

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, D Coupar, M Harland,  
H Hayden, A Lamb, J Lennox, J Pryor,  
M Rafique and F Venner

**53 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There was no information contained within the agenda which was designated as being exempt from publication.

**54 Late Items**

There were no formal late items of business submitted to the Board for consideration, however, supplementary information had been provided to Board Members and published ahead of the meeting. This was in the form of Appendix 2 to Item 9 (Children and Young People's Transport Policy: Outcome of consultation on proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)). This Appendix 2 presented the Scrutiny Board Children and Families Working Group statement relating to the proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 SEND learners, which had been submitted following the Scrutiny Board's agreement of the statement at the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024. (Minute No. 60 refers).

**55 Declaration of Interests**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared at the meeting.

**56 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

### **EQUALITY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**57 Plans for New Hospital Provision in Leeds**

The Interim Chief Executive of Leeds City Council submitted a report which provided an update on the current position regarding the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's (LTH) proposals for new hospital provision in the city as part of the Government's New Hospitals Programme. This would see existing hospital facilities on the Leeds General Infirmary site being replaced with new state of the art buildings and equipment. It was also noted that proposals included the creation of a Leeds Innovation Village as part of a wider Innovation Arc. The report reconfirmed the support which had been provided by a range of city partners and sought the Board's endorsement of the proposed approach to Government for the swift delivery of the programme in Leeds.

The Executive Member introduced the report, highlighting that the Government's New Hospitals Programme had been the subject of significant delays since its establishment in 2019 and that the current Secretary of State had commissioned a review of the programme in order to put it on a sustainable footing. In advance of the Chancellor's upcoming Budget statement, the Executive Member highlighted that the purpose of the report was to call on the Government, in partnership with colleagues from LTHT to accelerate funding to deliver the new hospital programme for Leeds. Thanks were extended to Councillor Lamb for his support, and also for the work being undertaken to facilitate a cross-party letter to Government on such matters.

The Board welcomed Professor Phil Wood, Chief Executive, LTHT, and Jenny Ehrhardt, Director of Finance, LTHT, who were in attendance for the consideration of this item.

Professor Wood highlighted the readiness in Leeds to proceed with the programme, provided an update on the preparatory progress made to date and emphasised how this facility would not only be key to delivering state of the art health care for Leeds residents, but would have critical importance for the region and the north of England generally. Also noted was how the proposals were consistent with both local and national policy. Emphasis was placed upon the fact that LTHT's estate backlog remained challenging and would continue to accelerate whilst the new facility was awaited. It was noted that the proposals for Leeds were part of an ambitious regeneration development that included the Innovation Village, which would have a significant impact in terms of inward economic investment and job creation. An update on the progress made to date on the first phase of that initiative was provided.

The Leader thanked all involved from within the Council and from the LTHT and all other partner organisations for their continued efforts in this process, their collaborative approach and for providing a clear message of support. The significant healthcare benefits that would be realised as a result of the proposals were reiterated, as were the wider economic benefits from the development of the Innovation Arc.

In considering this matter, Councillor Lamb welcomed the report, reiterated the cross-party and 'Team Leeds' approach being taken and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the support of Leeds MPs was also gained on this matter.

Councillor Lamb moved several proposed amendments to the recommendations in the submitted report, Specifically that:

- Recommendations (a) and (b) remain unchanged;
- Recommendation (c) becomes recommendation (d), and that a new recommendation (c) be added as follows, '*The Executive Board is asked to note that four years of delays have so far cost the NHS Trust £300 million and further delays owing to the latest Government review of the NHS New Hospital Programme (NHP) will cost the NHS considerably more*'; and

- The original recommendation (d) becomes recommendation (e), and that be amended to read as follows, '*The Executive Board requests that, given the Department for Health and Social Care/Treasury review of the new hospitals programme, Executive Board make a submission to the Treasury before the Budget on 30 October, clearly stating the importance of modernised hospital provision in Leeds and requesting that the Leeds scheme be permitted to go ahead without delay. The Leader and Executive Member for Equality and Health and Wellbeing have sought cross-party support for a letter in support of the Council's submission*'.

Those proposed amendments were then seconded by Councillor Venner, and with the Board's agreement, it was -

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the strategic importance to Leeds of replacing existing hospital facilities on the Leeds General Infirmary site with new state of the art buildings and equipment, be noted, with the progress made so far by LTHT and partners of the Leeds Innovation Partnership including the Council, University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University, also being noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the new hospital programme will deliver a boost to the health of children and adults, act to regenerate the existing and surrounding site and promote innovation and research across Leeds;
- (c) That it be noted that four years of delays have so far cost the NHS Trust £300 million and that further delays owing to the latest Government review of the NHS New Hospital Programme (NHP) will cost the NHS considerably more;
- (d) That the call to Government, as outlined within the submitted report, to approve and to subsequently accelerate the new hospital programme in Leeds, serving as critical regional health infrastructure, be supported;
- (e) That, given the Department for Health and Social Care/Treasury review of the new hospitals programme, agreement be given for Executive Board to make a submission to the Treasury before the Budget on 30 October 2024, clearly stating the importance of modernised hospital provision in Leeds and requesting that the Leeds scheme be permitted to go ahead without delay. That it also be noted that the Leader and Executive Member for Equality and Health and Wellbeing have sought cross-party support for a letter in support of the Council's submission.

#### **58 Fast Track Cities: One Year On (2024)**

The Director of Public Health submitted a report which provided an overview of the Fast Track Cities initiative, the achievements in Leeds in the last twelve months, as well as the ambitions for the next year. The report noted that Fast Track Cities is a global partnership between cities and municipalities around the world in which participants declare a commitment to ending HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Tuberculosis (TB) epidemics by 2030.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member provided an overview of the initiative and the ambitious nature of it, the actions which continued to be taken, the challenges which were being faced and the progress that had been made over past year. It was also highlighted that in February 2023, Leeds became the first city in the Yorkshire and Humber region to become a Fast Track City.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further information on the ways in which progress in this area would be monitored and measured, with it being noted that indicators relating to HIV and blood-borne viruses were part of a dashboard which was considered by the city's Health Protection Board, as part of the Team Leeds health protection processes. It was undertaken that such dashboard data would be shared with Board Members for information.

It was also noted that in the most recent data there had been increases in several indicators, which was partly due to the fact that more testing was being undertaken. Further information was then given on the approach being taken to manage such matters moving forward.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the achievements of the Fast Track City initiative, as detailed within the submitted report, be recognised;
- (b) That the future ambitions of the Fast Track City initiative, be supported, and that the development of the Leeds: Getting to Zero Action Plan also be supported, together with the aim of reducing the stigma and misinformation associated with TB, HIV and Hepatitis.

### **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

#### **59 The Annual report on Academic Outcomes**

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the outcomes from the statutory assessments and examinations which took place during the 2022/23 academic year in primary and secondary state-funded schools in Leeds (both maintained schools and academies) and which covered the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 5.

The Executive Member introduced the report and thanked all children and young people who had undertaken assessments and examinations for their efforts. Thanks was also extended to all teachers and those, including parents and carers, who had supported students throughout what could be challenging times for children and young people. An overview of the performance of Leeds pupils when compared to the national average was provided, with it being noted that Leeds was not complacent in respect of the progress which was being made, and that work would continue to improve the outcomes for all children and young people at every stage of education, especially those who faced additional challenges.

In noting the outcomes within the submitted report, a Member highlighted the positive local and national results which had been achieved by the students, and how such positive results reflected upon the educational reforms of the previous Government.

Responding to a specific enquiry, Members discussed the complex, national issue of attendance in schools, which it was highlighted, had been exacerbated by the pandemic. Further details were provided on the partnership approach being taken to improve attendance and engagement in education, with it being noted that this was a priority for Leeds. It was also highlighted that this matter was being considered by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and also the multi-agency Children and Young People's Partnership. Bearing in mind the context of the pandemic and the range of challenges faced by children and young people as a result, Members emphasised how the pupils' achievements detailed within the submitted report were all the more significant.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the performance against headline measures for pupils in Leeds in 2023 in comparison to national data, as presented within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the actions taken by Local Authority services to support maintained schools and academies in their work to improve outcomes in Leeds, be noted;
- (c) That it be noted that the data presented within the submitted report has previously been discussed at Children and Families Scrutiny Board on 18 July 2024.

**60 Children and Young People's Transport Policy: Outcome of consultation on proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Further to Minute No. 10, 19 June 2024, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the outcomes from the public consultation exercise undertaken on proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The report detailed proposed next steps and sought approval of an updated Children and Young People's Transport Policy, as presented at Appendix 3.

Supplementary information had been provided to Board Members and published ahead of the meeting in the form of the Scrutiny Board Children and Families Working Group statement regarding the proposed changes to transport assistance for post-16 SEND learners. This had been submitted following the Scrutiny Board's agreement of the statement at the meeting held on 9th October 2024. The statement was presented as Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member extended her thanks to Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the work that it had undertaken in

this area. Also, it was highlighted that the Local Authority's duty was to provide home to school transport assistance for children with SEND of statutory school age, and that although it was the parents' responsibility to provide transport arrangements for post-16 year old learners with SEND, the Council had continued to provide substantial assistance. With regard to the proposals within the report, it was noted that they had followed consultation undertaken with young people and their families. The Board was also advised that the proposals would reduce the significant overspend which existed in this service area, whilst maintaining a discretionary transport offer for post-16 students with SEND. The provisions which would be put in place to support those affected were also noted.

In acknowledging the reasons for a review being undertaken, a Member raised his concerns in respect of the proposals and in doing so relayed to the Board an individual concern which had been raised with him, advising that this was representative of others he had received. The Member sought reassurance that the implementation and communication of the proposed policy would be proactive and would be centred around the needs of children, young people and their families, and that for instance, there would be flexibility on the 20-mile radius cap being proposed. In raising such concerns, the Member suggested that further work needed to be undertaken and perhaps a deferral of the final decision was required in order to provide the necessary assurance to parents and families around the approach which would be taken to implement the proposals.

In response, whilst acknowledging the impact of the proposals, it was noted that the current policy was unsustainable. It was also noted that the matter had been considered in detail at Scrutiny Board, where the challenges being faced had been acknowledged, and it was confirmed that the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board had been accepted.

Assurance was provided to the Board that the proposed policy would take into consideration the individual needs of children, young people and their families, and where such individual needs required provision outside of the agreed policy, then in those exceptional circumstances the policy would provide flexibility to deliver that. A commitment was also provided that communication and engagement would continue with the parents, carers, children and young people affected using a range of methods.

Further detail was also provided on the actions being taken regarding the delivery of SEND provision in Leeds, with the aim of minimising the need for learners having to travel significant distances outside of the city wherever possible. The opportunities arising from the proposals in relation to independent travel were also highlighted. As part of the discussion on this report, clarification was also provided to Members on several specific areas within the proposed policy.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That in general terms, the contents of the submitted report, be noted;

- (b) That the outcomes from the consultation exercise, as agreed by Executive Board at its meeting on 19 June 2024, be noted;
- (c) That approval in principle be given to the proposed Children and Young People's Transport Policy (October 2024) as presented at Appendix 3 to the submitted report, which details how a stepped model of transport assistance would be offered to eligible young people with SEND in post-16 education. Transport assistance would in future be made available on the following basis, depending on eligibility and the level of transport need, assessed against the policy:-
  - (i) limiting post-16 transport assistance to learners with SEND, living 3 or more miles from their education setting;
  - (ii) provide Independent Travel Training and a free bus pass (or equivalent cost) for a young person who is able to travel independently or could make the journey to their learning setting on public transport accompanied by an adult as necessary;
  - (iii) issue a Personal Transport Allowance for post-16 learners with SEND, as set out in paragraph 8 (b) of the submitted report;
  - (iv) the consideration of transport assistance for applications made against the exceptional circumstance criteria set out in the Children and Young People's Transport Policy (October 2024) as detailed at Appendix 3 and as detailed in paragraphs 24-25 of the submitted report.
- (d) That it be noted that implementation would be with effect from the commencement of the new academic year (September 2025) and that transitional arrangements would apply to the application of the new policy, as detailed in paragraph 22 of the submitted report;
- (e) That it be noted that a Children and Families Scrutiny Board Working Group meeting took place on 24 September 2024 to discuss the recommendations detailed within the submitted report and due to timing associated with Executive Board agenda publication and the Scrutiny Board meeting schedule, the resulting Working Group Statement was circulated to Board Members as supplementary information which forms Appendix 2 to the submitted report;
- (f) That further to the approval in principle of the Policy (resolution (c) above), it be noted that any further amendments to this policy would be taken in accordance with existing delegations by the Director of Children and Families.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor A Lamb required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions referred to within this minute)

## **61 Little Owls Nurseries Review**

Further to Minute No. 7, 19 June 2024 and Minute No. 22, 24 July 2024, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report which provided an update on the withdrawal of service from three Little Owls settings and on the 'market

sounding exercise' undertaken in relation to a further twelve settings, as previously approved by Executive Board. In addition, the report provided recommendations to Executive Board regarding proposed next steps in relation to those further twelve settings.

The Executive Member introduced the report, highlighting that in response to the financial challenges faced and as part of the review undertaken in relation to the Little Owls Nurseries, Executive Board had previously resolved to undertake a market sounding exercise in relation to the future of those twelve Little Owls nursery settings referenced within the report. The Executive Member provided an update on the work undertaken to date on this exercise together with details of the proposals regarding the future of those settings. As part of any next steps, assurance was provided that engagement would continue with parents and carers, and that actions would be taken to ensure that any new providers continued to deliver a number of issues which had been identified as key by parents and carers during the engagement process. Such matters would be considered on a setting-by-setting basis, and if it was deemed that those critical needs were not met in a specific setting, it was noted that the default position would be for the Council to continue as the provider.

A Member raised a specific enquiry and concern regarding the extent to which child poverty was being taken into consideration as part of the proposals. In response, the Board was provided with assurance that the issue of child poverty remained a key concern in Leeds. It was also noted that whilst the appended Equality Impact Assessment took a broader view on such matters given that the submitted report invited the Board to agree the principle of a series of changes, the bespoke and localised discussions which would take place with potential providers moving forward would allow issues such as child poverty to be considered in detail. However, it was reiterated that the default position would be for the Council to continue as the provider, should it be deemed that any potential provision arrangements were not suitable for a specific setting.

Clarification was provided to the Board that the Local Authority's statutory duty in this case was to ensure sufficiency of childcare provision, with it being noted that as part of the proposals, Leeds would retain at least nine directly delivered nurseries, which was more than any other comparator city and significantly beyond the Council's statutory duty, reflecting the commitment to early years provision in Leeds.

The Board discussed the financial basis on which the review had been undertaken and the proposals being made. Members also discussed the issue of daily fee levels, with the Board receiving further information on the process by which appropriate consideration would be given to such matters, as part of the individual discussions with any potential providers. Responding to a specific enquiry regarding potential fee levels which had been identified as part of the expression of interest exercise, it was undertaken that further detail could be provided to the Member in question, if required.



A Member raised a concern regarding the Call In status of the report, as they felt that the submitted report should be eligible for Call In and recommended that the status of the report should be changed so as to be eligible for Call In. In response, it was confirmed that the report was not eligible for Call In as the matter had already been through the Call In process.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the activity undertaken to withdraw from service provision at three settings, as agreed by Executive Board in June 2024, be noted;
- (b) That the work undertaken to date in relation to the agreed 'market sounding exercise' regarding the following settings, be noted:-
- Shepherds Lane
  - Meanwood
  - St Mary's Hunslet
  - Hawksworth Wood
  - City & Holbeck
  - Parklands
  - Quarry Mount
  - Bramley
  - Hunslet Rylestone
  - Osmondthorpe
  - Rothwell
  - Burley Park
- (c) That the recommendations set out for each of those settings detailed in resolution (b) (above), be agreed, as set out below:-
- (ci) That the overarching proposal, be agreed, that subject to a successful outcome of detailed discussion with schools and alternative providers, none of the twelve settings identified in resolution (b) will be retained by Leeds City Council for direct delivery. In the event that those detailed discussions do not progress to a satisfactory conclusion, the Council's default position will be that settings are retained by the Council and directly delivered;
- (cii) That the recommendation to engage in detailed conversations with neighbouring schools around their interest in operating Little Owls nurseries at St Mary's Hunslet, Parklands, Hawksworth Wood, Quarry Mount, be agreed, and if required, agreement be given to a procurement process and other statutory consultation processes with the individual neighbouring schools;
- (ciii) That the recommendation to enter a formal procurement process with alternative providers for the future provision at the following settings: Shepherds Lane, City and Holbeck, Hunslet Rylestone, Rothwell, Meanwood, Bramley, Osmondthorpe and Burley Park, be agreed;
- (d) That it be noted that the Director for Children and Families has delegated authority to make the operational decision to move forward with individual providers for the settings set out in resolution (ciii) above.

(As referenced within paragraph 33 of the submitted report, the resolutions above are not eligible for Call In, as they are a direct consequence of implementing a previous key decision on such matters which had been the subject of a previous Call In)

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor A Lamb required it to be recorded that he voted against the decisions referred to within this minute)

## **RESOURCES**

### **62 Gambling Act 2005 - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy**

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report regarding the review of the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy. The report detailed the outcomes from the consultation undertaken, presented the updated draft Policy for the Board's endorsement and asked the Board to refer it to Full Council with a recommendation that it be formally adopted.

The Executive Member introduced the report, highlighting the statutory requirements for the Local Authority to produce a policy and noted the associated consultation exercise that had been undertaken, which included the consideration of the draft policy by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board. The partnership approach being taken towards addressing the issue of gambling harm across the city was also highlighted.

Responding to a Member's enquiry about the low level of responses received to the associated consultation exercise, assurance was provided that the level of response was expected, and was a reflection of the comprehensiveness of the policy, the fact that regular consultation was undertaken and given that where appropriate, the policy had been adapted in the past to incorporate responses previously received.

An enquiry was raised regarding the Authority not being informed by the Gambling Commission about an establishment's breach of its operating license. In response, it was noted that the Council had written to the Commission in order to make its concerns known with a request that the Council be kept informed of such matters in future. It was also noted that there had not been any further breaches that the Council had been informed of since that incident.

Noting the Public Health team's involvement in the field of Licensing activity, further information was provided on the actions which were being developed in this area. It was noted that whilst this process was in its relatively early stages Members had welcomed Public Health's involvement, and given the limited resource available, actions were being taken to ensure that such resource was being used as effectively as possible.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report and appendices be noted, including the final draft Statement of Licensing Policy which includes the outcomes from the statutory consultation exercise and any comments/recommendations from Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board; and

- (b) That approval be given to refer the final draft Statement of Licensing Policy, as presented, to Full Council, with a recommendation that it is formally adopted.

(Given that the above decisions were being made in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, they were not eligible for Call In)

### **63 Financial Health Monitoring 2024/25 – Month 5 (August)**

The Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Finance, Traded and Resources submitted a report providing an update on the Council's financial performance against the 2024/25 revenue budget, as at month 5 of the financial year. The report also presented the August (Month 5) position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Schools' Budget (DSG) and the Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund.

In presenting the report the Executive Member provided an overview of the key points in which it was noted that as at month 5 of the financial year, the Council was forecasting a General Fund overspend of £22.0m. The Executive Member also highlighted the range of mitigating measures being taken to address the overspend.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board noted that the savings proposals which were established for the current financial year were largely being achieved, and that the overspend being experienced was due to the increased demand in both children's and adults' social care services. The range of work being undertaken to mitigate the current overspend was highlighted, with the scale of the challenge faced being reiterated.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That it be noted that at August 2024 (Month 5 of the financial year) the Authority's General Fund revenue budget is reporting an overspend of £22.0m for 2024/25 (3.6% of the approved net revenue budget) after application of reserves and within a challenging national context. That it also be noted that a range of actions are being undertaken to address this position as detailed within the submitted report;
- (b) That it be noted that at August 2024 (Month 5 of the financial year) the Authority's Housing Revenue Account is reporting a balanced position;
- (c) That it be noted that at August 2024 (Month 5 of the financial year), the DSG budget is projecting an in-year pressure of £15.1m which equates to 2.73% of the total estimated DSG funding;
- (d) That it be noted that known inflationary increases, including demand and demographic pressures in Social Care and known impacts of the rising cost of living have been incorporated into this reported financial position. The position assumes a pay settlement of 3.5%, with the final pay award for 2024/25 yet to be agreed. That it also be noted that these pressures will continue to be reviewed during the year and

reported to future Executive Board meetings as more information becomes available, and that proposals would need to be identified to absorb any additional pressures;

- (e) That it be noted that where an overspend is projected, directorates, including the Housing Revenue Account, are required to present action plans to mitigate their reported pressures and those of the Council's wider financial challenge where possible, in line with the Revenue Principles as agreed by Executive Board in February 2024 through the annual Revenue Budget report.

#### **64 Revenue Savings Proposals for 2025/26 TO 2027/28**

Further to Minute No. 47, 18 September 2024, which presented the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2025/26 – 2029/30, the Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Finance, Traded and Resources submitted a report providing details of a first tranche of savings proposals to contribute to closing the Council's projected revenue budget gap over the next three financial year period and to meet the statutory requirement to achieve a balanced budget for 2025/26. The report noted that 'savings proposals' was a collective term used in this context to apply to reductions in expenditure and increases in income.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted that the submitted report presented the initial revenue savings proposals for the Board's consideration, totalling £37.4m. It was noted that subsequent reports would be submitted to the November and December 2024 Board meetings presenting further savings proposals.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further information regarding potential implications should National Insurance Contributions be increased in the future. Also, it was confirmed that whilst the current financial monitoring position assumed a pay settlement of 3.5% for 2024/25, every 1% in addition to that equated to approximately £4.3m cost to the Council.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the 'Business as Usual' savings presented in the submitted report be noted, and that decisions to give effect to them shall be taken by the relevant Director or Chief Officer in accordance with the Officer Delegation Scheme (Executive functions);
- (b) That the Board's agreement be given for consultation to commence, where required, with regard to the 'Service Review' savings proposals detailed within the submitted report, and that it be noted that decisions to give effect to them shall be taken by the relevant Director or Chief Officer following any consultation period, in accordance with the Officer Delegation Scheme (Executive functions) and decision-making framework, save where the Leader or the relevant Portfolio Holder has directed, or the Director considers that the matter should be referred to Executive Board for consideration;

- (c) That it be noted that additional savings proposals will be brought to Executive Board for consideration at its meetings on 20th November 2024 and 11th December 2024;
- (d) That it be noted that further savings will be required to close the Council's estimated budget gaps in the years 2026/27 and 2027/28, and that proposals on such matters will be brought to future meetings of Executive Board.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor A Lamb required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions referred to within this minute)

## **ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **65 Highway Maintenance Strategy Review**

The Director of City Development submitted a report providing an update on the work being undertaken to address the highways maintenance backlog in Leeds in the face of current and historical financial challenges.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted that this report followed a White Paper Motion resolution from the full Council meeting held on 20th March 2024. It was noted that whilst the Council had provided almost £200m of Capital investment in highways maintenance since 2010, a backlog of £288m still existed, which had been exacerbated by inflation and also adverse weather conditions. It was noted that the challenges faced were being experienced by Local Authorities nationally. The Executive Member extended his thanks to Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board for the work which they had undertaken in this area, and reference was also made to the joint letter being sent to Government on such matters in the names of Councillor Bithell as relevant Scrutiny Board Chair and Councillor Pryor as relevant Executive Member.

The Board welcomed Councillor Bithell to the meeting, who was in attendance for the consideration of this item in her position as Chair of the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board. The Scrutiny Board had produced a statement on this matter which was appended to the submitted report for the Board's consideration. Councillor Bithell thanked Members and officers involved in this piece of work and acknowledged the high level of activity and innovation being undertaken by the service. The scale of the challenges being faced were also highlighted. Councillor Bithell provided an overview of the key conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Board, as highlighted in the appended statement.

In considering the report, a Member raised several enquiries regarding the current position with respect to Network North funding, the service's utilisation of the latest technology and innovation, and also regarding the latest backlog position.

Regarding the Council's current highways maintenance backlog position and the worst affected Ward within that, it was undertaken that this information would be provided to the Member in question.

The Board received further information on the actions which continued to be taken in order to innovate the service and adapt to new technology in this area. It was noted that experiences would be shared with other Local Authorities in order to ensure that best value was delivered. It was also highlighted that the service wanted to embrace the Scrutiny Board's recommendations and also embrace new technology, with it being emphasised that highways maintenance remained a key priority of the Council. Responding to a further question, it was noted that associated review work continued to be undertaken and that at the appropriate time, recommendations would be brought forward which covered new ways of working across the whole of the highways service.

In conclusion, the Executive Member extended his thanks to Highways Services for the vital work that they continued to undertake throughout the city.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, including the maintenance strategy and policy as presented, be noted and endorsed;
- (b) That it be noted that the submitted report was considered by the Infrastructure, Investment, and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board at its July 2024 meeting and that a Scrutiny Board Statement has been submitted to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Sustainable Development and which is attached to the submitted report at Appendix B.

**66 Leeds City Council Vote in the Leeds Business Improvement District 2025-2030 Ballot**

Further to Minute No. 14, 19 June 2024, the Director of City Development submitted a report presenting the finalised 2025-2030 Business Plan from Leeds Business Improvement District (LeedsBID) and which set out the themes and work streams that LeedsBID would focus upon in its next term of 2025-2030. The report also provided information about the Council's financial contribution as a BID levy payer.

The Executive Member introduced the report, highlighting that LeedsBID would cover an expanded geographical area for the forthcoming term and recommending that the Council vote in favour of LeedsBID for a third term (2025-2030) based upon the submitted business plan.

Members welcomed the proposals within the submitted report.

With regard to the expanded geographical area, a Member highlighted the importance of ensuring that effective communication was established with those businesses which would now be included within the LeedsBID area.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the LeedsBID business plan (2025-2030), as appended to the submitted report, which sets out the organisation's plan of delivery in its third term, be noted;
- (b) That approval be given for Leeds City Council as a LeedsBID levy payer, to vote in favour of LeedsBID for a third term (2025-2030), based upon the appended business plan, thereby enabling the opportunity for significant investment of circa £18.75m in Leeds city centre through the activities of LeedsBID;
- (c) That the resource implications for the Council arising from a successful BID ballot, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (d) That the responsibility of the vote be delegated to the Interim Director of City Development;
- (e) That the Director of City Development (and/or the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment (or a delegate of)) be requested to meet with LeedsBID on a quarterly basis to advocate that the needs and asks of Leeds City Council and those of the communities that the Council represents are met;
- (f) That the Interim Director of City Development be requested to write to LeedsBID to ask that they work with the Council in order to consider destination marketing branding that applies to Leeds city centre as a place, to ensure that visitor experience is optimised and that where possible, any unnecessary duplication is removed;
- (g) That the Interim Director of City Development be requested to write to LeedsBID to ask that a copy of its Forward Plan is provided in December annually to allow Leeds City Council time to consider any resource implications and provide advice to LeedsBID accordingly.

## **CLIMATE, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACES**

### **67 Climate Emergency Annual Report**

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report presenting the annual review of the work that continues to be undertaken both on a Council and a citywide basis following the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019. The report also reflected upon wider changes which have occurred both regionally and nationally that are relevant to the city's decarbonisation.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member extended his thanks to officers involved in the delivery of this work, and also to Members for their efforts in this area. Special reference was made to Councillor Dye as Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, together with all other Members of that Committee.

An overview was provided on the progress being made and the actions which had been taken to reduce carbon emissions in Leeds over the past twelve months. It was noted that such actions were being delivered both via cross-directorate activity and collaboratively with external partners.

A Member raised an enquiry regarding a recent press report regarding the use of incinerators and their potential impact upon the environment. It was noted that significant work had been undertaken following that press report in order to provide reassurance on the use of the RERF (Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility) in Leeds and how it continued to contribute towards the carbon reduction agenda. It was emphasised that at the current time, the RERF provided the best solution. It was then undertaken that the detailed response which had been prepared on such matters would be shared with the Member in question for their information.

**RESOLVED** – That the progress being made in Leeds’ ambition to become the first net-zero city in the UK, as set out within the submitted report, be acknowledged.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 2024

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00PM, FRIDAY, 25TH OCTOBER 2024