

‘We want Leeds to be a city that is fair and just, that recognises and embraces people’s different needs, situations and ambitions. The barriers that limit what people can do will be removed, and everyone will be enabled to be their best. For this to happen, we all need to take responsibility for our actions and behaviours and contribute positively to change. We recognise that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is something that the council has legal responsibilities around however we want to lead on this agenda because it’s the right thing to do. Delivery of a successful programme around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is essential to support our Best City Ambitions’.

#TeamLeeds is everyone coming together to play a part – people who live here, who work here, the council, its services and all partners.

It’s everyone’s business.

What do we mean?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

E (quality)

Of Opportunity. Our obligation to eliminate unlawful discrimination and prejudice

D (iversity)

Understanding, respecting, valuing and embracing difference and applying this to our employment and service delivery

I (nclusion)

The work we do to achieve equality whilst respecting diversity. Including everyone so that they can make a positive and active contribution to life in the city

Stepping Up a Gear

“Our **Equality Improvement Priorities Plan 2021 to 2025** sets out the agreed approach taken to embed equality and diversity and the specific actions taken to remove barriers that prevent people from fully participating in the social, cultural, political and economic life of the city.

However, there has been a notable societal shift with the events over the past two years, not least the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement, the increasing awareness of violence against women and girls and the inequalities exacerbated and exposed by the Coronavirus pandemic and the cost of living crisis. This has raised expectations, with strong calls for bigger and faster change. We see this shift as a positive opportunity, and we are keen to step up a gear.

As an important next step, we have set out in an action plan accompanying this vision **three areas for action** covering the council’s role as:

- **An employer** driving the workforce agenda based on the council’s values.
- **A service deliverer/provider**, including commissioning and contracting, based on the council’s values.
- **A partner in supporting communities to thrive**, based on the Best City Team Leeds approach.

By building on the good work we already do and using the insight from a broad range of stakeholders, we aim to target our actions and resources in the right areas. The views of Leeds communities, local people, our partners, council teams and employees are crucially important to success. These views have shaped this new delivery plan, and will continue to do so in the future, with our Equality Assembly, Equality Hubs and Staff Networks playing a key role alongside the many valuable and varied engagement channels that we have in Leeds.

We will keep the action plan under regular review and make sure it stays relevant to the changing times we live in. We will reflect progress against it every year via our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report. By working together, we can change and adjust our approach as needed.

More details around each of the three actions are found in the accompanying action plan. We set out priorities and activities, as well as governance, accountabilities, responsibilities and reporting.



Working Together as Team Leeds

The Ambition outlines the **Team Leeds** approach which will help us to achieve our shared goals – and ensure everyone can play their part.

This includes a focus on fostering mutual respect and understanding, building community capacity, tackling systemic inequalities and being optimistic about our future.

Leeds Best City Ambition

The Best City Ambition is our vision for the future of Leeds.

At its heart is our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. It describes our shared goals through the three pillars of the Ambition.

In 2030, Leeds will:

Be a healthy and caring city for everyone: where those who are most likely to experience poverty improve their mental and physical health the fastest, people are living healthy lives for longer, and are supported to thrive from early years to later life.

Health and Wellbeing

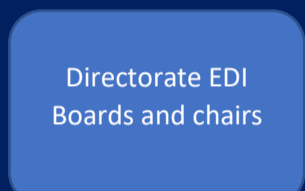
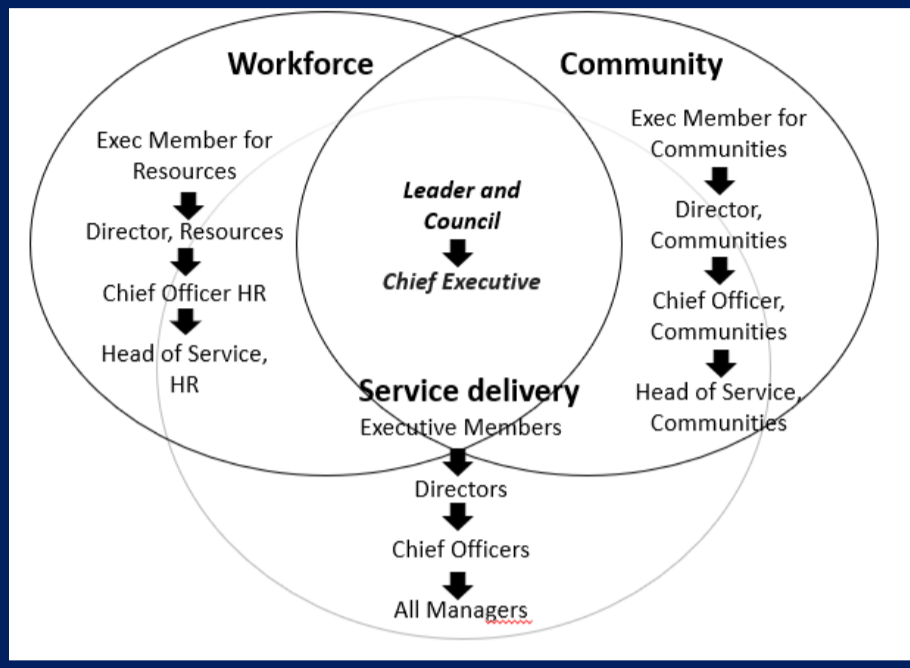
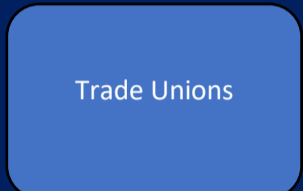
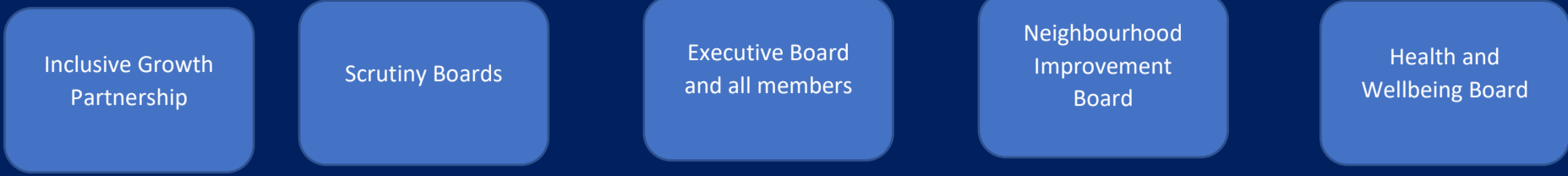
Have an economy that works for everyone, where we work to tackle poverty and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are fairly distributed across the city, creating opportunities for all.

Inclusive Growth

Have made rapid progress towards carbon neutrality, reducing our impact on the planet and doing so in a fair way which improves standards of living in all the city’s communities.

Zero Carbon

Personal responsibility – citizens and community leaders

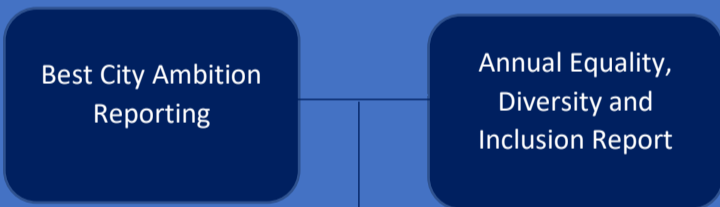


Shared accountability

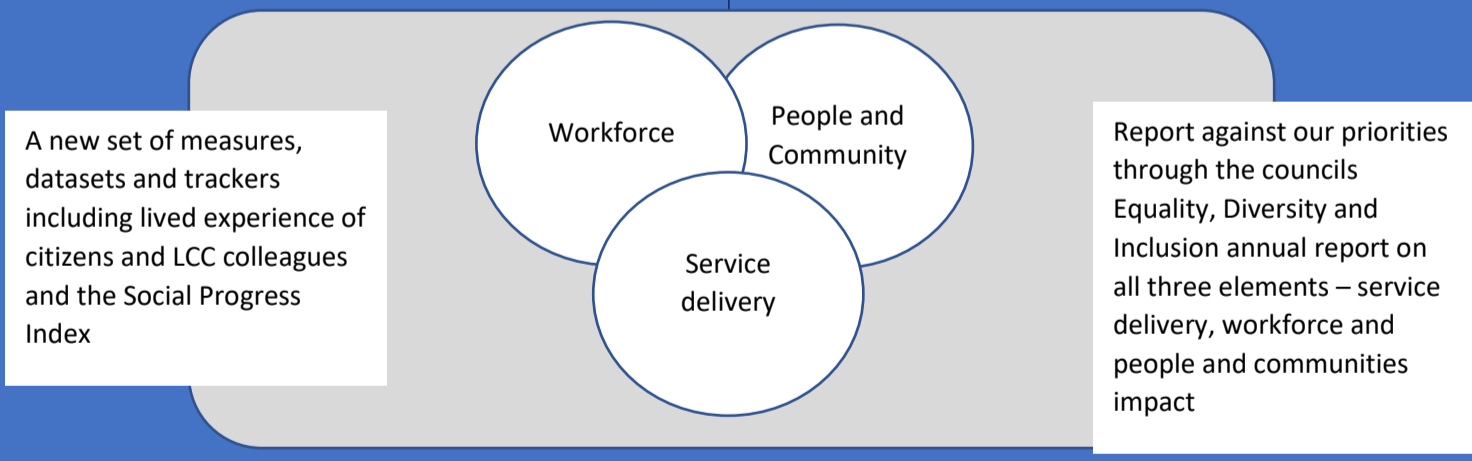
Personal responsibility – all council colleagues, teams and procured services

EDI embedded in everyday governance

Reporting



Evidence, progress and impact



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023/25

1. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



2. SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH THE COUNCIL



3. WORKFORCE - THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER

BEST CITY TEAM LEEDS APPROACH

Leeds is a wonderfully diverse city, and it is this diversity that is its strength

A City where people recognise, value and embrace diversity and difference – and this shows in positive attitudes and behaviours

Thriving and resilient communities

People from different backgrounds and ages feel comfortable living together, with a warm welcome to all

Strong, local community leadership

OUR COUNCIL VALUES – UNDERPINNING EVERYTHING WE DO AND THE WAY WE WORK

Delivering and commissioning services in an inclusive way, rooting out inequality and discrimination

Inclusive and accessible design of services

Integrated around people and place, and responsive to different needs

Adopting a caring and compassionate approach

People are treated with dignity and respect and the causes of unfairness are understood and addressed

Being an Inclusive Employer- promoting difference and diversity, embedding equality

Leading the way around fair, inclusive and anti-discriminatory employment practice

Having a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve

Helping all our colleagues to bring their full and best self to work.

Valuing everyone in the council team as an individual

ZERO TOLERANCE TO ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

OUR SHARED VISION AND BEST CITY AMBITIONS

ALL PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

CULTURE AND VALUES

DATA AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

BEST CITY TEAM LEEDS APPROACH

Why it Matters

It is important that everyone benefits from the City's success.

We know that some communities have poorer outcomes than others. We want to live in a fair society that recognises people's different needs and situations, and removes barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

Tackling poverty and inequality drives economic and social growth. We need to break the link between poverty and inequality, and poor health and wellbeing outcomes. We will support those most affected by Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis.

We want to see improved outcomes across a broad range of areas including Education, Health, Housing, Transport, Culture, Employment, Criminal Justice, Climate Change and more.

By investing in prevention and using asset-based approaches, we can build community capacity focussing on what people can do, rather than what they can't. More power in the hands of our citizens, will inspire citizens to change the things they believe need changing, and help us tackle systemic inequalities.

As a multi-cultural city and a City of Sanctuary, we welcome people from across the globe to build their lives in our city.

We will look to build safe and strong communities for all. The council will always work to foster good relations within and between our communities with a view to building good community relations.

We need everyone to play a part, with all business and public institutions and partners fully embracing their responsibilities to make Leeds a truly inclusive city. This is our Best City Teams Leeds Approach.

Things to focus on – to make the biggest difference



better and more equal access to essential services for all communities



a safe and welcoming city for all



the best start in life for children in all areas



safe access to a local park/green space in all communities



improved housing quality, accessibility and affordability, and tackling fuel poverty



closing education attainment gaps, and skills and opportunities for employment for all ages



tackling the disproportionality of experiences within the youth justice system, through our Race and Identity action plan



work to integrate new migrants to the city



a public transport network that is low carbon, affordable, safe and accessible



celebrate the contributions of our diverse communities through positive identity, culture and heritage



responding to the mental health crisis, which deepened during the pandemic



progress on our net zero target – energy efficiency, diet and active travel, 'green' jobs



closing stark gaps in healthy life expectancy and premature mortality across the city

Our commitment to all Leeds communities and citizens

Our ambition is for Leeds to be **the best city in the UK**.

Everyone should be able to be themselves and feel warmly welcome in our city. We will do all we can to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect, one of our core values. We will be a caring and compassionate council for all.

We will support one another to make Leeds the best place it can be, and **work with you to co-design and co-produce the best solutions for you and your community.** We will always be ambitious and optimistic about the future of Leeds.

We value the contributions that all citizens in Leeds make to our city and we want everyone to recognise and appreciate these. We will **ensure that council services meet the needs of diverse communities** and will work hard to fully understand community issues.

There is **no place for racism or any form of discrimination in Leeds**, and we will do all we can to eliminate racism and inequality – wherever we find it, by challenging and addressing inappropriate behaviour.

Through groups like our **Leeds Race 4 Equality Forum** we will work together to understand the root causes of racism and prejudice in Leeds and work as a city to address them.

We will deliver against key equality related agendas including asset based community development, our Hate Crime Strategy, work on anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-Semitism, delivering against the Faith Covenant, LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds, Age Friendly and Child Friendly Leeds, Women Friendly Leeds and the Social Model of Disability.

Taking Action – we will:

- Work with the Lord Mayors Office and third sector partners to ensure appropriate celebration of communities right across the city.
- Continue to develop the role of the Elected Members for the Protected Characteristics to ensure that there are strong champions for the diverse communities in the city.
- Support the citizens who lead the Equality Hubs as 'Hub Reps' through an enhanced development and support offer.
- Ensure each Equality Hub has an action plan for the year ahead.
- Hold an annual Equality Assembly with all the Hubs and hold regular meetings throughout the year between their leaders to ensure that we work in an intersectional way across the different protected characteristic agendas.
- Ensure our equality annual report reflects our work in communities and is presented in a way that is accessible for everyone.
- Better understand the financial situation for third sector organisations who work on the equality agenda and target support as appropriate.

Our specific top 5 priorities for 2022-2023 are shown below

1. **Strengthen and develop our community engagement** approach including review and develop of Equality Assembly and Equality Hubs.
2. **Celebrate the diversity of our city** and its people and communities through supporting a programme of activity for International Months, Weeks and Days.
3. **Develop our third sector infrastructure** which focuses on equality, diversity, inclusion and migration and hate crime.
4. **Widen our partnerships** at city, West Yorkshire, regional, national and international level to ensure we can continue to be a leader in EDI and associated work and incorporate best practice wherever possible.
5. **Deliver a cohesion strategy** for the city that brings together key stakeholders and agendas and builds on our work around the Intercultural Cities Programme.

2. SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH THE COUNCIL

OUR COUNCIL VALUES – UNDERPINNING EVERYTHING WE DO AND THE WAY WE WORK

Why it Matters

All council services should be inclusive and accessible. This includes services we directly deliver and those we commission.

We must give **due regard to equality and diversity** when reviewing existing and developing new strategies, policies, services, and functions. Legally, we have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

In day-to-day delivery, our aim is always to **provide excellent quality customer service**, and to meet the needs and expectations of all those who use our services.

We will respond to and learn from complaints made against council service delivery and in particular where these relate to perceived or actual discrimination.

As a council, we hold **significant spending power in the city** via the procurement of goods, works and services. By taking a **social value approach**, we can have a positive influence on the big issues facing the city. We look beyond the price of each individual contract to the collective benefit to a community when we choose to award a contract.

We will access and use high quality data about the needs of Leeds people and communities including the emerging data from the 2021 census to inform service delivery.

Our principles for inclusive service delivery

We will

-  Assess the needs of existing and potential service users
-  Ensure fair access to services, making reasonable adjustments when needed
-  Engage and involve interested groups and individuals in our decision making
-  Work hard to understand and address the causes of unfairness and poor outcomes
-  Treat people fairly, according to their needs
-  Show zero tolerance to any form of intimidation, bullying or harassment
-  Fairly award contracts, and commission services
-  Secure fair and flexible working practices
-  Deal with all complaints promptly and with sensitivity to all those involved
-  Provide access points for reporting hate crimes
-  Actively seek feedback and use it to improve the way we work
-  Undertake regular equality monitoring and reporting

Our commitment

We will treat everyone with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of:

- age
- disability
- race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin or national origins)
- religion or belief
- sex
- marriage and civil partnership
- gender reassignment/ gender identity
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- caring responsibilities
- social class
- trade union activity

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we do not unlawfully discriminate.

Our commitment covers all of the following:

- Council members
- Service users
- Those applying to access services
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Our partnership arrangements

Taking Action we will:

- Put our Corporate Equality Board at the forefront of guiding and shaping our approach to EDI work.
- Ensure that our services engage with the Equality Assembly and Hubs to ensure that customers are consulted on service design and change.
- Work with the council's access officers in Highways and Planning to ensure that the social model of disability is firmly embedded.
- Report against our complaints outcomes to ensure that lessons are learnt from customer feedback.
- Ensure our Translation and Interpreting Team and Website Team lead on best practice to make sure our information to customers is provided in appropriate formats.
- Aim to deliver the best customer service appropriate to customers' needs through our contact centre and community hubs.
- Roll out new third-party reporting and signposting centres alongside the online reporting option to make Hate Crime reporting more accessible for everyone.

Our specific top 5 priorities for 2022-2023 are shown below

1. **Review and strengthen our approach to 'giving due regard'** to equality, diversity and inclusion with an improved focus on monitoring outcomes and reporting these.
2. **Deliver the councils Equality Improvement Priorities** which can be found at www.leeds.gov.uk/equality
3. **Strengthen our governance arrangements** at all levels of the council and improve transparent and accessible reporting so we can clearly show progress against our priorities.
4. **Improve how we communicate key messages, priorities, and programmes** to all council staff to ensure everyone can contribute to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.
5. **Focus on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the long term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic** on people and communities through all of our service delivery.

3. THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER

OUR COUNCIL VALUES – UNDERPINNING EVERYTHING WE DO AND THE WAY WE WORK

Why it Matters

UK legislation sets important standards around equality in employment – covering areas such as age, disability, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. It remains important that we recognise the prevailing **diversity deficits** and tackle underrepresentation and discrimination where we find it.








However, our approach goes beyond legal compliance. It's about the way we treat **everyone** and is key to employee performance, engagement, wellbeing, and everything that makes us #Teamleeds.

There are many advantages of being a diverse and inclusive organisation. Being so brings a **diversity dividend**, which means we benefit from different backgrounds, perspectives, skills, knowledge and lived experiences. A workplace that represents the communities we serve helps us to deliver better services.

In addition to having equality and greater diversity within the workplace, we must also be inclusive, allowing all individuals to participate and fulfil their potential, by bringing their full and best self to work.

It's good for business, our workforce and Leeds people

We want to tackle the diversity deficits and realise the diversity dividend across the organisation. Being diverse, and having an inclusive workplace, can help us in the following ways

-  A bigger and broader pool of skills and talents to call on
-  Better creativity, problem solving and innovation
-  It helps us to understand our customers better
-  Happier and more effective teams - listened to, involved and willing to put forward ideas
-  Our reputation as a great employer
-  Our ability to attract the best people and enable them to flourish
-  It means we deliver better service and outcomes for the people of Leeds

Our commitment to all Council colleagues

We will help **all colleagues to be their best at work** so that they feel like they count are supported to be well at work and are valued for who they are.

This is a whole team effort, and there will be visible and ongoing support from the top and throughout the organization. We will work alongside our staff networks, trade unions and all colleagues to deliver change and improvement.

Everyone should be able to bring their whole self to work and feel warmly welcome in our team.

We will make sure **everyone** in the council is treated fairly and with respect, one of our core values. We will be a caring and compassionate employer for all, and we will celebrate and make the most of our differences. We will always look to be fair in our decision making.

We will support, train and develop all of our managers and leaders so that equality and diversity is an integral part of their role and to enable inclusive workplace culture and behaviours.

There is no place for racism or any form of discrimination in Leeds City Council, and we will do all we can to eliminate racism and inequality – wherever we find it, by challenging and addressing inappropriate behaviour. We will set out and hold people to high expectations, [as can be seen in this clear statement from our Leader and Chief Executive](#).

Taking Action – we will

- Make the council **the Best Place to Work**, in line with [our People Strategy 2020-25](#)
- Create a **great all-round experience for all staff**, with the support of their leaders and managers, in a positive organisational culture driven by our council values.
- Create a **diverse and representative workforce** at all levels in the council through **fair recruitment, progression and development**
- Do more to **listen to and understand the real, lived experiences** of colleagues at work, and build a culture in which **people have a strong voice and feel able to speak up**
- Introduce a **Freedom to Speak Up Guardian** role for the council
- Take a **zero-tolerance approach** to racism and discrimination
- Act on the findings of our **Workforce Race Equality Standard** project in Social Care, and use it to inform council wide change.
- Continue to build **modern and inclusive workplaces practices and team cultures**
- Ensure everyone has **high quality appraisals and wellbeing support**
- **Maintain living wages and Fair Work** across the council workforce
- Develop **inclusive policies and processes**
- **Benchmark and network** with others

Our specific top 5 priorities for 2022-2023 are shown below

1. **Recruitment and initial welcome** – making our approaches more inclusive
2. **Progression** – supporting people to progress
3. **Training for staff and managers** – getting the offer right, and ensuring everyone engages
4. **Speaking up and zero tolerance** – tackling discrimination and unacceptable behaviour
5. **Data and Monitoring** – being clear about the difference we are making