

# Governance arrangements for implementation of the Leeds Best City Ambition

Date: 24 June 2022

Report of: Chief Officer Strategy and Improvement

Report to: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## What is this report about?

### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- A report has been requested by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to set out the proposed governance arrangements for implementation of the Best City Ambition.
- The Best City Ambition was adopted by Full Council in February 2022 and replaces the Best Council Plan in Article 4 of the council's constitution – the budget and policy framework. It sets out the outcomes we want to see for the city, recognising these cannot be achieved by the council alone and that everyone has a part to play – the council, city partners across sectors, citizens, communities, and Government too.
- The Ambition is centred on the city's mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone, driven by a focus on our three pillars of health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon. It seeks to better reflect the importance of partnership working and a renewed relationship with the citizen – our Team Leeds approach – in achieving the city's shared goals, learning from Leeds' experiences through the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Using the cycle of internal control framework, elected members will be provided with an overview of how governance will be managed in relation to the Best City Ambition. As agreed by Full Council on adoption of the Ambition, 2022/23 is a transitional year as arrangements are reviewed and revised as needed in moving from Best Council Plan to Best City Ambition.

## Recommendations

- a) The committee is asked to consider the governance arrangements outlined in relation to the Best City Ambition.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Best City Ambition offers the opportunity to bring together in one place the key priorities we have for the city – articulated as our three pillars of health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon. It is geared towards our overall longstanding mission to tackle poverty and inequality, while improving quality of life for everyone in Leeds.
- 2 Each pillar is underpinned by a range of important work to make Leeds the best it can be, the best place to live, work and visit, the best city in the UK, and crucially to deliver meaningful improvements in quality of life so everyone in Leeds can thrive. Many of the city's greatest challenges and opportunities sit at the point where our three pillars meet in the middle.
- 3 Leeds has an opportunity to drive toward the goals the Ambition sets out by embracing the platform it provides to review the council's wider strategic framework and the city's partnership and delivery infrastructure, maximising opportunities to align activity, reduce duplication and strengthen our focus on a set of cross-cutting key priorities in a way that makes the most of limited resources and ensures progress is being made. Effective evidence and progress monitoring are key to achieving this – with the Ambition providing an overarching direction and an increasingly shared evidence base led by the Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment underpinning the work that we do.

## What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards affected:** n/a

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 4 The report will provide elected members with an oversight of the approach being taken to governance around the Ambition.
- 5 In short that is to embrace the council's convening role in sharing and promoting the strategic intent the Ambition outlines. As agreed by Full Council, we are pursuing a flexible and inclusive approach to governance which works through and builds upon the arrangements which are already in place, avoiding creating new structures when we can work effectively without them. Instead, it is our Team Leeds approach and the principles and values which underpin it which make partnership working and our relationship with citizens successful in Leeds.
- 6 Appendix 1 expands in more detail how arrangements align to the cycle of internal control. It is important to state that while this addresses the council's approach, the Best City Ambition is by its very nature focused on the role everyone plays with large parts of the delivery being the responsibility of other organisations. While the council is stepping into its convening role, the Ambition is not entirely within our control – and that is a strength rather than a weakness.
- 7 In headline terms the approach being proposed will result in:
  - A refreshed and simplified strategic framework, which more clearly communicates key priorities underneath the three pillars and the actions being pursued to deliver improved outcomes.
  - A clearer view about the partnerships and delivery mechanisms through which city partners are working, including the relationships between different forums.

- A stronger connection between overall city ambitions and delivery on the ground in neighbourhoods and communities – being facilitated by the ongoing strategic review.
- A refreshed performance framework aligned to the Best City Ambition, including read across to the Leeds Social Progress Index due to be published in the coming months.
- A short, operational account pulling together key internal priorities and programmes supporting the council to be an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 8 Extensive engagement took place with citizens and city partners – both in person and online – to inform development of the Best City Ambition. Full Council approved the broad approach to governance arrangements outlined in this report when it agreed to adopt the Ambition.
- 9 The information in this report is presented for information and comment.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 10 In proposing the governance arrangements outlined in this report, every effort has been made to maximise resources – working within existing arrangements wherever possible and exploring opportunities to further simplify these. This is in-keeping with the overall approach to developing and delivering the Best City Ambition, which aside from officer time has been achieved at close to nil cost to the council.
- 11 As a result, there are no specific resource implications arising from this report. All decisions made to enable activity to take place in support of the Ambition will be informed by their own decision making reports, which all detail and relevant resource implications.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 12 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 13 This report is not eligible for call in.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 14 Ensuring progress towards towards the Best City Ambition will form part of the council's risk management approach and corporate risks. Regular review of corporate risks takes place through directorate management teams and CLT, alongside review by elected members through the appropriate committee arrangements.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

- 15 The Best City Ambition further develops and embeds the council's three key pillars as a framework – including developing revised 'mission statements' for each and highlighting key areas of focus for Team Leeds under each pillar.
- 16 Governance arrangements – including revising the strategic framework and designing new performance measures – take the pillars as a general structure through which to work.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **What other options were considered?**

- 17 Not applicable.

### **How will success be measured?**

18 The council's established approach to performance management will continue, albeit with a new performance framework and set of KPIs and highlighted above and outlined in more detail in Appendix 1. The success of these governance arrangements can be in part evidence by positive progression against these KPIs, and the Leeds Social Progress Index, over the coming years.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

19 As stated earlier in this report, Full Council has agreed 2022/23 will be a transitional year allowing time for further development work on supporting performance, strategy, partnership etc. arrangements to be undertaken. This will be complete by the end of the financial year and confirmed alongside the next version on the Best City Ambition in February 2023.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Governance arrangements for the Best City Ambition

### **Background papers**

None.