



Cllr James Lewis
Leader of Leeds City Council
By Email

Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward
Councillor Asghar Khan
Chair, Strategy & Resources
Scrutiny Board
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19 January 2024

Dear Cllr Lewis,

In line with the Budget and Policy Framework of the authority, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board considered the Best City Ambition (BCA) 2024 Update at its meeting on 15 January 2024 in advance of the Executive Board meeting on 7 February where the BCA proposals will be finalised and then referred to Full Council. In order to ensure early consultation with the board and facilitate pre-decision scrutiny, the Board also considered a report on this issue at its meeting on 16 October 2023 which set out the scope of the Best City Ambition Update and gave Board members an early opportunity to comment on and shape the work. Scrutiny also welcomed the broader engagement that has taken place between October and now to help develop this BCA Update, including with Community Committees and Third Sector representatives.

In general terms the Board have been supportive of the aims and objectives of the update and in particular were keen to emphasise the benefits of the Team Leeds approach and ongoing work with city partners set against the challenging financial context that the authority, and indeed other partners, are working in. The Board therefore clearly welcomed the continued strategic ambition the city has despite the ongoing financial challenge and demand pressures.

Whilst feedback from scrutiny has been positive, some observations are worth highlighting. In October board members were keen to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Best City Ambition were being delivered and are benefitting communities in Leeds and that resident engagement and feedback are central to delivery of policy and priorities on the ground in the city, the ongoing consultation on the budget proposals for 2024/25 are perhaps a good example of how the Council seeks community feedback as part of its policy development approach. At the January meeting, members emphasised the role of the Third Sector in the Innovation Arc, given the commitment to working with partners and with communities, members believed that the role of the Third Sector should be reflected more strongly in this work due to the Third Sector having strong community links and often reaching communities and groups that are the hardest to reach in our city.

As part of our consideration of the update the Chairs of the four other scrutiny boards were invited to attend the January meeting of Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, but unfortunately were unable to attend due to other diary commitments.

We would like to thank you and the officers working on this update for the early consultation with scrutiny and hope that this feedback is constructive and can be noted in advance of the Executive Board meeting on 7 February.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Asghar Khan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Cllr Asghar Khan
Chair, Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board