



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

# A vision for Leeds: a decade of city centre growth and wider prosperity

March 2024



**LEVELLING  
— UP —**



# Contents

---

<b>1. Foreword by the Secretary of State, Mayor of West Yorkshire and Leeds City Council leader</b>	<b>4</b>
Foreword from Secretary of State	4
Foreword from Mayor of West Yorkshire	6
Foreword from Leeds City Council leader	7
<b>2. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Strengths and challenges</b>	<b>9</b>
Strengths: a platform of success and clear vision for growth	9
Challenges: the constraints of success	11
<b>4. Our vision for Leeds: a resilient and thriving city</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. Key neighbourhoods and priorities</b>	<b>16</b>
Mabgate	17
Eastside & Hunslet Riverside	19
South Bank	21
Holbeck	23
West End Riverside	25
Innovation Arc	27
<b>6. Connectivity</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>7. Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership</b>	<b>32</b>
Delivery and implementation	34
<b>8. Next steps</b>	<b>35</b>

# 1. Foreword by the Secretary of State, Mayor of West Yorkshire and Leeds City Council leader

---

## Foreword from Secretary of State



Leeds has long been fertile ground for innovation: the strong commercial culture that grew up around its engineering and textile industries spurring the rich tradition of technological advances, pursued by its skilled people in a spirit of ambition and endeavour. As a Core City, Leeds is again ready to advance and accelerate further. Our plans for further regeneration and growth will magnify its success and do even more to realise the great reserves of untapped potential.

Leeds is a key economic pillar not only of the North but the United Kingdom as a whole. As a hub of innovation, it is home to fast-growing digital, fintech and medical sectors, and to important academic and economic institutions. Yet productivity levels are below the UK average. Leeds ought to be benefiting

from the agglomeration effect – surfing the economic wave that comes from a concentration of talent, given its proximity to other great cities such as Manchester and Sheffield, and near neighbour Bradford. Instead, Leeds is constrained by its low effective city size and poor transport connectivity, which means business and employers cannot access the full range of skills and finance. Now is a key time to move in and support transformation. We are using the convening power of central government to supercharge development in Leeds as part of the most ambitious urban regeneration programme in this country for decades.

West Yorkshire



The opportunity is there. The city is achieving rapid growth; and billions of pounds worth of government funding – combined with private investment – is driving change. And the prize is clear: were Leeds' productivity levelled up to the UK average, £3 billion would be added to the UK economy each year. Leeds is on the cusp of becoming a globally competitive city. Boosted by targeted government investment and collaborative working with the private sector, we can ensure that it flourishes as a truly world-class centre.

Our vision for Leeds is based on the five principles that will shape new development and forge new opportunities around the country – beauty, infrastructure, democracy, the environment and neighbourhood – as we transform the built environment. We will be delivering what people and business want most through improved housing and transport systems. We will be answering their cultural and community needs. And we will be making sure that citizens continue to be involved in the planning process to ensure their support as we create the spaces and places Leeds needs to develop and grow.

But this is a vision that goes beyond brick and mortar and beyond a blueprint for urban development: we want to create a Leeds that is prosperous, liveable and connected for its residents. This means an even more vibrant, beautiful and sustainable city, with 20,000 homes unlocked and created in attractive new central quarters even as the character of existing neighbourhoods is protected and enhanced. It means a dynamic city, whose residents can move with ease in and out of the centre and around West Yorkshire on a mass transit system. And it means a productive city, furnished with the talented workforce, innovative startups, and cultural and commercial spaces that will make it a great place to live and work.

This vision is not ours alone. It will be taken forward with support from across central government, in tandem with local and regional partners, and the voices of the residents and businesses of Leeds.

To the private sector, we extend an invitation to be a part of the legacy of the city, building on the Leeds Business Anchors network. Your investment is not merely capital; it is the catalyst for regeneration and growth, innovation and opportunity, jobs and prosperity.

Join us in this exciting chapter of Leeds' history—a chapter where every voice matters, every contribution counts, and together, we can create a success that thrives, inspires and endures.





## Foreword from Mayor of West Yorkshire

### Mayor Tracy Brabin

We want to create a brighter future for all in West Yorkshire. We are ambitious for our region, and bursting with ideas, energy, and creativity. Our goal is to ensure that investment and opportunities reach every town, city and village in our region.

At the heart of our plan for West Yorkshire lies the continued growth and success of Leeds. As our largest urban and economic centre, the success of Leeds will provide more jobs and opportunities for people across the region.

Ensuring economic success is shared widely requires making good and deliberate decisions that benefit many people, with strategic investment and support for transport, housing and key institutions.

Success can be accelerated if we work together. And this document – prepared jointly by HM Government, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and Leeds City Council – demonstrates our shared commitment to continuing Leeds’ transformation.

We are committed to building new homes and communities that are bold, beautiful and affordable.

Additionally, we are committed to investing in and supporting our vital local cultural sector as well as the key national institutions based in the region, catalysing regeneration and accelerating growth.

Furthermore, we are committed to delivering the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system, connecting more people to Leeds City Centre, opening up jobs, education, training and leisure opportunities across the region.

This initiative will unlock greater prosperity as we create a greener, more sustainable transport system that better connects our towns and cities, enabling our regional economy to thrive.

These commitments build on the West Yorkshire Investment Zone, accelerating the growth of our globally competitive digital, health and life sciences sectors.

By bringing together our region’s universities, businesses and public sector, the partnership promises to unlock significant new funding and investment to boost innovation, jobs and growth in this thriving sector.

For the UK’s economy to grow and prosper over the next decade, it needs Leeds and West Yorkshire to succeed.

That’s what we’re committed to and that’s what this vision will deliver.



## Foreword from Leeds City Council leader

### Cllr James Lewis

Leeds is a city with national impact, global reach, and great cultural vibrancy. Following over a decade of locally-led regeneration, there is incredible momentum in our city and an active development pipeline exceeding £7 billion, giving us a unique opportunity to grow further, faster.

We are at a transition point in our growth as we deal with economic headwinds, public sector funding challenges, and changes in the property and investment cycles, yet we must ensure that continued development contributes to our aims to be sustainable, healthy, and inclusive, as well as delivering on our 'Best City' ambition to tackle poverty and inequality. I welcome the opportunity to develop a closer long-term partnership between local, regional and central government, so that we can accelerate our inclusive growth ambitions for the city and wider region.

Central to our vision is the creation of high-quality, affordable and sustainable homes, neighbourhoods and connected places that meet the needs of all our residents and businesses. In the last five years Leeds has provided around 1.5% of England's new housing and seen more new affordable homes delivered than any other Core City – but we need to do more to meet housing needs. Our Connecting Leeds programme has refreshed and begun to upgrade our transport infrastructure, taking a public transport and people-first approach – but we still need a mass transit system and certainty on the future of rail connectivity. An integrated mass transit network linking Leeds City Centre to the wider city and region will unlock accelerated, sustainably located housing growth. And though our broad-based economy has seen over 30% growth in the last decade, we cannot be complacent. To boost our productivity we need to support and unlock development, invest in our natural, economic and cultural assets, remaining resilient, adaptable and innovative.

The city centre has been at the heart of our growth, with substantial investments in the residential, retail, and leisure sectors, the first phases of the South Bank now well underway, the establishment of the Innovation Arc, Holbeck's renaissance and the establishment of the West End as a core business district. There's still much more to be achieved. Many Leeds residents have yet to experience the benefits of these changes, including those who live in the neighbourhoods closest to the centre. We have already identified the need for concerted and targeted regeneration to address this, in our recent update to the Inclusive Growth Strategy. As we review our Local Plan and in collaboration with HM Government, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Homes England, we now have a unique opportunity to plot a course for the next wave of transformative place shaping, and a new programme of public and private regeneration investment.

I look forward to establishing and growing the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership and in keeping with our #teamLeeds approach, engaging and collaborating with residents, communities and city stakeholders.

## 2. Introduction

---

Leeds is rich in history and potential, a town that grew into a regional powerhouse and then led the world in textiles, engineering, printing and chemical industries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its urban form and built environment continue to reflect the civic pride and prosperity that has built Leeds, with the Town Hall and Corn Exchange standing out as particular landmarks - and with distinctive industrial buildings such as Tower Works and Temple Works reflecting the prosperity of its industrial past. These are complemented by other historic buildings, often in red brick, that give Leeds its unique character.

Like so many other places, Leeds was knocked back by the decline of traditional industries, but in recent years it has reinvented itself as a modern, dynamic city, broadening its economic base and becoming a test bed for new ideas. In Leeds, we see a blend of heritage with modernity and resilience with innovation and now, an opportunity to accelerate regeneration and revitalise neighbourhoods in a way that builds on and complements Leeds' existing heritage, character and beauty.

Leeds has seen remarkable economic growth and physical regeneration over the last 20 years: the city centre is now the most productive part of Yorkshire. While it remains a hub for investment, development and infrastructure at the heart of West Yorkshire, the wider Leeds district also offers a wide range of places and opportunities for growth. There is a clear advantage in capitalising on the 'Leeds effect' and supporting Leeds City Council in encouraging investment and prosperity beyond the defined city centre. Regenerative development will create new places and support existing neighbourhoods to become more economically successful, beautiful, healthy and sustainable, resilient and well-connected.

This vision sits with the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy (LIGS) 2023, which sets out a clear vision for a strong economy within a compassionate city and acknowledges the virtuous connected circle between people, place and productivity.





# 3. Strengths and challenges

---

## Strengths: a platform of success and clear vision for growth

West Yorkshire is home to over 2.4 million people, a working age population of 1.4 million, and around 80,000 businesses<sup>1</sup>. With a population of 812,000, Leeds is the economic heart and capital of the region.

As one of only two UK Core Cities that are a net contributor to the Exchequer, Leeds is an emblem of self-starting, problem-solving civic leadership and cross-sector partnership, delivering an urban renaissance at the heart of West Yorkshire.

- **Leeds is vibrant, dynamic and growing.** West Yorkshire's economy is worth £70 billion with Leeds alone accounting for over 40% of this, having grown 32% over the past decade. Leeds has built over £4 billion worth of large-scale development projects over the last 10 years.
- **Leeds has recognised talent and research strengths.** The largest centre for finance and professional services outside London and the second city in the UK for start-up businesses, Leeds has also seen the biggest jobs growth in knowledge-intensive businesses of all UK cities since 2010.
- **Leeds station is one of the busiest in the country** with over 30 million pre-Covid passenger journeys a year, and has good local, regional, and national rail connections. Major investment such as that to be provided through the Leeds Existing Station Programme (LESP) and the Leeds Area Improvement Programme (LAIP) will support our vision of growth for Leeds and West Yorkshire, providing increased capacity, services and connections.
- **Leeds is attracting new firms and important institutions.** The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) moved to the region in 2021, alongside existing brands such as JP Morgan, the Bank of England, First Direct, Channel 4, Burberry and DLA Piper.
- **Leeds is a city with a significant environmental base,** with major tracts of countryside surrounding the main urban area, and 4,000 hectares of green spaces, 16 Local Nature Reserves and 50 Local Wildlife Sites within its boundary as well as ready access to the beautiful nearby countryside of the Yorkshire Dales and Vale of York.
- **Leeds is at the forefront of the country's housing growth,** with over 17,000 new homes built over the last five years – 1.5% of England's overall housing supply – including the most new affordable homes of any Core City.
- **Leeds has a rich and vibrant cultural life,** celebrated in the 2023 Year of Culture and including the largest free Pride march in the UK, the World Triathlon Championship, Light Night, Opera North, Northern Ballet and Europe's longest running Caribbean Carnival.

---

<sup>1</sup> The West Yorkshire Story - Our Innovation and Economy - West Yorkshire Plan.

- **Leeds is a great place to learn.** The city and the wider West Yorkshire region boast access to high-quality further education institutions, which serve as crucial anchor institutions for growth within the region. Over 70,000 students attend one of Leeds’ six universities (the Russell Group University of Leeds, which has created over 110 spin-out companies since 1995, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Trinity University, Leeds Arts University, University of Law and Leeds Conservatoire). And Leeds is home to high-quality secondary education too. Leeds Mathematics School, led by the Gorse Academies Trust, opened in September 2023 in Leeds city centre. Over-subscribed on opening, this strong trust is focused on providing skills to an area of great need.
- **Leeds is a leading city in nurturing talent and has a strong pool of skilled graduates.** It trains more cultural and creative graduates than any other Core City. Unlike other comparable UK cities, Leeds boasts a “brain gain,” with more undergraduates and graduates moving to the city than those leaving to study elsewhere. Additionally, the Leeds City Region has more STEM students than any other area outside London.
- **Leeds is an important healthcare centre.** The Leeds City Region hosts 22% of UK digital health technology jobs, including headquarters for the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and five other health-related bodies; and Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust – one of biggest NHS trusts in the country.
- **Leeds has a distinctive built environment and architectural character shaped by its industrial heritage,** with landmark individual buildings and a wider streetscape that reflects its proud past and continues to evolve.



## Challenges: the constraints of success

Yet with success come challenges. A growing population, jobs and economy mean greater demand for homes and more people on the move around the region – challenges to which our vision will rise.

- **Above all, the city and region are constrained by poor transport connectivity, the need for mass transit and for better bus and rail services.** Leeds is the biggest city in Western Europe without a light-rail or metro-style system: our plans will resolve this with a new West Yorkshire Mass Transit system by the early 2030s (*for details, see Chapter 6*). Just 38% of the population can reach the centre in 30 minutes by public transport – a drain on productivity that cost the local economy £2.8 billion in 2022. Compare this to Marseilles, a city of similar size, where 87% of people can reach the city centre in 30 minutes<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, the rail connectivity between Leeds and Yorkshire’s other Core City, Sheffield, is poor when compared to similar adjacent cities of scale.
- **The imperative to maximise agglomeration effects.** Leeds and its immediate neighbour Bradford are two of the biggest UK cities with the largest commuter flows, yet disproportionately low economic benefits arise from their proximity. There is potential for significant growth from improving rail connectivity and delivering mass transit.
- **Spreading the ‘Leeds effect’ from the city centre.** Despite the prosperity created in and by the city centre, it is surrounded by some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country. Nearly a quarter (24%) of Leeds’ population resides in neighbourhoods with the highest level of deprivation as measured by the Index for Multiple Deprivation (an increase on 22% in 2015), and many parts of the inner city remain cut off from the centre by busy roads, rail infrastructure and generally poor-quality older development.
- **The need to boost productivity.** Leeds has a higher productivity level than the rest of West Yorkshire and ranks third nationally among the Core Cities. Yet there is work to do. Over the past decade, productivity growth has been slow. As well as lower overall productivity compared to the UK average, businesses within the city’s high productivity sectors are also typically less productive than the UK average. This is estimated to cost the UK economy £3 billion per year.
- **Housing is increasingly unaffordable.** The average rent in Leeds rose by 13% between 2021 and 2022. Average house prices are approaching nine times the average salary (up from seven times the average salary in 2018). At present over 26,000 households are applying for homes through the Leeds Homes Register; the time it takes to rehouse applicants has more than doubled over the last five years.
- **Whilst Leeds is a green city, its natural environment offers opportunities for greater adaptability and resilience** through Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery that can benefit local people, businesses and investors.
- **There is very little ‘gentle density’ or ‘missing middle’ housing, including family homes and townhouses,** within key sites on the city rim, challenging the city’s ability to accommodate a growing population in the most sustainable central locations. Good development doesn’t happen by chance; it needs to be planned, funded and coordinated, with a focus on urban community building and infrastructure.

---

2 Centre for Cities. [Billions lost in productivity as Northern cities’ transport networks lag behind European equivalents](#). 2022.

## 4. Our vision for Leeds: a resilient and thriving city

---

Our vision for Leeds charts a course for the next decade, aiming for a resilient and thriving city. Our initial focus will be on revitalising six associated neighbourhoods – **Mabgate, Eastside & Hunslet Riverside, South Bank, Holbeck, West End Riverside and the Innovation Arc** – unlocking and supporting the delivery of 20,000 new homes to meet demand. We aim to create busy and beautiful new neighbourhoods and bring the benefits of investment to existing communities in places such as Lincoln Green and Holbeck. Improving city and regional connectivity through an improved public transport system, we will spur broader regeneration. And in strengthening anchor institutions and key sectors, especially digital, healthcare and medical technology, our mission aligns with the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, creating growth in the economy that works for everyone.

The government has already been working closely with Leeds, awarding over £80 million in Levelling Up funding since 2019 across a range of transport, jobs and community interventions. At a regional level, Leeds is also benefiting from the 30-year £1.14 billion gainshare fund secured through the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal in 2020, as well as significant investment through the West Yorkshire Transport Fund.

Wider government investments, underscored by the UK Infrastructure Bank, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and Channel 4, also mark a transformative moment for Leeds. These investments showcase confidence in Leeds as an economic and cultural hub that has a pivotal role in national infrastructure development, setting the stage for further growth and innovation advances.

But further support is needed and it will come – as we underline our long-term commitment through the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership to work together to accelerate the evolution of the city. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **£2.5 billion, funded by HS2 savings, for the vital new West Yorkshire Mass Transit system**, to improve the poor connections between Leeds and Bradford, Huddersfield, Wakefield and Halifax. £200 million has been allocated to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to develop the business case for a system that will connect Leeds city centre and help unlock city-rim regeneration. Improved transport is crucial to Leeds's future.
- Funding for the **electrification and upgrade** of the line between Sheffield and Leeds giving passengers a choice of three to four fast trains an hour, instead of one.
- £36.4 million of funding for Network Rail to complete detailed design work on a single option for the **Leeds Existing Station Programme**. This aims to resolve critical station capacity issues and build resilience, to ensure that as the main station for Leeds it continues to grow sustainably to meet passenger growth.
- As part of a bigger programme being delivered by West Yorkshire Combined Authority, **the New Stations Fund** is supporting the construction of both Thorpe Park and White Rose stations with a combined contribution of £12 million. White Rose is expected to open in 2024.



- Additional planned investment to **increase capacity and improve the performance** of local rail services in Leeds and the West Yorkshire area through the Leeds Area Improvement Programme.
- The announcement of England's third **Investment Zone** in West Yorkshire, which will drive innovation and growth of HealthTech and digital in the region, drawing on existing strengths in the life sciences sector. Over £50 million in infrastructure investment across West Yorkshire will accelerate delivery of key initiatives such as the refurbishment of Leeds' Old Medical School, which will unlock 4,000 square metres of innovation space as part of a wider life sciences and digital health science park, as well as digital technology assets in Bradford Knowledge Quarter and specialist clinical teaching facilities at the National Health Innovation Campus in Huddersfield. These initiatives are together expected to generate more than 7,300 jobs and £250 million investment across West Yorkshire over the next decade.
- **Building on HM Government's existing £25 million support for a potential British Library North**, Homes England has now entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the owners of the Temple Works site with a view to acquiring it as a home for the library. HM Government is also providing £10 million additional funding to support further stages of design and development. Bringing the historic Temple Works building into public ownership is an important step in progressing this exciting cultural project. It has the potential to catalyse the regeneration of Holbeck and the wider South Bank through delivery of c8,000m<sup>2</sup> of world-class space for learning, community, research, business incubation, events, and exhibitions, designed to welcome future generations of visitors.
- **Working closely with the Royal Armouries and investing resource funding to understand the potential impact of expanding its facilities to become a premier conference venue.** This venue, already the largest conference facility in Leeds, has the potential to offer a significant increase in conferencing space and support delivery of essential infrastructure including hotels, restaurants, and external event space, bringing economic and social benefits to the wider Eastside & Hunslet Riverside area
- **Working with the Poet Laureate to support proposals for a National Poetry Centre.** This exciting project, which HM Government is supporting with £5 million funding, aims to elevate poetry's national standing while repurposing an empty Grade II-listed building, Trinity St David's church, in the city's Innovation Arc. The Centre will feature a custom-designed arts performance space, hospitality facilities, educational areas, artist studios, offices, and event spaces. The National Poetry Centre will be a catalyst for cultural rejuvenation and community involvement, anchoring poetry at the heart of both national and local life.



To drive forward these investments and opportunities and maximise the value for Leeds, we are establishing the **Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership** with £2.7 million to support Leeds City Council to drive forward the vision for Leeds and the development and regeneration of our six neighbourhoods.

Expanding on our commitment, our mission is to accelerate the growth of Leeds as a greener and climate-resilient, healthier and happier place in which to live, work, study or invest: a magnet for visitors and a place of choice to bring up children and grow families – a city that is the equal of any in Europe or indeed the world. We will do this through:

- **Creating the integrated transport system and improving connectivity.** We have outlined how the lack of city and regional connectivity is the single biggest barrier to further economic growth in and around Leeds, and achieving transformational regeneration. To address these regional transport constraints, the West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan sets out a comprehensive, investment programme for the next 20 years. We are already investing in rebuilding key parts of Leeds station, opening up access to new areas of the city through better public transport interchanges and new or improved entrances. The Transpennine Route Upgrade, too, will substantially improve reliability, capacity, and journey times across Manchester, Leeds and York. Finally, the direct investment in the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system will make it easier for people to move around the region, improving access to jobs, retail and leisure opportunities, boosting the economy and supporting productivity. This will catalyse under-used brownfield land back into use as vibrant new neighbourhoods to boost economic growth and encourage intensification of existing neighbourhoods where communities wish. The new transport system will support beautiful neighbourhoods with excellent travel facilities so that residents can move around in a healthy and sustainable way.
- **Embedding and growing city centre living** with 20,000 beautiful new homes by 2033 in enhanced, walkable and sustainable neighbourhoods. Our initial focus will be on six priority neighbourhoods, building on work over the last 10 years to double the size and more importantly economic impact of the city centre. This will include developing proposals to improve key sites such as Temple Works and investing in local infrastructure such as schools and healthcare facilities to kickstart development. High-quality placemaking which responds to the needs of all residents will be at the heart of this urban regeneration. We wish to improve the best of the city's physical and environmental assets, bringing forward the highest-quality new development to ensure a locally distinct approach that celebrates the existing heritage and complements it with exemplar new design.

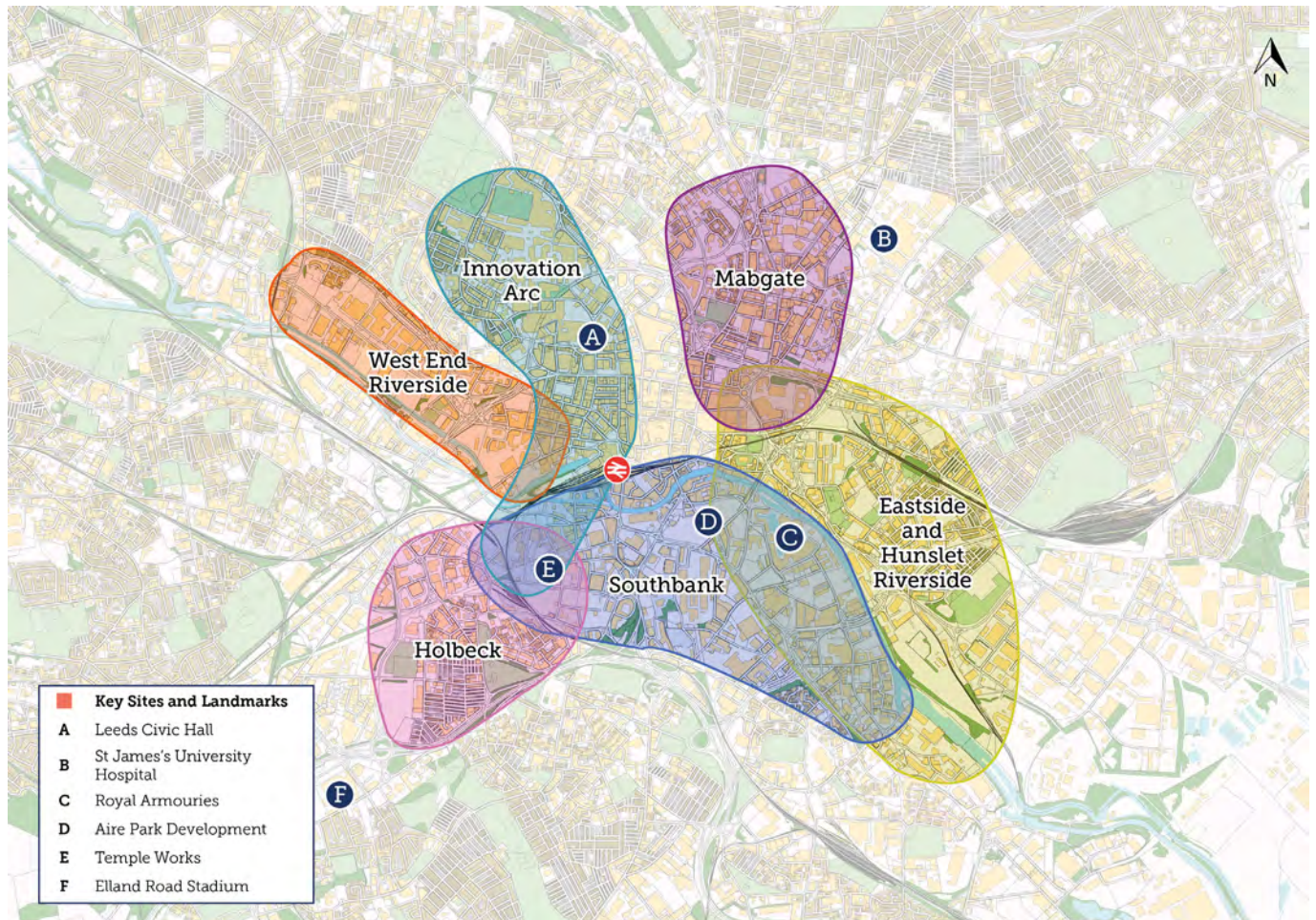
- **Growing the economic and cultural landscape** in Leeds through the development of key cultural anchor institutions and the recently announced West Yorkshire Investment Zone. We aim to stimulate growth in research, innovation excellence in HealthTech and digital, business investment, skills development and job creation, aligning with the region's wider vision for sustainable growth. Beyond this our goal is to contribute to the overall thriving of the city, ensuring that neighbourhoods in which we invest have the essential social infrastructure – the schools, further education Institutions, sports facilities, health centres and community hubs – that create places which are not only economically buzzing but socially desirable: stable, settled neighbourhoods where people want to put down roots and send the benefits rippling across the region. Furthermore, this vision represents a significant opportunity for local people to benefit not only from improved housing and transport systems, but through the jobs that are created by acquiring high-quality skills from priority government programmes such as apprenticeships, T Levels, skills bootcamps and HTQs.
- **Ensuring visionary and holistic planning** involving a range of local people, investors and professionals to deal positively with some of Leeds' greatest assets. Ensuring that our rivers and canals are respected and integrated into the new urban environment in a sustainable way, learning from recent successes with the Flood Alleviation Scheme. Adapting the historic environment to change so that it continues to be cherished by local people and supports investment in the city.

The recently published Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy sets out the huge scope for growth that surrounds the city centre.



# 5. Key neighbourhoods and priorities

In Leeds, our strategic vision centres on key pillars that are vital for a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive urban landscape: housing, transport, and institutional strength. We are focusing initially on enabling transformative developments in six associated neighbourhoods – Mabgate, Eastside & Hunslet Riverside, South Bank, Holbeck, West End Riverside and the Innovation Arc – anchoring each with robust transport, cultural, community and economic infrastructure.



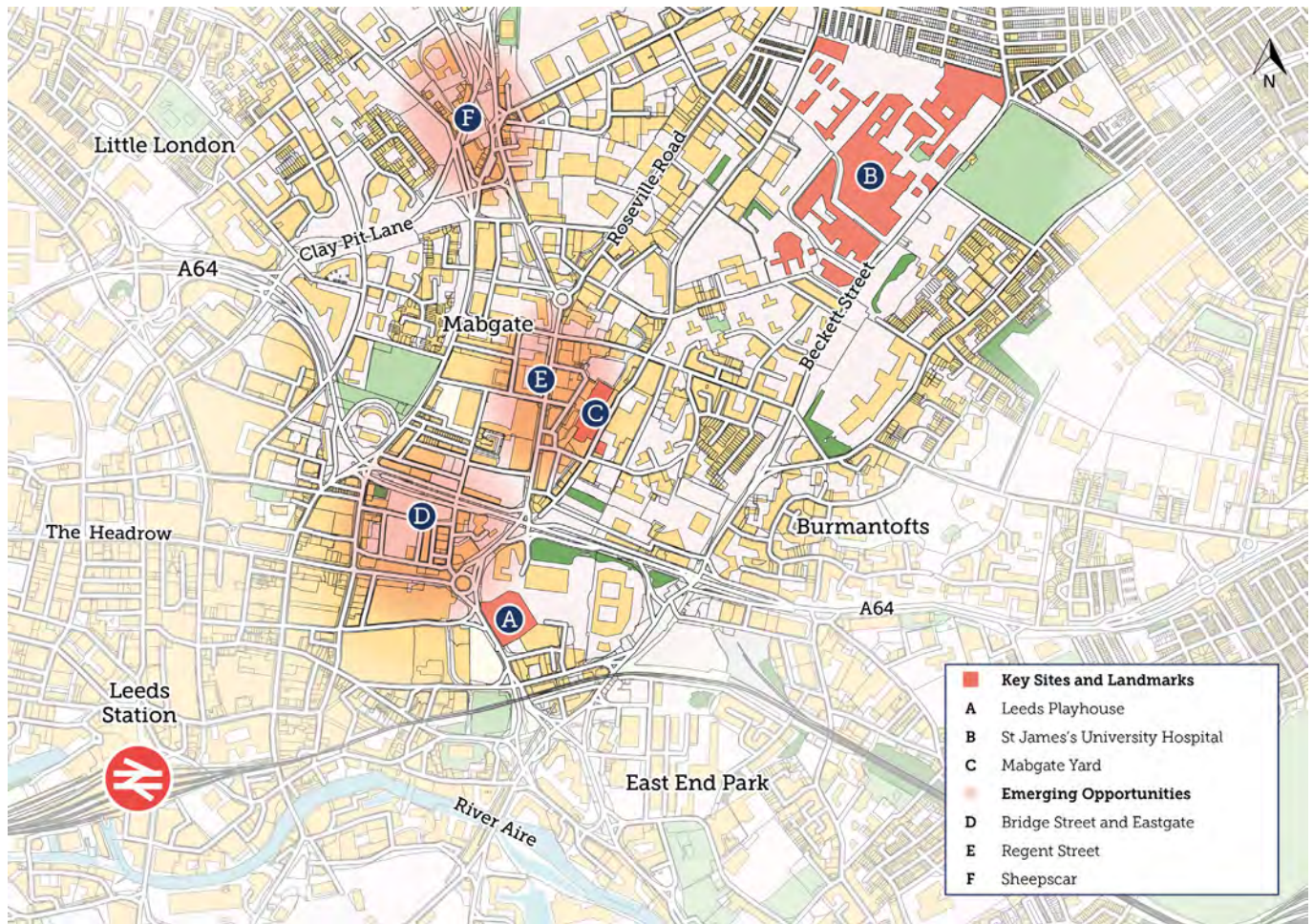
These areas have been prioritised based on a review of their current position and a vision for their untapped potential. Each neighbourhood offers clear improvement opportunities, with identified key sites and regeneration plans.

By concentrating our efforts in these city-centre areas we can allocate our resources efficiently and effectively and achieve the most profound impact. The strategic selection aligns with existing plans, fostering interconnected mixed-use neighbourhoods that work in synergy to contribute to Leeds' overall vitality and transformation.

Our neighbourhood-specific plans will be underpinned by the investment in a mass transit system that will unlock regeneration by transforming connectivity across Leeds and West Yorkshire, and by investment in wider cultural and community infrastructure to create vibrant, liveable neighbourhoods.



# Mabgate



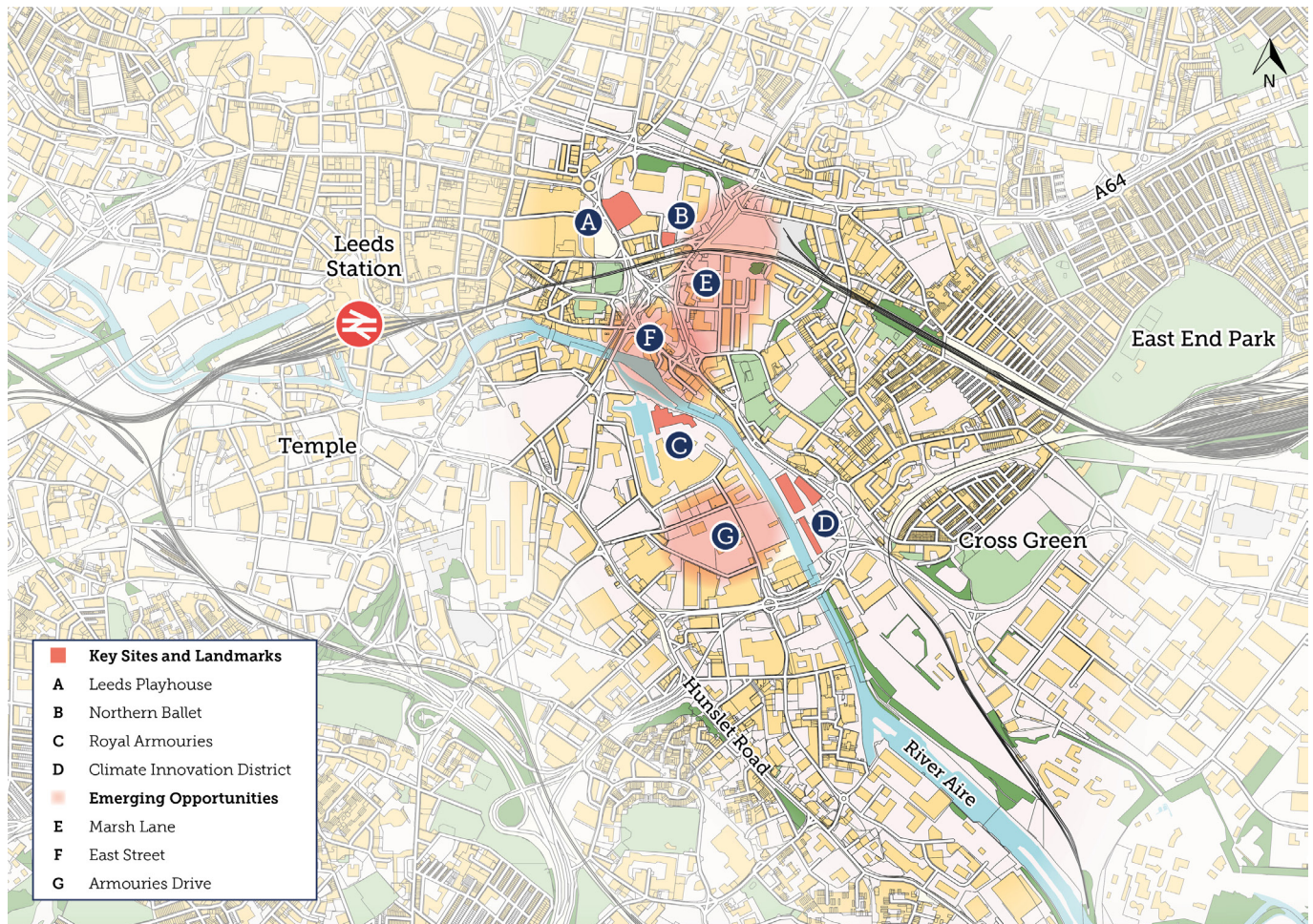
- Positioned towards the north-east of Leeds city centre, Mabgate owes its built environment to a deep industrial legacy. It is now renowned as a creative arts quarter, with an emerging additional focus on education and training.
- As one of Leeds' original inner urban neighbourhoods, Mabgate presents opportunities for comprehensive regeneration with a key link to the inner-city estate of Lincoln Green and into the St James's Hospital campus.
- With key residential opportunities, it also offers the potential to draw greater investment into its development sites, heritage properties, and infrastructure.
- Future plans seek to improve transport and movement connectivity to and through Mabgate, develop new homes in key sites, and unlock investment in existing social and health infrastructure such as a new Leeds City College campus and the Lincoln Green local centre.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate the possibility for upwards of 2,000 new homes in Mabgate – key among these are land at Bridge Street, Regent Street, Eastgate and Mabgate Yard. Beyond this there are opportunities to explore the repurposing of public sector land and to extend a placemaking and regeneration focus into Sheepscar.







## Eastside & Hunslet Riverside



- Eastside and Hunslet Riverside straddle the River Aire, in close proximity to the city centre, linking South Bank and the city centre with residential communities and employment areas, including the Enterprise Zone, to the east.
- The Climate Innovation District represents a pioneering new approach to delivering sustainable places in the UK. Spanning both banks of the River Aire in the east of Leeds city centre, it serves as an exemplar sustainable scheme, featuring low-carbon homes, alongside manufacturing, offices, a school, and community facilities. With a strong emphasis on public realm and innovative architectural design, and conveniently situated just a 20-minute walk from the city centre, the Innovation District has become a haven and a highly desirable place to live.
- Significant opportunities include the extensive, yet still underutilised river frontage, sizeable areas of brownfield land, and emerging private sector development proposals. Where Eastside touches the city centre there are opportunities to consider the impacts and opportunities of major legacy highways infrastructure to more effectively stitch neighbourhoods together and to unlock development opportunities.
- The city's cultural quarter in Eastside has already generated huge momentum and energy, with Royal Armouries alongside the innovation of the Climate Innovation District in Hunslet Riverside offering a strong platform for wider investment.

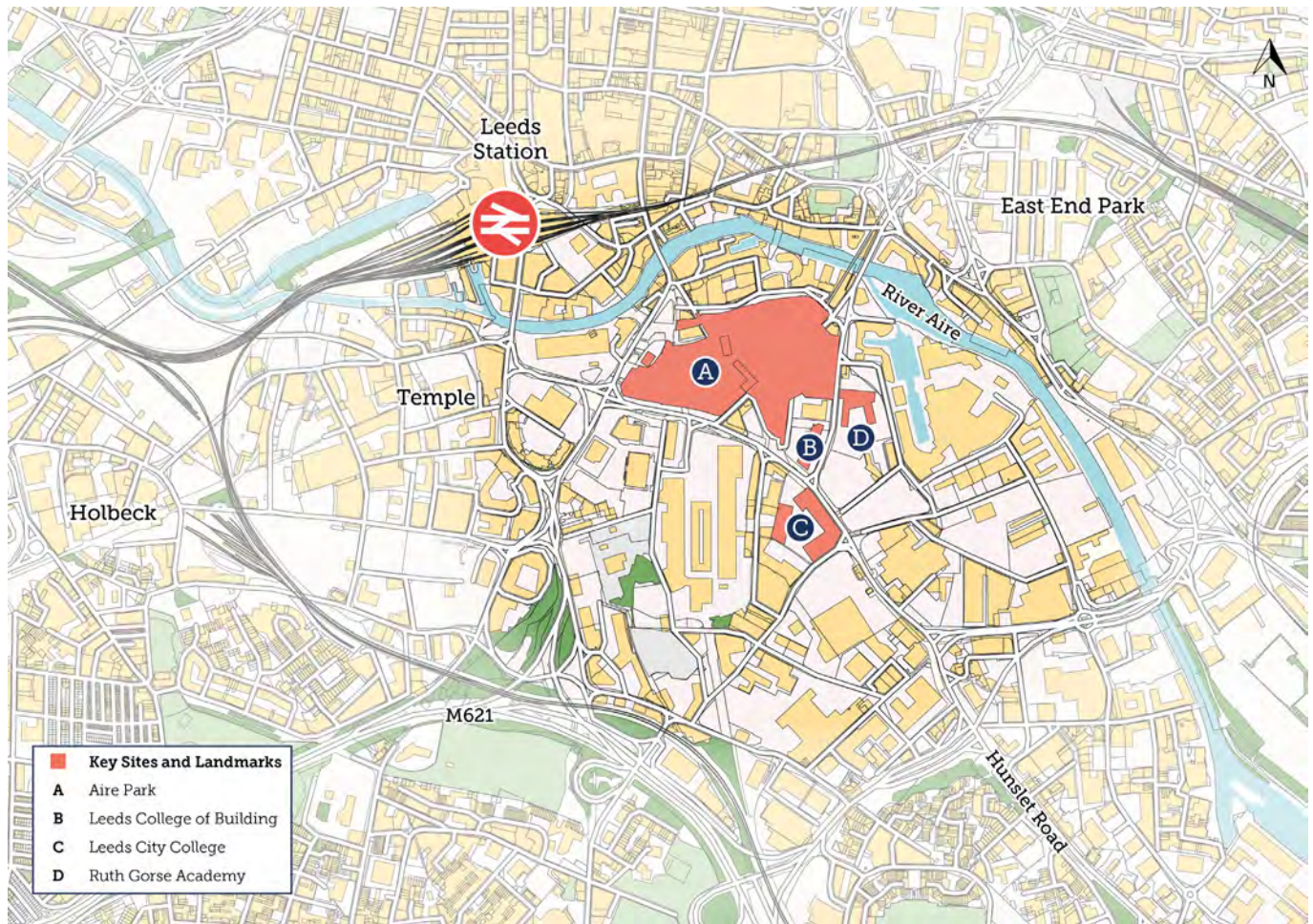


- We are working closely with the Royal Armouries and investing resource funding to understand the potential impact of expanding its facilities to become a premier conference venue. This venue, already the largest conference facility in Leeds, has the potential to offer a significant increase in conferencing space and support delivery of essential infrastructure including hotels, restaurants, and external event space, bringing economic and social benefits to the wider Eastside & Hunslet Riverside area.
- Our work will bring forward a wider regeneration plan that will make the area an exemplar of sustainable development.
- Extending the green and blue links from the City Centre through an Active Aire investment programme will promote active travel and recreation, exploiting the environmental, amenity and economic potential of the river and canal corridor.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate potential for around 2,000 new homes in Eastside and Hunslet Riverside. Key among these are sites at Marsh Lane, Armouries Drive and East Street. Beyond this, as with other parts of the city rim, we will look to extend city centre and residential uses beyond legacy infrastructure constraints.





# South Bank



- One of Europe’s largest regeneration areas, South Bank has doubled the footprint of Leeds City Centre through the ongoing transformation of 235 hectares south of the River Aire. 2024 sees the opening of the initial stages of the UK’s largest new city-centre green space as part of the wider Aire Park development. The new 9.7-hectare mixed-use district will include new homes, office space and leisure amenities, all surrounding an 8-acre park.
- The ongoing transformation of Leeds Station and how its role as a hub for national, regional and local transport connectivity is delivered will be crucial. Delivery of future-proofed rail capacity, in tandem with ensuring operational effectiveness for both the station and the city centre, is vital to unlocking significant development and investment opportunities in the South Bank. We will ensure these issues and opportunities are at the heart of decision-making around Network North investments.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate potential for around a further 1,000 new homes in the central South Bank area. Key among these are Aire Park and related development sites around it. Beyond this there are opportunities for the extension of city centre and residential uses beyond current constraints imposed by legacy highways infrastructure.

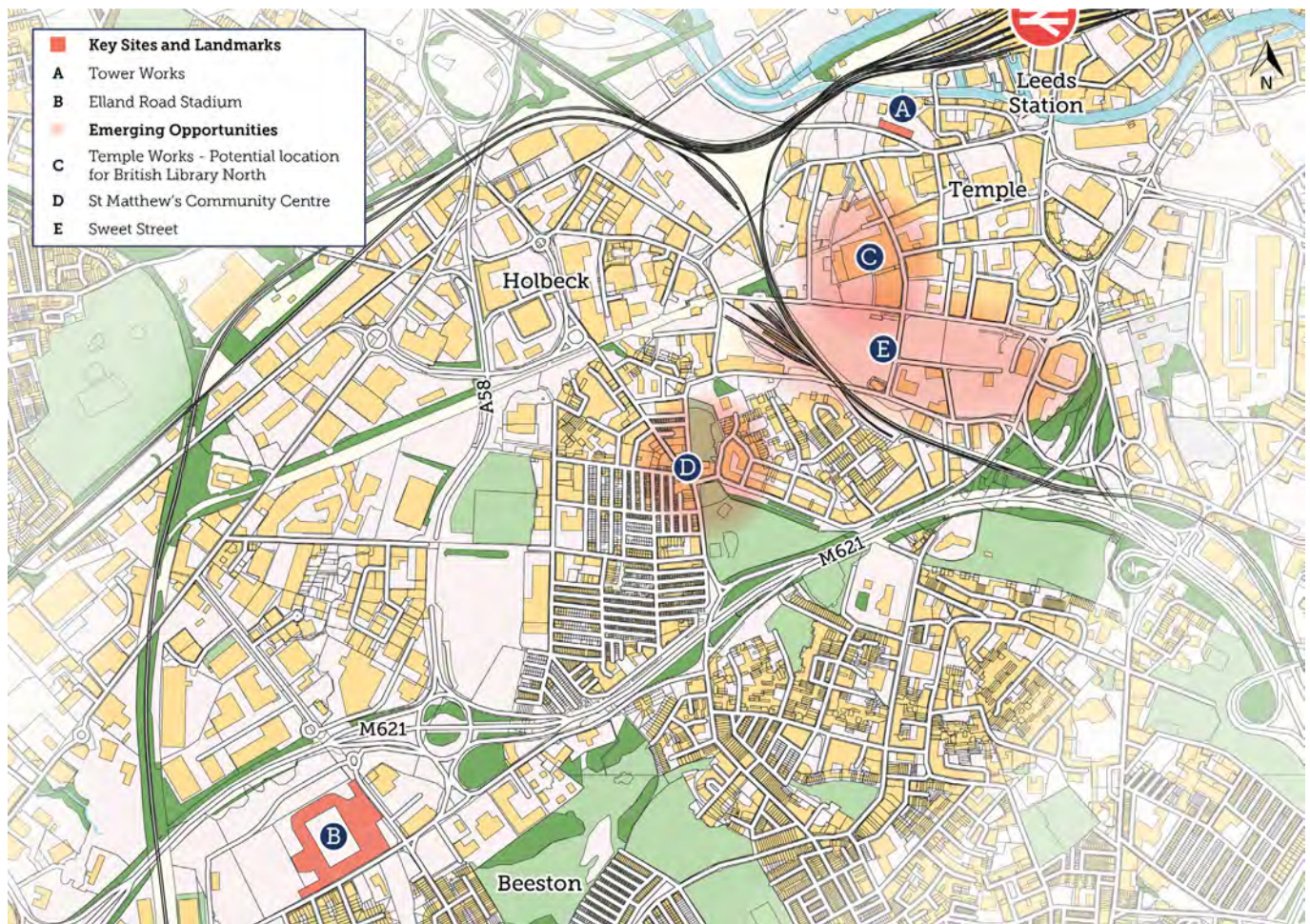


- We will plan for the next phases of South Bank’s regeneration with a particular focus on the central area to the south of Aire Park and Leeds Station, placemaking and unlocking development opportunities that will secure connectivity for inner city communities to the south.





# Holbeck



- A distinct part of the wider South Bank area, Holbeck is an area steeped in heritage, with a strong historic character informed by landmark assets such as the listed buildings at Temple Works and Tower Works. And it is an area already on a strong regeneration journey – in close proximity to Leeds Station, with significant residential and commercial developments already underway, and a wide range of future opportunities to be unlocked.
- Alongside these and despite its proximity to the city centre, there are significant pockets of deprivation in the established Holbeck neighbourhood further to the south. Some parts are in the 1% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and much of the neighbourhood is in the bottom 5%. The £15.9 million allocated to Heart of Holbeck in Round Three of the Levelling Up Fund will begin to tackle this by supporting the regeneration of St Matthew's Community Centre, improving the look, feel, safety, and accessibility of Holbeck Moor and the surrounding public realm, providing new cycling and walking infrastructure and addressing private sector housing quality.
- Our work will unlock the benefits of connectivity to bring together Holbeck's new and existing neighbourhoods, making a meaningful link between city centre growth and neighbourhood regeneration, and reflecting local ambitions set in the adopted Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan.
- Homes England will move forward with discussions on acquiring the Temple Works site as the first step towards plans to bringing a British Library North to the area, and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the site owners to collaborate on this acquisition. HM Government is also providing £10 million additional funding to support further stages of design and development. These are important steps towards safeguarding the Temple



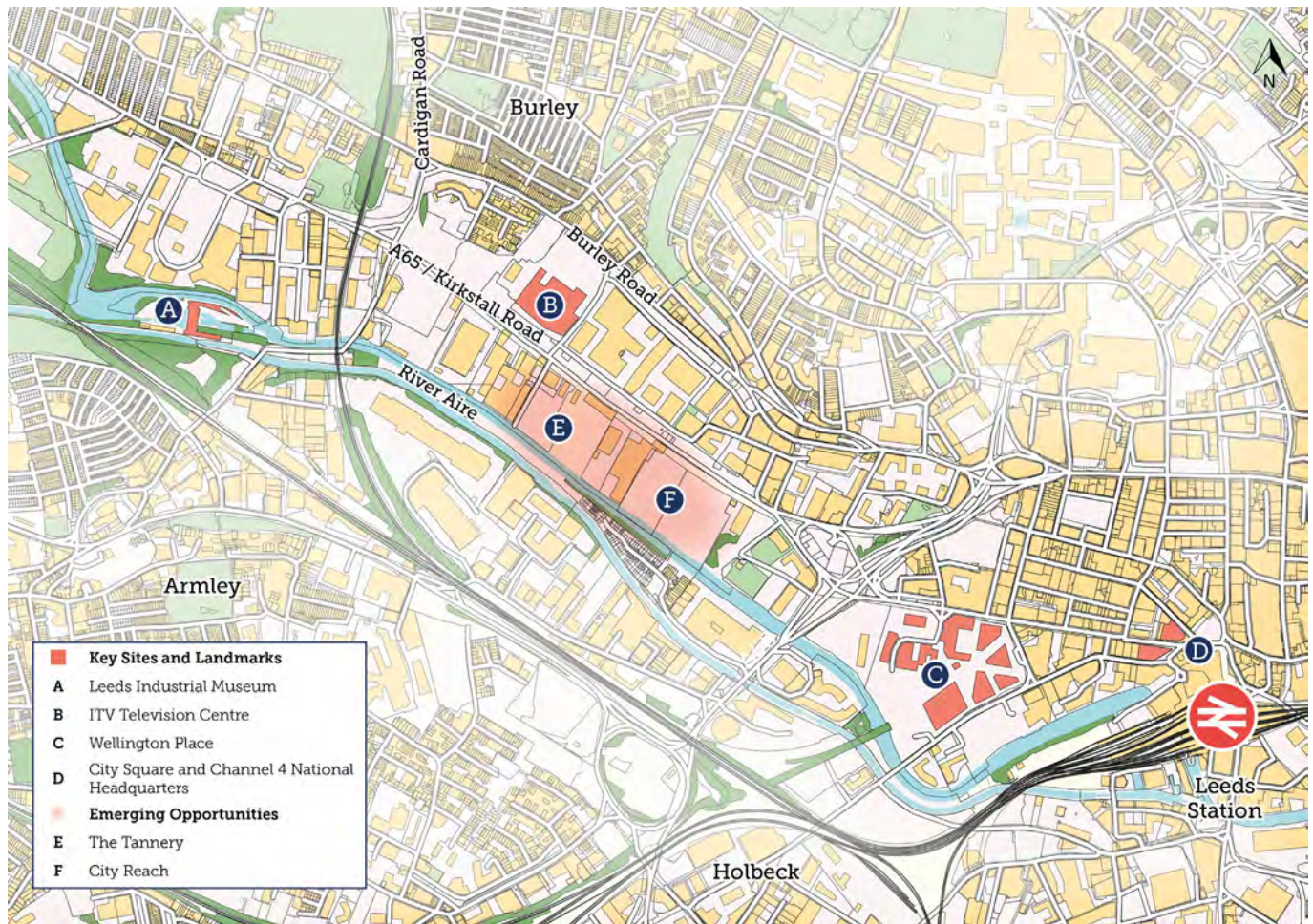
Works site and exploring its potential to become the new northern home of the British Library. The library will be as a game-changing, transformative catalyst that will deliver significant economic and social benefits for the area and wider city.

- Extending our focus beyond Holbeck to the south means that its role in a series of linked economic and cultural opportunities is recognised and amplified – part of a gateway into the city centre that joins up with the major opportunities for investment and economic development at Elland Road stadium, White Rose Park, the White Rose Shopping Centre and Capitol Park.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate the potential for around 3,000 new homes in Holbeck, of which the key opportunities are major brownfield sites on Sweet Street and part of the Temple Quarter.





## West End Riverside



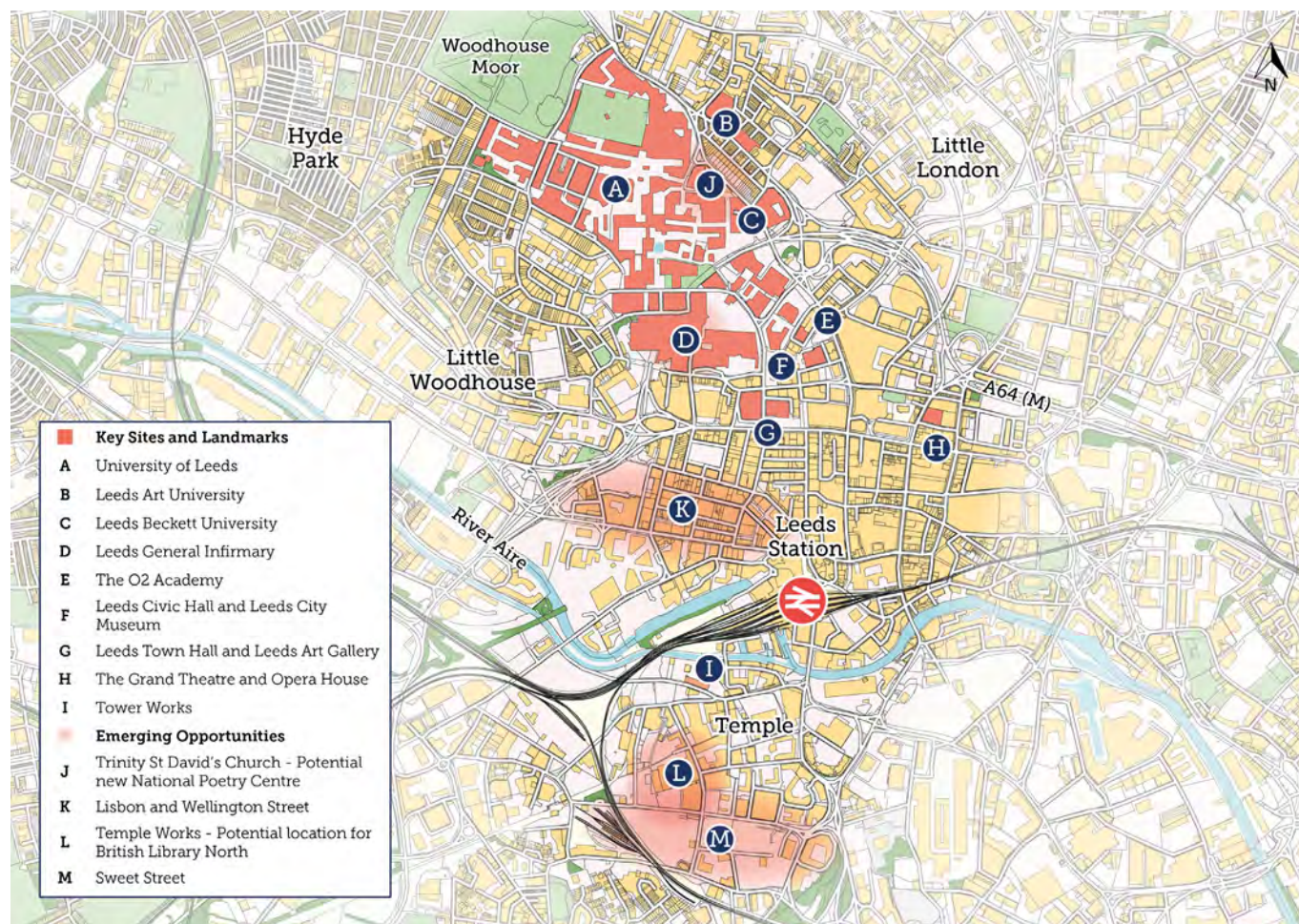
- From City Square, through the major Grade A office hub at Wellington Place (the biggest ever commercial property let in Leeds, and workplace of over 7,000 civil servants) and moving beyond the Inner Ring Road, West End Riverside is a natural area of city centre sustainable growth along the Kirkstall Road and upstream river/canal corridor.
- West End Riverside is also home to the Leeds Studios, ITV's regional home and an engine of cultural and creative production for over 50 years. Other core production facilities such as Prime Studios and the corridor link to Channel 4 at City Square create a major film, television and media presence in this area.
- Our work will support and capitalise on this cluster to expand on the economic opportunities, building on Leeds' growing reputation in the creative industries.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate the potential for around 2,000 new homes in West End Riverside. Key among these are City Reach and the Tannery. We will also explore opportunities for land use changes along the Kirkstall Road corridor and a mixed-use gateway to the Riverside area.







# Innovation Arc



- The Leeds Innovation Arc is a 130-hectare area of the city centre encompassing three university campuses, the Leeds General Infirmary and the most significant concentration of private sector employment in the region. The Arc touches a number of neighbouring communities including Little London, Hyde Park and Little Woodhouse, with distinct pockets of deprivation at the Arc's edges.
- The Innovation Arc is an area with significant opportunity to drive inclusive growth but one constrained by key challenges – including major infrastructure, a deficit of green space, heritage buildings, and a lack of coherence between constituent neighbourhoods.
- Leeds has a clear vision to stimulate innovation and deliver measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future for the city and the world. This vision underpins a spatial framework for the Innovation Arc with ambitious plans for two new city parks, 100,000 square metres of repurposed heritage space, the re-stitching of neighbouring areas, 3,000 new homes, 220,000 square metres of enhanced public realm and improved public transport connecting the area to the wider region.
- In addition, a new hospital will be delivered, enabling the release of a major strategic development site in the city centre with the potential to deliver a new innovation-led mixed-use community.
- Ambitious plans have been developed to repurpose the Grade II\* listed Old Medical School for innovation use, bringing together clinicians, innovators and academics, and building on significant private sector and higher education investment in new innovation and learning assets over the last five years. The West Yorkshire Investment Zone will deliver an initial phase of interventions at the site to accelerate this development.



- Working with the Poet Laureate to support proposals for a new National Poetry Centre and supporting the development of the project with £5 million funding. The National Poetry Centre aims to elevate the position of poetry in national life whilst repurposing an empty Grade II-listed building, Trinity St David’s church, in the city’s Innovation Arc. The Centre will feature a custom-designed arts performance space, hospitality facilities, educational areas, artist studios, offices, and event spaces, aspiring to serve as a cultural hub for both national and local communities.
- Identified sites in the immediate development and planning pipeline indicate the potential for around 3,000 new homes in the Innovation Arc (north) area. Key among these is the redevelopment opportunity offered in the residual LGI estate, with sites coming forward at Lisbon Street and at Wellington Street.





## 6. Connectivity

---

Leeds is receiving major government investment in its transport infrastructure, including £2.5 billion, funded by HS2 savings, for the new West Yorkshire Mass Transit system, boosting connectivity between Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax and Wakefield. £200 million has been allocated to West Yorkshire Combined Authority to develop the case for mass transit between now and 2027, including for Leeds.

Anticipated to start in 2028, mass transit is set to deliver its first route in the early 2030s - a significant milestone in Leeds' transformational journey towards an upgraded and interconnected public transport system.

No longer will Leeds be the biggest European city without a mass-transit system. Mass transit will play a crucial part in regenerating key neighbourhoods, potentially including Mabgate, Eastside & Hunslet Riverside, South Bank, West End Riverside and the Innovation Arc, as well as the central retail district (subject to further analysis and specific route decisions). And it will also unlock opportunities to improve links to hospitals, universities, and jobs, and to rethink the existing road network across West Yorkshire. This will go hand in hand with our work to develop the urban environment of these neighbourhoods and represents a unique opportunity to harness the connectivity benefits of mass transit to a programme of spatial planning, housing development, and economic transformation.





Mass transit will also unlock the benefits of improved connectivity across West Yorkshire, with up to seven lines created as part of a transformed network that will eventually link Leeds to Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Wakefield. This will bring enormous opportunities, including:

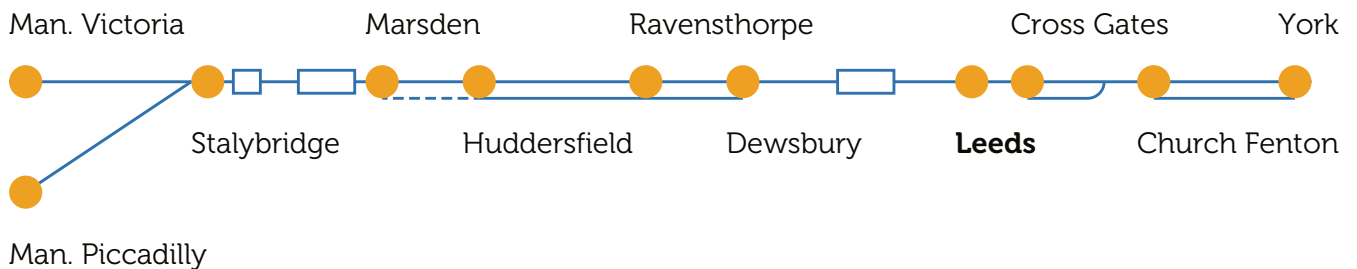
- **Transforming the West Yorkshire economy.** The routes will improve connections between Leeds and Bradford, the two largest centres of employment in West Yorkshire. Frequent, high-capacity, city centre-to-city centre connections will bring massive agglomeration benefits to the region. At present, 45,000 commuters travel between Bradford and Leeds each day, the largest flow between any two cities in the UK – with 74% of them choosing to travel by car.
- **Unlocking opportunity**, by linking areas of need to employment opportunities and new housing.
- **Making travel easier**, by ensuring there is a wider range of transport and active travel options that people can choose from.

Further transport investment will support our ambitions in Leeds and the wider West Yorkshire region, including:

### Transpennine Route Upgrade

**Core Upgrade** delivers **full electrification** scheme;

- 41 min Man-Leeds/ 65 mins Man-York **journey time**;
- Two **additional train paths** per hour each way;
- Largest **freight** containers can pass through;
- **Digital signalling** Stalybridge-Colton Jn;
- **Station** accessibility, length and other upgrades;
- **Reliability**: halving of delay minutes (fast services).



— TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) - core upgrade  
 - - - TRU additional third track upgrade  
 □ Significant existing tunnel (max 2 tracks)

Each line represents two tracks except where stated.  
 Not to scale. Not all stations shown.



Department for Transport

- The **Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)** is the biggest ever conventional rail programme, delivering flagship rail investment in the North of England and running from York to Manchester via Leeds and Huddersfield. Total investment has reached **£6.9 billion** with the upgrade expected to complete in the mid-2030s.

- The route will be fully modernised and electrified, giving passengers a faster, more reliable service and **30% more seats**<sup>3</sup>, and helping to improve connectivity across the wider region. This once-in-a-generation funding provides an opportunity to comprehensively upgrade this vital transport artery. The transformation will encourage more people to travel by rail for work and leisure, extending the reach of Leeds as a central hub. Railway stations will also be made more accessible, to make it easier to travel by rail and put pride back into the commuter belt that supports the region's cities.
- In addition, we will increase the number of freight journeys to transport more goods by rail and decrease the UK's environmental impact. This will bring more highly skilled jobs to the region and reenergise the North's industrial heritage.
- TRU unlocks **Northern Powerhouse Rail**, a cornerstone of Network North, promising to reshape and transform the North's economy by better connecting communities and businesses across the region's major economic centres. As construction progresses, TRU goes beyond infrastructure development by providing career opportunities to local people: 80% of jobs are expected to be filled from within a 40-mile radius of the route, and 65% from within a 25-mile radius.
- Recent **Network North** announcements committed to the electrification and upgrade of the Leeds to Sheffield line, giving passengers a choice of three to four fast trains an hour, instead of one, with journey times of 40 minutes.
- The **£280 million** injection towards the redevelopment of Leeds station, as part of the Leeds Existing Station Programme, will increase passenger capacity in the next few years, while **hundreds of millions** of pounds for the redevelopment of track layout around Leeds will also improve capacity.



3 30% more seats between Huddersfield and Leeds.



# 7. Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership

---

In addition to direct government investment to drive the development of our key neighbourhoods, we will also ensure that we provide Leeds with the long-term structures and support it needs to grow over the next decade. We want to see a coherent placemaking vision across the whole of Leeds, rather than the unsatisfactory unfurling of piecemeal development and individual projects.

For this reason, we will seek to establish the **Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership** between national, regional and local government – offering a clear trajectory for change, investment and collaboration, and creating welcome certainty for both the public and private sector.

The partnership will be informed by the well-established West Yorkshire Strategic Place Partnership between West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Homes England, which identifies Leeds city centre as one of the most important strategic growth opportunities in the region.

This partnership will unite HM Government, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Homes England under a shared vision for the city's future. This initial vision sets the foundation upon which the partnership will be built and offers a statement of intent that will be used to develop a wider coalition of partners and stakeholders, who will be crucial to its realisation.

Building on the Strategic Place Partnership, this partnership will leverage the combined strengths, resources and specialist knowledge of these bodies, drawing in the pivotal role of the private sector and the views of Leeds residents. This means it will support partners to:

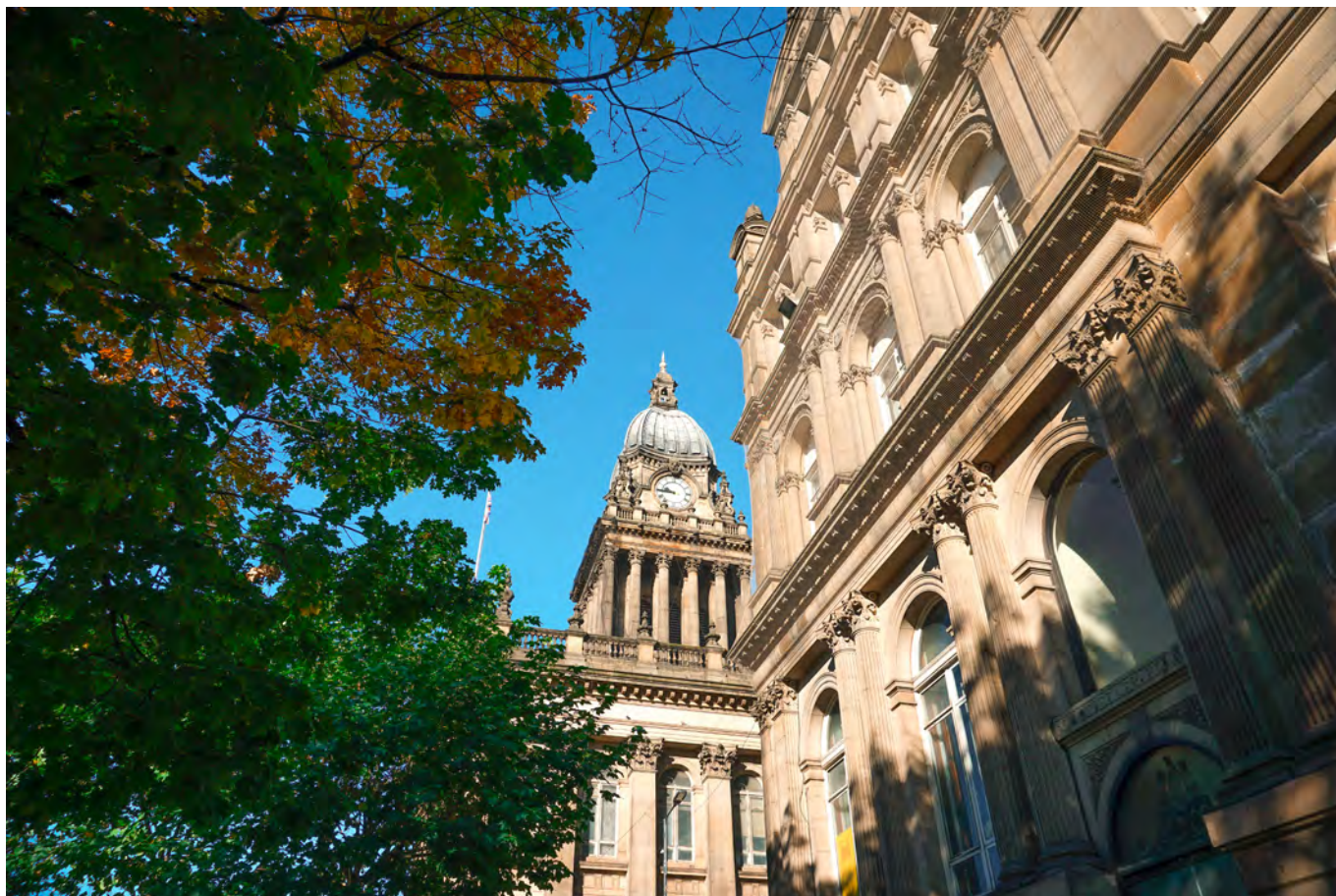
- **Address fragmented land ownership and infrastructure barriers**, to help prepare sites for mixed-use development.
- **Create a 'single front door'** for public funding, financing and site-enabling discussions.
- **Raise low land values** through comprehensive placemaking that will make marginal sites more viable.
- **Encourage more employment space and support further housing growth**, through making better use of public sector and safeguarded land.
- **Plan neighbourhoods to be ready for the arrival of mass transit**, ensuring robust plans are in place and delivery barriers are addressed.

To bring this vision to fruition, we recognise the importance of capacity funding to kickstart a programme of investment and bring confidence to the market. Government has provided £2.7 million in capacity funding for Leeds City Council, allocated specifically to build local capacity and undertake crucial feasibility and enabling work, ensuring that the initial steps of our transformative journey are supported with the necessary resources. This initial investment will act as a catalyst, laying the groundwork for the broader, long-term objectives.

The **Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership** will represent a collaborative effort crafted to capitalise on opportunities over the next decade and beyond, marking the next chapter in the history of Leeds and its impact across the region. And with the private sector playing a crucial role in this endeavour, Leeds can become a model for what is achievable when public and private sector partners join forces with a shared vision for success.

This is only the beginning. As these direct investments and collaborative efforts act to create value in Leeds and kickstart major regeneration projects, we will work with Leeds City Council to bring forward a new, modern vision of Leeds, enabling:

- **A Denser Leeds**, building new homes in line with the best urbanist principles of gentle densification;
- **A Greener Leeds**, utilising brownfield land, connecting and creating green spaces for nature recovery and healthier living;
- **A Connected Leeds**, bringing mass transit into the heart of the city and creating walkable neighbourhoods; and
- **An Inclusive Leeds**, breaking down barriers to opportunity with mixed-tenure, connected and affordable homes, in high-quality urban spaces.



## Delivery and implementation

As the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership takes shape, it will oversee the implementation of our vision and drive forward the programme of work in Leeds. There is strong alignment between HM Government, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and Leeds City Council on the priorities and ambitions outlined in this vision - but effective execution is crucial to maintaining this alignment and momentum.



The Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership will ensure effective leadership and accountability, publishing an implementation plan for the programme and ensuring appropriate delivery structures are in place to expedite progress. A high-level implementation timeline is set out below.

## **High-level timeline**

### **Autumn Statement 2023**

- £2 million to support Leeds City Council in driving forward the vision for Leeds, including master planning for the six neighbourhoods to unlock the delivery of new homes and infrastructure.

### **2024**

- Establishment of the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership, with a further £700k of revenue support committed to Leeds City Council.
- Additional funding announced for key sites in the city to bolster regeneration plans.
- Developing the implementation plan for the programme.

### **2025**

- Well established plans developed for each neighbourhood, maximising the use of Leeds City Council's £2.7 million resource funding, supported by the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership.

### **2028**

- Planned scheduled construction of West Yorkshire Mass Transit phase 1 begins.

### **2030s onwards**

- Completion of phase 1 of West Yorkshire Mass Transit.
- 20,000 new homes in the city.

## 8. Next steps

---

Our vision for the acceleration of ongoing transformation of Leeds sets out our plans for a liveable, connected and prosperous city – building on its current success to fulfil its long-term potential. This vision will be supported by key government investment, such as an initial £2.7 million for Leeds City Council, the establishment of the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership, and significant investments in transport infrastructure such as West Yorkshire Mass Transit.

However, our vision cannot be realised in isolation; it demands the collective efforts of both the public and private sectors. Leeds stands poised with the essential talent required to fuel its burgeoning economy and drive innovation, thanks to a richly diverse pool of students and skilled professionals. The implementation of a mass transit system will not merely improve connectivity; it will exponentially expand labour market reach, igniting economic growth throughout the region. Furthermore, the construction of additional homes across the city centre will not merely fulfil housing demand; it will foster the creation of vibrant, interconnected neighbourhoods, pulsating with life and opportunity.

The city's cultural institutions, from the British Library North to a National Poetry Centre, will serve as beacons of heritage and innovation, catalysing wider regeneration and development. Moreover, the strategic release of land for employment space will not just create opportunities for businesses to flourish; it will also open access to new employment prospects for all.

To achieve these ambitious goals, we need your support. Your investment, commitment, and active involvement are vital to the realisation of our vision. Together, we can propel Leeds towards a future of unparalleled prosperity and boundless opportunity for every resident and business. However, this journey can only be traversed hand-in-hand, with your invaluable contributions of investment, expertise, and collaborative spirit.

If you want to find out more about our vision for Leeds you can contact [Regeneration.Team@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Regeneration.Team@leeds.gov.uk), or if you would like to discuss how your business can share in its success, the team at [Invest Leeds](mailto:Invest Leeds) can help with location, real estate, search and advice. Get in touch at [invest-leeds@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:invest-leeds@leeds.gov.uk).





1. Clare Jackson / Alamy Stock Photo
2. iStock.com / Janis Abolins
3. eye35 / Alamy Stock Photo
4. iStock.com / kelvinjay
5. WH CHOW / Shutterstock.com
6. Leeds Corn Exchange by Chris Rycroft on Flickr. Used Under Creative Commons BY 2.0 DEED
7. Fabric Works, Primus Property Group Image Credit: Tim Groom Architects (Architects & CGI Artwork)
8. Wirestock, Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo
9. Darren Galpin / Alamy Stock Photo
10. Karl Everett / Shutterstock.com
11. Aire Park Development, Vastint UK. Image Credit: Vastint UK
12. Buabong / Shutterstock.com
13. Paul Leach / Alamy Stock Photo
14. Architects Impression: Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios/Buro Happold
15. Glenbrook, Kirkstall Road. Image Credit: Glenbrook
16. iStock.com / kelvinjay
17. iStock.com / kelvinjay
18. Mark Sunderland Photography / Alamy Stock Photo
19. Image by West Yorkshire Combined Authority
20. Clare Jackson / Alamy Stock Photo
21. Britain / Shutterstock.com
22. Darren Galpin / Alamy Stock Photo



© Crown copyright, 2024

*Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.*

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/dluhc](http://www.gov.uk/dluhc)

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email [correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk) or write to us at:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/luhc>

March 2024



