well as West Yorkshire Trading Standards to create more challenge for licence applications in areas with high levels of alcohol and drug misuse, as

well as to tackle the sale of illicit tobacco. Nonetheless, the Board felt that more could be achieved in relation to these matters.

12. The Board believes it is important to ensure access to healthy food and nutritional advice, particularly in deprived communities and welcomed the commitment to improvement in this area, demonstrated through the recently agreed Healthy Weight Declaration. Additionally, the Board commented on the offer of unhealthy and/or high sugar content snacks available in vending machines at Council-run sports centres and swimming pools. The Board welcomed efforts to address this issue through a three month trial exploring potential changes to contracts to offer healthier alternatives.

Strategy and Resources (21/01/2019)

13. Particular concerns were raised by the Board in relation to staff sickness levels, which have increased gradually throughout the year and particularly in all high-volume frontline services despite action plans being in place alongside the wider Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy. In the 12 months to the end of August 2018, the average across the entire organisation was 9.82 days per FTE (15% above the target of 8.5 days). The Board was particularly interested to learn that during that 12 month period, 42,289 sickness days were attributed to mental health conditions. The Board was pleased to acknowledge that more preventative measures were being introduced as well as plans to look at specific areas of concern.



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14. It was noted that more emphasis would also be placed upon the role of managers/supervisors in terms of looking out for their staffs' general health and wellbeing.
15. In view of the above, the Board was particularly supportive of the proposal to expand the Best Council 'efficient and enterprising' strapline to incorporate 'healthy', encompassing a focus on health across the council's workforce. Linked to this, it was also acknowledged that the Board was already intending to undertake more detailed scrutiny of this matter during its next meeting in February.
16. Acknowledging that there is to be a review of the Best Council Plan key performance indicators too, the following points were also raised during the Board's consideration of the latest BCP performance update report:
17. That work is ongoing to explore a better way of reporting in relation to the current KPI on 'workforce more representative of our communities' given that this is currently assessed and compared to the baseline of 2011 census data and has always proven difficult to provide a simple numerical way to express an overall result for this indicator.
18. That disclosure rates surrounding the workforce diversity indicator were low (particularly in relation to the disclosure of being a carer) and whilst such disclosures will remain optional to staff, there will be ongoing efforts to improve disclosure rates in underrepresented areas.
- Children and Families (23/01/2019)
19. Whilst acknowledging that the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy is one of the primary strategies in achieving the Council's Best City ambition, the Board made particular reference to the recommendation put forward by Scrutiny last year in terms of making 'supporting healthy, active lifestyles' a Best Council Plan priority or city-wide obsession in accordance with existing efforts to develop a sustainable whole systems approach towards physical activity for Leeds.
20. The Board focussed on active lifestyles, particularly for young people and their family groups and the benefits this can bring in terms of general health and wellbeing, mental health and improving outcomes for young people. The Board supports the suggestion that "active lifestyles" should be a future relentless focus which therefore warrants more prominence as part of the Best Council Plan.
21. Discussion identified the challenges which prevented the take up of activities – such as cost, access and availability – and the disparity of leisure centre/activity provision across the city, particularly in areas of high housing density. The Board identified the need for a review to better communicate the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and to seek to identify and address the barriers to activity.



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Environment, Housing and Communities
(23/01/2019)

22. The Board acknowledged the intention to focus on the city's ageing population through the BCP refresh, which will support the continued creation of environments and housing in Leeds suitable and sustainable for its ageing residents.
23. The Scrutiny Board will continue to focus on the impact of Universal Credit in the context of tackling poverty for individuals and families, both in and out of employment, which will support the strategic direction of the Council as set out in the refreshed Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21.

**Concluding
recommendations made
by Scrutiny**

24. The following recommendations have been made by Scrutiny for the consideration of the Executive Board:

Recommendation 1.

That the Executive Board supports the new focus on the City's ageing population within the refreshed Best Council Plan.

Recommendation 2.

That the Executive Board reflects again on the recommendation put forward by Scrutiny last year and supports the need to make 'supporting healthy, active lifestyles' a Best Council Plan priority or city-wide obsession in accordance with existing efforts to develop a sustainable whole systems approach towards physical activity for Leeds.

Recommendation 3.

That the Executive Board support the proposal to expand the Best Council "efficient and enterprising" strapline to incorporate 'healthy', encompassing a focus on health across the Council's workforce.

Recommendation 4.

That the Executive Board is again requested to ensure that sustainable development has prominence in the Best Council Plan, to reinforce focus on the environmental and social needs of communities, so that poorer communities are not disproportionately disadvantaged by housing and infrastructure growth and in addition, to ensure that all Leeds residents can enjoy the advantages delivered through economic development.

**Scrutiny Boards
Joint Statement for the Executive Board
Best Council Plan Refresh 2019/20 – 2020/2021
February 2019**

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Equality Impact Assessment: Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20

Introduction

This paper outlines the equality analysis and strategic equality assessment of the proposed Best Council Plan for 2019/20 to 2020/21 and proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2019/20 (as detailed in the accompanying reports to the Executive Board meeting 13 February 2019 recommending proposals to Full Council on 27 February 2019). The lead person for this equality impact assessment was Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing. Members of the assessment team were:

Coral Main	Head of Business Planning & Risk
Richard Ellis	Head of Finance
Lelir Yeung	Head of Equality
Graham Sephton	Head of HR
Pauline Ellis	Senior Policy & Performance Officer
Tim Rollett	Intelligence and Policy Manager
Joanna Rowlands	Senior Policy Development Officer
Ruth Addison	Senior Intelligence Officer

Overview

The Best Council Plan is Leeds City Council's strategic plan, both bringing together and also informing and being informed by the aspirations from a range of supporting council and partnership plans to set out the authority's overall ambitions, policy direction and priorities for city and organisation. It underpins the council's budget-setting and financial strategies, helps our staff understand how the work they do makes a real difference to the people of Leeds and shows our partners how we contribute to city-wide issues. Whilst the Best Council Plan is written as a multi-year, long-term strategic document, as with the council's medium-term financial plan, it is reviewed and refined annually as needed.

The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and the 2019/20 Budget have been developed in the context of the approach agreed by the Executive Board on 19th December 2018 through the Initial Best Council Plan proposals and the Initial Budget Proposals. The 2019/20 Budget also incorporates the local government finance settlement. In accordance with the council's budget and policy framework and as agreed by Executive Board in December, both the Initial Best Council Plan proposals and the Initial Budget Proposals have been submitted to Scrutiny for review and consideration, and have also been used as the basis for wider consultation.

The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 maintains the clear, strategic message expressed over several years around Best City meaning a strong economy in a compassionate city with the city's Inclusive Growth and Health & Wellbeing Strategies as key drivers in tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Key changes from the 2018/19 Best Council Plan include strengthening the environmental aspects of sustainable development by establishing a 'Sustainable Infrastructure' priority (replacing 21st Century Infrastructure) and highlighting linkages across all priorities; also introducing a new 'Age-Friendly Leeds' priority based on the existing, well developed ambition for Leeds to be the best city to grow old in, a place that both values older people recognising the contribution they can make, but also prioritises

their needs. The 'Best Council' ambition of being 'An Efficient and Enterprising Organisation' is kept but extended to include 'Healthy', adding further focus to the health and wellbeing of staff, and with updated detailed narrative on how the authority will enact this in support of the Best City ambition. The Best Council Plan key performance indicators are also updated. The Best Council Plan ambitions, outcomes and priorities underpin the Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by the Executive Board in July 2018 and the proposed 2019/20 Budget.

The financial climate for local government continues to present significant risks to the council's priorities and ambitions. The council continues to make every effort possible to protect the front line delivery of services, and whilst we have been able to balance the budget each year since 2010, have continued to deliver a broad range of services despite declining income, and have avoided large scale compulsory redundancies, it is clear that the position continues to be difficult to manage. Resource implications will impact on all communities but those who have been identified as being at the greatest potential risk of negative impact include:

- Disabled people – including all impairment groups;
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities;
- Women;
- Older and younger people; and
- Low socio-economic groups (within this group, there is over-representation by disabled people and BME communities).

Scope

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to give 'due regard' to equality. The council is committed to ending unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advancing equal opportunities and fostering good relations.

In order to achieve this we need to ensure that equality and diversity are given proper consideration when we develop policies and make decisions. The council has an agreed process in place to do this through the use of equality impact assessments.

Best Council Plan

The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 is intended to provide long-term strategic direction rather than being a detailed delivery or action plan. It includes:

- A foreword setting out our approach, high-level socio-economic and policy context and the underpinning principles and coverage of the Best Council Plan, with Inclusive Growth and Health and Wellbeing at the heart of our Strong Economy / Compassionate City ambition.
- A 'Plan on a Page' setting out our vision, ambitions, desired outcomes and eight 'Best City' priorities:
 - Inclusive Growth
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Child-Friendly City
 - Age-Friendly Leeds
 - Safe, Strong Communities
 - Housing
 - Sustainable Infrastructure
 - Culture

- A 'Best City' section that provides an introduction to each of the priorities and signposts the reader to the key supporting strategies for further information.
- A 'Best Council' section, explaining our approach to being an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation with our five council values underpinning everything we do and how we work.
- A set of 'Best City' and 'Best Council' key performance indicators.

The council is committed to responding to the challenges of inequality in Leeds within the pressures of the financial context in which we are now operating.

Budget

The council has so far responded successfully to the funding challenges since 2010 by reducing a number of areas of expenditure, most significantly on employees and through better procurement and demand management, and by increasing income as outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Also, through targeting resources into preventative services the council has ensured that the implications of demand and demographic pressures, which have resulted in significant cost pressures in other local authorities, have been contained within Leeds.

After taking into account the impact of the anticipated changes in funding and cost pressures, it is forecast that the council will need to generate savings, efficiencies and additional income to the order of £22.1m in 2019/20 to balance to the anticipated level of resources available.

The council remains committed to protecting front line services as far as possible especially those that provide support to the most vulnerable and is planning to meet the challenge of the estimated budget gap for 2019/20 through a combination of efficiencies, changes to service, increased income (generated through fees, charges and traded services), increased grant and changes in the funding of lifecycle costs on PFI contracts. Details of these proposals can be found in the directorate reports appended to the Budget 2019/20 report to February's Executive Board.

Impact of budget proposals on employees

Following the 2015 spending review, it became clear that the council's funding position would give rise to the need for further reductions in staff. At that time it was estimated that the council would need to downsize by between 1,000 and 2,000 full time equivalent (FTE) posts by the end of March 2020. Accordingly the council re-issued a section 188 notice (notice to collectively consult to avoid redundancies issued under s.188 TULRCA 1992). Given the scale of this challenge, it was the council's view that this level of reduction could not easily be achieved without compulsory redundancies.

Since May 2016, the council has held extensive discussions with Trade Unions. This engagement has been both positive and constructive and has collectively explored opportunities to manage staff reductions down in a way that avoids compulsory redundancies.

As a result, through a combination of normal turnover, voluntary retirement and severance, and through greater staff flexibility, the required savings have been achieved. Whilst it still may be necessary in some circumstances, the council will continue to strive to avoid compulsory redundancies.

The council has operated a voluntary retirement and severance scheme since 2010/11 which has already contributed significantly to the reduction in staffing since then.

In July 2018 Executive Board received an update to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in which the budget gap over the next 3 years was forecast at around £96.8m. (An updated financial forecast for 2020/21 and 2021/22 is included in section 12 of the 2019/20 Budget report for consideration by Executive Board and Full Council in February 2019.)

The council reissued a S188 notice on 19th December 2018 which indicated that an estimated reduction of a further 69 FTEs would be required by 2020. The notice also identified that with an identified funding gap of £65.6m for 2020/21 and 2021/22 some of the budget savings options to address this will inevitably include a reduction in the number of staffing FTEs.

Fact finding – what do we already know

Demographics: A Changing Population

- The population of Leeds is estimated to be 784,800¹ people in 2017 (ONS mid-year estimate) - an increase of 0.5% (3,800 people) in the year since the previous 2016 estimate.
- One in ten people (10.1%) are in the 20-24 age band reflecting the large student population.
- In the 10 years (2007-2017), the Leeds population has increased by 6.3% (46,300 people). The working age population had a smaller percentage increase (3.2%) than both the population of children and young people (12.6%) and the population aged 65 and over (12.7%).
- In the 10 years (2007-2017), the increase in the children's and young people's population has been in the primary school age groups, with an increase of 19,435 children in the 0-10 age group.
- Over the next 10 years, this increase will affect the secondary school age group, with a big rise in the number of teenagers in Leeds. There will be a projected 18,348 more young people aged between 11 and 19 years old in 2027 compared to 2017.
- The population of older people aged 65 and above has increased by 13,700 people (2007-2017). In the next 10 years, the increase in the older population will be even bigger, with 17,100 more people aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2027 than in 2017.
- Although the 65 and above age group still has more women than men, there has been a bigger increase in the number of men, with 8,300 more men aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2017 than in 2007 (compared to 5,400 more women).
- Leeds continues to become more ethnically diverse, with the greatest ethnic diversity in younger age groups. The proportion of the school population from

¹ Rounded to 100. Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2017 Mid-Year Estimates

BME backgrounds has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from 17.9% in 2005 to 33.8% in 2018.

- Although the population aged 65 and older is less ethnically diverse than younger age groups, the proportion from BME backgrounds will increase as people who settled in Leeds as young adults grow older.
- The Leeds population is predicted to continue to grow, reaching 826,500² in 2027. This is a 5.1% increase in the 10 years 2017 to 2027. The working age population will have a smaller percentage increase (2.4%) than the population of children and young people (7.4%) and the population aged 65 and over (14.1%).
- There is no direct count of disability for the whole population, but the Census 2011 collected information about 'long term health problems or disability'. In Leeds 83.3% of people said that their day-to-day activities are not limited by long term health problems or disability, 7.9% said they are limited a lot and 8.9% said that they are limited a little.
- The religious profile of the city is changing. In the 10 years between the 2001 census and 2011 census, the proportion of people who said they are Christian decreased from 68.9% to 55.9%. The proportion with no religion increased from 16.8% to 28.2%. Compared to England and Wales, Leeds had higher than average proportions of people stating their religion as Jewish (0.9% compared to 0.5%), as Muslim (5.4% compared to 4.8%) and as Sikh (1.2% compared to 0.8%). The Muslim community had the youngest age profile.
- The 2011 Census collected information on civil partnerships for the first time, reflecting the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which came into effect in the UK in December 2005. In Leeds, 41.5% of adults were married, which is lower than the England and Wales rate of 46.6%; 0.2% of adults were in a registered same-sex civil partnership, which is the same as the England and Wales rate; 40.8% of adults were single (never married or never registered in a same-sex civil partnership), which is much higher than the England and Wales rate of 34.6%; 17.5% of adults were separated, divorced or widowed, which is slightly lower than the England and Wales rate of 18.6%.

Poverty and Inequality

The key message in the Best Council Plan is that for Leeds to be the Best Council in the Best City, we need to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities. The council's approach to equality improvement recognises poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. The approach recognises that a number of protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those people living in poverty.

Our latest socio-economic analysis (notably the 2018 Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment, analysis based on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation and the 2019 update of the council's Poverty Fact Book) show that a range of inequalities persist across the city and, linked with deprivation levels, are particularly concentrated in specific localities with long-term related challenges such as access to employment, housing, language and literacy, skills, health and care responsibilities. The slow economic recovery alongside reductions in public spending has significantly impacted the poorest members of society.

² Rounded to 100. Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016-based projections

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 show the geographic concentration of deprivation in the communities of Inner East and Inner South Leeds, confirming the wider analysis of poverty and deprivation undertaken in the 2018 Joint Strategic Assessment. Analysis of relative change in the city since the previous 2010 Index suggests that there has been some intensification of the concentration of our most deprived and least deprived neighbourhoods.

- In 2016/17 almost a fifth of the Leeds population – around 150,000 people across the city were classified as being in ‘absolute poverty’. (Absolute Poverty measures individuals who have household incomes 60% below the median average in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.)³
- Over 28,000⁴ (19.6%) Leeds Children under 16 were in poverty in 2015. In 2016/17 there has been an increase in the number of people in employment who are living in poverty. Nationally 5.4 million people now live in households where at least one member of the household is in work, yet they live in poverty. This is symptomatic of a labour market which is characterised by low pay, temporary, part-time and zero hour contracts.
- During 2016/17, in-work poverty was estimated to affect over 71,000 Leeds adults. Over 27,000 Leeds residents in full-time work earn less than the Real Living Wage of 2018 and over 10,900 Leeds workers are on zero hour contracts.
- In 2016, almost 43,000 Leeds households were in fuel poverty and almost 10,000 of these households were paying their fuel bills via prepayment meters during 2016.
- Leeds has 105 neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% nationally. This is 22% of Leeds neighbourhoods. Leeds is ranked at 31 out of 326 local authorities on the proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10%. All the other Core Cities, apart from Bristol, have a higher proportion in the most deprived 10% (e.g. Liverpool has 45% and Manchester has 41%).
- However, if we look at the number of people experiencing deprivation, Leeds is ranked as the 3rd most deprived out of 326 local authorities. There are two measures which identify local authority districts with large numbers of people experiencing deprivation. These are the income scale and the employment scale:
 - Income scale – this counts the number of individuals (adults and children) experiencing income deprivation in the local authority area. Leeds had the 3rd highest number (Birmingham had the highest number and Manchester the 2nd highest).
 - Employment scale - this counts the number of individuals experiencing employment deprivation in the local authority area. Leeds had the 3rd highest number (Birmingham had the highest number and Liverpool the 2nd highest).

Financial Hardship

Poverty is recognised as an issue that impacts on equality, and financial exclusion as a barrier to an equal society. We know that poverty and financial exclusion disproportionately affect people within specific equality groups, particularly single

³ The Leeds Poverty Fact Book includes measures for Relative and Absolute Poverty, both before and after housing costs are deducted. ‘Absolute Poverty’ measures individuals who have income below 60% of median incomes, but uses the median income from 2010/11 and adjusts this in line with inflation. This is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation/living standards. Absolute Poverty falls when individuals with low incomes see their incomes rise by more than inflation.

⁴ Children in Low Income Families Local Measure (Source: HMRC data published March 2018, representing Child Poverty in Leeds 2015)

parents, and people with mental health problems. For example, in recent research commissioned by Leeds City Council into Financial Exclusion and Poverty in Leeds, it was found that families with children were much less likely to save and therefore less resilient to any changes in their finances. Survey results of 600 deprived area households found that 47% of lone parent households in deprived areas said they never save, compared to 38% of all households surveyed (University of Salford, 2018). A report by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute found that nearly a quarter of people (23%) who attempted suicide in 2017 were in problem debt. People with multiple debt problems are at significantly higher risk of suicide than those with just one problem debt. (A Silent Killer, Breaking the link between financial difficulty and suicide, 2018). Below we have provided statistics to show the scale of financial hardship across Leeds:

- The implementation of welfare changes from April 2013 has contributed to many families falling into rent and council tax arrears or further into arrears. As a result, in 2017/18 the council saw almost 3,800 awards to people accessing its Local Welfare Support Scheme for both emergency (food and fuel) and basic needs provision (household goods), totalling almost £560,000 in direct awards.
- Further welfare changes, including the under-occupancy charges, have affected over 5,200 Leeds households. In January 2017, the Benefit Cap reduced to £20,000 per annum and affected over 800 households during September 2018.
- Over 19,000 households in Leeds have to pay 25% of their Council Tax due to changes to Council Tax Support.
- Mirroring national trends, the city has also seen the emergence and significant growth of foodbanks, supported by the establishment of the Leeds Food Aid Network to coordinate emergency food provision across the district. Almost 28,000 people in Leeds have needed assistance with food via a food bank between April 2017 and March 2018.
- Access to credit and interest rates for those on low incomes or with poor credit histories also remains high. The value of the high cost credit sector was £8.9bn nationally in 2016; in Leeds it is estimated to be worth £178m, up almost 19% since the figure was last estimated in 2009. The high cost credit sector includes products and services such as payday loans, rent-to-own, home credit and catalogue credit

Third sector

The council has a long tradition of working in collaboration with the third sector in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people of Leeds. The council recognises and values the critical and significant role that the third sector plays in the life of the city and the importance of a diverse sector as articulated in the Leeds Third Sector Ambition Statement. The council demonstrates its commitment to the sector in many ways.

The council invests financial and staff resource in the development and maintenance of partnership and engagement relationships with the sector, including city-wide strategic bodies and a network of locality, service, thematic, community and equality-focused third sector forums. This facilitates strategic engagement with the sector, dialogue between the sector, council and a range of partnerships and forums and enables the council to have better reach into communities, resulting in more effective co-production and collaboration on key city and locality agendas. For example:

- The council provides executive support and plays a leading role in the Third Sector Partnership. This is a key part of the city infrastructure through which the third sector, council, NHS, universities and other public sector partners work together to ensure that collectively the conditions are created for a thriving third sector, so organisations can deliver better outcomes for the people of Leeds. The Partnership is chaired by Cllr Debra Coupar and is attended by representatives from all council directorates.

The council makes a significant financial investment in the sector. In 2017/18 £125.1m was invested in the sector through transactions with 1392 individual third sector organisations. Of these:

- 719 organisations received payments of less than £1000 (predominantly small, local, community and sports organisations)
- 25 organisations / consortiums received £80.3m between them (principally agencies focusing on health, social care and the children's agenda's)
- 197 faith organisations received £14.8m for their secular work in communities
- Members Improvement in the Community and Environmental (MICE) allocation totalling £240k was invested in third sector-led, community-based initiatives.
- The total investment in the sector by the council has been broadly maintained despite the £251m funding reduction experienced by the council over the period of austerity. This is a positive picture, but the council along with third sector partners, is continuing to review the analysis of the council's financial relationship with the sector in order to understand whether the approach is supporting our shared ambitions for the sector and the city.

There is ongoing dialogue with the third sector regarding the budget challenges and future plans, for example:

- The Third Sector Partnership has received regular updates on the council's financial position. In November 2018, the council's Chief Officer, Financial Services provided an overview of the financial position and the challenges that will need to be addressed in the council budget 2019/20 and 2020/21. Directorate commissioning colleagues also shared information about their respective emerging budget positions.
- Council directorates have well established on-going arrangements and dialogue with their third sector partners and other interested third sector stakeholders. This shapes and informs their approach to the budget challenges and their priorities. There is a well-established expectation that they are in regular detailed discussions with organisations that will be impacted by any budget reductions or changes.

The council continues to drive forward and support a range of initiatives to ensure that Leeds has a thriving third sector that can deliver for the people of Leeds. For example:

- In March 2018 the council endorsed the Compact for Leeds, the Commissioning and the Working Together Codes of Practice. The Commissioning Code is of particular significance as it was developed through a long process of collaboration between health, council and third sector partners and provides an important framework to support coherence and consistency with their collective and individual commissioning.

- The council coproduces the annual Lord Mayor's Small Groups and Charities Event which celebrates the work of small groups, volunteers and active citizens, but also provides them with an opportunity to link into a range of organisational and funding support and advice.
- The council facilitates the cross sector Funding Leeds Partnership, which has been leading on ambitions to maximise external investment into Leeds through the third sector. This includes:
 - The development and promotion of a programme of training, funding fairs and workshops to enable front line third sector organisations to access information about funding opportunities and to develop skills and access support to maximise their success in bidding for funding.
 - Investment in and further development and promotion of the Funding Leeds website which provides a comprehensive accessible database of local, regional and national funding opportunities and provides information and links to local training and support.
- The council has also further developed its employer-supported funding support programme which encourages council staff to volunteer to use their transferable skills and experience to help smaller community organisations to produce better funding bids, with a specific focus on support to minority and marginalised communities.
- The People's Commissioning arrangements in the council provide a vehicle to ensure that investment, including in the third sector, is coherent and coordinated.

Council colleagues and third sector partners will continue to broker further discussions as necessary on budget, global, national, and local and other emerging challenges that impact on Leeds, in order to drive new ways of working and contribute to the delivery of the city ambitions.

The council's workforce profile

In recent years in response to the financial challenges, the council has significantly reduced its workforce. Working closely with the trade unions and with the take-up of our voluntary leaver scheme we have managed to reduce staffing with relatively few compulsory redundancies. Reducing agency staff costs, overtime, sickness and introducing working from different locations has also brought costs down significantly. Reskilling and redeploying people whose roles are at risk is creating a more flexible and responsive workforce and avoiding the need for as many redundancies as initially estimated.

Our staff engagement results are very positive, with three year trends showing improvement across all areas linked to our workplace culture and values.

In-work poverty and low pay remain issues of national concern. In Leeds, work continues to tackle this, reflecting the commitments in the Low Pay Charter adopted by Council in April 2015.

- In April 2018 the council's minimum hourly rate was increased to £8.75 which mirrored the Living Wage Foundation recommended minimum rate of pay, with a commitment to review this annually in the overall context of the budget strategy. Increases are considered in terms of affordability, impact on pay structures and national pay settlements.

- From the 1st April 2019 a new National Joint Council (NJC) pay spine will be introduced with a minimum rate of £9.00 for new starters. The pay for all existing staff will be £9.18 or more which exceeds the Living Wage Foundation minimum. These changes have a positive impact on in-work poverty, particularly for women, under 25s and part-time workers.

In December 2018 there were 14,736 people employed in the council (excluding schools and casual staff). The workforce profile of all employees is shown below.

Profile area	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male (including Trans)	5,820	39%
Female (including Trans)	8,916	61%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,736</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Disability		
Not disabled	12,394	84%
Disabled	835	6%
Not specified/prefer not to say	1,507	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,736</i>	<i>100%</i>
Ethnic origin		
Non BME	10,911	74%
BME	2,032	13%
Not specified/prefer not to say	1,793	13%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,736</i>	<i>100%</i>
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	7,800	53%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual & other	363	3%
Not specified/prefer not to say	6,393	44%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,736</i>	<i>100%</i>
Religion or belief		
Religion	8,991	61%
Not specified/prefer not to say	5,745	39%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14736</i>	<i>100%</i>
Age / years		
16 – 25	1,004	7%
26 - 64	13,404	91%
65 +	328	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>14,736</i>	<i>100%</i>

To date the number of people leaving through turnover and the voluntary early retirement and severance scheme is not adversely affecting the workforce equality profile. We are working hard to encourage staff that have not specified/prefer not to

say to update their equality information so we have a more accurate picture of our workforce; though long-term in nature, this work is deemed high priority.

The council promotes equality and diversity and is committed to creating a representative organisation with an inclusive culture. All members of the Corporate Leadership Team and Chief Officers have a specific inclusion objective in their appraisals, and this year part of the reporting is being linked to how they develop their own workforce around the inclusion agenda. Political support remains strong and a comprehensive programme of work is in place, with strong links to our Staff Network groups and community hubs where appropriate. Our graduate and apprenticeship programmes provide opportunities to further diversify our workforce.

Due regard continues to be given to all key and major decisions which may impact on the workforce.

Apprentices

Since the announcement of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017, the council has worked to improve its apprenticeship offer and grow the apprenticeship programme and opportunities across all services within the organisation to make best use of levy funds.

Currently (January 2019) the council employs 636 apprentices, from level 3-7, across more than 70 standards, covering traditional entry roles, through to technical professionals. These are a mix of new recruits and conversions of current employees onto apprenticeship training.

Although recruitment to new apprenticeship posts is limited within the current budget position, we are taking steps to engage communities and underrepresented groups within areas of deprivation and diversity across the city in order to widen participation and encourage inclusiveness and accessibility for all. As a result we are continuing to work with 6 target high schools across the city to encourage and build awareness to school age students and their parents, to take up apprenticeships with a specific focus on public sector and council apprenticeships. These schools were identified from deprivation and diversity targets and hit those featuring most highly in these indices. Work includes a selection of workshops that cover employment skills and awareness raising.

In addition to this, work has been carried out within community hubs to raise awareness with hub staff of apprenticeships and particularly council opportunities, to assist in their advisory capacity to communities.

Recent analysis of diversity data indicates that in terms of apprenticeships, the number of BME apprentices is slightly raised above that of the makeup of the workforce at 17% BME (against 14% for the council). This appears to be a significant achievement against the Census 2011 figures which show Leeds population is around 19% BME. This comes against a backdrop of diversity data in apprenticeship starts across the city as a whole which have recently shown BME take up to be around 11.7%.

Looking at areas of deprivation across the city, analysis suggests that in 2017, when looking at all employed apprentices (both new recruits and current employees) approximately 54% of our apprentices came from the 40% most deprived postcodes in the city. In 2018 we looked solely at new start data and as such can demonstrate a relative increase, as 55% of just our new recruits are now coming from these top most deprived areas. This hopefully reflects the work mentioned above.

Equality Impacts and Improvement Work

During 2017 council's Equality Improvement Priorities were reviewed and refreshed. Approved and published in the summer 2018, the Equality Improvement Priorities 2018–2022 ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and complement the 'Best City' ambition set out in the Best Council Plan for Leeds to have a Strong Economy and to be a Compassionate City.

Equality analysis continues to be used to set the council equality improvement priorities and has also been used to inform, and is an integral part of, the Best Council Plan priorities and Budget proposals. The Equality Improvement Priorities recognise that there are currently different outcomes and experiences for different groups and communities, highlighting the challenges the city will have to address in order to tackle inequalities and help people out of poverty. They are based on evidence of disproportionate outcomes, which we are seeking to challenge and change.

The council's Equality Improvement Priorities still take into account the protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010. We continue to recognise poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. We have, therefore, included priorities that specifically address poverty as we recognise that a number of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.

There is not an equality priority for every protected characteristic but all characteristics are taken into account. We are committed to equality for all our citizens and believe that improving a service for one community will have a positive impact for all communities. We will continue our work across all the protected characteristics, whether or not there are specific equality improvement priorities which are explicitly focussing on them. We will consider all communities when we give due regard to equality at both strategic and operational activities.

Progress against the equality improvement priorities is reported annually.

A range of activity has taken place over the last 12 months to help reduce inequalities and improve outcomes. This has included work to:

- Improve housing options for young people and disabled people;
- Ensure people in Leeds can lead safer, healthier and happier lives and are free from the risks, threats and harms associated with domestic violence and abuse;
- Prevent and reduce levels of hate incidents by ensuring victims, witnesses and third parties of hate incidents are supported and offenders are brought to justice;
- Improve access to cultural opportunities and sport;
- Improve access to transport and quality of service for all to enable people to use public transport;
- Increase digital inclusion, particularly for those in poverty to provide greater access to jobs, skills and learning;
- Reduce the gaps in learning outcomes for vulnerable learners;
- Support people out of financial hardship; and
- Develop a skilled and diverse council workforce.

Full details of this improvement work can be found in the Annual Equality Progress Report 2017 - 2018, which can be accessed [here](#).

These continue to be priority areas of work for the council for the coming years with the addition of:

- Improving equality outcomes across the six priority neighbourhoods with a focus on addressing inequality and poverty;
- Improving the approach to migration in Leeds;
- Developing a quality mark for (regulated) services to demonstrate their appropriateness of delivery to LGBT+ individuals and communities;
- Ensuring fair and equal access to taxi and private hire services for disabled people; and
- Improving the walkability and accessibility of Leeds City Centre by developing and expanding a user friendly wayfinding system.

The 2018-2019 Annual Equality Progress Report will be available during the summer of 2019.

Consultation

The financial strategy and budget proposals have been driven by the Best Council Plan ambitions and priorities. These have been shaped through past and ongoing consultations and stakeholder engagement, including significant consultations to help develop new Inclusive Growth, Culture and Transport Strategies for the city.

The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20 proposals have been developed through consultation with officers and members, including Scrutiny. Summaries of discussions with all Scrutiny Boards are provided as appendices to the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20 reports for consideration by the council's Executive Board and Full Council in February 2019.

Evidence from public perception that services and localities already hold with regard to people's priorities also supported the preparation of the Initial Best Council Plan and Initial Budget Proposals for 2019/20 considered by the Executive Board in December 2018.

The public consultation on the council's Initial Budget Proposals for 2019/20 took place between 20th December 2018 and 20th January 2019. Though focused on the budget, the survey presented findings from the previous year's consultation exercise and explored whether the public's views and perceptions of the council's priorities had changed in that time. As such, the results of that consultation exercise are relevant to the proposals to update the Best Council Plan.

The consultation was primarily carried out through an online survey that was advertised on the council's website and social media sites, via email to partner organisations, Equality Hub members and the Citizens' Panel, and circulated to staff; paper versions were also available. The challenge of balancing the budget was also the theme for the Equality Assembly Conference in November 2018, and a broad range of issues were raised.

A total of 1,241 surveys were completed, making the results statistically very robust, by respondents from a range of different demographic groups, broadly representative of the population of Leeds residents. The full report is provided as an appendix to the Budget 2019/20 report for consideration by the council's Executive Board and Full Council in February 2019 with summaries in the cover reports for both the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20.

Summary and Next Steps

This is a high-level strategic analysis and equality impact assessment of the proposed Best Council Plan, Budget and Council Tax. It has not identified any specific gaps in the equality and diversity information used to carry it out.

The proposed Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 and Budget 2019/20 recognise the challenges that the city and the council are facing: reduced funding, increased demands on public services and inequalities impacting upon people's educational attainment, health and employment. Having a clear, strategic vision centred firmly on tackling poverty and inequalities with a budget that supports this will help tackle these challenges.

The Best Council Plan and supporting Budget are aimed at tackling inequalities through a range of activity and interventions. This requires an understanding of the potential negative impacts on communities and protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 and action identified to mitigate against these. The revenue budget will impact on all communities and, as previously stated, those groups identified as being at the greatest potential risk of negative impact include:

- Disabled people – including all impairment groups;
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities;
- Women;
- Older and younger people; and
- Low socio-economic groups (within this group, there is over-representation by disabled people and BME communities).

Other considerations also consider a range of factors including:

- Stakeholder status - for example, whether one is a service user, employee or elected member; and
- Potential barriers - for example, the built environment, location, stereotypes and assumptions timing etc.

Specific equality impact assessments will continue to be carried out on specific proposals in relation to implementing the Best Council Plan and Budget during 2019/20 through the council's decision-making processes.