

## **Define and Document**

### **Context**

1. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, the council has determined that the Best City Ambition is of such significance that it should be included in the budget and policy framework in Article 4 of the council's constitution, therefore being subject to adoption by Full Council.
2. The Ambition highlights the council's mission to tackle poverty and inequality, and the document also sets out the three pillars approach which flows through the council's wider strategic framework including through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Inclusive Growth Strategy and forthcoming Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy (details tbc but will build upon the council's existing Climate Emergency Declaration) – each of which is subject to its own governance and control arrangements.
3. This document provides a high-level account of how the Best City Ambition will be implemented from the council's perspective. This is the business of everyone, and as such the information in this report will not be exhaustive but does include details of all the main aspects. As outlined in the cover report, the Ambition focuses on our overall shared objectives and outcomes for Leeds not all of which are in the council's control (e.g. health arrangements). Working in partnership as Team Leeds is therefore front and centre in the Ambition itself.

### **Strategic Framework**

4. Implementing the Best City Ambition relies strongly on establishing a broader strategic framework which effectively influences priority setting, investment decisions and delivery on the ground. Therefore, following a successful mapping exercise a process is now ongoing to review all the council's strategies with the aim of removing duplication and arriving at a much-simplified set of key strategies which are easier to digest and communicate. Executive Members have been kept fully informed as this work has progressed and have contributed their views to shape the outcome.
5. In the future, the objective is to document this framework in a more coherent way on the council's external website, and revisit it regularly through the Best City Ambition review schedule.
6. NB Many strategies the council produces are subject to their own governance and control arrangements – some of these are statutory.

### **Partnership arrangements**

7. Similarly, a mapping exercise is ongoing to enable a review of partnership infrastructure across the city to be undertaken. Through development of the Ambition we have been clear there is no desire to re-create an overarching city partnership board or similar. Instead, we want to work through and build upon existing forums. Nevertheless, it is clear there are areas where they may be an opportunity to bring groups together to improve collaboration and realise two-way benefits while also making better use of the limited resources we share.

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8. Any moves to make changes to partnership structures in the city will be subject to their own appropriate decision-making processes as they arise.
9. Following completion of this work we will have documented the partnership landscape which exists in the city for the first time in several years.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Officer accountability**

10. The Director of Resources has delegated responsibility for the council's corporate planning and policy development services, including co-ordination of the Best Council Plan which preceded the Best City Ambition – the delegation is currently being updated to reflect this change. He also has responsibility for the Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment which was produced prior to the Ambition and acted as a large part of the evidence based to inform its development.
11. Separate officer arrangements are in place to provide leadership and oversight of each of the three pillars – health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon – including their strategies and partnerships some of which are statutory. Details of these responsibilities are set out in the relevant delegation schemes.
12. The council's Intelligence and Policy team play a co-ordination and facilitation role to progress Ambition activity including around breakthrough priorities. In addition to this the team leads on risk and performance monitoring against the Ambition and holds practical responsibility for the review schedule – both for the Ambition itself and its supporting evidence base.

#### **Democratic Oversight**

Leader of Council	Portfolio responsibility for the Best City Ambition and policy development
Executive Member for Resources	Oversight of performance and communications which are relevant for Ambition implementation
Full Council	Responsibility for adoption of the Best City Ambition
Scrutiny Boards	All receive performance monitoring information on a regular basis which will report on progress towards the Best City Ambition for their relevant areas
Health and Wellbeing Board	Statutory responsibility for the Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment – the evidence base of the Best City Ambition

## Clearly Communicate

13. The Best City Ambition is being communicated to council staff, elected members, partners and citizens in a variety of ways to reach the broadest audience. These include:

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- **Staff intranet (InSite)** – description of the aims of the ambition and how it will be monitored, links to the document, provision of supporting resources to help share knowledge and promote the Ambition through our work, and key contacts for further information or support. Insite also provides guidance and pointers on how members of staff can use the Ambition in their day-to-day work.
- **External website** – contains both an accessible (html) version of the Ambition and the pdf version alongside links to supporting strategies, performance and risk monitoring information. There are plans to enhance this web presence to make it more engaging when the council moves to its new website.
- **Plans on a page** – being developed to cover the three pillars of the ambition and the Team Leeds approach – offering a shorter, more visual way to access the most important information. These will be distributed throughout the council.
- **New city branding** – produced so future strategies, plans and strategic communications are marketed in a way that is easily identifiable with Team Leeds and the Best City Ambition. This is already feeding through into the first major new strategies including Housing and Better Lives and was used for the marketing around Leeds hosting the inaugural UK REiiF forum in May 2022.
- **Physical marketing** – in buildings and at events through pull-up banners, noticeboard posters etc. promoting the Ambition and signposting to the online resources where more information is available.

### Leadership

14. Executive Members remain fully briefed and actively engaged in work outlined throughout this report on enabling and implementing the Ambition. The Ambition itself has been drafted in a way that helps clear concise communication about our goals, and we will continue to look for further opportunities to strengthen this aspect in future versions.
15. In addition to the roles that senior elected members and CLT play, key messages are channelled primarily through Best Council Leadership Team (BCLT) and the Leeds Policy Network with an expectation that colleagues will cascade information in the most appropriate way for their teams. Regular partner messages from the Leader and Chief Executive also include information about the Ambition, and it is used up front as context for events like State of the City and Anchor partnership forums.
16. City partners share key messages about the Ambition with their networks too – in recognition it is collectively owned by the city as a whole and not just the council. This ethos will be increasingly visible through the branding noted above too, which we anticipate will be used very widely including as for partnership working and partnership documents.

### Engagement

17. Regular engagement takes place with external partners – through Third Sector Leeds, anchor institutions, health and wellbeing board etc. – and there is open dialogue on further developing the Ambition and strengthening it for future versions.
18. Intelligence and Policy directly deliver or support an ad hoc but regular programme of presentations at staff forums and away days – encouraging teams across the council to consider how they contribute to achieving the Ambition. These are organised

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directly with services upon request, with efforts made to support all requests as far as possible within the limited officer capacity Intelligence and Policy have available.

### Effectively Embed

#### Decision making

19. All decision making reports include a section where report writers should address whether and how their proposal support the three pillars and the Best City Ambition – being specific about which pillar(s) are relevant. Detailed report writing guidance is available on InSite and shared through training available to all staff to help colleagues to do this effectively. The council's report template is currently being updated to reflect the Best City Ambition and further strengthen how officers are required to account for the contribution their proposal makes. This follows the new report template and introduction of a significantly different approach to report writing which was rolled out in 2021 and has been widely well-received.
20. Decision makers are expected to consider, using information provided in reports, whether proposals are in-keeping with the strategic direction set out in the Best City Ambition and responsibility to provide challenge back where this might not be the case sits with the decision maker(s).

#### Working with communities

21. We are taking a new approach to ensure the Ambition is effectively embedded in work on the ground in neighbourhoods and communities through the development of local area plans. These will provide a local 'translation' of the Ambition for each part of the city which plans cover, supporting priority setting, investment decisions and new ways of working with citizens which meet the specific needs of an area, within the overall context of our city-wide goals.
22. Development of these plans is at an early scoping stage, but they will be produced working closely with elected members through community committees and will help to shape the next phase of the council's locality working agenda.

#### Values and behaviours

23. The Team Leeds approach set out in the Best City Ambition provides an important set of principles for partnership working in the city, to be shared across organisations. It defines some important characteristics of a team Leeds way of working – including being evidence-led, working with strengths and asset-based models, and adopting co-production and co-design with the citizen as standard. The approach is already well understood but provides useful check and challenge to ensure we are applying it consistently and going further where we can.
24. Managers are encouraged to share information and updates about the Ambition in their 121s, team meetings and appraisals with staff, providing a context for objective setting and ensuring everyone understands where their role fits in the council's and city's overall goals. Managers receive support on undertaking effective proposals and an expanded leadership and management offer is building on that support.

## **Meaningfully Monitor**

### **Regular reporting**

25. As has been the case with the Best Council Plan, regular performance reporting against the Best City Ambition will continue. Key performance indicators results are reported to directorate management teams and the Corporate Leadership Team four times a year. Scrutiny Boards will continue to receive twice-yearly performance reports and Executive Board will receive an annual performance report in the summer each year.
26. A revised performance framework and set of KPIs is in development to align with the Ambition and it is this which will be used for the reporting noted above. Scrutiny Chairs will be consulted as part of the development of this new framework in the coming weeks and months. Through development of this, consideration is also being given on how best to incorporate the new Leeds Social Progress Index which is a comprehensive measure of real quality of life, independent of economic indicators, focused on the domains of basic human needs, foundations of wellbeing, and opportunity.
27. The Leeds Observatory will continue to provide a vast range of data and performance metrics organised by policy theme, updated regularly and new data becomes available.
28. The council's approach to risk management is unchanged from previously and remains robust. The council's corporate risks were reviewed earlier in 2022 to check that the risks are aligned to the Best City Ambition and its three pillars. The corporate risks linked to the Ambition will continue to be reviewed four times a year and be reported to directorate management teams and the Corporate Leadership Team for review and comment. Executive Board will continue to receive an annual corporate risk report.
29. Benchmarking with other comparable cities takes places regularly across policy areas – and the new performance framework is likely to include more benchmarking on some of the highest-level indicators which will move in very small increments within the city – e.g. overall life expectancy

### **Escalation**

30. Escalation processes are in place through regular monitoring of risk and performance at CLT and departmental leadership teams.

## **Review and Refine**

### **Approach to reviewing the Ambition**

31. The Best City Ambition will undergo a light touch review every year, with the intention being for Full Council to consider small adjustments and updates alongside the budget in February.

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32. A full review and revision will take place every three years, with the first scheduled for February 2025, following on from the new Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment. This schedule maintains the link between the JSA as an evidence base and the Ambition as a response, ensuring we continue to be responsive to the latest data and analysis when setting priorities.

### **Opportunities to strengthen**

33. As agreed by Full Council when the Ambition was adopted, we recognise this first version is the start not the end of a process. There will continue to be opportunities to strengthen our approach in the future.
34. On monitoring, we will continue to seek to improve data maturity and develop new indicators where not currently exist as information becomes available, including working with academic partners to do this.
35. The Ambition's Team Leeds approach injects new energy into our way of working with citizens, building on the civic enterprise approach we established over ten years ago through the Commission on the Future of Local Government. Through more embedded co-production and co-design as standard, alongside expanding the use of asset-based approaches, we will be in a stronger position to bring greater lived experience into future reviews of the Best City Ambition.

### **External review**

36. The Best City Ambition will be subject to external review, benchmarking and peer challenge through the LGA Peer Review of Leeds City Council due to take place later this year.