



## SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

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Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on  
Monday, 11th December, 2023 at 10.00 am

*(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 9.30 a.m.)*

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### MEMBERSHIP

#### **Councillors**

- G Almass - Beeston and Holbeck;
- H Bithell - Kirkstall;
- S Burke - Middleton Park;
- A Carter - Calverley and Farsley;
- D Chapman - Rothwell;
- S Firth - Harewood;
- T Hinchcliffe - Bramley and Stanningley;
- A Khan (Chair) - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
- W Kidger - Morley South;
- A Parnham - Armley;
- E Thomson - Guiseley and Rawdon;

**Please Note:** Please do not attend the meeting in person if you have symptoms of Covid-19 and please follow current public health advice to avoid passing the virus onto other people.

**Note to observers of the meeting:** We strive to ensure our public committee meetings are inclusive and accessible for all. If you are intending to observe a public meeting in-person, please advise us in advance by email ([FacilitiesManagement@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:FacilitiesManagement@leeds.gov.uk)) of any specific access requirements, or if you have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) that we need to take into account. Please state the name, date and start time of the committee meeting you will be observing and include your full name and contact details.

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**Principal Scrutiny Adviser:**  
**Rob Clayton**  
**Tel: 37 88790**

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# A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p><b>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</b></p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p><b>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p><b>RESOLVED –</b> That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p><b>No exempt items have been identified.</b></p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
3			<p><b>LATE ITEMS</b></p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
4			<p><b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b></p> <p>To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council's 'Councillor Code of Conduct'.</p>	
5			<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.</p>	
6			<p><b>MINUTES - 16 OCTOBER 2023</b></p> <p>To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023</p>	7 - 16
7			<p><b>WEST YORKSHIRE JOINT SERVICES UPDATE</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services providing an update on the services delivered by West Yorkshire Joint Services in the Leeds District and their broader regional role.</p>	17 - 38
8			<p><b>LGA PEER CHALLENGE - PROGRESS REVIEW</b></p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Democratic Services that sets out progress on the recommendations made in the LGA Peer Challenge inspection carried out in November 2022. This follows consideration and comment on the 15 recommendations by the Board at its meeting in February 2023.</p>	39 - 68

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
9			<p><b>ANNUAL CORPORATE RISK REPORT</b></p> <p>To receive an update on the risks and summary assurances presented in the Annual Corporate Risk Report, which was considered by Executive Board on 20 September 2023.</p>	69 - 104
10			<p><b>LCC CONTACT CENTRE UPDATE</b></p> <p>To receive a report from the Director of Strategy and Resources providing an update on transformation work at the Contact Centre and information on work volumes and current performance. This follows previous interest in the Contact Centre principally through reports considered in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 municipal years.</p>	105 - 120
11			<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>To consider the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.</p>	121 - 138
12			<p><b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next public meeting of the Board will take place on 15 January 2024 at 10.00am. There will be a pre-meeting for all board members at 9.30am.</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
			<p><b>THIRD PARTY RECORDING</b></p> <p>Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.</p> <p>Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.</li> <li>b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.</li> </ul>	

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## SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

**MONDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Khan in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, S Burke, D Chapman,  
S Firth, T Hinchcliffe, W Kidger, A Parnham  
and E Thomson

### **39 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents**

There were no appeals.

### **40 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There was no exempt information considered by the Board.

### **41 Late Items**

There were no late items.

### **42 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **43 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

The Board received the following apologies:

Cllr Matthew Robinson  
Cllr Gohar Almass

### **44 Minutes - 18 September 2023**

Under minute 33 – Matters Arising of the meeting held on 18 September, the Scrutiny Advisor agreed to follow up on the July meeting of the Board and the provision of information to Rothwell Ward members related to Leeds 2023.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **45 Matters Arising**

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser highlighted the following areas as matters arising from the 18 September meeting of the Board:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Monday, 11th December, 2023

Min 34 – On the staff survey item the Board were informed that more detailed analysis of EDI survey results linked to protected characteristics is to be shared with the member champions as requested. In addition, more information linked to member questions on digital improvements being planned to support staff in their roles has been requested and will be circulated to the Board once available.

Min 35 – The Electoral Commission report summarising issues arising from the 2023 Local Elections has been circulated to members as requested, and it has been noted that a further elections item could come forward later in the municipal year to set out plans for the Election in 2024 following questions from the Board.

Min 36 – The OFLOG training request has been passed on to colleagues and plans to develop that will be pulled together. In addition, queries have been raised with colleagues in Adult Social Care linked to some queries from the Board on the metrics that covered those services, responses are awaited and will be provided to the Board when available.

In addition, the Board also highlighted a useful follow up meeting in relation to Minute 35, the Elections Update. This was focussed on ensuring that support is available for trans people to be able to vote without triggering gender dysphoria. It was further noted that additional information will be available through a forthcoming communications plan to support this approach.

#### **46 Employee Mental Health Update**

The Board considered a report from the Director of Strategy and Resources setting out the Council's approach to staff mental health and well-being support.

The report highlighted a number of targeted interventions being undertaken by the Council, as follows:

- Setting a clear policy, framework, and management system.
- Continue talking, learning, and leading
- Corporate Support
- Data Capture and Reporting
- Building Manager Capability
- Managing absence and performance

To accompany this item a presentation was delivered covering the key points in the council's approach to mental health and well-being support. In attendance for this item were:

- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Andy Dodman, Chief Officer HR
- Lisa Colver, Head of Health, Safety and Well-Being



By way of introduction the importance of health and well-being was highlighted, and it was noted that it is a key element of the Council's People Strategy and work to support staff working for Leeds City Council.

The Board heard that the approach to mental health and well-being is continuously developing and that the role of managers in ensuring the success of the approach will be vital within the context of the Be Your Best management programme.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- Members were interested to know more about management approaches such as responses to feedback where colleagues say "I am fine", whether trauma informed management techniques are used and encouraging the disclosure of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to inform how managers respond to staff in a more nuanced manner. The Board were informed of plans to expand the Be Your Best management programme which has to date focussed on EDI (for the mandatory element of the programme). This will move to focus on other areas of management such as performance management (as discussed with the board previously) and mental health, safety and well-being.
- Members asked about correspondence to staff who are suffering from sickness absence and potentially adapting it to be more individually focussed. The Board were informed that work is ongoing with the Business Support Centre on developing the correspondence used in these cases to ensure it is better tailored and appropriately compassionate.
- Responding to a query about how mental health first aiders are supported the board were informed that more work is required in this area. There is provision of counselling for the first aiders, but more could be done and this will commence through an upcoming conference for mental health first aiders to enhance support. Members expressed an interest in attending the Mental Health First Aiders Conference and this was welcomed.
- Discussion moved on to pre-crisis techniques and what the Council is doing to support staff and deliver interventions. The Board heard that initial steps have been taken and more is planned through the Mental Health First Aiders Conference that is due to take place in November where this will be one of the areas of discussion.
- The Board asked about any consideration that the authority had given to use of a four-day week to relieve stress and work related anxiety given that other organisations have used that approach to help staff manage work pressures. The Board were informed that it had been briefly considered but it is not in the Council's plans particularly given the hybrid approaches that the Council has developed in recent years which can assist with staff workloads and providing work life balance flexibility.
- Members noted that mental health and well-being are two different subjects and warned about conflating the two as they are distinct issues. In addition, members also emphasised that mental health encapsulates a

range of conditions beyond perhaps the most commonly reported of stress and depression and wanted to see more of a focus on wider conditions as well as tackling stress and depression. In response it was acknowledged that there is a danger of compressing everything into 'well-being,' work is underway to address this within the Council through the appointment of a Mental Health Advisor who will be focused solely on mental health issues.

- The Board also referenced cultural awareness which they wanted more of an emphasis on in the Council's approach to take account of the different perceptions of mental health amongst the active groups in this area – it was acknowledged that this should feature in the approach and is a factor in the work being carried out.
- Members received assurances on support available for the menopause. It is a key area of focus for the Council and the possibility of supporting initiatives such as Menopause Cafes was also covered. The Board requested access to any briefings available on this subject and suggested that consideration should be given to establish a menopause staff network that could focus on this issue in detail covering issues such as trans colleagues who often experience early menopause due to the hormone treatment. It was agreed that a discussion with the Women's Voice and other staff networks could be taken forward to see if there is a specific group that could work with the Council on this issue. It was also noted that WYCA has been doing some valuable work in this area and that will be shared with attending officers.
- Members asked about the breakdown by directorate in terms of access to the Vivup support that is offered by the Council. The Board were informed that social work services in Children and Families are a main area of focus followed by social work staff in Adults and Health services. There was a further commitment to look at the data in more detail to provide that breakdown by services or directorate.
- In respect of home working the Board were keen to ensure that support is available to new staff and that they do not become isolated through home working approaches. It was acknowledged that hybrid working can carry some risks in terms of health, safety and well-being issues but also brings benefits through work life balance flexibility.
- The Board also discussed staff survey results and those that are anxious or unhappy in their lives. Approximately 15% of staff have stated that they are not happy and more work is planned through data analysis to focus resources on those that are expressing these views.
- The Chair asked about the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on staff absence. The Board were informed that some of the free text responses in the recent staff survey covered this but that is still subject to ongoing analysis and it is difficult to accurately provide numbers on how many staff have had absences due to financial difficulties however, it was clear that this has had an impact on absence rates.

**Resolved:**

The Board noted the contents of the report and the ongoing work and progress to promote positive mental health and manage work-related stress and:

- a) Agreed to consider this item again later in the municipal year but as two distinct items, one to cover mental health and one on staff well-being.
- b) Requested a 'you said, we did' summary of ongoing work linked to well-being and mental health and covering issues raised by the Board.

#### **47 Financial Reporting 2023/24 - Month 4 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2028/29**

The board agreed to consider Item 8 and Item 9 as one item given the clear links between the two and that the financial issues faced in 2023/24 will have an impact on the medium-term strategy and projections.

In attendance for this item were:

- Victoria Bradshaw, Chief Finance Officer
- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources (left to attend another meeting for part of this item).

The Board received a presentation on the following issues:

- The latest position on the financial challenge in 2023/24 and work underway to balance the budget.
- Detail on the budget gaps faced over the course of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/24-2028/29 (MTFS), the key risks and assumptions, work underway to address the budget position and next steps.
- Details on other key areas of the MTFS such as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the Capital Programme.
- In respect of Children Looked After (CLA) budgets the board were informed of the ongoing challenges faced by the authority in terms of increased demand and higher costs of placements in recent years, this is reflected nationally and is not a position unique to Leeds. The budget pressure in 2023/24 for CLA external placements is £15.49m.
- To manage in year spending in 2023/24 only essential spend is permitted. This has been combined with other measures such as a recruitment freeze, maximising income, focussing support on services with the highest areas of spend, an asset review and bringing forward future years savings proposals to deliver benefits in year.
- Key messages being communicated internally to manage budgets are: stay within budget, absorb in year pressures, highlight budgetary issues early and continue with robust monitoring.

- The projected budget gaps for the next three years were presented as: 2024/25 - £59.2m; 2025/26 - £56.6m, 2026/27 - £47m. In terms of key risks these were identified as: impacts of global events on the UK economy, the overall funding envelope available for Local Government from the Government, fuel and energy inflation, increased interest rates, pay awards, demand and demography, possible changes to the political landscape and capital assumptions.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- Members were interested to know more about plans for CLA budgets in future years given that costs for external placements have recently doubled. In response the Board were informed that the increased costs in this area have been built into the MTFS which is reflected in the budget gaps that formed part of the presentation. The overall approach to CLA placements has been to develop a mixed economy and to look to deliver more in-house placements through smaller living accommodation in Leeds. These plans are well underway along with detailed work to see if any external placements can be brought back into Leeds where it is suitable, and any move would not be disruptive for the children and young people concerned.
- It was noted that there needs to be a balanced approach to delivery of new in-house placements to not have accommodation that is either not used or staffed and not having enough of that type of placement and having to pay additional costs for external placements. The cost of placements as opposed to volume was stressed as the key concern in this area.
- In response to a query around the Little Owls nursery provision the Board were informed that the service is subject to a review which will be reported to Executive Board in the coming months.
- Members also noted the reduction in Government funding and whether that has been taken account of in the projections. The Board were informed that this is part of the projections, and it was also noted that there has been a shift from Government funding to more of a reliance on local taxation to increase the funding available to local government.
- Members were concerned about the projected overspend in the current financial year, 2023/24, and how the Council will be able to deliver the savings required to balance the budget as is legally required. The Board were informed that it is likely that the Council will have to use its reserves in 2023/24 to deliver a balanced budget. The impact of this will be a reduced level of resources in future years of the MTFS.
- The budget sustainability of the Council and the services provided were discussed. It was acknowledged that there is a need to re-base the council's budget and carry out a thorough analysis of statutory services and those that are valued by Leeds residents to ensure that services are provided to those that need it the most.
- Given the scale of the challenge faced the Board emphasised the need for engagement with elected members to ensure that they can carry out engagement with residents and explore alternative solutions that

could be delivered and for ward members to be part of the solutions that are developed.

- Members made enquiries around the speed of decision making and that sometimes it can take too long to make decision that can deliver savings. In response the importance of ensuring the right decisions are taken was emphasised. However, it was acknowledged that in some cases colleagues have other responsibilities and delivering transformative change can be difficult whilst also having a 'day job.' As a result, additional staffing has been invested in to deliver service transformation which should assist in terms of realising change and delivering savings.
- The Board were informed of the need to do more on budget accountability and the new financial systems being delivered through the Core Business Transformation approach will assist with this to ensure that real time information is available to budget holders.
- Responding to queries around possible staffing reductions the Board noted that to address the budget position the Council will need to stop or reduce services which will inevitably lead to reduced staffing. Reducing staff levels without changing services will ultimately lead to additional workload pressure and remaining staff being placed under more pressure.
- The staffing reductions that do take place will be delivered in a managed way through a voluntary leavers scheme and decisions will be based on the services that staff are working in and will be different to other schemes such as the Early Leavers Initiative that operated in previous years.
- The Board highlighted the section 114 notice that Birmingham has served in recent months. A key difference between Leeds and Birmingham is that the Council does not face equal pay claims like Birmingham does and has been proactive in addressing equal pay issues in the past. It was also believed that the open and honest approach taken in Leeds allied to close consultation with elected members has enabled decisions to be made and measures taken to balance the budget each year.
- The board put on record their thanks and appreciation for the work being done by the Council's finance team to ensure balanced budgets and budget sustainability.

**Resolved:**

The Board:

- a) Noted the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29
- b) Noted that savings proposals will be considered at future meetings of Executive Board and the budget proposals for 2024/25 will be the focus of a Scrutiny Working Group in December 2023, following practice established in previous years.
- c) Noted the Month 4 Financial Reporting Position for 2023/24.

## 48 Best City Ambition Update

The Board considered the report of the Director of Strategy and Resources setting out the scope of the Best City Ambition update which precedes more detailed work on the initial update proposals and offers an opportunity to the Board to provide feedback on this ongoing work stream.

As part of ongoing consultation with the Strategy and Resources Board this item will return for further consideration in the Board's January cycle.

In attendance for this item were:

- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Mike Eakins, Head of Policy

Given the previous items on the financial challenge the Best City Ambition emphasises the need to maximise available financial resources to have the biggest impact against the key priority of tackling poverty and inequality and the work on net zero, health and well-being and inclusive growth.

Through the Team Leeds approach the Council aims to deliver the Best City Ambition setting out the way the city wants to work and how the ambition will be delivered. Team Leeds has six key strands:

- Building mutual respect and understanding through co-production and co-design
- Shifting power to citizens through vibrant and sustainable community social infrastructure, and tackling systemic inequalities
- Being evidence-led, ambitious and optimistic for the future of Leeds – fostering innovation, creativity and a learning culture in a digital world
- Investing in prevention and using asset-based approaches to build community capacity, focusing on what people can do not what they cannot
- Recognising the impact of society and the economy on the health of people in Leeds at different stages of their lives
- Everyone playing their part – businesses and public institutions recognising their responsibilities and investing in social entrepreneurship.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- On KPIs members were keen to understand how the Council is delivering on the ground, and whether feedback on KPIs would feature at the report brought to full Council annually. The Board were informed that the KPIs are part of a separate reporting process through the annual performance report that is considered by Executive Board, reporting the same KPIs through the BCA route runs the risk of duplicating.

- Members also wanted to know more about implementation of the priorities particularly in relation to giving more power to communities and listening and responding to resident concerns and feedback. The council buildings in Rothwell were suggested as a case study that might inform how the Council responds to communities. In response the Board were informed that the BCA is an over-arching strategy setting out and guiding how the Council and its partners wants to achieve their ambitions and does not answer all aspects of the work done by the Council in granular detail. It was also noted that the BCA plays an important role in galvanising partners in the city and guiding how the city works.

**Resolved:**

The Board:

- a) Noted the scope of the update of the Best City Ambition set out in the presented report.

**49 Work Programme**

The Board considered the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

In attendance for this item was:

- Rob Clayton, Principal Scrutiny Adviser

The Board were informed of some changes to the work programme that have taken place since the publication of the papers for this meeting. The staff networks item scheduled for December has now been moved to the February meeting.

In addition, the Chair updated board members on the cross-scrutiny Community Committee Review Working Group. Follow further discussion the nominees from this Board will now also include Cllr Chapman.

**50 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next public meeting of the Board will take place on 11 December 2023 at 10.00am. There will be a pre-meeting for all board members at 9.30am.

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## West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) - Update

Date: 11 December 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) provide a number of services, some of which are statutory, on behalf of the five West Yorkshire local authorities Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield.

Statutory services included in their activity are Archaeological Advisory Services, Archives, Ecology Services and Trading Standards along with other services such as Archaeological Services, Asbestos and Calibration Services which provide a commercial resource.

Given that WYJS provide a range of services on behalf of Leeds City Council the Strategy and Resources Board were approached to facilitate an update report to scrutiny on WYJS service provision in Leeds and as a key partner organisation seek to enhance existing working relationships between WYJS and the Council.

A similar process is being replicated across the other West Yorkshire authorities with Wakefield and Kirklees already having considered a similar update item through their respective scrutiny functions.

Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is a briefing note provided by WYJS which provides details on their activity both in Leeds and generally across the region.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) note the content of the report and appendix and consider any future scrutiny actions that could arise from this item.
- b) Note the breadth of work undertaken by WYJS in Leeds and raise any questions related to these services in the city.

## **What is this report about?**

- 1 This item provides an update on the services provided by West Yorkshire Joint Services in Leeds and includes examples of recent activity within the district.
- 2 Due to the variety of services provided by WYJS they impact on the remits of more than just the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board. The remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Board is impacted by West Yorkshire Trading Standards, Financial Investigation and Analytical Services which includes asbestos related service provision. In addition, the remit of the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board covers Ecology Services and Archaeology Advisory Services which are largely related to that Board's planning remit. As a result, the chairs of those two scrutiny boards have been invited to attend today's meeting.
- 3 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board remit covers Archive Services from a cultural perspective, Business Hive from a business administration and meetings perspective and Calibration Services which is covered by Residual Responsibility. The Strategy and Resources Board has 'residual responsibility' which is responsibility for functions that are not otherwise allocated to a specific Scrutiny Board.
- 4 In addition, the Leeds appointed members of the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee which comprises of representation from all five West Yorkshire authorities have also been invited to attend to contribute to discussion.
- 5 Attached at Appendix 1 is a detailed briefing note providing information on the services provided by WYJS and case studies of recent activity in Leeds.
- 6 The West Yorkshire Joint Services Vision is to support social and economic prosperity across West Yorkshire and operate as a modern and forward-thinking service. Its mission is to:
  - Encourage a growing economy
  - Support safer, stronger and healthier communities
  - Preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future
  - Promote and conserve the natural and historic environment
- 7 In addition, WYJS focuses on four main interconnected priorities:
  - Business and the economy
  - Environment and heritage
  - Safer, stronger and healthier communities
  - Operating as a modern and forward-thinking service
- 8 This item is brought to the Board to provide an update on the activity of WYJS in Leeds and to raise awareness of the important services that are provided by them.

## **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 9 It is hoped that this item will enhance existing relationships between Leeds City Council and WYJS, raise awareness of the services they provide and highlight the positive work done in Leeds in recent months such as the West Yorkshire Archaeological Services excavation work near Garforth.

10 Should members identify any areas for further work this can be explored through this item as an initial update from WYJS.

**How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing                       Inclusive Growth                       Zero Carbon

11 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards continue to promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

12 WYJS take account of the strategic priorities of the five constituent West Yorkshire authorities when designing and delivering services and this includes Leeds City Council’s Best City Ambition.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Wards affected:
Have ward members been consulted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

13 Following agreement at the WYJS Committee meeting held in March 2023 to liaise with the five constituent authorities in West Yorkshire, contact has been made with the five authorities to provide an update report to their respective scrutiny functions. The Chair of this Board, the Director of Strategy and Resources and the Chief Officer for Human Resources (who is the Council’s lead officer on WYJS) have been consulted in advance of this item.

**What are the resource implications?**

14 There are no specific resource implications associated with this report.

**What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

15 This report has no specific risk management implications.

**What are the legal implications?**

16 This report has no specific legal implications.

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1: WYJS Briefing Note providing an update on their aims and objectives and recent activity in Leeds.

**Background papers**

- None

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# BRIEFING NOTE ON WEST YORKSHIRE JOINT SERVICES

11 DECEMBER 2023

**Briefing from: Andy Robson, Director, West Yorkshire Joint Services**

**Briefing to: Leeds City Council Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board**

## Role of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS)

West Yorkshire Joint Services deliver a number of high-quality shared services on behalf of the five district Councils within West Yorkshire via a Joint Services Committee arrangement made up of members from each Local Authority. These services either fulfil a statutory role on behalf of the five Councils such as Archaeological Advisory Services, Archives, Ecology Services and Trading Standards or those such as Archaeological Services, Asbestos and Calibration Services provide a first-class commercial resource, delivering vital services to local businesses.

**WYJS Vision:** To support social and economic prosperity across West Yorkshire and operate as a modern and forward-thinking service.

**WYJS Mission:** Delivering trusted shared services that:

- encourage a growing economy
- support safer, stronger and healthier communities
- preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future
- promote and conserve the natural and historic environment

**WYJS Priorities:** WYJS focuses on four main interconnected priorities:

- Business and the economy
- Environment and heritage
- Safer, stronger and healthier communities
- Operating as a modern and forward-thinking service

## Archaeology Advisory Service

The Archaeology Advisory Service's principal role is to provide informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant heritage sites that are affected by development proposals. The Service helps inform and influence sustainable developments within West Yorkshire and promotes an informed understanding and high level of appreciation of those heritage sites.

### Archive Service

The Archive Service collects, preserves and makes available for public use over 21,000 individual collections of the region's historic records dating back to the twelfth century. These records are used for research and learning. WYJS also holds one of only five surviving Registry of Deeds in the whole country used for legal purposes or for family and local history.

### Ecology Service

The Ecology Service provides informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant biodiversity habitats and species. The Service holds 501,000 records of individual species (including over 105,000 protected and other notable species) which are mapped on a geographical information system (GIS). The records are accessed or consulted by developers' ecological consultants, nature conservation organisations and the public.

### Trading Standards Service

WYJS has several specialist teams within Trading Standards Service covering a wide range of legislation to protect both West Yorkshire businesses and consumers. The Service uses an intelligence led approach to respond flexibly to emerging threats and demands and ensures issues that cause the highest levels of detriment to consumers and businesses across West Yorkshire are addressed as a priority.

The key activities based on risk and harm, which warrant heightened intervention are:

- Doorstep crime and scams: prevention and detection of rogue trading, scams and frauds, disruption of illegal trading and the recovery of money and assets obtained from criminal activity.
- Safeguarding and maintaining the integrity of the human food supply chain including the safety and legality of animal feed.
- Disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco.
- Protecting consumers from purchasing unsafe second-hand cars.
- Product safety: ensuring goods placed on the market are safe and disrupting the sale of age restricted products (for example; alcohol, tobacco and vapes) to minors.

Through partnership working this Service also encourages economic growth by proactively engaging with and supporting the West Yorkshire business community (both Primary Authority and non-Primary Authority businesses). Another example of partnership working is the West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) which is hosted and run by this Service. WYFEAT undertakes activities across West Yorkshire to protect vulnerable residents from financial abuse; detecting and investigating incidents of scams, frauds, doorstep crime and family, friends and carer abuse, undertaking effective safeguarding of victims and potential victims, helping residents to be safe, healthy and independent.

## West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (WYAS)

The Service operates as one of the leading units delivering efficient archaeological and heritage solutions across the UK with an extensive portfolio of sites from housing developments, quarries, road, rail and other infrastructure projects. The Service's approach is focused on delivering customer-focused commercial services, engaging at all stages of development to provide desk-based assessments, heritage statements, geophysical surveys, landscape surveys, watching briefs, trial trenching and excavation services.

## Asbestos Services and Calibration Services

Calibration Services protect and support businesses, Local Authorities and other customers by ensuring accurate testing and calibration of weighing and measuring equipment regulated by the Weights and Measure Act 1985. The Service offers UKAS accredited mass calibrations, legal verification of weighing and measuring equipment, and operates two weighbridge test units. The client base includes weighing instrument manufacturers, engineering, pharmaceutical and medical companies, factories and retail users of weighing and measuring equipment.

Asbestos Services provides asbestos testing services to both private businesses, and Local Authorities. This includes asbestos identification and air monitoring which supports compliance and safety for the Service's clients. The asbestos work is also accredited to ISO 17025:2017 standard through the UKAS accredited quality system.

## Recent Case Studies

Some examples of the WYJS activity in the Leeds District are highlighted in Appendix 1.

## Leeds City Council Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

### Case studies of WYJS activity in the Leeds District

#### **West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (WYAS)**

The WYAS team excavated a site near Garforth, which unearthed high status Roman and post-Roman burials. The on-site works were completed in 2022 and work is ongoing with the post-excitation processing of finds, samples and skeletons.

The team excavated 62 human skeletons and a single cremation. Based on their grave goods, some of these individuals were Roman and some were Early Saxon in date. WYAS are currently awaiting a suite of radiocarbon dates to be returned which will confirm the dates of some of the burials, and date, for the first time, those without any grave goods.

The photographs below show some of the burials and finds that were recovered.





Of particular significance was the recovery of a lead coffin. As there are no known examples of post-Roman lead coffins, the assumption made is this burial is Roman in date. Due to the weight of the coffin and its contents, it required a team of conservators and specialist lifting equipment to excavate. The coffin, was transported to a lab to opened and was found to contain the body of a female, aged 26-35 years. She was buried with a necklace of glass beads and a bangle.

The photograph below shows the excavation of the lead coffin.



The intention is to undertake DNA and isotope analysis of the skeletons once they have been carbon dated. Carbon and nitrogen isotopes are useful indicators for diet, while strontium and oxygen isotopes relate to geology and climate so are most useful for providing information about where an individual grew up. The DNA analysis will allow experts to consider issues such as weaning, infectious diseases such as leprosy, genetic relationships between individuals and migration. This exciting site still has so much to tell us about the local history of the area.

### **Trading Standards Service**

To support the Leeds district business community, the Service provides the Primary Authority scheme to deliver a comprehensive package of advice and support to partner businesses. This is a statutory scheme which is a chargeable service and demonstrates WYJS commitment to form a positive relationship between the business and Local Authority. There are ten Primary Authority businesses based in the Leeds district, which include the likes of Arla, Asda and Symingtons. Partnership working is also established with the West Yorkshire LEP to provide a route to Trading Standards advice for start-up businesses.

The Service operates a Motor Trade Partnership (MTP) as part of its work to protect consumers from purchasing unsafe used cars. 13 businesses in the Leeds district are members of the MTP and benefit from guidance on compliance with legislative requirements. Members are audited annually and during the 2022 audit cycle, 9 of the 13 Leeds businesses achieved an award for Excellent Customer Service.

In respect to the work of the food team, enforcement interventions were required following a routine inspection of a Leeds based food wholesaler. This business was supplying grated red and white cheddar to businesses, schools, and care homes in the West Yorkshire area and beyond. Samples of these products were taken by Trading Standards and submitted to the Public Analyst who found both products to contain a high amount of undeclared vegetable fat. The products were found to be a cheaper alternative consisting of a cheese/vegetable oil blend in nature, otherwise known as 'cheese analogue.' As a result of the WYJS enforcement interventions the wholesaler has delisted these products and now only supplies 100% grated cheddar to its customers.

During the summer holiday season, Trading Standards received a complaint over an incident at Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA) where a 13-year-old girl had experienced an allergic reaction. The case had chilling similarities to that of Natasha Laparouse (her tragic death was as result of eating a Pret A Manger baguette bought at Heathrow airport). The child at LBA had unknowingly been served wheat pancakes from one of the lounges run by LBA despite her mother informing them that her daughter was a coeliac and had a severe allergy to gluten. An allergic reaction occurred during the flight and she luckily recovered after being rushed to hospital in Menorca upon landing.

Whilst the premises at LBA may be classed as lower risk generally, the consequence of there being an allergy incident are that much more severe, particularly as in this case when the pilot could not contact anyone at the LBA based food business. A full internal investigation was conducted by the food business during which the chef was suspended. In this particular case the chef had mistaken vegan claim for gluten free and no gluten free option actually existed for pancakes. The Trading Standards Officer in the case has worked closely with the food business to put measures in place in all the LBA run airport lounges including improvements to the escalation process for complaints of this nature.

In September 2023 at Leeds Magistrates Court, Aamir Masood of BK Stores of Harehills was fined £3,840 and ordered to pay costs of £1,888 and a £1536 victim surcharge having pleaded guilty to offences under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. WYJS officers had conducted a routine inspection at BK Stores in November 2022, and discovered 47 items of food past their use by date. The items of food collectively were 2,772 days past their use by date. The food items consisted of five packs of sliced chicken that were each 104 days past the use by date, a further nine packs of sliced chicken each 90 days past the use by date, three packs of sliced beef that were each 97 days past the use by date, four packs of turkey rashers that were each 90 days past the use by date and five packs of sliced turkey that were each 83 days past the use by date.

Underage sales enforcement activity is undertaken based on an intelligence led basis. WYJS operates to strict criteria in responding to complaints about the sale of age restricted products to children, particularly alcohol and e-cigarettes, and unsafe consumer goods. WYJS works in partnership with Leeds City Council to contribute to the Council's 'Best Council' objectives. Some examples of WYJS work that support the health and well being of Leeds District residents include:

On 23 June 2023, Mr Sheraz Ahmed appeared at Kirklees Magistrates Court regarding the sale of an oversized disposable electronic cigarette to a 14-year-old child from his business Diamond Vapes UK Ltd, The Headrow, Leeds. Mr Ahmed pleaded guilty on behalf of the company and was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay a surcharge of £800 and costs of £3,000.

In addition, Mr Shaheer Muhammed, an employee of the company, pleaded guilty to selling the disposable electronic cigarette to the child. Mr Muhammed was fined £100 and ordered to pay a surcharge of £40 and costs of £344.

This investigation was carried out after WYJS received multiple complaints about the premises allegedly selling vapes to children and also the widespread perception within communities that city centre shops were routinely breaching underage sales laws and openly selling vapes to minors.

On the 31 October 2023, Yalaw Shop Limited trading as The Yellow Shop, Station Road, Horsforth appeared at Kirklees Magistrates Court in relation to having on sale counterfeit cigarettes and tobacco along with cigarettes and tobacco which were not in plain packaging or carrying the Health Warning in English. The company also had for sale disposable electronic cigarettes which had a tank capacity in excess of the permitted 2 ml and nicotine strength greater than 20 mg/ml. Khabat Ahmad, the Director of the company pleaded guilty to committing the offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994, the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 and The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. The company was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay a surcharge of £1,600 and costs of £2,753.

The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 makes it an offence to treat, or make arrangements to treat, an individual under the age of 18. Enforcement of this part of the legislation sits with WYJS, (other sections are the responsibility of the Police to enforce). WYJS carried out a trader education project across West Yorkshire to write to all businesses providing botulinum toxin (Botox) and cosmetic filler services that could be identified. A total of 145 Leeds businesses were identified and advised of their obligations. Businesses were asked to sign and return a declaration confirming they had received the advisory letter and that they understood their legal obligations. Any enforcement work arising will be based on an intelligence led approach.

### **WYFEAT Fraud Prevention Advice & Training**

The delivery of an on-going project involving the coordination of WYFEAT training across the West Yorkshire District areas raises awareness of fraud and financial abuse of vulnerable adults and the reporting mechanisms. WYFEAT have delivered numerous different training sessions within the Leeds District since the project started. Recently, the WYFEAT safeguarding team have reached out to different partner departments from Housing associations to NHS staff and community social work teams, delivering 7 training sessions to 165 professionals within the Leeds district within the last 12 months, covering topics around financial exploitation and abuse.

The comprehensive training aims to explore different ways residents here in West Yorkshire can be financially exploited including recognising the signs of abuse and reporting any concerns to the team.

WYJS are undertaking initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of doorstep crime across the districts of West Yorkshire. The project referred to as 'Operation Athena' is intelligence and complaint led to help raise awareness of recent Rogue Trader activity within West Yorkshire communities. In line with further PREVENT and safeguarding work, officers from WYFEAT have carried out community engagement visits with residents of 42 areas within the Leeds District since the start of Operation Athena in December 2022. During these visits, officers distribute awareness and information leaflets and speak with residents about recent rogue trader activity. Officers encourage reporting from within the community and give advice on how to prevent becoming a victim to doorstep crime.

The West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) have been carrying out both investigative and preventative work across the Leeds District. During 2023 WYFEAT have received 69 financial exploitation and abuse referrals regarding Leeds residents and in the same period the value of reported fraud/financial exploitation amounted to approximately £259,000.00. The team are currently investigating 16 cases, an example case is detailed below.

Under the umbrella of Operation Athena, a further project is currently being trialled in the Leeds District to reach those residents most at risk of instances of Doorstep Crime. It is aimed at reaching out to mobile service providers whose clientele are typically elderly, vulnerable residents who receive an appointment service at their home address from services such as mobile hairdressers, cleaners, mobile chiropodists.

This project intends to educate the service providers, as they carry out their appointments on a day-to-day basis, to be aware of distinctive indicators of rogue trader activity. By raising awareness of the typical victim profile, the usual methodology used by rogue traders and how they operate it is hoped that this project will heighten awareness on what to look out for, by professionals who are most likely to encounter rogue traders operating in and around Leeds.

At present, officers are approaching the various service providers, and establishing links with the various Neighbourhood Action groups and similar hubs across Leeds. The Operation Athena Rogue Trader infographic is also going to be featured in the respective resident's quarterly newsletters which the hubs send out to their participants who are in the over 60 age category.

WYFEAT currently have two ongoing investigations involving the alleged financial exploitation of vulnerable adults in the Leeds area.

The first is Operation Link which relates to a complex referral received from the Direct Payment team within Leeds City Council regarding an alleged offender who was a previous LCC employee. The alleged offender had been employed as a social worker and was acting as her mother's social worker without declaring this. The victim is now deceased but had a direct agreement in place and the alleged offender had direct involvement in determining the level of support required. The level of support kept increasing meaning the direct agreement payment increased.

The direct payment agreement was subsequently managed by a second alleged offender who was a family friend. The direct payment money would enter the victims bank account and then the second alleged offender would pay personal assistants based on time sheets received. A third alleged offender in this case was one of the personal assistants who was paid to care for the victim, it is believed that this alleged suspect was out of the country on two occasions when they claimed they provided services to the victim. There are suspicious transactions on the direct payment account. In an audit run by LCC it showed that the victim was over paid and owed LCC monies. The total detriment to LCC is £19,851.68. Two of the three alleged suspects have attended a voluntary attendance interview with WYFEAT. Further investigations are on-going.

The second case involves a banking protocol referral received by WYFEAT regarding a 62-year-old female who had recently sold her house in east Leeds with the intention of moving to Canada to live with a romance scammer who she had never met in person. The female had no previous interventions from Adult Social Care and had no care and support needs. She had reportedly met the romance scammer online 5 years ago and was infatuated with him.

The victim was living in a budget hotel in Leeds following the sale of her property, waiting for the scammer to meet her so they could move to Canada together. WYFEAT and West Yorkshire Police discussed the romance scam in detail with the victim and the financial situation she now found herself in but she refused to believe that she was a romance scam victim and refused to stop contact with the scammer.

Bank account records showed that the victim had been withdrawing thousands in cash but when questioned about it, refused to say where that money was going. A safeguarding referral was made to Adult Social Care Leeds. Actions were taken by WYFEAT to minimise further financial abuse including a limit on cash withdrawals.

Despite numerous actions from the victim's bank and WYFEAT over several weeks she continued to believe that the relationship was genuine. Eventually the banks put a stop on all transactions leaving the victim unable to pay her hotel bill. This actually resulted in the victim finally admitting she had been sending cash to the romance scammer. She is believed to have sent an estimated £80k - £100k. WYFEAT supported the victim to find emergency accommodation following her leaving the hotel. The victim has now been offered a retirement flat in another area of Leeds and a relative is supporting her with her finances going forward. The victim is no longer in contact with romance scammer.

WYJS has the responsibility of enforcing legislation in relation to The Tenant Fees Act 2019. This legislation was introduced to prohibit certain types of 'tenant fees' with the aim of making renting fairer and more affordable for tenants. The Service is currently undertaking Operation Titan aimed at improving awareness and compliance within the property rental sector to inform landlords and letting agents of their responsibilities as part of this legislation. WYJS also aims to provide tenants with information about their rights, responsibilities and how to gain redress. As a first step in this project WYJS are identifying Lettings Agents within West Yorkshire in addition to using records provided by the five West Yorkshire Councils' housing teams. The identified Lettings Agents are being contacted and asked to provide key information in relation to their compliance with The Tenant Fees Act 2019. Any identified non-compliances will be recorded on the WYJS intelligence database and dealt with by providing advice or undertaking enforcement action where appropriate. This will help build an intelligence picture of the lettings sector landscape in West Yorkshire and inform future enforcement activity. To date 79 Leeds based agents have been contacted.

The project also aims to strengthen the links between WYJS and the five District Housing Teams to create a stronger intelligence sharing network. WYJS have met with Leeds District housing team and facilitated the team's access to IDB, an intelligence database used by Trading Standards. WYJS officers will be assisting the housing team regarding the use and benefits of the IDB system and how to adopt an intelligence-led approach.

## **Tobacco**

At the start of 2023, West Yorkshire Trading Standards seized its 10 millionth illicit cigarette. In respect to the work undertaken on disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco, below are the key outcome headlines for the Leeds district over the last nine years:

- over 3 million cigarettes seized
- 1,280 kg of hand rolling tobacco seized

In addition, the team has also seized more than 6,500 illegal oversize vapes.

In the last twelve months, 80 Inspections at businesses within the Leeds district including 38 Test Purchases at businesses where intelligence and complaints received indicate illicit tobacco is available. At over 80% of these businesses, a positive sale was recorded which reinforces the importance and value of community led intelligence. The total illicit tobacco seized in the last 12 months in the Leeds District is 524,500 cigarettes and 111.8kg of hand rolling tobacco.

The tobacco team has been working alongside several partner agencies for the latest operation as part of a sustained campaign of action targeting serious and organised crime in the Harehills area of Leeds. As part of the 'CommUnity Harehills' project, a wide-reaching initiative based on the Home Office's 'Clear, Hold, Build' tactic to improve areas blighted by organised crime, officers from the Leeds East Neighbourhood Policing Team were joined by staff from Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour

Team, Licensing, West Yorkshire Trading Standards, HM Revenue & Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions, Immigration, and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Through a combination of targeted enforcement and community work, the initiative sees police and partner agencies clear an area of organised criminal activity, hold that location to prevent another group from filling the void, and build resilience so the area is less susceptible to criminal groups.

A recent two-day operation saw 5 people arrested, 9 vehicles seized, and 25 closure warning letters issued to licensed premises. Three Community Protection Notice warning letters were also issued. An emergency Misuse of Drugs Act warrant resulted in a cannabis farm being located, and an offensive weapon being seized. A total of 3,129 cans of beer, 428 bottles of wine, 255 bottles of spirits, 2,230 illegal vapes and approximately 150,000 cigarettes were also recovered during the operation. A number of premises licence reviews are being supported by WYJS as well as a closure order of a persistent offender. The photographs below show some of the products seized and a concealed panel in a van.





WYJS officers also undertake partnership working to contribute to the Tackling Illegal Tobacco for Better Health programme. Officers deliver free education sessions to community groups, schools, colleges and front-line professionals. To date, during 2023, 13 sessions have been delivered in the Leeds District to 478 participants which includes schools, youth groups, NHS, neighbourhood policing and Leeds City College. A number of sessions have already been booked in for the next three months for schools and charities.

### **West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service**

During 2023, the Service has made responses to 36 planning applications and additional ongoing developments in the Leeds District. Work has included responses to new housing developments, solar parks, industrial sites, a disused city centre church and developments in the District's rural villages and farms. The team continue to deliver work associated with the East Leeds Outer Relief Road which has also been the source of new archaeological information. The excavation of archaeological sites range from the Bronze Age to Norman conquest in date.

The Service has also provided advice for projects across the District including the Trans-Pennine Railway upgrade east of Leeds, works at Leeds Railway station, sites put forward by the White Rose Forest and Leeds City Council estates department.



The team are contributing to a community project at Temple Newsam House and are helping LCC's curators and a community archaeology group design a project to look closely at the gardens and to investigate evidence of the house's Tudor origins and later alterations. Work will focus on the gardens where the Tudor plan is hidden below later schemes from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The photograph below shows the outline of the 18th century riding school's foundations seen from the roof of the house during a dry summer in the late 1990s, This is a target for future survey and investigation.



### **Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)**

The WYJS Finds Liaison Officer held 28 'Finds Surgeries' within the Leeds District in the last twelve months. These surgeries are opportunities for finders of archaeological objects to bring them in for examination and identification, and if they meet the criteria, the finds are recorded onto the Portable Antiquities Scheme database.

The Finds Liaison Officer is supported by a team of volunteers to help identify, photograph and record archaeological finds submitted to the Service. In the last twelve months, 1,025 finds from 'findspots' in Leeds have been processed and recorded. These finds cover the Mesolithic, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods.

One of the most significant finds recorded from Leeds is an Irish threepence of Edward VI in the name of Henry VIII (posthumous coinage) dating from AD 1547 – 1550. There are only 5 examples of this type of coin recorded among the 1.6 million objects recorded on the PAS database.



The most spectacular Treasure case from the Leeds District in the last 12 months was a hoard of Roman coins which was found by a metal detectorist near Kippax in January 2023. Research using the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record identified that the location was close to a known crop mark of an enclosure, perhaps a Roman farmstead. A small archaeological excavation was undertaken by WYAAS staff and a pot containing an estimated 5,000 small coins were discovered. The coins are of a type called radiates and are mainly copper alloy with a tiny amount of silver, about 1%, also present. Radiates date to the late 200s AD and there are several hundred hoards recorded in England and Wales. This distribution is taken to be an indicator of political and economic stress.

The excavation established the coins had been placed in a pottery vessel that was buried in a small pit. The pot, which was about 25cm tall, was sitting on its base. Vertically set stones had been used as packing to keep the pot upright. There was no sign of a lid, but the upper part of the pot had been damaged by ploughing, so this may have been lost. The whole process had to be carried out with care and precision and the pot with most of its contents of radiate coins was lifted from the ground intact.

The pot and its contents were wrapped and lifted together and delivered to the British Museum in London for excavation in their laboratory where X-ray images will be taken, and where the coins will be catalogued. This work will include determining ownership, identifying, and valuing the coins and then determining the distribution of any reward. At present it is hoped that the hoard will be acquired by Leeds Museum and put on display. The photograph below shows the intact pot, wrapped up for protection during the excavation.



## **Archive Service**

The mission of the WYJS Archive Team for the Leeds District is to preserve and make accessible the unique documentary heritage of the region and help members of the public to use and enjoy these records. Each year the Service produces around 8,000 historical documents from the archive stores and engages with over 10,000 people, answering their enquiries, responding to Freedom of Information requests and promoting the city's rich heritage resources to a global audience. WYJS supports Leeds City Council to manage their corporate memory by ensuring that its records are preserved and managed appropriately in accordance with recognised standards and relevant legislation.

The team are collaborating with Leeds 2023 to ensure that the archives of the Year of Culture are preserved for future generations. A hugely significant digital archive, these records will enable residents to reflect on the long-term impact and success of 'Letting Culture Loose' and capture a pivotal point in the city's history. WYJS staff, as part of the steering group for 'Libraries in Leeds,' are leading the development of this new collaborative network.

The archive staff are also working in partnership with the National Trust and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to deliver the 'Skell Valley Project' which aims to preserve the landscape and heritage of the River Skell which runs through Fountains Abbey. The archives of Fountains Abbey, a World Heritage site, are owned by Leeds archives. The project looks at issues around tackling climate change, protecting the heritage of the region, conserving nature, and providing access for everyone. This heritage lottery funded project is an excellent example of partnership working across local authority boundaries which benefits both regions. West Yorkshire residents are benefitting from volunteering opportunities to learn new skills using the archives held locally.

The WYJS Archive Service co-ordinates a Community Archives Accreditation Scheme. A key element of the scheme is to recognise the importance of community

archives and archiving and the need to support local groups with caring for their own collections. The WYJS staff are currently providing support to the volunteers at Lotherton Hall, who are working with the archival collections at the Hall towards gaining accreditation status.

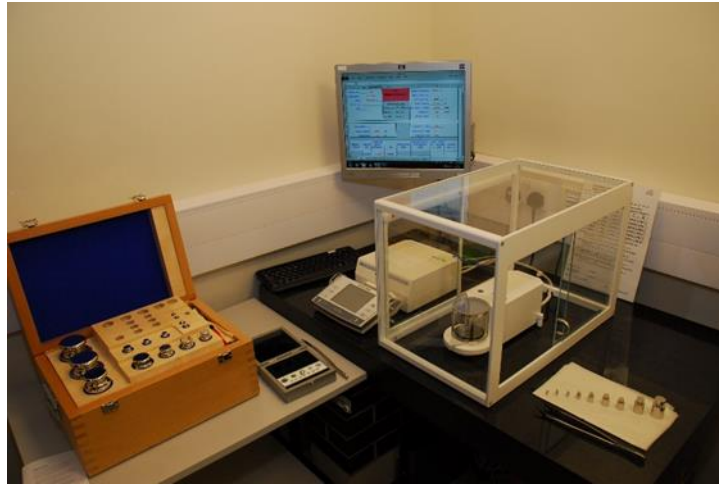
Over the past 18 months almost 18,000 boxes of archives held for the Leeds District have been surveyed to check for mould following an earlier outbreak. Almost 1,000 affected boxes have been identified and cleaned and are now safe again for the public and staff to access.

The current WYJS exhibition, 'The Medieval Magnified,' opened at the West Yorkshire History Centre in May 2023. This features some of the fantastic medieval archives held by the Archive team for the Leeds District, dating from 1138-1485. These items have survived through wars, natural disasters and periods of enormous change and are as magnificent as when they were first made. The exhibition takes a close-up look at these documents, revealing the stories of how they were made; why they were created; and the incredible journeys that brought them to West Yorkshire.



### **West Yorkshire Trading Standards Calibration Services**

Over the past 12 months West Yorkshire Trading Standards Calibration Services have continued to actively support local business of Leeds District alongside those within the wider West Yorkshire area through its calibration, verification, and enforcement activities. In addition, the work has continued to contribute to protection of the public from short measure goods.



The WYJS UKAS accredited mass labs have provided a route for calibration and precision measurement to a broad range of businesses servicing over 750 submissions in the past year. A further 160 submissions of other measuring equipment have also been calibrated. These have included submissions from Leeds based businesses including precision weights from a medicine manufacture, as well as weights and other equipment for many Leeds based food and non-food manufacturers, packers, and suppliers.

As residents and businesses have felt the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, WYJS has focused its weights and measures enforcement visits on areas where the impact of high fuel prices have been most felt. Accuracy of measurement is critical for ensuring that the public are getting what they have paid for. During the past year, in the Leeds District officers have visited 23 fuel service stations and tested 454 fuel dispensers. Officers have also inspected two solid fuel packers/distributors and at a purpose-built tanker bay at the Morley site, officers have tested 68 bulk fuel delivery tankers.



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## Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Date: 11 December 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

In February 2023 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board received a report providing details of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge carried out in November 2022, the action plan established in response to the 15 recommendations that were made with a view to providing the input of scrutiny into the Council’s overall LGA Peer Challenge response. This followed a recommendation made by Executive Board in December 2022 that scrutiny should consider the findings of the recent Corporate Peer Challenge report and recommendations.

Following consideration of this item the Chair of the Board wrote a letter to the Leader of Council setting out the Board’s discussion, highlighting and welcoming the focus on locality working contained in the LGA report, emphasising the importance of EDI and staff networks, calling for greater freedoms linked to budgets at locality level where appropriate and committing to bringing back a monitoring report later in 2023/24 to take account of progress against the Peer Challenge Action Plan and the planned follow up visit from the LGA Peer Challenge Team.

An item on the LGA Peer Challenge return visit was considered by the Executive Board in October 2023 and within that report was a commitment to bring the progress update back to the December meeting of the Strategy and Resources Board. This item is therefore brought to the Board to follow up on the February scrutiny board meeting and the October Executive Board recommendation to seek further scrutiny input into the ongoing development of the response to the Peer Challenge findings.

### Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Note the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report, following the Peer Challenge team’s revisit on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and provide scrutiny input into the Council’s ongoing response.
- b) Note the progress made against the original LGA Peer Challenge recommendations from November 2022 and the findings of the peers following their revisit in September 2023 contained in the appendices to this report.
- c) Note and comment on the proposed next steps developed in response to the findings of the peers following their revisit in September 2023, set out in Appendix 3.

## What is this report about?

1. This report provides an overview of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, which includes the findings of the follow-up visit by the Peer Challenge team on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The revisit followed the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in November 2022.
2. Following their visit in November 2022, the Peer Challenge team made 15 recommendations, these were grouped into five themes (Values, Culture and Workforce; Locality Working; Financial Planning; Transformation approach as an organisation; and Work beyond the city). The [Corporate Peer Challenge report](#) was considered by Executive Board in December 2022, with the action plan developed in response to the recommendations considered by [Executive Board](#) and [Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board](#) in February 2023.
3. The Progress Review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. Taking place approximately 10 months after the Corporate Peer Challenge, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on early progress made and to receive feedback on this, including how actions align to the peers' recommendations; consider peers' reflections to any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the Peer Challenge team were "on-site", including any further support needs; and to discuss any early or learning from the progress made to-date.
4. The Peer Challenge team for the follow-up visit consisted of four peers: Pat Ritchie (former Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council and Chief Executive Peer); Sarah Reed (Executive Director of Corporate Services, West Northamptonshire Council); Jon Rowney (Executive Director Corporate Services, London Borough Camden); and Judith Hurcombe (LGA Peer Challenge Manager). The team prepared for their time in Leeds by reviewing the council's updated position statement which outlined the progress made against the November 2022 recommendations. During the one-day revisit the team spoke to over 60 people, including Elected Members; Scrutiny Chairs; senior officers; groups of middle managers, front line staff and Staff Network Chairs.
5. Full details of the Peer Challenge team, its scope and focus and the process followed can be found in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, which is included as Appendix 2 to this report.
6. Given the role of scrutiny as a critical friend and with a remit to check and challenge outcomes this report is brought to the Board to gain further comments and feedback on the progress made since scrutiny first reviewed the 15 recommendations in February 2023 and to consider the next steps in taking the recommendations forward.

## 7. What impact will this proposal have?

### Key Messages from the Peer Challenge Revisit

8. As a broad overview, below are some of the headline findings and observations made by the Peer Challenge Team following their revisit on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023:
  - Building on a strong approach to improvement, tangible progress has been made on the recommendations, with the council building further on its many strengths over the past 10 months.
  - Members and officers are energetic and enthusiastic about shaping and planning further improvement to deliver the council's clearly stated values and ambitions for their city, whilst being realistic about the challenges ahead.
  - The concepts of Best Council, Best City and Team Leeds are widely recognised and understood on a day-to-day basis, by elected members, staff and partners underpinned by clear and consistent internal communications and engagement which are regarded by recipients as open and honest. This is supported by a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the council and the city.



- The success of the Be Your Best manager development programme was recognised, and consideration could be given to providing this to a wider cohort of staff to support resilience and workforce retention.
- Continued focus and progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), with the Be Your Best EDI training programme having wide reaching impact across the organisation.
- Staff survey showing very positive results with the workforce very loyal and readily identify with Team Leeds, however capacity and resilience need ongoing attention. The scale of transformation required will be challenging and will test this resilience further.
- The peer team heard a variety of views about the Community Committee review and suggest that there is further work to do on clarifying what the review is aiming to achieve and what is in and out of its scope, and how it relates to transformation.
- Progress on developing locality working approaches has been made through a distributed leadership model, however, to gain more traction and impact consideration could be given to treating the programme as a more explicit change programme.
- There is positive energy around transformation and change with an increase in horizontal capacity and working.
- Children's Services pressures in Leeds are high, and consistent with the demand-led pressures in other upper tier councils. Enhancing capacity in Children's Services, based on strong evidence-based approach with strong executive level leadership and buy-in with social care workforce, should help to deal with this challenge.
- Strong national leadership on children's social care, growth, housing and the future of local government. Further consideration is needed on whether the council is maximising its membership and role within the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.
- There is collective political and officer leadership of the budget and its challenges, with an openness about the scale of the budget gap and the need for collective efforts to address it, including new ways of working dealing with demand, delivering services differently and whether the traditional role of local government is still feasible within the resources available. The council will need a very clear plan for balancing the budget, with clear accountabilities for delivery across the organisation.

9. A summary of progress against the 2022 recommendations, feedback from the 2023 revisit and proposed next steps in response to the further feedback are attached in the appendices to the report.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

- Health and Wellbeing
- Inclusive Growth
- Zero Carbon

10. The terms of reference of the scrutiny boards continue to promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

11. The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board has considered a number of items linked to the Best City Ambition in the current municipal year including the initial steps in the refresh of the Best City Ambition and with plans to consider the full update d of the Best City Ambition in the January cycle of meetings.

12. In addition, the Board has had a particular focus on staff well being in the municipal year to date considering items on the Organisational Plan, Mental Health, Well Being and the recent staff survey. In addition, and in line with the Board's remit, financial sustainability and resilience has also been a key feature of the work programme with items on the financial health of the authority and Medium-Term Financial Strategy being key recent items considered. This work has in part been informed by the recommendations made in the LGA Peer Challenge with these report items touching on some areas highlighted in the original Peer Challenge visit not least on recruitment and retention, staff workloads and the possibility of staff burnout and financial sustainability and ongoing financial challenge.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

13. Executive Board and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in February 2023 checked and challenged the action plan developed in response to the initial Corporate Peer Challenge visit and recommendations at that time it was agreed that the Board would consider the Peer Challenge in its work programme for 2023/24.
14. The newly formed Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for municipal year 2023/24 agreed for this item to be included in the Work Programme for 2023/24 when setting out its priorities in June and July 2023 through consideration of the Sources of Work agenda item and subsequent follow up through regular consideration of the Work Programme.

## What are the resource implications?

15. There are no specific resource implications associated with this report.

## What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

16. There are no specific risks associated with this report.

## What are the legal implications?

17. There are no specific legal implications arising from this Peer Challenge report.

## Options, timescales and measuring success

### What other options were considered?

18. There is an expectation that councils having a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge will commit to a return visit to see what progress has been made against the original recommendations therefore, the follow-up visit was always intended when the council entered into this process. The initial correspondence from the Chair of the Board to the Leader of Council also set out the intention to consider an update or monitoring report on this subject as part of the Board's work programme in 2023/24 an approach that was supported when initial priorities for the Board's work programme were agreed in June 2023.

### How will success be measured?

19. The follow-up visit is a further method of assessing progress against the recommendations of the Peer Challenge in 2022. Success will be measured by regular reporting through the Annual Performance report, as well as through the refresh of the Best City Ambition and ongoing financial planning and monitoring. Scrutiny input into this process will widen feedback and enable check and challenge of the Council's response to the Peer Challenge.

### What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

20. The Director of Strategy and Resources is responsible for implementation, which will happen through the refresh of the Best City Ambition and council's Being Our Best organisation plan in Spring 2024, as well as through the Financial Challenge work. All of these work areas have also been key elements of the Board's work so far in the municipal year.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Executive Board report from 18 October 2023.
- Appendix 2 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- Appendix 3 – LGA Peer Challenge recommendations, progress update and next steps.

## Background papers

None

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# Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Report of: Chief Executive

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

This report provides an overview of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, which outlines the findings of the one-day follow-up visit made by the Peer Challenge team on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023. A copy of the full Progress Review report can be found at Appendix 1, with a summary of progress against the 2022 recommendations, feedback from the 2023 revisit and proposed next steps attached at Appendix 2.

The revisit followed the Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2022, when the Peer Challenge team made 15 recommendations grouped around five themes (Values, Culture and Workforce; Locality Working; Financial Planning; Transformation approach as an organisation; and Work beyond the city). The [Corporate Peer Challenge report](#) was considered by Executive Board in December 2022, with the action plan developed in response to the recommendations considered by [Executive Board](#) and [Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board](#) in February 2023.

The Peer Challenge team prepared for their revisit to Leeds by reviewing the council's updated position statement, which outlined progress made against the recommendations of the November 2022 Peer Challenge. During their revisit to Leeds, the team spoke to over 60 people, including Elected Members and colleagues from across the Council.

## Recommendations

Members of Executive Board are asked to:

- Note the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report, following the Peer Challenge team's revisit on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- Note the progress made against the original LGA Peer Challenge recommendations from November 2022 and the findings of the peers following their revisit in September 2023.
- Note and comment on the proposed next steps developed in response to the findings of the peers following their revisit in September 2023.
- Refer the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board's December 2023 meeting.

## What is this report about?

1. This report provides an overview of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, which includes the findings of the follow-up visit by the Peer Challenge team on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The revisit followed the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in November 2022.
2. Early last year, the council requested that the LGA lead an independent Corporate Peer Challenge to help assess progress towards our Best City Ambition, the financial challenge and post-pandemic recovery, and to recommend where we could improve further. Following their visit in November 2022, the Peer Challenge team made 15 recommendations, were grouped into five themes (Values, Culture and Workforce; Locality Working; Financial Planning; Transformation approach as an organisation; and Work beyond the city). The [Corporate Peer Challenge report](#) was considered by Executive Board in December 2022, with the action plan developed in response to the recommendations considered by [Executive Board](#) and [Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board](#) in February 2023.
3. The Progress Review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. Taking place approximately 10 months after the Corporate Peer Challenge, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on early progress made and to receive feedback on this, including how actions align to the peers' recommendations; consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the Peer Challenge team were "on-site", including any further support needs; and to discuss any early or learning from the progress made to-date.
4. The Peer Challenge team for the follow-up visit consisted of four peers: Pat Ritchie (former Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council and Chief Executive Peer); Sarah Reed (Executive Director of Corporate Services, West Northamptonshire Council); Jon Rowney (Executive Director Corporate Services, London Borough Camden); and Judith Hurcombe (LGA Peer Challenge Manager). The team prepared for their time in Leeds by reviewing the council's updated position statement which outlined the progress made against the November 2022 recommendations. During the one-day revisit the team spoke to over 60 people, including Elected Members; Scrutiny Chairs; senior officers; groups of middle manager and front line staff and Staff Network Chairs.
5. Full details of the Peer Challenge team, its scope and focus and the process followed can be found in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, which is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

## 6. What impact will this proposal have?

### Key Messages from the Peer Challenge Revisit

7. As a broad overview, below are some of the headline findings and observations made by the Peer Challenge Team following their revisit on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023:
  - Building on a strong approach to improvement, tangible progress has been made on the recommendations, with the council building further on its many strengths over the past 10 months.
  - Members and officers are energetic and enthusiastic about shaping and planning further improvement to deliver the council's clearly stated values and ambitions for their city, whilst being realistic about the challenges ahead.
  - The concepts of Best Council, Best City and Team Leeds are widely recognised and understood on a day-to-day basis, by elected members, staff and partners underpinned by clear and consistent internal communications and engagement which are regarded by recipients as open and honest. This is supported by a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the council and the city.

- The success of the Be Your Best manager development programme was recognised, and consideration could be given to widened out to a wider cohort of staff to support resilience and workforce retention.
- Continued focus and progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), with the Be Your Best EDI training programme having wide reaching impact across the organisation.
- Staff survey showing very positive results with the workforce very loyal and readily identify with Team Leeds, however capacity and resilience need ongoing attention. The scale of transformation required will be challenging and will test this resilience further.
- The peer team heard a variety of views about the Community Committee review and suggest that there is further work to do on clarifying what the review is aiming to achieve and what is in and out of its scope, and how it relates to transformation.
- Progress on developing locality working approaches has been made through a distributed leadership model, however, to gain more traction and impact consideration could be given to treating the programme as a more explicit change programme.
- There is positive energy around transformation and change with an increase in horizontal capacity and working.
- Children's Services pressures in Leeds are high, and consistent with the demand-led pressures in other upper tier councils. Enhancing capacity in Children's Services, based on strong evidence-based approach with strong executive level leadership and buy-in with social care workforce, should help to deal with this challenge.
- Strong national leadership on children's social care, growth, housing and the future of local government. Further consideration is needed on whether the council is maximising its membership and role within the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.
- There is collective political and officer leadership of the budget and its challenges, with an openness about the scale of the budget gap and the need for collective efforts to address it, including new ways of working dealing with demand, delivering services differently and whether the traditional role of local government is still feasible within the resources available. The council will need a very clear plan for balancing the budget, with clear accountabilities for delivery across the organisation.

8. A summary of progress against the 2022 recommendations, feedback from the 2023 revisit and proposed next steps in response to the further feedback is attached at Appendix 2.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

- Health and Wellbeing
- Inclusive Growth
- Zero Carbon

9. The alignment between the city and council is a significant strength in our work, for example with many employees living in the city, with a connection to the city or committed to the wider role of the council in the city. This connection continues to help us to come together and work in the context of the Best City Ambition, which provides a shared vision (based on the interlinked pillars of: Health and Wellbeing; Inclusive Growth; and Zero Carbon) for all city partners.

10. Consistency in our Best Council ambition, values and priorities is key to help us fulfil our convening and delivery roles, bringing people, partners, and services together, as we aim to be the Best City in the UK, focused on tackling poverty and inequality.

11. The recommendations from the initial Peer Challenge in November 2022 have informed the scope for the refresh of the Best City Ambition and work to progress the three pillars, including the strategy refresh processes that have recently been completed for the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

12. Executive Board and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in February 2023 checked and challenged the action plan developed in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations last November 2022, with it having been developed through senior leaders on Extended Best Council Leadership Team.
13. As part of planning for the Peer Challenge revisit, an updated position statement outlining progress against the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation was developed through engagement with Executive Members and the council's Corporate Leadership Team. As occurred for the original visit in November 2022, briefing material relating to the revisit was provided to those meeting the Peer Challenge team, including our updated position statement.
14. The Peer Challenge team met with a wide range of elected members and officers as part of their revisit to hear the views from as many people as possible during their day with the council. This included meeting with Elected Members and staff from various levels, including the Chief Executive; a cross-section of managers and frontline staff; and Staff Network Chairs.
15. Initial headlines of the Peer Challenge revisit findings have been shared with members, staff and partners ensuring that colleagues and stakeholders are kept updated.
16. The findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board's December 2023 meeting.

## What are the resource implications?

17. There are no specific resource implications from the Peer Challenge recommendations at this stage. The Peer Challenge team insight into the council's financial planning approach, with actions outlined in Appendix 2 will be followed up as part of the regular budget planning, monitoring, and reporting cycle.

## What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

18. As we are progressing the recommendations, any risks identified will be a consideration in line with the regular approach to risk management and reporting.

## What are the legal implications?

19. There are no specific legal implications arising from the Peer Challenge report. Any that arise will be picked up as part of progressing the recommendations through the council's regular governance routes.

## Options, timescales and measuring success

### What other options were considered?

20. There is an expectation that councils having a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge will commit to a return visit to see what progress has been made against the original recommendations therefore, the follow-up visit was always intended when the council entered into this process.

### How will success be measured?

21. The follow-up visit is a further method of assessing progress against the recommendations of the Peer Challenge in 2022. Success will be measured by regular reporting through the Annual Performance report, as well as through the refresh of the Best City Ambition and ongoing financial planning and monitoring.



**What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

22. Following Executive Board, the Challenge Progress Review Report will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in December 2023. The Director of Strategy and Resources is responsible for implementation, which will happen through the refresh of the Best City Ambition and council's Being Our Best organisation plan in Spring 2024, as well as through the Financial Challenge work.

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- Appendix 2 – LGA Peer Challenge recommendations, progress update and next steps.

**Background papers**

None

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# LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Leeds City Council

11<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Feedback





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# 1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) at Leeds City Council (LCC) during November 2022 and promptly published the full report with an action plan.

The Progress Review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- Update peers on the early progress made and to receive feedback on this including how the action plan aligns to the CPC's recommendations.
- Consider peer's reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were 'on-site' including any further support needs.
- Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date.

The LGA would like to thank Leeds City Council for their commitment to sector led improvement. The team would particularly like to thank Alex McEwan-Hannant and Dion Jennings for supporting the team before and during the return visit to Leeds. This Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, open and close relationship that the council has with LGA sector support.

# 2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at Leeds City Council took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The progress review, using the comprehensive review programme for the day, focussed on each of the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge, under the following theme headings:

- Values, culture and workforce
- Locality working
- Transformational approach as an organisation
- Financial planning
- Work beyond the city

For this progress review, the following members of the original CPC team were involved:

- Chief Executive Peer – Pat Ritchie CBE
- Officer Peer – Sarah Reed, Executive Director, Corporate Services, West Northamptonshire Council
- Officer Peer - Jon Rowney, Executive Director, Corporate Services, LB Camden
- Peer Challenge Manager - Judith Hurcombe, Local Government Association

The peer team met face to face in Leeds City Council on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September with over 60 representatives from the council including:

- Cllr James Lewis, Leader of the Council
- Cllr Debra Coupar, Deputy Leader of the Council
- Cllr Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Leader of the Council
- Cllr Dan Cohen, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)
- Cllr Abigail Marshall-Katung, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)
- Cllr Andrew Scopes, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles)
- Cllr Stewart Golton, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) & Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- Cllr Alan Lamb, Leader of the Conservative Group
- Tom Riordan CBE, Chief Executive
- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Victoria Bradshaw, Chief Financial Services Officer and S.151 Officer
- A range of Chief Officers and Heads of services, senior managers, groups of middle managers and frontline staff as well as Staff Network Chairs

### 3. Progress Review Feedback

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge of Leeds City Council (LCC) in November 2022 described a very well-led, ambitious and collaborative council, a beacon of best practice, delivering for and with its communities, partners and stakeholders. It has

made clear and tangible progress on the recommendations made by the peer team, with the council building further on its many strengths over the past 10 months.


The council actively seeks external perspectives and views to help it improve further. Between the peer challenges of 2016 and 2022 LCC had clearly acted on the first CPC's recommendations and other feedback, and we saw widespread evidence that it has considered and is acting upon the reflections from the peers last year. The November 2022 CPC recommendations have been incorporated into the Being Our Best organisation plan, agreed by the Executive in June 2023. Members and officers are energetic and enthusiastic about shaping and planning further improvement to deliver the council's clearly stated values and ambitions for their city, whilst being realistic about the challenges ahead.

### **Values, culture and workforce**

In June 2023 the Being Our Best organisational plan was published, setting out LCC's vision to be the Best Council and the Best City, and responding to the recommendations in the 2022 peer challenge. The concepts of Best Council, Best City and Team Leeds are widely recognised and understood on a day-to-day basis, underpinned by clear and consistent internal communications and engagement which are regarded by recipients as open and honest. Councillors, staff and partners recognise this approach and collectively there remains a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the council and the city.

The leadership and management development programme launched in 2022 includes around 2,300 managers continues to provide development opportunities for aspiring, new and existing managers. It was recognised that these managers are a key cohort in sustaining and developing the values and culture of the council. Sessions are hosted by the Chief Executive and enable direct engagement with key corporate messages, and the first meeting discussed the results from the staff survey and the Being Our Best organisation plan. An issue for the council to consider is whether the evident success of the Be Your Best programme so far is starting to create demand for training and development opportunities for those outside of this cohort or the new aspiring leaders programme cohort, and whether tackling this could contribute with resilience and staff retention issues.

Whilst a year ago Equality, Diversity and Inclusion had an already and significant,



growing profile, the focus since then has been to accelerate and normalise it as part of the day-to-day business of the council. Earlier this year the Be Your Best managers participated in face-to-face EDI training, and this is having a wide-reaching impact across the organisation. Participants told us of their growing understanding and willingness to take a more inclusive approach, challenging themselves and each other. They really value the members' and senior leadership's encouragement and this training as being instrumental to their improved confidence and feeling supported in managing their staff. There is enthusiasm to consolidate this further with engagement and service delivery for residents and communities. This new approach has clearly invigorated participants and has created an audible buzz about what is possible on EDI in Leeds, as well as creating wider ownership and supporting more distributed leadership within the council.

Between April and May 2023, a council-wide employee survey was undertaken. A key question asked participants to rate their jobs at Leeds with an overall score out of 10 and resulted in 76% of participants scoring 7 or more. Ninety-one per cent of respondents reported they know what is expected of them. Whilst the results were in line with the pulse surveys undertaken during Covid, the areas of concern from respondents included team meetings, workloads, management support, availability of tools, IT and systems, and career progression.

The survey results have been incorporated into the management information dashboard, which also enables managers to make comparisons with other teams and services. Further analysis of the data has been undertaken at the strategic level to enable comparisons to be made between the highest and lowest performing areas and different demographic groups. Following the publication of the survey results the Corporate Leadership Team identified actions for managers and teams including career progression opportunities; quality tools and IT equipment; workloads; and supporting staff to feel valued. Staff engaging with the peer challenge progress review were aware of the staff survey, and the results for their service areas.

An EDI scorecard has been developed by the council's HR team and the Leeds Office for Data Analytics to help the council better understand the diversity of its workforce.

An issue flagged in the staff survey has been stretched workforce capacity and



workloads, and whilst this is a common concern across many councils, it is acknowledged as a major challenge by the leadership team as well as by members and staff across the council. It was also identified by employees to the peer team during the peer challenge in November 2022. A wide range of formal and informal support and consideration is given, and time and workload management courses are being provided in September and October 2023 to help managers with their workloads and supporting their staff. Reviews of systems and processes are underway to simplify approaches and remove duplication.

There is a strong and ongoing focus on health and wellbeing which employees describe as being a huge corporate priority, encouraging people to share concerns and take action including:

- one service has put in place dedicated wellbeing capacity in addition to the service line managers.
- the creation of a mental health group for men
- Wellbeing Wednesdays in the council's call centre to encourage colleagues to improve their physical and mental health and occupational therapist support and resilience training at the call centre
- embedding the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Mindful of the ongoing workforce challenges the council has introduced a new course for managers on change management, aiming to support better understanding of how people engage with and respond to change. Mandatory change training will be launched for the Be Your Best manager cohort during 2024, and its scope will reflect issues arising from the staff survey.

### **Locality working**

Locality working continues to represent an issue of strategic importance to the council and there is potential for members to have a different role in the future as stronger advocates of their communities. Activity continues across the city to explore the model including a greater focus on impact in priority wards and the 12 most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Leeds.

A priority ward delivery group has been established and priority ward partnership plans now incorporate the use of the Social Progress Index to help gauge the impact of work in the 6 priority wards. Assets have been assessed and mapped across local areas and one of the next steps will be to scope rationalisation of assets. A review of community centre provision is also nearing completion.

Support for councillors on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is being incorporated into the member development programme.

The review of Community Committees is underway. The peer team heard a variety of views about the review and suggests that there is further work to do on clarifying what the review is aiming to achieve and what is in and out of its scope, and how it relates to transformation.

The breadth and depth of the localities work is undoubtedly complex with a variety of partners, anchor institutions and leaders within the council. To date, the council has adopted a distributed leadership model, and this has been successful in galvanising energy and commitment across the system. Looking ahead, it may be useful for the review to consider whether it would be helpful to treat this as a more explicit change programme with a clear set of outcomes and a focus on delivery: this may help the review to gain more traction and impact.

### **Transformational approach as an organisation**

The peer team noticed positive energy around transformation and change and an acceleration in approach over the past year. More emphasis is being placed on using the Being Our Best plan and five change priorities to improve the overall coordination and synergy of the programme.

This has been supported through recruiting new posts. The strategic focus on transformation is being supported by creating extra capacity within specific teams such as Children and Families, Adults and Health, Core Business Transformation, Integrated Digital Services, and is complemented by additional corporate resources. This growing area of activity has a growing strategic oversight which needs to continue, so that the new posts and approach contribute to a stronger cross-cutting and corporate ethos which enables more to be achieved than by a range of posts sitting within services. There is much to learn and share from within departments for the wider benefit of the council. New finance and human resources systems with

user-centred design are being implemented and there is a clear work programme for implementation and resources in place to support this delivery.

Children's Services pressures in Leeds are high, and consistent with the demand-led pressures in other upper tier councils. Looked After Children numbers remain broadly unchanging. Recruiting and retaining social workers is difficult and this also has an impact on the workloads of existing staff. Enhancing capacity in Children's Services, based on strong evidence-based approach with strong executive level leadership and buy-in with social care workforce, should help to deal with this challenge. A members' oversight group including both Deputy Leaders and relevant Executive Member has been created to support children's services delivery in the context of the Financial Challenge.

The council at all levels of the organisation - political, corporate and service - is aware that it needs to undertake more transformation to meet both the financial challenges ahead, as well as to deliver its ambitions for its communities. Although the workforce is very loyal and readily identifies with Team Leeds, capacity and resilience need ongoing attention. The scale of transformation required will be challenging and will test this resilience further.

### **Work beyond the city**

The council continues to bring influence and inform at national levels. This includes pressing for change on the funding of children's social care, economic growth, housing and the future of local government.

As the financial environment continues to become more difficult, further consideration is needed on whether the council is maximising its membership and role within the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. Councillors voice concern about the council's capacity to deliver programmes for the sub-region when its capacity is so stretched.

### **Financial planning**

There is collective senior leadership of the budget and the challenges presented by service demand pressures and the in-year overspend of £34m projected in September 2023, whilst the council has always managed to address budgetary issues, this is the largest it has had to face to date. A further £59m of savings are

required for the 2024/25 budget. Overall Social Care costs amount to around 70% of the council's expenditure and Children's Services pressures are a significant factor in these forecasts. Members and officers are open about the scale of the budget gap and the need for collective efforts to address it, including new ways of working dealing with demand, delivering services differently and whether the traditional role of local government is still feasible within the resources available. Some members and officers feel there is more potential for savings through new approaches to procurement and commissioning.

The council will need a very clear plan for balancing the budget, with clear accountabilities for delivery across the organisation. This will be challenging for everyone, both politically and managerially, as these savings will be difficult to achieve and will require discipline and rigour. As the council prepares to deliver its organisational plan and further develop its approach to transformation it will need to address a number of issues, including:

- What will deliver the necessary savings over the next 2-3 years?
- Are resources in the right place to deliver those savings and transformation?
- Has enough consideration been given to what the council can no longer afford to do, or which could be done in better ways which meet the needs of residents and communities and which balance cost effectiveness with impact and ambition?

The council is in a transition period as it plans to reset its role within the financial envelope available. The next two to three years will require strong leadership because difficult decisions will be required in setting and delivering a series of tough budgets, and Leeds does not have high levels of reserves on which to draw, which would cushion some of the impact. Public services are under significant pressure, there is uncertainty over the national political direction, and the workforce is loyal but tired. Councillors' commitment to their strategic ambitions for the city and its communities will be tested and challenged, particularly in stopping doing things and moving away from established practices and provision.

There is recognition and willingness to embrace change, commitment to its stated ambitions and priorities, and an ongoing vision to be the best council, with the best workforce in the best city. We saw evidence of the council responding well to the peer challenge recommendations made a year ago. These are positive indicators for

further improvement.

## 4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank Leeds City Council for undertaking an LGA CPC progress review.

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an on-going offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Mark Edgell (Principal Adviser) is the main point of contact between the authority and the Local Government Association (LGA) and his e-mail address is [mark.edgell@local.gov.uk](mailto:mark.edgell@local.gov.uk)

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LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – recommendations, progress update and next steps

Values, Culture and Workforce

Recommendations – November 2022	Summary of progress so far	Feedback – September 2023	Next Steps
<p>Keep being Leeds, keep being ambitious and living the values of collaboration, compassion and convening.</p> <p>Be mindful of the risk of staff burnout and provide clarity about priorities especially as budgets further reduce. Capacity at some levels is stretched and some employees are worried about the health and wellbeing of their colleagues.</p> <p>Build on the success of the EDI champions network and strengthen corporate champions at the senior level to support the further development and embedding of EDI in the council.</p>	<p>Being our Best – our plan for 2023 onwards incl 4 manager expectations and 5 interdependent change priorities.</p> <p>Strong focus on engagement and EDI Progress on EDI incl mandatory training for 2,300 managers and EDI dashboards, backed up by staff survey results.</p> <p>Be Your Best – manager training offer including change and workloads. Digital core skills offer. Wellbeing support continued.</p>	<p>Strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the council via the Be Our Best, Best City and Best City Ambition concepts.</p> <p>Roll out of EDI training - staff are taking a more inclusive approach day to day and challenging themselves and others. There is a clear enthusiasm over this.</p> <p>EDI scorecard has been developed to understand the diversity of the workforce.</p> <p>Use of data e.g. staff survey, EDI scorecard.</p> <p>Clear commitment to people’s wellbeing.</p> <p>Staff survey showing very positive results, reflecting Team Leeds.</p>	<p>Review of internal communications to ensure reach effective consistently, including to off-line staff.</p> <p>Review of internal polices and Constitution to help reduce workloads and burdens.</p> <p>Continue relentless messaging about permission to make local changes to reduce burnout.</p> <p>Maintain wellbeing offer, focus on appraisals and ensure follow up on local and corporate actions resulting from staff survey findings.</p> <p>Continue to focus on BYB programme delivery, including Steps 4/5 EDI, performance and change management, as well as digital skills.</p> <p>Launch Inclusive Leadership Programme in Inclusion week at end Sept.</p>

## Locality Working

Recommendations – November 2022	Summary of progress so far	Feedback – September 2023	Next Steps
<p>Review locality working to improve clarity and coherence for the council, partners and communities.</p> <p>Invest in member development on strengths-based community development. Councillors’ ambitions for their communities are clear but as the council’s resources reduce members have an important role to play in supporting communities to be able to do more for themselves.</p>	<p>City Cost of living response.</p> <p>Expansion of approach to locality working in priority wards, new Priority Ward Delivery Group and have developed Priority Ward Partnerships Plans.</p> <p>All local assets have been assessed and mapped, with work looking at local areas and proposing scope for rationalisation.</p>	<p>Localities review needs to be part of the change programme with a clear set of outcomes and a focus on delivery.</p> <p>Acknowledge this is an issue of strategic importance and potential for members to have different roles in future. Work ongoing to explore model.</p> <p>Community Committee review is underway – feedback provided to peers suggests that further work is needed for clarity of the review and how it ties in with other priorities.</p>	<p>Refresh of Best City Ambition by Feb 2024.</p> <p>Develop into more formal change programme linked to Being Our Best organisational plan and Best City Ambition update.</p> <p>Develop further model for a different use of workforce and assets in communities.</p> <p>Complete Locality Building Review including community centres.</p> <p>Complete Community Committee review.</p> <p>Continue member development programme for ABCD training.</p>



## Transformation approach across the organisation

Recommendations – November 2022	Summary of progress so far	Feedback – September 2023	Next Steps
<p>Develop capacity for transformation and change.</p> <p>Use the opportunity of the new leadership team to review and develop strong practice in Children's Services in light of the MacAlister review.</p> <p>Use the opportunity of the digital transformation to co-produce with middle managers a system that is more agile and responsive to their needs on the ground.</p>	<p>Organisation plan five interrelated change priorities, used to improve coherence of the changes and prioritisation.</p> <p>Recruitment of additional transformation capacity to create networked capacity, including for Children &amp; Family changes.</p> <p>Core Business Transformation procurements for Finance and HR delivery partners. User centred design approach embedded within programme.</p>	<p>Positive energy around transformation and change.</p> <p>Developing capacity in transformation, with more horizontal working.</p> <p>Developing systems to empower managers.</p> <p>Changing capacity in Children's Services based on strong evidence-based approach with strong executive level leadership, buy-in with social care workforce.</p> <p>Given the scale of transformation, how confident are you about the resilience of the workforce to support your ambitions?</p>	<p>Continuing best practice sharing across whole organisation.</p> <p>Successful implementation of revised HR and Finance systems, including ongoing engagement on policies, processes, and culture.</p> <p>Complete recruitment of additional transformation capacity and ensure vision of networked capacity is delivered.</p> <p>Review of some aspects of organisation design where scope for change outweighs required investment and disruption.</p> <p>Ensure clear governance on 5 interrelated priorities in Being Our Best organisational plan.</p> <p>Exploit Artificial Intelligence to support financial challenge, with effective use of business cases and clear rollout plan.</p>

## Financial Planning

Recommendations – November 2022	Summary of progress so far	Feedback – September 2023	Next Steps
<p>Consider a more outcomes focused and evidence-based approach to medium-term financial planning.</p> <p>Prepare for the financial challenges ahead. Take best practice on specialist commissioning and robust financial management from the Adults and Health directorate into the Children and Families directorate.</p>	<p>Continued to communicate and engage with the scale of our financial challenge, with guidance on in-year and future year approaches.</p> <p>Disciplined financial reporting through Executive Board. Budget Management packs and training for key budget holders.</p> <p>Extensive review of Capital Programme.</p> <p>Focus on contract management, colleagues from Adults &amp; Health and Children &amp; Families commissioning good practise sharing and cross council liaison relating to 3rd sector partners.</p>	<p>Collective senior leadership of the budget and its challenges. The council is open about the scale of the issue and the need for fully collective efforts to resolve this.</p> <p>Staff recognise and are willing to embrace change, commit to the ambitions and priorities and the vision of being the best council with the best workforce in the best city.</p> <p>Staff feel there are more potential savings to be made through new approaches to procurement and commissioning.</p> <p>This is a transition period pre-election, with the sector under pressure and we think you need to further explore these issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will deliver the necessary savings over the next 2-3 years?</li> <li>• Are you clear about what you are not doing?</li> <li>• Are resources in the right place to deliver those savings and transformation?</li> <li>• Has enough consideration been given to what the council can no longer afford to do, or which could be done in better ways which meet the needs of residents and communities and which balance cost effectiveness with impact and ambition?</li> </ul>	<p>Current year overspend savings and plans in place to ensure financial sustainability.</p> <p>Revisit essential/non-essential and statutory/non-statutory services, level of provision, performance, and service design to help with clear prioritisation and options for members.</p> <p>Develop and deliver asset package to help smooth future year anticipated challenges.</p> <p>Continued work with key partners, so everyone makes maximum contribution.</p> <p>Influence position for reset of role of Local Government locally, regionally, and nationally.</p> <p>Deliver transformation and organisational redesign, as above, to ensure savings delivered.</p>

## Work beyond the city

Recommendations – November 2022	Summary of progress so far	Feedback – September 2023	Next Steps
<p>Further strengthen MCA relationships.</p> <p>Opportunity to be a new national exemplar for community-led integrated public service delivery.</p> <p>Continue to influence and improve policy and practice in partnership with national and local government.</p> <p>Work with anchors and city partners to strengthen further their campaigning and lobbying on the financial challenge and the need for investment.</p>	<p>Team West Yorkshire - continued engagement with WYCA, WYICB and WYLRF.</p> <p>Homecare First programme underway and active engagement with DHSC Policy Hub.</p> <p>Continued active engagement with Ministers, civil servants, wider LG sector, think tanks to influence national policy and practice.</p> <p>Continued engagement with key partners, plus anchor institution working with city partners, community partners and businesses.</p>	<p>Council brings influence and informs at all levels and presses for change on all things local government.</p> <p>Strong national leadership on children’s social care, growth, housing and the future of local government.</p> <p>Feedback came from Cllrs about the capacity to deliver on sub region programmes when it is so stretched locally.</p> <p>Council needs to look at maximising memberships and roles within MCA.</p>	<p>Complete refresh of key relationship mapping (using Boston Matrix) and build refinements into leadership approach.</p> <p>Potentially different approach to national and sector award submissions.</p> <p>Continued influencing at every opportunity – WYCA, WYICB etc as well as nationally and internationally.</p>

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## Annual Corporate Risk Report

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

This annual report updates the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board with a joined up picture of the risk and resilience activities undertaken by the council. The term 'risk and resilience' covers the three inter-related areas of Risk Management, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management.

The report includes details of the most significant risks currently on the council's corporate risk register with summary assurances describing the key controls in place to manage the risks and further actions planned, signposting to where more detailed information can be found.

The report includes details of the work undertaken by the council's Resilience and Emergencies Team, who have responsibility for preparing for, responding to and helping the council and the city recover from disruptive incidents and emergencies.

Members are requested to note that the Annual Corporate Risk Report (seen at Appendix 1) was reviewed by Executive Board at their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Subsequently, due to the changing nature of the council's risk environment, the rating for the corporate risk on Medium term financial strategy has increased, Nationally, many local authorities are facing similar challenges around the resources required to deliver services.

This report is supplemented by an annual assurance report on the authority's risk and resilience arrangements considered each year by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. This report is publicly available and focuses on the policies, procedures, systems and processes in place to manage risk and resilience across all levels within the council and with our partners. The most recent report was approved at the Committee's meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### Recommendations

- a) Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board is asked to note the annual risk and resilience report and the assurances given on the most significant corporate risks in line with the council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy and the Board's overarching responsibility for their management.

## What is this report about?

- 1 The annual report seen in Appendix 1 updates the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board on the most significant risks currently on the corporate risk register (their descriptions, risk ratings and the accountable director and portfolio member risk owners) with summary assurances describing the key controls in place to manage the risks and any further actions planned, signposting to where more detailed information can be found.
- 2 The report summarises the work of the council's Resilience and Emergencies Team who have responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) for co-ordinating how the council prepares for and responds to emergencies.
- 3 The report will provide a key source of evidence on the authority's risk management arrangements contributing to the Annual Governance Statement to be considered later this year by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 4 The risk information contained in the appendix is provided for Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board's information.
- 5 This is an assurance report with no decision required, so it is not necessary to conduct an equality impact assessment.

## How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 Should any of the corporate risks arise, then this would impact on the achievement of the Pillars. Strong risk management arrangements are essential to minimise the risks of failing to achieve the ambition and outcomes.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 This is an information report and as such does not need to be consulted on with the public. However, summary information on the corporate risks is published on the council's website.
- 8 The template for Committee and Board reports for decision making require authors to detail the risk management aspects as part of the mandatory 'What are the key risks and how are they being managed?' section. This ensures that Elected Members are sighted of key risks when making decisions.
- 9 The corporate risk assurances at Appendix 1 have been subject to consultation with lead officers, the Corporate Leadership Team and portfolio members. The arrangements in place to manage the council's risks are embedded and therefore subject to consultation and engagement on an ongoing basis. Consultation is undertaken as part of risk management best practice, and in line with the roles and responsibilities set out in the Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 10 All council risks are required to be managed proportionately, factoring in the value for money and use of resources. Should any of the corporate risks included in this report arise, including those of a resilience nature, there would be significant financial, staffing and other resource implications for the council.
- 11 Effective risk management arrangements help to avoid costly mistakes from being made and minimising their impact if they happen.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 12 This report supports the council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy in providing assurances on the management of the authority's most significant risks. The appendix provides details of the key strategic risks facing the council, provides details of how they are being managed along with any further actions required to treat them.
- 13 Risk and resilience arrangements are captured within the council's corporate risks on 'City Resilience' and 'Council Resilience' (also known as 'Major incident in the city' and 'Major incident in the council') with regular reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team and annually to the Executive Board.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 14 The council's risk management arrangements support the authority's compliance with the statutory requirement under the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. Through this, Regulation 6 requires authorities to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control in accordance with proper practices. The system of internal control, including arrangements for the management of risk, assists the council in effectively exercising its functions.
- 15 The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) imposes a clear set of roles and responsibilities on those organisations with a role to play in preparing for and responding to emergencies. The Act requires all Category 1 responders (which includes local authorities) to maintain plans to ensure they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. Category 1 responder duties under that Act also include maintenance of plans to prevent emergencies and reduce, control and mitigate the effects of an emergency, should it occur.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

16 N/A

### **How will success be measured?**

17 N/A

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

18 N/A

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report 2023

## **Background papers**

- None

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# Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report

September 2023



## Introduction

Risk is present in everything we do to improve outcomes and deliver services. Local authorities, our communities and partners experience a wide range of significant risks including: adverse weather conditions, safeguarding incidents and cyber-attacks on our digital infrastructure. More recently, pressures from inflation, the increased demand for services and cost of living, combined with a challenging job market in some sectors have impacted on the council's risk profile.

Our Best City Ambition aims to tackle poverty and inequality and improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. Central to this, focus is placed on improving outcomes across the three Pillars of Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero-Carbon. Strong risk management arrangements are essential to minimise the risks of failing to achieve the ambition, outcomes and budget. Our policy is to identify, analyse and manage potential threats and opportunities posed by risks, in line with the council values.

The previous annual corporate risk management report was considered by Executive Board on 27 July 2022. Since then, the corporate risk register has continued to be reviewed and updated in accordance with the council's Risk Management Policy and in line with the Best City Ambition outcomes. The remainder of this report focuses on the management of the most significant risks currently on the corporate risk register and provides additional focus on our emergency planning arrangements that are essential to help us manage our resilience risks.

This report is supplemented by an [annual assurance report](#) on the authority's risk and resilience<sup>1</sup> arrangements considered each year by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. This report is publicly available and focuses on the policies, procedures, systems and processes in place to manage risk and resilience across all levels within the council and with our partners.

The council received a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in November 2022. Their headline findings were that there is *passion and ambition for the city, with the move to the Best City Ambition helping to further galvanise the city with partners feeling well supported and committed, and that finances are well-managed, but the scale of the challenge is significant, with staff being stretched and priorities requiring even greater focus*. The key messages from the Peer Review covered areas relating to corporate risks, including, partnership working (especially with the voluntary and community sector), progress against the low carbon agenda and the challenges facing the council from financial and staffing aspects.

## Council Values and Behaviours and risk

Linked to the Ambition are a series of shared Values and Behaviours covering aspects related to good risk management such as ethical behaviour and the staff code of conduct. Through the risk management and emergency planning arrangements, the council seeks to embed an effective risk and resilience culture across its values, and in the behaviour of all its staff and elected members. It is important that the strategic ambitions and objectives are aligned to the organisation's risk culture and the Values and Behaviours are followed. Where this is not the case, there would be an increased likelihood of risks occurring and their impact being material, for example through loss of public trust and confidence in the council.

The Being Our Best plan was introduced in 2023 for all managers across the council – over 2,000 in total. The plan, which includes recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge, helps managers support their staff to be their best. The plan recognises the feedback and concerns about capacity and potential staff burnout as all services deal with the impact of increased demand and complexity, alongside squeezed council budgets, recruitment challenges, whilst supporting households and businesses during the cost-of-living crisis. Underpinned by our values and behaviours, the plan helps all our managers understand what's

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<sup>1</sup> Risk and resilience" is a term used to describe the inter-related areas of risk management, emergency planning and response, and business continuity management.

expected of them as we aim to deliver high quality services, as well as change and innovate to meet the upcoming challenges and make the most of digital opportunities and progress their personal development. The Being Our Best plan is linked to the council’s risk management arrangements as none of the corporate risks can be managed and mitigated without effective management skills and knowledge and an awareness of the challenges facing the workforce.

In July 2022, the council became the first local authority to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian - an independent person who employees can approach to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace and how services are being delivered. The Guardian is effectively an early warning indicator that can help identify any risks at an early stage so they can be discussed and treated. Additionally, the staff survey, conducted across the whole workforce, is another way for concerns linked to risks and to the culture of the organisation to be raised, with the first full survey since Covid being completed in 2023.

### The national and regional risk environment

A wider assessment of the external environment and potential risk factors is constantly undertaken. For example, economic shocks, major shifts in public policy and changes in legislation are monitored.

The risk and resilience arrangements take into consideration the National Risk Register (NRR), published by the Cabinet Office. The NRR is the public facing version of the National Security Risk Assessment (NRSA) which is the government’s assessment of the most serious risks facing the UK. The NRR and NRSA are used to inform the more local West Yorkshire Community Risk Register. Leeds City Council is represented at West Yorkshire Prepared, the local resilience forum (as detailed in the following section of this report), which provides a good conduit for horizon scanning of changes to risks and threats. Together the NRR, NRSA, West Yorkshire Community Risk Register and the work of the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum informs the review and update of the council’s corporate risks on City resilience and Council resilience.

### Risk Management Framework

The council’s risks are identified, assessed and managed using six steps:



These iterative steps enable us to:

- Understand the nature and scale of the risks we face.
- Identify the level of risk that we are willing to accept.
- Recognise our ability to control and reduce risk.
- Recognise where we cannot control the risk.
- Take action where we can and when it would be the best use of resources. This helps us make better decisions and deliver better outcomes for our staff and the people of Leeds.

The steps are applied across the organisation through the Leeds Risk Management Framework: at strategic and operational levels and for programmes and projects. The adoption of the framework and compliance with it has helped to embed a risk management culture within the organisation. This report considers the strategic level: the arrangements in place to manage the council's corporate risks.

Active membership and participation with professional risk management organisations such as ALARM<sup>2</sup> and the Institute of Risk Management are also help us identify new and emerging risks as well as changes to existing risks facing the council and the city.

## Corporate Risks

### *Defining a corporate risk*

Corporate risks are those of significant, cross-cutting strategic importance that require the attention of the council's most senior managers and elected members. While all members of staff have responsibility for managing risks in their services, each of the corporate risks has one or more named 'risk owner(s)': members of the Corporate Leadership Team (the Chief Executive and directors) and Executive Board portfolio holders who, together, are accountable for their management. The Executive Board as a whole retains ultimate responsibility.

Corporate risks can be roughly split into two types: those that could principally affect the city and people of Leeds and others that relate more to the way we run our organisation internally. An example of a 'city' risk includes major flooding or a breach in the safeguarding arrangements that help protect vulnerable people; these are often managed in partnership with a range of other organisations. An example of a more internal 'council' risk is a major, prolonged failure of the ICT network. The council's organisational plan sets out how we will mobilise our internal resources – our people, money, digital capabilities, land and buildings, communications and engagement. Should any of the internal council risks arise, this would affect our ability to deliver the plan. Some risks clearly impact on both the city and the council – a major disruptive event in the city being a current example.

### *How corporate risks are assessed and managed*

Each corporate risk has a current rating based on a combined assessment of how likely the risk is to occur – its probability - and its potential impact after considering the controls already put in place. When evaluating the impact of a risk we consider the range of consequences that could result: effects on the local community, staff, the services we provide, any cost implications and whether the risk could prevent us meeting our statutory and legal requirements.

A consistent '5x5' scoring mechanism – seen at annex 1 of this report - is used to carry out this assessment of probability and impact which ensures that the risks are rated in the same way. Target ratings are also applied for each risk based on the lowest probability and impact scores deemed viable to manage the risk to an acceptable level given the amount of resources available to deal with it. These are used to compare the gap between 'where the risk is now' based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, to 'how low do we aim

<sup>2</sup> ALARM is a not-for-profit professional membership association that supports risk and insurance professionals.

for the risk to go' and so help determine whether additional actions are needed to manage the risk down to the target level.

The greater the risk, the more we try to do to manage it if it is in our control and if that would be the best use of resources. The council takes a balanced approach, recognising that the cost and time involved in managing the risk down to nothing may not always be the best use of public money and we factor this in when establishing the target rating and developing our risk management action plans.

Risks are reviewed and updated regularly through horizon scanning, benchmarking and in response to findings from inspections and audits, government policy changes and engagement with staff and the public. The LCC Policy Network, made up of officers engaged in analysis and policy development, is a useful source of such insight.

Managing risk is the responsibility of everyone, is at the heart of the council's culture and values and has to be reflected in the behaviours of staff and elected members. This helps ensure that risk decision making is both open and transparent.

### **Current corporate risks**

The risk map seen at Figure 1 summarises the risks on the corporate risk register at September 2023 and their current 'reasonable worst-case scenario' ratings based on combined probability and impact scores.

This report provides a summary assurance on how each of the corporate risks currently rated as 'Very High' and 'High' – i.e. those of the highest significance - are managed, and signposts to where further information can be found. An overview of the risks covered in this report is provided at Table 1, detailing their full descriptions and risk owners. Further details about how the risks are scored can be seen in Annex 1 of this report.

### **Emergency planning and business continuity**

The corporate risk register includes several risks of a resilience nature i.e. those relating to major incidents and emergencies that could affect the safety of the citizens, communities and businesses of Leeds. This section of the report provides additional information on how Leeds City Council plays a vital role in preparing for and responding to major incidents.

The council's Resilience and Emergencies Team (RET) have the responsibility of ensuring that our legislative duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are met. These duties are:

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- Put in place emergency plans.
- Put in place business continuity management arrangements.
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination.
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

The council's emergency planning approach follows the four phases of emergency management:



### ***Emergency Plans***

Leeds City Council has fifteen core plans to respond to the High and Very High risks outlined within the West Yorkshire Community Risk Register, these are: Severe Weather; Flooding; Reception Centre; Recovery and Site Clearance; Mass Fatality; Utility Failure; City Centre Evacuation; Mass Casualties; Reservoir Inundation; Chemical and Environmental Hazards; CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) Response; Fuel Disruption; Outbreak Response; Pandemic Influenza, and Exotic Notifiable Animal Diseases.

The plans are produced in consultation with the council services and partners that have a role and responsibility in responding to the activation of any plan.

### ***Warning and Informing***

Leeds' citizens, communities and businesses face a range of emergencies. To provide information on preparing for and dealing with emergencies, the RET maintains the [Emergencies](#) webpage on Leeds.gov. The council uses a wide range of communication methods to engage with the general public and city stakeholders on warning and informing of incidents, including social media channels and signposting to alerts provided by partners such as Gov.uk (flooding) and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Earlier this year, Roundhay Park hosted the Emergency Services Show, an event intended to build the awareness of members of the public about the risks that they face and to enhance their personal resilience.

### ***Business Continuity Management***

The council has classed over 80 of its services as being 'critical', with each one requiring a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) setting out their arrangements for recovering from a disruptive incident back to an acceptable level of service delivery. The RET has responsibility for co-ordinating the annual review and update of the BCPs by their respective owners, with this year's update being completed in June.

### ***Business Continuity Network***

Prior to the pandemic, the RET hosted regular events in the Civic Hall, where local businesses were able to attend and discuss topics relating to Business Continuity Management. The first post pandemic event is planned for 9th November 2023 and will be based around the theme of Counter Terrorism, Protect duty and 'Martyn's Law'<sup>3</sup>. We hope to welcome in the region of 100 businesses to the event.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Martyn's Law' will place a requirement on those responsible for certain venues to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

## ***Training and Exercising***

All Emergency and Business Continuity plans follow a programme of review, training and exercising. The Local Resilience Forum produces an annual training and exercising programme, summarised in the following section. As part of these exercises the robustness of our local plans can be tested.

### ***West Yorkshire Prepared***

[West Yorkshire Prepared](#) is the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for West Yorkshire. A LRF is a multi-agency forum consisting of key emergency responders, including local authorities, “blue light” services as well as other supporting agencies. Established under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which came into effect in order to ensure the UK is better prepared to cope with potential risks, LRFs require their multi-agency partner organisations to work together to prepare, respond and recover from different major incidents.

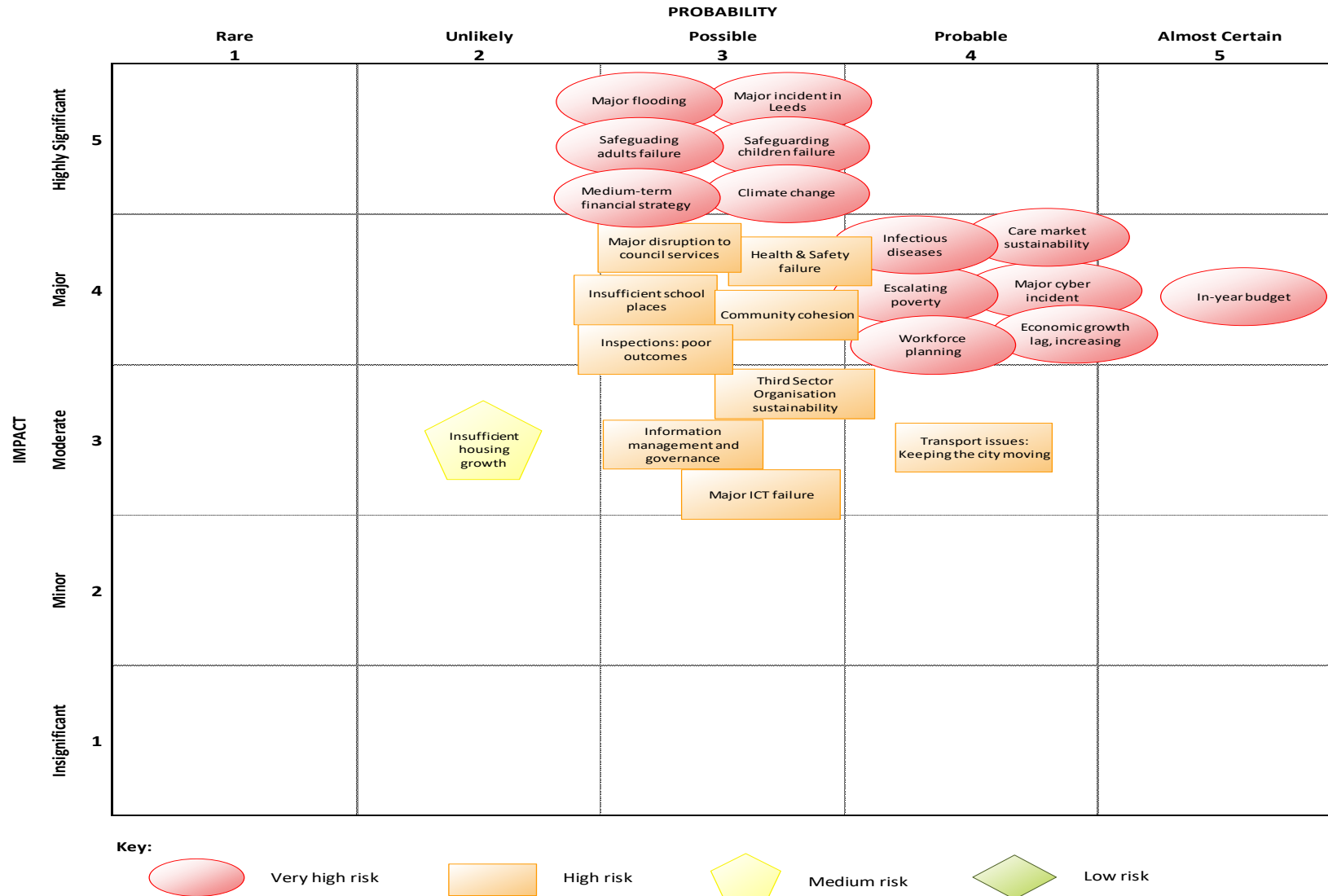
West Yorkshire Prepared produces an annual report which acknowledges the hard work, wider collaboration and achievement of the forum over the previous twelve months. The most recent report covering the 2022/23 municipal year was published in July 2023 and can be seen [here](#).

The Annual Report includes details of the sub-groups within West Yorkshire Prepared which include those for Risk and Capabilities; Business Continuity; Training, Exercising and Development; Severe Weather and Warning and Informing. Leeds City Council is represented at the LRF and its sub-groups. The Director of Strategy and Resources at Leeds is a co-chair of the LRF alongside senior police and fire colleagues.

Training and exercising are an essential part of the work undertaken by West Yorkshire Prepared to ensure all partners are trained and appropriately prepared for a wider range of emergency incidents that may occur in the region. The 2022/23 municipal year saw many exercises take place as well as incidents that required a multi-agency response, and a summary of these can be seen in the Annual Report. Exercises and incidents of note included:

- Extreme Heat during summer 2022, requiring the Severe Weather Plan to be activated.
- Operation London Bridge (response to the Death of HM Queen Elizabeth II).
- Exercise GREX, a no-notice activation to test the ability of partner agencies to mobilise a virtual meeting outside of normal working hours.
- Exercise DARK DAY, a multi-agency exercise to test the strategic response to a Marauding Terrorist Attack at multiple locations.

Figure 1: Corporate Risk Map at September 2023





**Table 1: Overview of significant and ‘standing’ corporate risks**

Risk area	Description	Accountability (Risk owners)		Current Rating
		Senior officer	Member & Portfolio	
<b>In-year budget</b>	The council’s financial position goes into significant deficit in current year resulting in reserves being less than minimum specified by council’s risk-based reserves policy	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	Cllr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
<b>Escalating poverty</b>	The impact of poverty in the city escalates due to factors such as inflation, fuel, food and energy prices increases	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	Cllr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities	Very High
<b>Economic growth lag</b>	Growth in Leeds businesses is slower and less inclusive than the national and international economy, leading to lower wages, fewer jobs and poorer citizens and communities	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	Cllr Jonathan Pryor: Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education	Very High
<b>Care market sustainability and viability</b>	Without a thriving care market in the city, there is a risk that people in need of care services are not able to access them when needed or that services are not of sufficient quality	Caroline Baria, Director of Adults & Health	Cllr Salma Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles	Very High
<b>Infectious diseases</b>	Preparedness for new and emerging infectious diseases of concern and outbreaks	Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health	Cllr Salma Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles	Very High
<b>Major cyber incident</b>	Risk to citizens, council and city as a result of digital crime, process failure or people’s actions in relation to a major cyber incident	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	Cllr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
<b>Workforce planning</b>	Workforce resource not in place to deliver the service to the required standard	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	Cllr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
<b>Safeguarding children</b>	Risk of harm, accident or death to a child linked to failure of the council to act appropriately according to safeguarding arrangements	Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families	Cllr F Venner: Executive Member for Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships	Very High
<b>Safeguarding adults</b>	Failure a) of staff in any council directorate to recognise and report a risk of abuse or neglect facing an adult with care and support needs in Leeds, and b) of staff adult social care to respond appropriately, in line with national legislation and safeguarding adults procedures	Caroline Baria, Director of Adults & Health	Cllr Salma Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles	Very High
<b>Climate change</b>	Failure to adapt to and mitigate more extreme weather conditions brought about by climate change, resulting in an adverse impact on Leeds (its people, communities, infrastructure, economy and natural environment)	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	Cllr M Rafique: Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space	Very High
<b>Major flooding</b>	Major flooding, especially north of the city centre station, occurs in Leeds that has a significant impact on homes, business, land and infrastructure	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	Cllr M Rafique: Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space	Very High
<b>Medium-term financial position</b>	The council cannot balance its Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	Cllr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High

Risk area	Description	Accountability (Risk owners)		Current Rating
		Senior officer	Member & Portfolio	
City resilience	Risk of significant disruption in Leeds (major incident in the city)	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
Inspections: poor outcome	Poor or inadequate outcome from a service/delivery based inspection	Tom Riordan., Chief Executive, Leeds City Council	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
School places	Failure to provide sufficient school places in good quality buildings that meet the needs of local communities	Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families and Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	CLr F Venner: Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships	High
Community cohesion	Failure to identify and address the barriers to community cohesion and increased tensions in Leeds	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities	High
Council resilience	Risk of significant disruption to council services and failure to effectively manage emergency incidents (major incident in the council)	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Health and safety	Risk of a health & safety failure resulting in death, injury, damage or legal challenge	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Transport: Keeping the city moving	Failure to adequately maintain and manage the current transport infrastructure to keep the city moving.	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	CLr H Hayden: Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure	High
Cost of living impact on Third Sector Organisations	There is a risk that Third Sector Organisations will not be able to deliver due to reduced funding and increased demand	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities	High
Information management	Risk of harm to individuals, partners, organisations, third parties and the council as a result of non-compliance with Information Governance legislation and industry standards	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Major ICT failure	Risk that council services are disrupted due to frequent and / or prolonged ICT failures	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High

## Financial management corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The council's current and future financial position is subject to many risks, notably not addressing the financial pressures in a sustainable way so that the revenue budget cannot be balanced and the council's financial position going into significant deficit. The financial position – for both revenue and capital - remains challenging: against a backdrop of uncertainty on Government funding, inflation and cost of living pressures have significant implications for the council's finances and levels of demand. Failing to deliver a balanced budget that addresses these issues both in the short and medium-term will ultimately require the council to consider even more difficult decisions that could have a far greater impact on front-line services, including those that support the most vulnerable. If the council's Chief Officer - Financial Services in their professional opinion considers that the authority cannot deliver a balanced budget position in 2023/24, a Section 114 notice would have to be issued, prompting an emergency budget.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Roles and responsibilities** - financial management within the council is delivered by colleagues who report to and are accountable to the Chief Officer - Financial Services (the Section 151 Officer), with clear accountability and training of all budget holders.
- **Strategic financial planning** – focussing on the annual funding settlement from government and wider reform of local government funding.
- **Budget preparation and setting** – revenue and capital budget planning, both for the current budget year and over the medium term. Budget proposals are subject to scrutiny and public consultation and are submitted to Full Council for approval in February.
- **In-year budget monitoring** – financial management and monitoring continues to be undertaken on a risk-based approach where financial management resources are prioritised to support those areas of the budget that are judged to be at risk. Both revenue and capital budgets are continually monitored and reported regularly to senior managers and members, including regular public reports to the council's Executive Board meeting.
- **Closure of accounts** – timely accounts without audit qualification ensure we can properly account for resources used during the year and fully understand the council's financial standing.
- **Audit inspections** – providing elected members and the public with independent assurance that the accounts reflect a true and fair view of the council's financial position.
- **Engagement** – the council value of 'spending money wisely' is part of the organisational culture and, along with the other shared Values and Behaviours, forms part of staff appraisals.
- **Fraud and corruption:** The council has a zero-tolerance stance on fraud, bribery and corruption and is committed to addressing these risks to protect public funds. Controls include fraud awareness training and a whistleblowing hotline

### Further actions planned

- Whilst the council continues to make every effort to protect the front-line delivery of services, the position remains difficult to manage financially. In addition to the inherent pressures due to demand and demography, especially within adults and children's social care, there will be a continued focus on dealing with the financial implications for the council from the economic impact of the rising cost of living, pay and price inflation and the loss of income for services the council provides.
- The council's Executive Board will be receiving a range of financial reports in the current municipal year including those on the Capital Programme and the Treasury Management Strategy, with a further update to the authority's rolling 5-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy scheduled for September 2023.

### More information

Financial information can be seen on the council's Leeds.gov website: [Our financial plans](#) [Our financial performance](#) and the [2023/24 Revenue Budget and Council Tax report](#)

## Escalating poverty corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The council and partners across the city have been recognised for the work undertaken on reducing poverty for many years. Despite this, poverty and financial exclusion have continued to worsen in Leeds and across the UK, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation has now been further intensified by the cost-of-living crisis. The cost-of-living crisis started to take effect in July 2021 due to global and national supply chain issues, which were impacted by demand on the workforce, energy, fuel, and production of raw materials for food and transport. As lockdown rules were eased and as the world economy began to re-open businesses saw huge demand for goods, which in turn led to global shortages and price increases.

Longstanding barriers including lack of awareness or understanding, and digital exclusion are further compounding the situation and are preventing people from reaching services. With more households experiencing hardship for the first time, and many already below the poverty line facing destitution and desperation, the wide-ranging citywide support offer must be both maintained and enhanced to support Leeds residents and prevent further escalation.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

The council has set out a proposal to create a breakthrough priority with the aim of: “working together across sectors to harness the capacity and capability in the city, its communities and those with lived experience to develop a city solution to welfare provision and addressing the cost-of-living crisis – with a specific focus on food, fuel, housing and digital inclusion”. Building on both the existing citywide support infrastructure and learning from the COVID-19 pandemic emergency response, strategic and operational groups have been meeting since September 2022 to coordinate actions to mitigate as far as possible the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis through a proactive, collaborative approach on key issues relating to food, fuel, housing and digital. The groups all have senior representatives from the council, health, third sector and other key partners. Full details are included in the ‘Cost of Living Update’ Executive Board Reports that have been produced on a quarterly basis from October 2022.

The council’s Financial Inclusion Team works closely across council services and alongside national and local partners such as DWP, Advice Agencies, Leeds Credit Union, Leeds Food Aid Network as well as many third sector organisations, to run initiatives and schemes that reduce the impacts of poverty and strengthen the financial resilience of residents and communities in the city. The team is responsible for the Money Information Centre website and printed resources, the Leeds Poverty Factbook and the Cost-of-Living Dashboard.

### Further actions planned

Developing a city solution to welfare provision and on addressing the cost-of-living crisis. This work is reflected in the ‘Understanding and Addressing the Cost-of-Living Crisis’ report to July Executive Board, with recommendations including “To approve the establishment of a strategic, cross cutting, welfare group with the aim of taking a proactive approach to addressing issues Leeds residents face relating to the cost-of-living crisis”.

### More information

- The Leeds Cost of Living Dashboard draws on data and statistics from a wide variety of national and local sources to provide regular updates on the impact of the Cost of Living for Leeds residents.
- The Leeds Poverty Factbook helps us to understand and document the levels of poverty in Leeds; inform policies and assist in the City’s anti-poverty agenda. The Fact Book contains national and locally sourced data and information to help define and analyse the different themes of poverty.
- Regular reporting to Executive Board on the work undertaken around the Cost of Living. The most recent report from July 2023 can be seen [here](#) (Item 11).

To access this information please visit [Leeds Observatory – Financial Inclusion](#)

In December 2022, the council hosted a “State of the City” event for a wide range of partners including representatives from Third sector organisations, the private sector, [Leeds Anchor Network](#) and elected members. The event focussed on the impacts of the rising cost of living on people and organisations in Leeds. The event was designed to encourage a city-wide conversation about what is already being done in response and where Leeds can work together to go further, within available means and resources.

## Economic growth lag corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Volatility in the global, national and local economic environment all represent threats to the Leeds economy. In particular, our economy has been impacted by the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine, high inflation and interest rates and adjustment for businesses arising from leaving the EU. If the council and its economic partners don't understand the current and challenges and opportunities, deliver effective business and skills, and infrastructure support, this will have an adverse impact on the economy, business survival, investment and growth. There will be further longer-term consequences for the city in terms of lack of opportunity, lower wages, falling employment levels and an increase in poverty and inequality.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The Inclusive Growth Strategy, which is due to be updated in September 2023.
- We work in conjunction with our partners, including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, on a range of aspects such as supporting inward investment, business growth and enterprise, promoting a thriving and safe city centre and delivering regeneration projects.
- The council has an Economic Development Team that works on a diverse range of projects to support business, create employment and drive economic growth through programmes, including facilitating the Anchor Network.
- A range of performance information used to evaluate the Leeds Economy, including city centre daytime footfall, commuting activity and business growth.
- A Skills and Talent Plan with clear actions to help people adapt to the future of work.
- A programme of work in place to understand the opportunities and challenges for the Leeds economy including:
  - The second version of the Leeds Social Progress Index, a tool that helps measure how well Leeds is doing in terms of Inclusive Growth. The Index helps us understand what's happening in different areas of the city (ward based) by looking at multiple parts and offers a clear and unbiased measure of overall wellbeing in the city.
  - A commissioned piece of work focusing on the city centre and the night-time economy.

### Further actions planned

- Work to publicise and embed the Inclusive Growth Strategy following its update and approval.
- Further development of the Leeds Inclusive Growth website that provide information, guidance and support for local people and businesses.
- Progressing links with central government to promote and maintain lobbying to ensure that the needs of Leeds businesses are fully understood, and programmes can support these.
- The establishment of the Leeds Business Anchors Network in Autumn 2023.
- A communications plan for the second version of the Social Progress Index for Leeds.
- Continue to seek opportunities that enable the delivery of our innovation vision to drive a healthier, greener, and inclusive future for Leeds.
- Developing links with new business start-ups to encourage growth and support survival.

### More information

- The Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy, Innovation Vision and Social Progress Index can be viewed here: [Inclusive Growth Leeds](#).
- Business and licensing information is available on [Leeds.gov.uk](#), including [How to start your own business](#).

## Care market sustainability and viability corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Without a thriving care market in the city, there is a risk that people in need of care services are not able to access them when required or are not able to access quality services when required, placing the council in breach of its legal duty. The availability of staffing within externally commissioned services is still a major concern within the care market. In addition, there are significant financial pressures on the sector particularly in relation to rising energy and fuel costs and the ending of additional funding from the government through the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund and Infection Control Fund.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Quality frameworks implemented in services commissioned by the authority which include provisions for financial monitoring, business continuity planning as well as monitoring the quality of the service.
- Adult Social Care Provider Forum held with care providers and the wider care sector to discuss wide ranging issues affecting the care sector in the city such as financial climate and workforce.
- Additional funding has been provided for the home care contract to raise the wages of staff in the independent sector to a level above the Real Living Wage to assist providers with recruitment and retention.
- Closer working with the Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) to better manage the oversight of the regulated care markets.
- Contract management meetings with individual providers and sector provider forums.
- A plan, including lessons learnt, is in place ready to be used in the event of a care provider failure.
- Liaison with the CQC through regular contact between inspectors and officers and regular information sharing meetings to gather early intelligence on poor quality services being provided.
- Information sharing with the care market through a regular care bulletin and improved care quality website.
- The Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund has supported the completion of a cost of care exercise for older adults care homes and 18+ home care to ensure the rates for commissioning care as far as possible reflect the increased costs within the sector. The reports detailing this work were published in March 2023 and can be seen [here](#).

### Further actions planned

Leeds continues work to support providers recruit and retain care staff both locally and internationally.

Leeds is acting as the host authority for the Yorkshire and Humber regional coordination of the International recruitment fund for the adult social care sector. The fund will help tackle the barriers of international recruitment, while upholding ethical recruitment and employment practices. The key elements of the region's delivery plan are to:

- Develop a local ethical recruitment charter, bursary agreement and fair share agreement, building on the national code of practice.
- Develop and implement an advice and support offer for care providers, to make high quality recruitment easier.
- Provide and manage bursaries to care providers across the region as a contribution towards sponsorship licence costs.
- Bring 360 new international recruits to the region by Summer 2024, and ensure they receive quality support.

A significant programme is underway to recommission home care services in a manner which will establish a more efficient approach to commissioning and delivering care, whilst also aiming to improve career prospects terms and conditions for staff.

Work is continuing to identify and work with the providers who may be more affected by market issues and therefore at greater risk of financial instability.

## Infectious diseases corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

New and emerging infectious diseases pose a threat to the public's health, in particular from serious illness and fatalities, especially in those unprotected by vaccinations. The risk also has adverse impacts on social and economic inequalities as well as the workforce and its ability to deliver essential services. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role of local authorities and the public in preparing for and responding to new and emerging infectious diseases.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The council contributes to multiagency work to prepare for and respond to infectious diseases, including the Health Protection Board (who regularly review risks) and Multiagency Infectious Diseases Review and Response meetings which aim to ensure any outbreaks of concern are proactively managed.
- A Leeds Outbreak Management Plan is in place which incorporates learning from good practice nationally and from the Association of Directors of Public Health. This represents their professional views as the local leaders for the nation's health. This plan is developed with local partners to agree an approach to local outbreaks in Leeds.
- To strengthen the Outbreak Management Plan, a roles and responsibilities document has been developed which looks at responses to scenarios that may occur.
- The council has a good working relationship with the [UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) to review, plan and future-proof the local health protection system, including local alert systems in place across the health and social care sector to ensure that relevant organisations are aware of current and upcoming threats so that plans to deal with them can be enacted if required.
- Outbreak management response arrangements are in place through local surveillance and the council's Health Protection's Single Point of Contact system, which works closely with the UKHSA, in identifying emerging diseases. UKHSA provides guidance for infectious diseases.
- Close working with UKHSA to review, plan and future-proof the local health protection system.
- An effective partnership with Leeds Community Healthcare to ensure that there is a strong Infection Prevention Control workforce and offer for the city.
- An Incident Management Team with processes established to manage outbreaks or incidents in areas of high-risk e.g. in vulnerable/complex settings.
- Robust arrangements are in place for the anticipation of winter pressures across the health protection system (including surveillance, monitoring and escalation procedures).
- The health protection surveillance system collates outbreak notifications from school and early years, care homes and other settings which allows an effective and proactive outbreak management responses.

### Further actions planned

The Leeds approach to prevent transmission of new and emerging infectious diseases of concern is through intensifying a combination of interventions and measures to minimise harm, keep people safe, protect vulnerable people and minimise poverty and inequalities. Our approach continues to be comprehensive across the whole health care system and is informed by the full range of public health measures from vaccination, infection prevention control, communications, managing outbreaks and preventative activity, including encouraging safe practices and choices.

The Leeds Public Adverse Weather Health Plan (2023) is currently being developed with local partners.

### More information

Leeds' [Public Health Resource Centre](#) which includes information for people working to promote health and wellbeing in Leeds, including details of Public Health campaigns.

## Major cyber incident corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The council's digital infrastructure is under constant attack from malicious sources attempting to disrupt the confidentiality, availability and integrity of our information or bring our systems and applications to a standstill, severely impacting our ability to deliver critical services to the public. Cyber criminals seek to exploit UK public organisations and infrastructure for profit. Their technical sophistication varies from small scale fraud from individuals and gangs to advanced organisations. The world cyber climate also presents threats; following the attacks on Ukraine, the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) (NCSC) called on organisations in the UK to bolster their online defences. Internal threats to cyber security can arise from the inadvertent actions of employees, or from the malicious intent of insiders such as disgruntled or former employees.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **People** – Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out, including a Senior Information Risk Owner, Data Protection Officer and a Cyber Assurance Lead (a suitably qualified Cyber Security Professional). Mandatory information management and governance training for elected members and staff includes elements on 'cyber'. The message reinforced that this risk is everyone's responsibility.
- **Policies and processes** – An Information Assurance Policy, setting out the council's approach to managing information security and risk, includes cyber-security within its scope. This is complemented by the Remote Working Policy which includes information security measures for staff working at home or offsite.
- **Technology** – Filtering, blocking, scanning, firewalls, encryptions and access controls help prevent breaches of the council's IT network, council devices and systems. Over the last 12 months the level of cyber alerting, which assists the monitoring of cyber security threats for public sector organisations, has increased. The council network is subject to approx. 5 million system intrusion blocks each month.
- **Assurance and Compliance** – Information Assurance (including aspects of cyber) forms part of the council's Annual Governance Statement which reports on the effectiveness of the council's internal controls, reviews and audits and adopting compliance regimes such as the government's Public Services Network (PSN<sup>1</sup>) Code of Connection and the Data Protection and Security Toolkit and cyber essentials plus for Health.

### Further actions planned

- Continue to follow industry best practice and adopt any future updates from sources such as the Information Commissioners Office and the NCSC<sup>2</sup>.
- An enhanced level of cyber security training for digitally enabled employees is being developed.
- Ongoing work to retain the council's PSN compliance.
- Funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to improve our cyber arrangements has been received and is being allocated to help implement the ISMS..

### More information

DLUHC is developing a local government cyber security standard, termed the Cyber Health Framework. Further details can be seen [here](#).

An annual report is considered by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee which details the steps being taken to maintain and improve the authority's information governance arrangements (including a section on cyber assurance). The report from February 2023, is available [here](#). Cyber assurance details can be found in Section 8 of the report (page 32).

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<sup>1</sup> PSN Code of Connection (CoCo) is an independent security assessment of external and internal network infrastructure and devices.

<sup>2</sup> The NCSC also issues cyber security guidance for public sector organisations.



## Workforce planning corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Workforce Planning is the beginning of the journey to ensure we are clear about the resources we require to deliver the Best City Ambition and organisational plans. Our workforce is one of our biggest assets, therefore we need to ensure we have the right people in place to deliver our services to the required standard. This means having the right people with the requisite skills in the right place, at the right time. Since the pandemic and Brexit, the labour market has changed, within some sectors there are clear skills shortages. In addition, what people are looking for from their role and employer is also changing. If we fail to plan for our future workforce requirements, we may encounter difficulties recruiting to critical roles which will in turn impact on service delivery.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

Our [People strategy 2020 to 2025](#) clearly sets out our vision to be the Best Place to Work. The Strategy is supported by the Being Your Best Plan

The financial challenges experienced by the council over recent years has led to the development of the Medium Terms Finance Strategy (see Financial management corporate risk assurance), which has supported services to think longer term. This helps support the ethos of our workforce planning approach as services need to look ahead to the future in terms of how they will deliver services within budget. The workforce is often one of the biggest costs, we have seen a programme of service reviews carried out over recent years to achieve efficiency savings that has impacted on the make-up of our workforce. Any reductions in staffing have been managed through our Managing Staff Reductions policy. A Supporting Futures Toolkit was developed to support individuals who were/are at risk of redundancy because of a service review or would be interested in alternative opportunities to minimise the risk of redundancy. This has provided an opportunity to retain key skills within the workforce.

The Recruitment and Resourcing Team within the council's HR service are working to increase our maturity as an organisation in relation to workforce planning. The team have a clear support offer for managers, offering different levels of service from providing information and advice, to hands on support from the team to facilitate workshops or bringing in external independent expertise depending on the size and scale of the service needs. We have worked to develop the availability of data that will enable workforce planning discussion within services. We are focusing our effort with services that are looking for support or that have been identified as having hard to recruit posts to help focus future workforce planning, to ensure we have clear talent pipelines developed or identified.

Alongside the workforce planning stream, the team support managers with identifying different entry routes into the organisation and the broader recruitment support. Developing a wide range of entry routes into the organisation will help maximise the diversity of our workforce. This includes running schemes such as the graduate, intern, apprenticeship and T-level programmes. Enabling us to grow our own talent, which if planned can help ensure we have the right skills when we need them. The apprenticeship scheme has also supported many to progress their careers within the council or the city. We regularly engage with partners across the city including colleges, universities, NHS, Health & Care Academy and Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network<sup>3</sup> among others. Particularly looking at our workforce planning approach as a city within the Health and Care Sector.

Once workforce plans are in place and entry routes established, we need a clear approach to the recruitment and retention of our future workforce. A full end to end review of our approach to recruitment has been carried out. Action has already been taken to modernise our approach to reflect the current market, work has progressed to explore innovative ways to recruit and engage with future workforce, further develop our employer brand and help ensure we attract diverse candidates.

### Further actions planned

Our annual staff survey helps identifying the issues facing the workforce that need to be addressed. The key issues from the most recent survey related to career progression opportunities, workloads and the need for quality tools, IT equipment and systems.

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<sup>3</sup> Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network is a group of the city's largest (mainly) public sector employers. They come together and focus on areas where they can make a difference for people as an employer.

## Safeguarding children corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The potential consequence of a significant failure in safeguarding is that a child or young person could be seriously harmed, abused, or die. This is a tragic outcome for all, including the family of the young person. From a council perspective, this could damage public trust and confidence in the council depending on the seriousness of failure and could possibly lead to intervention by Ofsted and/or government. Along with key partners from health, police and education, the council is jointly responsible for adequate provision of services and functions which aim to support children with additional needs both formally assessed and needs not subject to statutory assessment. Increased demand and increased cost of provision coupled with capacity constraints are resulting in a strained system. The work of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LCSP) can be seen in their [Annual Report](#). The Safeguarding children risk is linked to the corporate risk on “Poor outcome from a service based inspection” which is detailed later in this report.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

#### **Early Help:**

Early Help Hubs are multi-agency services located in communities where families live. This ensures that families have access to the services they need to provide appropriate support in a timely and accessible manner. Early Help practitioners from the Hubs work alongside colleagues at the Front Door to better align early help services with Duty and Advice, directly preventing escalation into statutory services where appropriate by offering a timely early help response. The local authority also jointly funds Cluster services with schools and ICB to offer support to families in need in their locality and around their school community. We have also maintained our children’s centres and youth services providing support to pre-school children as well as adolescents.

#### **Front Door arrangements:**

Partners are co-located and work in partnership to safeguard children and young people. Professionals can have direct conversations with qualified social workers, which leads to a better-quality of information sharing at an early stage. These include partnership daily discussions around referrals where there are domestic violence and abuse concerns. Qualified social workers are based at the Front Door along with police and health practitioners as part of the council’s partnership arrangements. This ensures timely multi-agency decisions about safeguarding concerns can be made by the relevant professionals. Out of hours safeguarding concerns are dealt with by the Emergency Duty Social Workers, based with the Police Safeguarding team.

#### **Social work:**

The structure of the Social Work service in Leeds is based on a locality model of delivery close to families and communities. In response to deprivation and need across the city, social work teams are organised across 3 areas of the city, South, West North West, and East North East. There is also currently one Early Help Hub in each area supporting the Early Help provision in the Locality. There are specialist services in relation to Child Exploitation, The SAFE Project, who support work with young people at medium or high risk of harm. The Child Looked After Service and Care Leavers services provide focused long term work to support children Looked After and Care Leavers in line with corporate parenting responsibilities.

#### **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP):**

The council recently commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers to undertake a review of our [EHCP](#) processes. Regular reviews of resourcing are undertaken in order to try to balance demand issues.

#### **Performance management/quality assurance:**

There is a robust performance management and quality assurance framework in place that ensures management oversight at every level, internal scrutiny and review. This includes a monthly quality assurance (QA) meeting, an annual audit schedule of themed audits, and a weekly multi agency referral review meeting.

#### **Skilled workforce:**

There is a comprehensive workforce development offer and framework in line with national requirements for social workers. This includes additional training and support in the first year of qualifying as well as Advanced Practitioners providing practice support, mentoring and co-working around complex work. The work of social workers is supported by personal and case supervision underpinned by a clear supervision framework.

**Recruitment and retention:**

As nationally, Leeds continues to carry high number of social work vacancies, 70 approximately across the service impacting on caseloads and workers well-being. We have regular case load meetings and checks to look at individual worker level cases and capacity across the service. We have a clear recruitment plan including overseas recruitment and links with our feeder universities. We also have an established apprenticeship programme and are lead LA for Step up to Social Work for Bradford, Calderdale, Wakefield and Leeds. These are all entry programmes to social work. We have appointed some agency workers and also temporary social work assistants in teams where there are vacancy factors to provide support.

**Safeguarding Partnership:**

The responsibilities for safeguarding are collectively held by the council, integrated care boards, and West Yorkshire Police through LSCP. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 lays out the shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. Local organisations and agencies that work with children and families play a significant role when it comes to safeguarding children. The responsibility rests with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together. In Leeds the LSCP has close working relationships with a range of organisations, including those from the health, housing and third sectors, and the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board. This enables partners to work towards making Leeds a Safe Place for Everyone. Partnership working also include learning from experience (lessons learned) to improve the way we work.

**Reporting arrangements:**

Clear and well-publicised guidance is available on [Leeds.gov.uk](https://www.leeds.gov.uk) and [LSCP](https://www.lscp.org.uk) websites for members of the public and practitioners on how to report child safeguarding concerns.

**External partners:**

Challenge and scrutiny from external experts, leading practitioners, and the extensive use of research to inform practice. Leeds is engaged in regular regional peer challenges and health checks that provide a strong methodology for support and challenge across the region.

**Plans and strategies:**

Safeguarding is a clear priority in the strategic plans of the council (Child-Friendly Leeds) and relevant partners, in particular the [Children and Young People's Plan \(pp13-14\)](#), which was updated in early 2023 and approved at Full Council on 12 July. Through the council's Safeguarding Policy, all council staff have an obligation to protect all children, and vulnerable adults.

**Inspection:**

The [most recent 'full' Ofsted inspection](#), in February 2022, found services for children to be outstanding, retaining the judgement from the 2018 inspection. This inspection was a full and comprehensive assessment by a team of inspectors looking at the whole system as well as children's case files and speaking with practitioners from across the directorate.

**Further actions planned:**

- Re-structuring Early Help services around Family Help following the recommendations of the National Review of Children's Social Care, *Stable Homes, Built on Love*. This will further strengthen early support to families in need reducing escalation in concerns the need for statutory social work intervention.
- Working with colleagues in the council's Communities Service<sup>4</sup> around our approach to Youth Violence rolling out the success of the East Youth Violence meetings to the South and West of the city. These meetings are chaired by the police and are partnership meetings looking at young people who are involved in youth violence and gang affiliation.
- Reviewing our retention offer for social workers and residential workers.
- Working with the Health and Social Care Academy and Adults and Health around recruitment.

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<sup>4</sup> Responsible for the strategic leadership and direction of the council's localities and communities functions including the locality working agenda, best city for communities' framework, third sector and equality function.

## Safeguarding adults corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The abuse of adults with care and support needs in Leeds can happen anywhere, be committed by anyone and can take many forms. To prevent this type of abuse and to support individuals to meet their desired outcomes should harm take place, a range of safeguarding measures are in place. Should any of these measures fail, an adult may suffer violence, serious harm and/or ultimately death. Such a tragic outcome could represent a failure in the council's legal and ethical safeguarding duties and have significant resource implications including financial costs, ombudsman enquiries and even judicial review. The Safeguarding adults risk is linked to the corporate risk on "Poor outcome from a service based inspection" which is detailed later in this report.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

The [Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board](#) (LSAB) is a multi-agency statutory partnership of organisations, including the council, that work together to both prevent and end abuse of adults with care and support needs in Leeds. The LSAB has a three year [Strategic Plan](#) and produces an annual report which sets out specific actions that help the Board and its partners achieve its ambitions. Other controls in place to manage this risk include:

- Multi-agency [Safeguarding Adults Policies and Procedures](#), including national and regional guidance.
- Cross-Council Safeguarding Policy: all council staff have an obligation to protect all children, and vulnerable adults. The Policy helps employees to understand, recognise, and report a safeguarding concern.
- The LSAB undertake safeguarding adults reviews (in accordance with the Care Act 2014) and share the learning and associated actions with the council and partners, to ensure lessons are learned.
- The Safeguarding theme runs through the work of [Safer Leeds Partnership](#), the city's community safety partnership. Linked to this, the LSAB has close working arrangements with a range of organisations including the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Checks are made by the [Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC<sup>5</sup>), the independent regulator of health and social care in England on the quality of care in registered services. The council also undertakes contract management and quality assurance of commissioned care services.
- Clear, simple and easy to find information available on [what abuse is and how to report it](#).
- The Front Door Safeguarding Hub, the partnership arrangements through which a wide range of safeguarding partners work to support people who have been subject to Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- A rigorous and tiered training and competency framework for front line staff.
- In 2022 [an Exceptional Risk Forum](#) was established by the LSAB, offering a fresh perspective and multi-agency advice and recommendations as to how a vulnerable person's risk could be reduced. An evaluation of progress to date was presented to the SAB in April.

### Further actions planned

The LSAB's plans for 2023/24 are based around four key ambitions that guide their work as a Board:

- Ambition One: Develop citizen-led approaches to safeguarding adults.
- Ambition Two: Promote awareness about safeguarding within communities and organisations.
- Ambition Three: Develop citywide approaches to safeguarding.
- Ambition Four: Learn from experience to improve how we work.

Further details of how these ambitions plan to be achieved can be seen in [Our Strategic Plan 2023/24](#).

### More information

The most recent Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board annual report (2022/23) is available [here](#).

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<sup>5</sup> The CQC monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. It sets out what good and outstanding care looks like and makes sure services meet fundamental standards below which care must never fall.

## Climate change corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The climate change threat is one of the greatest challenges facing this and future generations across the world. Leeds is already experiencing a warmer climate than the historical average. Further warming is highly likely, and it is important that we take steps to mitigate the impact on the people, communities, infrastructure, economy and natural environment of the city. Whether Leeds experiences the worst impacts of climate change is uncertain and will depend on progress to transition to a net zero<sup>6</sup> economy both locally and globally. The council has a significant role to play in tackling climate change and working towards net zero, leading by example in adapting our own operations to reduce emissions and supporting businesses, households and individuals to do the same, and also in helping to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on Leeds.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

Some of the controls to mitigate climate change are seen in the city and council resilience risk elsewhere in this report, with additional climate change-specific and net zero orientated controls as follows:

- The Leeds Climate Commission and Yorkshire and Humberside Climate Commission informs the work we do to tackle climate change and work towards net zero. The Commissions bring together key organisations and actors from across the city and region and from the public, private and third sectors and helps Leeds make positive choices on issues relating to energy, carbon, weather and climate.
- Working with West Yorkshire Combine Authority (WYCA) to deliver the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, which includes the promotion of public transport usage and active travel.
- Increased use of electric vehicles in the council fleet.
- A successful track record of grant applications, with the funding awarded being used to support areas such as electric charging infrastructure, housing retrofit, public building decarbonisation and the expansion of the district heating PIPES network.

### Further actions planned

Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions from the city to net zero by 2030 by:

- Halving the carbon footprint from council operations to net zero by 2025.
- Supporting businesses and homeowners to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to reduce their own carbon footprints.
- Promoting cycling, walking, the use of public transport and zero emission vehicles. This includes tackling emissions from 'grey fleet' – staff-owned vehicles used to carry out council services.
- Building sustainable infrastructure, including large scale renewable energy projects.
- The council's website will continue to be updated to reflect, and signpost to, current plans and policies in relation to climate adaptation, along with information and guidance for residents and businesses summarising the hazards and how to build preparedness within Leeds communities.
- Deliver enhanced city-wide engagement with every community in Leeds to raise awareness of, and receive feedback on, the council's activity to support climate mitigation and adaptation.
- The actions that the council can take within the current powers and resources at its disposal will not be sufficient to unilaterally move the city to a net zero carbon position. There are areas where government policy changes are required and where further funding is needed. The council will seek to influence national policy through national and regional engagement.

### More information:

Further details about the actions we are taking can be seen in the most recent [Climate Emergency Annual Report](#)

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<sup>6</sup> The term net zero means achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it. This balance – or net zero – will happen when the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed.

## Major flooding corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Major flooding presents a clear threat to a wide range of stakeholders in Leeds. In recent years, Leeds has experienced several major flooding incidents including Storm Eva on Boxing Day 2015, which affected 3,500 homes and businesses and the more recent major storms of 2020 (Ciara and Dennis) and 2022 (Dudley, Eunice and Franklin).

Specific threats to communities and businesses from flooding include:

- Adverse impact on residents: loss of life or injury; personal distress and/or temporary homelessness.
- Damage to and contamination of domestic and business properties on large-scale.
- Damage to vital infrastructure of district, e.g. roads, rail, power, communications, water.
- Loss of confidence in the ability to cope with flooding leading to a decline in inward investment.

Flooding is the most significant weather related risk we face as a city, but it's also important that actions to address this risk are progressed alongside work that the council and partners are doing across a whole range of other risks so that a more resilient city is developed.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The River Aire Flood Alleviation Scheme [Phase 1](#) is one of the UK's largest flood defence projects and the first in the country to use moveable weirs as a pioneering solution to flooding. The scheme aims to reduce the risk of flooding in the city centre.
- A range of local initiatives across the city completed in recent years including the Wyke Beck Naturalised Flood Management Programme and Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Working closely with other local authorities and partners that oversee the investment in flood risk across the Yorkshire region as part of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Together, these form the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum for preparedness to respond to major and often cross boundary emergencies.
- Arrangements are in place to warn and inform the public and businesses about incidents via a range of channels including [Leeds Alert](#)<sup>7</sup>, X: (formerly twitter), @leedsemergency and the Emergencies page of [Leeds.gov](#).
- A Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which outlines the approach the council and other agencies will take. The Strategy contains: the objectives for managing flood risk; measures proposed to achieve those objectives; timeframes for any measures and their costs and benefits and funding plans.

### Further actions planned

- In conjunction with the Environment Agency, the council is progressing the Flood Alleviation Scheme [Phase 2 \(FAS2\)](#). When completed in 2024, FAS2 will see the city move from one with no flood defences to one with 1:200 year standard of protection.
- The development of a capital programme of local initiatives to reduce the risk of flooding across Leeds to improve the resilience and self-reliance of communities including the use of Nature Based Solutions.
- Working with partners across West Yorkshire including academia and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, businesses and other organisations to develop greater resilience in the city.

### More information

- Details of schemes including FAS2 can be seen at [Leeds City Council Flood Resilience](#)
- The most recent [Flood Risk Management Report](#) to the council's Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth Strategy Board in April 2023 (Item 8).
- Leeds.gov, the council's website includes information on how to prepare for and respond to [emergencies](#) including flooding .

<sup>7</sup> The warning and informing tool for businesses and members of the public to subscribe to.

## City and council resilience corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Leeds, like any other major city, can suffer disruptions caused by the impact of a major incident or emergency. In recent years, Leeds has experienced disruptive incidents including storms, flooding, a heatwave and the pandemic. Should more than one major incident occur in the city at the same time, the risk and its impacts would be exacerbated. The impact of a major incident would be felt externally, by citizens, communities and businesses, and internally, by the services delivered by the council which may be reduced or even suspended. Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), category 1 responders<sup>8</sup> which include local authorities, have a statutory duty to be prepared for emergencies and to be able to continue to deliver critical functions in the event of a disruptive incident.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- A 'top down' approach to managing risks based on the [National Risk Register](#) which compares, assesses and prioritises all major disruptive risks to the UK's national security. This informs the West Yorkshire Community Risk Register which in turn forms the basis of multi-agency planning between the council and partners.
- Working closely with other local authorities and partners that together form the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum for preparedness to respond to major and often cross boundary emergencies.
- Taking part in national and regional exercises designed to test our plans and cascading outcomes and recommendations into Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management arrangements.
- Arrangements are in place to warn and inform the public and businesses about incidents via a range of channels including [Leeds Alert](#)<sup>9</sup>, twitter: @leedsemergency and the Emergencies page of [Leeds.gov](#).
- The council and multi-agency partner organisations' ability to quickly assemble a 'Gold, Silver, Bronze' command structure in line with [JESIP](#) (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme) principles.
- Incident Response and Business Continuity Plans that cover both the response and recovery aspects.
- Provision of advice and assistance to business and voluntary sector.
- Working together with partners from the Safety Advisory Group<sup>10</sup> to deliver events safely.

### Further actions planned

- Ongoing work with Leeds' businesses, organisations, communities and the general public to develop greater resilience in the city. This work includes relaunching the Business Continuity Network events held in the Civic Hall, at which presentations are made to organisations on a range of resilience topics.
- Continuing to support national counter-terrorism campaigns and initiatives.
- Continuing to learn from incidents that happen to other organisations and contribute to any lessons learned from them.
- Implementing recommendations from the Government's [Protect Duty](#) consultation – designed to make the public safer at publicly accessible locations.

### More information

The West Yorkshire Police website contains details of the [West Yorkshire Resilience Forum](#) and the [West Yorkshire Community Risk Register](#). The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum [Annual Report 2022-2023](#) summarises the work, wider collaboration and achievements of the forum over the previous 12 months.

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<sup>8</sup> The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to those undertaking commercial activities and voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity management..

<sup>9</sup> The warning and informing tool for businesses and members of the public to subscribe to.

<sup>10</sup> SAGs are usually co-ordinated by a Local Authority and are made up of representatives from the LA, emergency services, other relevant bodies and the event organiser. SAGs provide a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event..

## Poor outcome from a service based inspection corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Local authorities are subject to a range of inspections across the services and functions they have responsibility for, in particular for the provision of services to adults (CQC) and children and families (Ofsted and CQC). In a worst case scenario, under the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State has the power to commission an inspection into a local authority which is at risk of failing in its 'best value' duty. Where there is sufficient evidence, the relevant Secretary of State can also intervene in that authority or relevant parts of an authority e.g. children's services.

The risk of the council receiving a poor (inadequate) outcome from an inspection would have adverse consequences across a range of aspects including: the resources required to undertake corrective action and the 'knock on' impact for service delivery; low staff morale and future problems attracting and recruiting staff; the potential resignation of senior officers and the associated loss of their skills and expertise, and loss of public trust and confidence in the council.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Risks relating to specific inspections e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, are documented and managed by the respective council directorates. There is a clear escalation route up to the council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) should any significant issues need to be raised or require corporate support
- Horizon scanning of inspections and their outcomes undertaken on other local authorities and active participation in sharing best practice through professional networks. The information obtained from this research can help identify aspects of best practice and areas of weakness requiring corrective action prior to any inspection taking place on ourselves.
- Performance frameworks: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other performance information reported to key stakeholders including Directorate Management Teams, CLT, Scrutiny Boards and the council's Executive Board. Regular review and discussion about performance results and their implications on future inspections can help identify any areas of weakness requiring corrective action. In this respect, performance information can be used as an early warning indicator for a potential poor inspection result.
- The council undertakes a staff survey (usually annually) and its results are another way of identifying any significant issues that could contribute to a poor inspection outcome.
- In July 2022, Leeds City Council became the first local authority to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian - an independent person who employees can approach to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace and how services are being delivered. Staff networks are an additional source of insight to help manage risks.

### Further actions planned:

- Preparation activities are taking place within council directorates and services that are expecting an inspection in the near future.

### More information

- Details of Ofsted and CQC inspections can be seen [here](#). A brief guide to the Ofsted new inspection framework can be seen [here](#).
- Annual Corporate Performance Report 2022/23
- The risk of a poor outcome from a service based inspection is linked to the corporate risks on Safeguarding adults and Safeguarding children, both of which are detailed earlier in this report.



## Insufficient school places corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Ensuring that the supply of school places meets demand is a statutory duty of local authorities. This duty also includes the promotion of parental choice, diversity and fair access. In terms of meeting demand, local authorities are subject to constraints under the Education Act 2011. The Act requires that, where a need for a new school is identified, the local authority invites proposals to establish an academy or free school, with the decision over whether to go ahead ultimately taken by the Department for Education (DfE).

For schools that are already open - local authority maintained, voluntary aided or academies - they can be expanded through a process of consultation. However, local authorities cannot require academies or free schools to expand. The inherent tension between the statutory requirement for a local authority to provide school places, and the diminishing influence of the local authority in the building/expansion of schools means that there is a greater risk of not meeting the duty to provide sufficient school places in good quality provision that meet the needs of local communities.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Data modelling undertaken and appropriately refined and tested for projecting school places need.
- Reviewing demographic data and developing action plans.
- Reporting to various internal boards with updates of position and forthcoming actions regarding school places.
- Regular reviews and sharing of school place planning trackers that inform the place planning strategy.
- Relevant school place proposals to the council's Executive Board, Scrutiny Boards and/or Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
- School Place Planning trackers to inform various internal boards as part of managing the risk, that include Good Learning Places Board, Program Risk & Control and School Places Program Board.
- Communication with schools and trusts through family of schools meetings and use of data and information sheets to share future demographic data including planned housing developments to holistically plan places in the short, medium and long term.
- Working with new academies, trust schools and free schools to ensure sufficient school places are commissioned.
- Integrated planning and delivery of SEND provision, implemented through best practice consultation and appropriate statutory processes, where appropriate.
- Working with relevant council functions to identify and review potential new school sites as they become available.
- Consultation and engagement: Carrying out consultation exercises linked to school place provision, for example housing planning. Ensure good practice is adhered to as part of consultation process to help inform a wide variety of stakeholders, including the public and local ward members.
- Continued engagement in Government consultation over methods of funding allocation.
- Capital programme for funding school construction projects: Capital programme limited to the delivery of primary and secondary basic need and SEND provision where necessary. Permission to approve requests for all types of proposals involving capital expenditure (including that for schools) sought from the Executive Board.

### More Information

- All reports that seek permission to consult about the creation of new school places, reports on the subsequent outcomes of those consultations, and design and cost reports basic need projects are publicly available as Executive Board reports, available [here](#).
- The DfE produce statistical first releases on national pupil projections for all local authorities in England. The most recent release is [here](#).

## Community cohesion corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Our Safer Leeds Partnership is accountable for improving community safety and developing stronger, more resilient, and cohesive communities across Leeds. This aligns to our Best City Ambition and Health & Wellbeing ambition, to deliver a safe and welcoming city for people of all ages and from all communities in which residents feel more secure and have good friends. To achieve this ambition, it is therefore vital that we work effectively in partnership in localities across the city to identify and address the barriers to community cohesion, however we are facing a growing number of complex challenges which could potentially increase tensions.

### Key controls in place to manage this risk

The Safer, Stronger Communities: Leeds Plan (2021- 24) sets out the strategic direction of Safer Leeds Executive and will guide the work of the partnership and its work with and for communities across the city.

From a community cohesion perspective, the partnership has a statutory requirement to:

- Regular engage and consult with the community.
- Prepare and implement a Community Safety Plan
- Produce Joint Strategic Assessments
- Ensure information sharing arrangements.

Safer Leeds strategic thinking and operational activity is guided by identification and prevention, early intervention and responses, recovery, and resilience. An example of which is the daily threat picture which is used to manage/monitor events/issues which will potentially increase tensions across communities. Areas currently under review are: Gang activity; Serious violence; anti-social behaviour (ASB); Strikes - preventing people from going to work, getting medical treatment etc; Cost of living crisis - people looking for other income streams (e.g., crime) to fund their lifestyles, and Migration & Asylum in the city.

Other examples of related support and work being undertaken to help manage this risk are:

- Leeds Prevent support vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist or terrorist behaviour.
- Neighbourhood Improvement work in targeted wards and priority neighbourhoods.
- Monitoring of public opinion through feedback from Councillors, social media channels. local blogs, Parish and Town councils, or via bespoke events such as the Equalities Conference.
- Commissioned services with 3rd sector to provide community support, mediation and advocacy.

Internally, the council has “Be Your Best on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)” our new mandatory equality, diversity, and inclusion training and development package, which all managers have to undertake.

### Further actions planned

Recognising no single agency can address these complex risks, threats, and harms alone, the following are committed to working collectively through the Safer Leeds Executive, in line with agreed terms of reference and information sharing protocols: - Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, Leeds NHS, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Yorkshire Probation Services, HMP Service, and the Voluntary & Community Sector.

An intercultural strategy is being developed to address the different challenges in enabling the effective mixing and engagement amongst communities. A survey is to be undertaken to capture views and ideas.

### More information

The report on the Safer, Stronger Communities: Leeds Plan (2021-2024) can be seen [here](#).

## Health and safety failure corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Should a serious health and safety (H&S) incident arise from the many services that the council provides or commissions, it could result in death, injury or chronic ill-health to a wide range of internal and external persons including service users and staff. If things go wrong, regulatory and enforcement bodies such as the [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) could undertake investigations into the council and this may require the suspension of services or closure of buildings. Civil claims for compensation could also be brought against the council by employees or members of the public injured due to a significant failure in our H&S arrangements.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy** – setting out the council’s commitment to health, safety & wellbeing. The policy and strategy include a set of refreshed priorities, with a focus on occupational stress but also covering violence & aggression, vehicle safety and mental health.
- **H&S training, advice and support** – available for all staff and provided by the council’s Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team and Occupational Health. Regular communications and engagement with staff on health, safety and wellbeing matters. Recent launch of ‘Let’s Talk H&S’ for managers as part of the council’s Be Your Best programme offer.
- **Processes & reporting** – Regular reporting on H&S issues and performance to a range of internal stakeholders, including the Corporate Leadership Team (consisting of the council’s Chief Executive and directors) and the Executive Board. An annual report to the Executive Board is produced which demonstrates how duties set out in the council’s Health and Safety Policy are discharged.
- **Co-operation & consultation** – between managers and employee representatives on H&S issues with various directorate and service level H&S committees. Best practice is also shared between the council and other relevant organisations through our networking arrangements. Additional co-operation on H&S matters takes place with Trade Unions.
- **Working with partner organisations** – essential pro-active maintenance of council buildings, schools and housing stock is carried out with contractors. A Fire Safety Concordat is also in place between the council and the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority. The Concordat aims to provide a framework to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the two organisations are effectively translated into practical working arrangements.
- **Staff networks** – a wide range of staff network groups; a valuable resource that support and represent staff on issues or topics they relate to or associate with. The networks include the Healthy Minds Group and Disability and Wellbeing Network which are both linked to health, safety and wellbeing.
- **Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FTSUG) and staff survey:** The council undertakes a staff survey, usually annually, across the whole workforce. The survey is used to identify any concerns around the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. The FTSUG offers a route for employees to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace, including health, safety and wellbeing.

### Further actions planned

In September 2023, work will commence to launch and embed the updated Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Strategy. Supporting this work are director pledges and service level policies – informed by recently completed risk profiles for each service.

### Further information

The council’s latest [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance and Assurance report](#) was considered by Executive Board in September 2022.

The [Health and Safety Executive](#) website provides H&S information, news and resources to help organisations.

## Transport issues - keeping the city moving corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Failure to adequately maintain and manage the transport infrastructure required to keep the city moving can lead to road closures resulting in reduced capacity on the network; re-routing; increased congestion; longer journey times and damage to the council's reputation. The wider consequences arising from risks materialising with the transport infrastructure include adverse impacts on the climate, the economy and road safety.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The [Leeds Vision Zero 2040 Strategy](#) - our ambition that by 2040 no one will be killed or suffer serious injuries on roads in Leeds. The strategy outlines the existing and emerging issues facing the city and explains how the council and key partners will attain our stated ambition via a series of actions and priorities.
- Working with a range of partners to ensure the network continues to operate. Key partners include the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, National Highways, Network Rail and utility companies. The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum (see Major Incident risk assurance) also plays a key role in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a major incident involving the transport infrastructure.
- Application of Incident Management Protocol and the ongoing review and update of the arrangements to ensure they remain up to date and adequate.
- Arrangements to deal with adverse winter weather that could affect the network include the monitoring of forecasted weather conditions via a range of sources, and maintaining stocks of grit, the fleet and HGV qualified drivers needed to distribute it.
- Ongoing work to identify and upgrade key structures (such as bridges) and network improvement programmes and projects as required, and the financing of these through the capital programme.
- Systems and a central control centre operated by the Urban Traffic Management and Control ([UTMC](#)). These are used to monitor and control traffic signals and to send out automated variable messaging e.g. in response to congestion, car park occupancy, road closures etc.
- Communications with the public and key stakeholders around major projects and changes to the transport network. The Vision Zero Strategy includes a commitment to engage with the citizens and businesses in Leeds to ensure the transport strategy meets their needs. This includes reaching and engaging as many Leeds residents, organisations and businesses in a conversation about the future of transport in the City with a particular focus on diversity and targeting hard to reach groups.

### Further actions planned

- Development of further schemes to deliver the outcomes of the Transport Strategy around improved reliability for buses, safer and more direct cycle provision, improved walking links and crossings.
- Development of a West Yorkshire Mass Transit system, with the first phase focused around connectivity to and around Leeds. Added to the continued improvement to Leeds Station and the heavy rail connectivity, this should deliver a step change in public transport and further reduce reliance on use of private cars.
- Major schemes in progress include: Armley Gyratory, Bishopgate, Neville Street/Victoria Road/Crown Point Road Cycleways, all schemes have on-going communications plans to keep informed as the schemes progress. The development of City Square is ongoing with full closure to through traffic implemented.
- Ongoing work to identify areas where the Climate Emergency, net zero ambition and climatic effects may impact the city's transport infrastructure.
- The launch of e-bike scheme late September to provide people who travel within Leeds (be they residents, workers, or visitors) with an opportunity to access e-bikes and to use those bikes as an alternative to other modes of travel particularly for short distance trips.

### More information

- The [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy – Action Plan Annual Update](#).
- The [West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Strategy](#) which sets out the delivery of a modern, world-class, well-connected transport system that should make travel around West Yorkshire easy and reliable.

## Cost of living and the impact on the third sector corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

'Third sector organisations' (TSOs) is a term used to describe the range of organisations that are neither public sector nor private sector. It includes voluntary and community organisations (both registered charities and other organisations such as associations, self-help groups and community groups), social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives.

In the last five years, there have been a number of major developments in Leeds and beyond that have changed the way that the third sector operates, both in itself and within the wider system in the city. This means that there is a risk that TSOs will not be able to deliver to same level of impact, which will affect day to day locality work and plans. TSO work also relieves the pressure on demand for our statutory services, including those provided by the council, at a later stage, so any reduction in provision will have implications on these already stretched services.

### Key controls in place to manage this risk

To ensure the resilience of the sector throughout the cost-of-living crisis, to enable the third sector to continue supporting communities, Third Sector Leeds<sup>11</sup> published a position statement in September 2022 which led to a workshop being convened with senior officers from key departments across Leeds City Council and health authorities.

The research from the workshop has been used to produce a new third sector strategy which is based on the following principles:

- Working in a way that ultimately benefits people and communities living in Leeds.
- The importance of delivering preventative measures where possible.
- Investment in resilience.
- The importance of working together in partnership.
- A commitment to 'one workforce'.
- The third sector being an equal partner as part of both the WY Health and Care Partnership, 'Team Leeds' approach and WYCA.

### Further actions planned

Planned launch of a TSO strategy from September 2023. The strategy is a shared vision for how the third sector in Leeds should work and what needs to be done to get there. In developing a strategy for investment in the third sector, we are not starting from scratch. There has been a decade of developing trust and understanding and adopting a teamwork approach within the broad framework of the Best City Ambition and its predecessor, the Best Council Plan. This is not just a strategy for the third sector; it's a strategy for the whole city to better understand and support the sector to continue playing a vital role in supporting communities in Leeds to thrive. Third Sector Leeds will be the focus for co-ordinating the third sector "ownership" of the development of the strategy, supported by Voluntary Action Leeds, working closely with key partners.

### More information

Two key pieces of research have been published which have enabled us to better understand our sector sustainability, impact and trends; State of the Sector Update 2022 & [The structure, dynamics and impact of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector report \(2021\)](#)

Information on Third Sector Leeds can be seen [here](#).

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<sup>11</sup> Third Sector Leeds is the leading policy body that advocates for the third sector's values and interests in supporting Leeds' Best City ambition.

## Information management and governance corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

Failure to manage personal information properly could cause serious damage, harm or even death to individuals, with the council facing legal and regulatory enforcement action and fines. The council recognises the need to protect its information assets from both accidental and malicious loss, damage and inappropriate disclosure.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Governance and Accountability** – The council’s information governance framework details our governance, reporting, decision-making and information risk management arrangements. This framework sets out the levels of responsibility for and visually shows the relationship between key internal stakeholders: the Information Management Group; the Information Assurance Board; the Senior Information Risk Owner<sup>12</sup> and the Corporate Leadership Team. The Information Assurance Board’s purpose is to set the council’s vision and information strategy in relation to how it manages and protects its information, and to provide assurance to the Senior Information Risk Owner that the council has appropriate arrangements and controls in place.
- **People** – Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out, including a Senior Information Risk Owner, Data Protection Officer and a Caldicott Guardian (a senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people’s health and care information). Mandatory training for elected members and staff and internal guidance on managing information and cyber security is also provided, through which the message is reinforced that this risk is everyone’s responsibility.
- **Policies and processes** – are in place that are fit for purpose and reflect of legislative requirements, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018), including those for Information Assurance and Information Sharing. The Remote Working Policy for council staff includes information security measures for staff working at home or offsite.
- **Assurance and Compliance** – Information management forms part of the council’s Annual Governance Statement which reports on the effectiveness of the council’s internal controls, reviews and inspections (internal and external) and adopting compliance regimes such as the government’s Public Services Network (PSN)<sup>13</sup> Code of Connection and the Data Protection and Security Toolkit for Health.

### Further actions planned

On-going work to improve the management and security of our information:

- Reviewing the council’s Incident Management and Data Protection Complaints process and associated systems to ensure they remain up to date.
- Undertaking a review of the current Data Protection Impact Assessment<sup>14</sup> (DPIA) process, utilising an appropriate system to maximise business efficiency and assurance.
- The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) is scheduled to undertake a Data Protection Audit in November 2023. This will see the council’s legislative information compliance tested. Any recommendations from the ICO audit will be implemented through an action plan.

### More information

The Annual Information Governance Report, including the Annual Report of the Caldicott Guardian, was reviewed by the council’s Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in February 2023 and is seen [here \(Item 7\)](#).

The [ICO website](#). The ICO is an independent authority upholding information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

<sup>12</sup> The SIRO is person responsible within the organisation for managing information risks.

<sup>13</sup> PSN Code of Connection (CoCo) is an independent security assessment of external and internal network infrastructure and devices.

<sup>14</sup> A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help organisations identify and minimise the data protection risks of a project. It is also good practice to do a DPIA for any other major project which requires the processing of personal data.

## Major ICT failure corporate risk assurance

### Risk overview

The council's ICT function plays a central role in supporting out Best City Ambition by providing day-to-day support to all council staff who use information, communications and technology to carry out their job. This includes standard office software as well as running major business applications. There are many factors which could trigger frequent or prolonged ICT failure, including loss of power coupled with failure of back-up generators, air conditioning units fail resulting in the data centre overheating and a power down of the ICT server equipment, a loss of internet connectivity and insufficient staffing resources to maintain the infrastructure. Should the risk arise and the digital infrastructure not be restored promptly, there would be a significant adverse impact on our ability to deliver services leading to mass complaints, loss of public confidence in the council and reputational damage.

### Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans in place for primary systems, with periodic review and testing. A cross-council Major Incident Management process is in place and would be activated to deal with a major IT failure.
- In the event of a total or partial disruption to the power supply, IT systems are configured to shut down safely. Generators providing an alternative source of power supply are maintained and can be used to support key sites in the event of a mains power failure.
- The Information Security Assurance and Compliance Board, which focuses on ensuring the council's IT risks are being actively managed. The Board's remit includes remediating known security vulnerabilities highlighted through an annual IT health check as well as responding to new threats and attacks. The Board also provides oversight on all IT projects to ensure that security and compliance aspects are considered.
- The implementation of a resilient fibre service between key data centres has reduced the number of hardware failures that can affect service delivery. Improved fibre links enable a quicker offsite backup of data should a major incident occur and data recovery be required.
- IT security measures such as firewalls, anti-virus software, and access controls for staff and contractors in place to mitigate against cyber-attacks.
- Senior managers within the council's Integrated Digital Service (IDS) meet weekly and act as the escalation point for any concerns raised around security and digital service delivery.

### Further actions planned

- Regular work to review, update and test the digital aspects of Business Continuity Plans for the council's critical services.
- Leading up to 2025 there will be significant changes as the national telephony system switches over from analogue (PSTN and ISDN) to digital. A programme is underway to convert the council's phone systems to digital and this includes the identification of any "legacy lines" that will no longer work after the switchover.

### More information

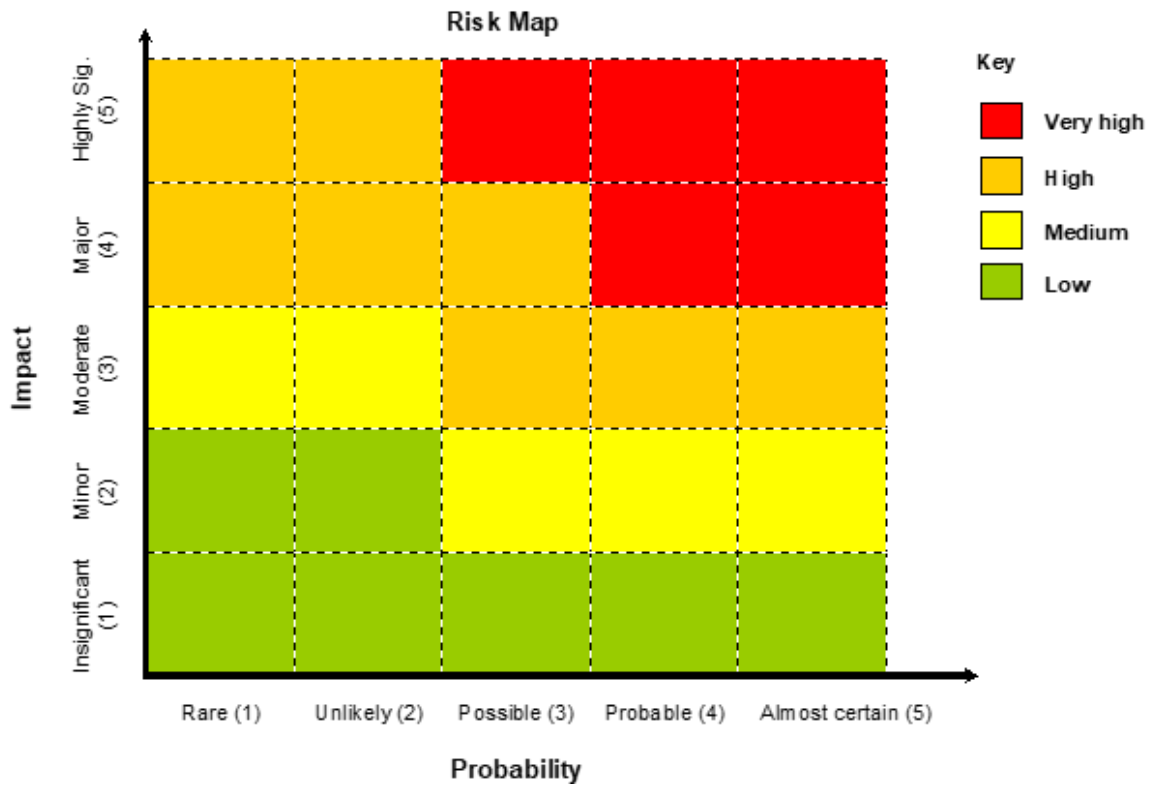
The council's [Digital Strategy \(2022 to 2025\)](#) which explains how the use of digital technology supports the delivery of our services and the achievement of the Best City Ambition.

**Annex 1: Leeds City Council’s Risk Evaluation Matrices**

Risks that have been identified need to be analysed and evaluated (scored) using Risk Evaluation Matrices so that they can be prioritised for treatment. Risks ratings are based on a combined assessment of how likely the risk is to occur – its **probability** - and its potential **impact** after considering the controls already in place to manage/mitigate the risk.

A ‘5x5’ scoring mechanism is used to carry out this assessment of probability and impact which ensures that the risks are rated consistently. Together, these two scores combine to give a risk rating, one that is based on the **reasonable worst-case scenario**, which helps prioritise the risks for review and action.

The scores allow the risks to be plotted onto a risk map (below) used to illustrate and compare a group of risks.





## Contact Centre Update

Date: 11 December 2023

Report of: Director of Strategy and Resources

Report to: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

This report provides an update on the transformation work that is ongoing to deliver an efficient, accessible and customer focussed contact centre operation that is well equipped to support our Best City Ambition.

The report also provides an overview of work volumes in the contact centre and current performance.

The report follows previous Board interest in the contact centre in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 municipal years.

### Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) note the progress that has been made against the actions that were reported to this Board in September 2022.

## What is this report about?

1. A programme of work aimed at transforming customer contact and improving the customer experience was initially presented to Scrutiny Board in February 2022 with a further update in September 2022. This report provides a brief description about the background to the service (particularly given that there are new members on the Scrutiny Board), an update on the progress that has been made since the last report in relation to customer satisfaction, performance and transformation activity. It draws on benchmarking where relevant and includes reference to workforce and budget information, the staff satisfaction results for the service and service development activity that has helped to deliver performance improvements.
2. The contact centre deals with approximately 1 million calls and 150,000 emails per year, supporting 23 service areas across the organisation in five broad areas;
  - Council Tax and Benefits (including local welfare support)
  - Care and Safeguarding (including adults and children's social care)
  - Housing and Planning (including Choice Based Lettings and anti-social behaviour)
  - Transactional Services (including registrars, school admissions, highways, refuse, pest control, elections, blue badge)
  - Out of Hours (a 5pm – 11pm provision for emergency / crisis, including emergency housing repairs and highways issues)
3. The service employs 190 FTE, 140 of which are Customer Services Officers who are supported by a management team and three key support teams –
  - Resource Planning team (responsible for scheduling, forecasting and planning of the service)
  - Performance and Relationship team (responsible for reporting and liaison with service areas in relation to service updates and process changes)
  - Training team (responsible for new starter and multi skilling training)
4. These three support teams also provide support to the Face-to-Face operations (community hubs, libraries and One Stops) in the Communities and Environments directorate.
5. The contact centre is responsible for responding to messages from the council's social media platforms and monitoring activity across these channels – the social media team handle about 60,000 incoming direct social media messages a year (around 4,500 – 5,000 messages a month).
6. The contact centre is currently undergoing a period of transformation, starting with the introduction of new telephony systems to be delivered in April 2024. The council has developed six strategic aims in relation to contact centre transformation –
  - To eradicate as many service failures as possible to minimise the need for customer contact;
  - To provide clear public communications to minimise the need for clarification;
  - To ensure effective feedback and completion of tasks once actions by the public are raised to minimise repeat contact;
  - To enable those who have access to digital technology to self-serve as a first preference;
  - To widen participation in the use of digital technology;

- To provide excellent face to face and telephony contact for key services which require complex handling or for customers who are unable to realistically self-serve.

7. The development of a customer contact board under a single strategic lead, working in partnership with IDS on prioritisation of digital developments, will be key in achieving these aims.

## Current Performance

### 8. Customer Satisfaction

9. A new customer satisfaction survey was launched in January 2022 and continues to be used to monitor customer satisfaction levels. The feedback is sought from an automated sample of customers who have telephoned the contact centre with a query or service request. Table 1 below provides an update of customer satisfaction levels from January to October 2023.

**Table 1: Customer Satisfaction January to October 2023**

Question	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	% Satisfaction									
<b>Knowledge:</b> How satisfied were you with the adviser's knowledge when answering your questions and providing guidance?	88	87	88	87	86	86	86	86	86	84
<b>Empathy:</b> How satisfied were you with the adviser's ability to communicate in a positive and caring way?	89	89	90	89	88	88	88	88	88	87
<b>General Satisfaction:</b> Overall how satisfied are you with the service you received?	84	84	85	84	84	83	84	84	84	82
<b>First Contact Resolution:</b> Is it the first time you have contacted us about this query? (Y/N)	80	79	81	81	80	79	78	77	79	76
<b>Right First Time:</b> Did we resolve your query on the call? (Y/N)	74	75	74	74	72	73	75	74	74	74
<b>Answer time:</b> How satisfied were you with the time taken to answer your call? (1 - 5)	66	71	64	63	66	68	72	75	76	74
<b>Web:</b> Did you try to find the information you needed on the website before calling (Y/N)	44	44	45	43	43	43	43	45	42	43
Based on an <b>average call wait</b> time (mins)	13	10	17	20	18	11	7	6	5	7

10. The percentage scores outlined in the table above present a positive picture overall in respect of the knowledge and empathy demonstrated by the Customer Service Officers (CSOs) and indicate that most customers are satisfied with the service they receive from the contact centre. The average score for general satisfaction was 84%, which is an improvement of 4% compared to the same period in 2022.

11. Customer satisfaction benchmarking with other local authorities indicates that Leeds is performing well in this area – comparable benchmarking is difficult due to the varied operational nature of each contact centre (i.e. size, demand and services provided by each

contact centre), but given Leeds is larger and handling higher call volumes, the satisfaction rates being achieved are encouraging.

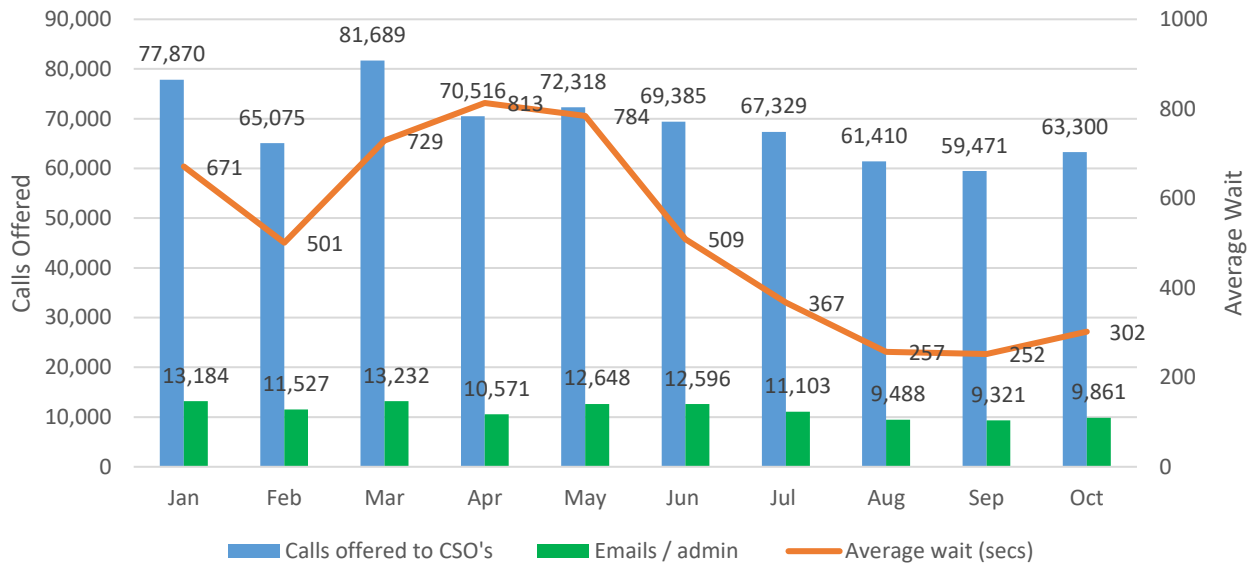
<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Overall customer satisfaction</b>
Leeds	84%
Barnsley	82%
Liverpool	75%
York	82%

12. For quality assurance purposes, a review of all calls where the customer has indicated that they were not satisfied with the service they have received is undertaken to ensure any appropriate remedial action is taken and service levels are continually improved.
13. The satisfaction survey asks customers if they had tried to find the information they needed on our website before calling. On average, 44% of customers indicated they had attempted to find the information they needed on the Council's website before calling the contact centre. This is a decrease from 48% during the same period in 2022, which suggests there is scope to improve the information available to customers on the website which will, in turn, improve the customer experience and reduce demand in the contact centre. There is more information on the ongoing channel shift work outlined later in this report.
14. Satisfaction levels for first contact resolution have increased from 77% in 2022 to 79% in 2023, along with an increase in right first time from 72% to 74%. The satisfaction data shows that improved answer times have little impact on overall satisfaction scores, although there has been an 8% increase in satisfaction in relation to time taken to answer the call in the period.
15. Appended to this report are extracts from the September and October staff newsletters which highlights a sample of compliments and feedback received about colleagues and the service they have provided.

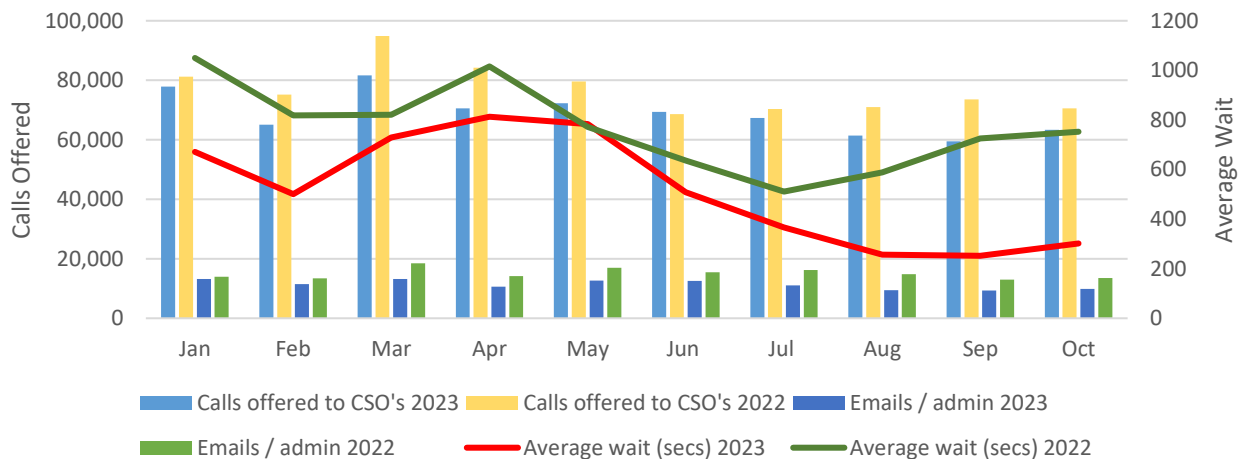
## 16. Call Handling Performance

**Chart 1** below shows call and email volumes alongside the average speed to answer calls per month for January to October 2023, and **chart 2** provides a comparison of this data with the same period in 2022.

**Chart 1 - Volume of calls, emails and average wait times Jan - Oct 2023**



**Chart 2 - Comparison of volume of calls, emails and average waiting times for Jan – Oct 2023 and 2022**



17 Overall, there has been a reduction in transactional contact from customers as some digital options have improved over the last 12 months, particularly in registrars and council tax. The trend for 2023 in terms of level of contact mirrors that for the same period in 2022, with the expected cyclical spikes in contact for council tax annual billing, school admissions and elections.

18 The average speed to answer calls within the contact centre has reduced by more than 50% in recent months – in October 2022 the average wait time was 12 minutes, compared to five minutes in 2023. This has been achieved due to several factors which include reduction in demand, increased focus on performance management and reduction of operations on some transactional lines where evidence suggests this has minimal impact.

19 From January 2023, the contact centre experienced an unprecedented demand on the Local Welfare Service as a direct consequence of the cost of living crisis. The table below

illustrates a performance comparison on this line from 2022 to 2023, which shows an increase in demand of over 200%.

	2022			2023		
	Gross Calls	Answer rate	ASA	Gross Calls	Answer rate	ASA
January	2,713	80%	602 secs	7,906 (+191%)	62%	1,372 secs
February	2,229	84%	385 secs	6,232 (+179%)	57%	1,390 secs
March	2,910	82%	450 secs	8,880 (+205%)	47%	2,772 secs
April	2,854	77%	671 secs *	9,204 (+222%)	45%	3,826 secs
May	2,770	76%	724 secs *	10,657 (+284%)	46%	3,755 secs

ASA = Average speed to answer

\* Average speed to answer impacted by the demand caused by the council tax rebate in 2022.

- 20 From May 2023, a triage service was introduced on the welfare line to improve answer times. Customer Service Officers carried out some qualification checks to see whether a customer would qualify for an award before passing them through to an assessor to complete their application. This improved the speed to answer on the line, which decreased to 522 seconds from June, 368 seconds in July and 63 seconds in August.
- 21 A freephone number was also introduced on to the welfare line from May 2023 to help residents with the cost of contact, particularly as at that time the wait times were excessive.
- 22 From late June 2023, the welfare scheme more broadly reverted to a 'crisis only' scheme due to budget constraints. This also resulted in a reduced demand for the contact centre as residents became aware they would no longer fit the award criteria for the scheme. The triage service was removed in September once performance was back within target levels. Customer satisfaction on the welfare service has decreased since the restriction of the scheme, from 89% in May to 47% in September.
- 23 Whilst the contact Centre respond to calls and undertake checks and assessments on the welfare line, the welfare service sits within the Communities, Housing and Environment Directorate and is dealt with by the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.
- 24 Reduced opening on transactional lines**
- 25 Due to the current in year financial challenge and budget constraints, recruitment has been slower due to the new vacancy controls. To maintain acceptable wait times across the service, opening hours on some transactional lines have been reduced to use existing resources more widely across the service. This approach was agreed following consultation with service leads after discussions in a Forum Network event where other local authorities shared that they had taken this approach with success and without complaint.
- 26 The lines that have reduced opening hours are transactional and have good online content. The lines are still open for a period every day for customers who need to speak with someone. There have been no complaints received from any customer about the new opening times of the lines. Service area leads have not reported any issues since the opening hours were reduced. This change has allowed us to maintain average speed of answer and reduce levels of administrative back logs (emails, applications) without recruiting to all vacant positions.

27 The reduced opening on lines will be reviewed in March 2024. The lines that are currently on reduced opening hours are large collections, pest control and blue badge.

## 28 Local Authority Benchmarking

29 The contact centre conducts regular benchmarking to other local authority contact centres. Comparable benchmarking is difficult due to the varied operational nature of each contact centre (i.e. size, demand and services provided by each contact centre). Liverpool council is of a similar size to Leeds and provides a comparable range of contact centre services.

Benchmarking April 2023 - September 2023		
	Liverpool	Leeds
Calls offered	346,770	464,029
% calls answered	77%	88%
Average speed of answer	627	466
Customer satisfaction	75%	84%
Complaints	48	87
Emails	18,343	75,588
CSO's	88.2	127.34

30 The data shows that Leeds is being offered a higher volume of calls and has a higher % of calls answered, alongside a faster average speed of answer and greater customer satisfaction, although Leeds does have larger staffing levels.

31 Leeds receives four times the volume of emails that Liverpool receives, which is an indication that we still have work to do in relation to channel shift. Further meetings are scheduled with Liverpool to understand how email channels have been reduced / diverted.

## 32 Workforce

33 Staffing levels within the contact centre have reduced in the last 12 months. Turnover within the services continues to be positive, in that staff tend to move on to higher graded roles within the authority. The contact centre has been impacted by the current recruitment controls which means that recruitment is generally taking longer. Whilst performance is improved in comparison to this period last year, we anticipate that the move into winter months coupled with the recruitment lag is likely to impact performance into quarter four.

34 It was reported to scrutiny board in September 2022 that increasing staffing levels would be key to improving call answer times ahead of any digital change which would take time to implement. Targeted recruitment campaigns were undertaken to recruit to specific shift patterns to support peak periods. Targeting shift patterns in this way has ensured that subsequent leavers have had less of an impact on the service. The contact centre is currently operating with 127.34 CSOs, which is the lowest staffing levels have been in two years. Whilst performance is currently improved from 2022, the regular turnover of leavers means that ongoing recruitment within the service is essential to maintain performance standards.

35 Approval has been given to recruit ten customer service officers over a two month period. Start dates for each group will be 15 January and 19 February, we expect that following training these staff will be effective in the telephone role from 12 February and 18 March

respectively. A decline in performance is anticipated as we expect we will have further leavers between November and March when the new starters will have completed training.

### 36 Staffing and sickness

37 Current staffing levels show that there are 15 FTE fewer Customer Services Officers in the Contact Centre compared to this time last year, yet performance levels have continued to improve.

38 Sickness levels have increased by just over 2% compared to the same period last month and there has been a small but steady increase in absence over the last 4 months. There are a number of long term sickness cases and Contact Centre management are working closely with colleagues in HR to expedite a return to work where possible.

39 Information on the council's wellbeing offer is regularly communicated through the Contact Centre communication channels along with opportunities to focus on training, development and wellbeing during the weekly People Hour.

40 Re-fresher training for managers on the Improving Attendance Policy and wellbeing offer is also being planned with a view to rolling this out in the new year.

### 41 Staffing and sickness – 2022 / 2023

	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Staffing and wellbeing</b>												
FTE (CSO)	134.3	134.64	140.34	144.16	149.07	142.4	142.4	145.35	139.16	137.55	137.55	138.04
Number of new starters (CSO)	0	4.04	6.1	4	8.51	0	5.8	2.87	0	0	0	0
Number of leavers (CSO)	3.81	0	3	1	7.608	4	4.22	2	2	1.81	0	0
Sickness %	7.89%	8.06%	7.62%	9.45%	7.95%	6.67%	5.86%	8.17%	6.83%	7.71%	7.54%	7.89%

### 42 Staffing and sickness - 2023/2024 to date

	Q1			Q2			Q3		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Staffing and wellbeing</b>									
FTE (CSO)	137.27	136.66	132.39	130.14	129.21	134.27	127.34		
Number of new starters (CSO)	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	3.00	4.00		
Number of leavers (CSO)	0.00	2.00	4.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	5.00		
Sickness %	6.13%	5.01%	4.83%	6.42%	6.61%	7.44%	8.05%		

### 43 Staff development

44 From May 2023, a group of Customer Service Support Officers began a 14-week personal development programme. The Customer Service Support Officers are responsible for delivering a helpdesk function (providing guidance on escalated calls) and delivering call coaching activity across the service.

45 The 14-week programme delivered skill based modules in areas such as coaching, communication, style awareness, motivation, delegation and negotiation in order to improve knowledge and experience amongst this cohort of staff. The course ended with an end of course presentation from each delegate. The learning is designed to help support



successions planning for the contact centre by investing into the next generation of leaders within the service.

46 It was previously reported to Scrutiny Board that the contact centre is a member of an organisation that provides learning, benchmarking, best practice and support services for contact centre functions. The contact centre has been working closely with this organisation to refine our planning and forecasting practices and ensure they are in line with best practice. In May 2023, our Resource Planning team completed a programme of learning and were awarded a Full Standards Benchmarking Accreditation which is valid for two years. This is a fantastic achievement for the team and demonstrates the progress they have made with the application of their learning in relation to planning, forecasting, scheduling and optimising contact centre performance.

#### 47 Staff survey results

48 The staff survey was completed in the first quarter of 23/24 and the contact centre had a 79% response rate, with 170 out of 216 staff taking part. The high level of staff engagement with the survey is very encouraging.

49 The overall results from the contact centre are very good, generally scoring higher than the council and directorate average scores across most indicators. Key highlights from the results are –

Indicator	Contact Centre	Directorate	Council
I know what is expected of me	96%	91%	91%
I'm kept in the loop	78%	72%	70%
I get a thank you for a job well done	72%	69%	69%
I'm treated fairly at work	85%	79%	78%
I get help and support from colleagues	91%	86%	86%
I am well supported with health, safety and wellbeing	85%	77%	76%
I am well prepared / supported through change	76%	63%	61%
I am able to speak up about any concerns	83%	77%	76%
I enjoy my job	75%	78%	78%
I have good quality appraisals	81%	70%	68%
I am well supervised / line managed	91%	79%	77%
My workload is manageable	80%	68%	62%
Our team meetings work well	80%	65%	65%
My team supports equality / preventing discrimination	92%	87%	87%

50 The high scores reflect the excellent work that has been delivered in the service in the last 12 months to improve communication, morale and motivation in the service. This has included embedding a monthly newsletter, a recognition scheme, regular performance updates, issuing all staff with a personal development plan with a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and delivering wellbeing activities in team meetings.

51 Areas where the contact centre has scored lower in the results include 'I have good quality tools, IT equipment and systems' (61%) and 'there are opportunities to progress my career' (54%).

52 The staff survey results have been shared with staff, and an action plan has been developed with a view to improving the lower scoring areas. Interventions to address the lowest scoring areas have already commenced with the development programme outlined

above and the procurement of a new telephony solution, which is covered later in this report. The overall results indicate good levels of staff satisfaction across the team which is encouraging given the pressure on performance in the team at the time the survey was conducted.

### 53 Transformation and channel shift

- 54 Council tax automation – it was reported at the last update to Scrutiny Board in September 2022 that this project would automate several council tax processes and provide options for customers to use self-service rather than visit a hub, call, or email the contact centre.
- 55 The first council tax forms were made live in December 2022 and this has resulted in a slight reduction in contact. There are a further three forms still to be made live which we anticipate will reduce contact further.

Council Tax call volumes												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2022	20,152	19,146	36,755*	36,968*	36,618*	23,509*	23,649*	19,882	18,764	19,926	18,097	12,855
2023	19,886	15,587	24,422	21,148	19,052	16,990	15,777	15,611	14,729	17,122		

\*Figures are inflated due to the £150 council tax rebate payment error.

- 56 Adult Social Care referral form - it was previously reported to Scrutiny Board that the contact centre, IDS and colleagues from Adult Social Care were working on a proof of concept that would develop a form for professionals to use for referrals, replacing unstructured emails and improving the workflow.
- 57 The form had a ‘soft launch’ in June 2023, being released to a small group of professional to complete their referrals. Since the form was launched, it has had a completion rate of 62% (form views converted to submissions). Discussions are now underway to roll out the form more widely.
- 58 Chatbot – it was reported at the last board that a proof of concept chat bot would be developed that would focus on resolving a common, simple customer requests. The bot has been developed and deployed across several service pages on leeds.gov.uk. The take up on the chatbot has been lower than anticipated and the contact centre has not realised any benefits in relation to demand reduction. This work has been paused pending a further prioritisation of contact centre transformation work.
- 59 Telephony – since the last update at Scrutiny Board procurement has taken place to implement a new telephony system for the Contact Centre as the contract for the current system expires at the end of March 2024. Work is progressing well with the implementation partner with broad engagement across the Contact Centre on the design phase. The user testing phase will take place in the new year with planned implementation of the new system by April 2024.
- 60 Phase one of the telephony will introduce ‘like for like’ switch out of functionality from the existing Avaya system to the new Genesys system. Improvements that will be delivered in phase one for the customer includes simplified auto attendants, accurately calculated call wait times, call-back facility (whilst holding place in queue), queue position and hold music.
- 61 Customer Services Officers will benefit from having one interface for all telephony activity, including receiving / making calls, improved call transfer, improved access to resources and schedules and outbound dialling technology.

62 The timescales for implementation are ambitious but positive engagement between the contact centre, IDS and implementation partners is enabling the project to be currently on track. Contingency plans are being implemented should progress slow at any point, and the risk in relation to delivering telephony is being monitored via the corporate risk register.

**What impact will this proposal have?**

63 The work outlined in this report supports our transformation agenda and channel shift strategy by offering digital and self-service options. The intention is to significantly improve the end-to-end customer experience and ensure that contact centre services are delivered in the most cost-effective way with a clear focus on delivering high quality services for our customers.

**How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

64 The work outlined in this report supports the council’s ambition to be an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation by making better use of resources and exploring the use of modern technology.

65 The work aims to improve the end-to-end customer experience and ensure that contact centre services are delivered in the most cost-effective way with a clear focus on delivering high quality services for our customers.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Wards affected:
Have ward members been consulted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

66 Engagement with relevant service areas and colleagues continues to take for each of the workstreams detailed within the report.

**What are the resource implications?**

67 The resources required for each of the projects and workstreams referenced in this report are captured within the relevant operational budgets and business cases.

**What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

68 The improvement plan is subject to a number of risks. There remains a risk that the challenging budget position and associated spending controls reduces the speed at which we can recruit and train new starters, as turnover in the service remains consistent. There is also a risk that contact grows due to increased service enquiries or as new government initiatives are rolled out. These risks are being managed through early escalation via contact centre board and a review of services that can be reduced / stopped in line with available resources for effective delivery.

69 Another key risk is the speed at which digital improvements can be delivered. This will be mitigated by the Chief Officer for IDS being part of the improvement board chaired by the Director to ensure work is prioritised.

**What are the legal implications?**

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

71 The Contact Centre Board considers all significant opportunities that are identified to improve the customer experience and the performance of the contact centre. The activity outlined in this report represents the opportunities that have been agreed through the Contact Centre Board.

### **How will success be measured?**

72 Progress against the operational action plan is being closely monitored within the service and through the Contact Centre Board. Call waiting times, abandoned rates and customer satisfaction will be monitored and will be key indicators of success

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

73 The transformation activity across the Contact Centre is ongoing. A broader review of approach to the customer is about to commence as part of the organisation design work to support the financial challenge work.

## **Appendices**

- Customer compliments extracts from staff newsletter – September and October 2023.

## **Background papers**

- None

Every month, each manager has the opportunity to submit a compliment received for someone in their team. Here is the selection for this month - keep up the amazing work!

"Personally cannot think of anything to improve customer service."

"I think it is fine. Only waited about 5 mins to get to speak with a very professional and positive gentleman."

"The telephone service as it was this morning worked perfectly well for me. The staff were very polite, friendly and helpful. Apart from giving me the information I needed, I was worried about something and they reassured me. I find it more helpful to speak to a person rather than look at apps."

"So far I could not ask for it to be any more informative and helpful."

"The phone call did the trick, can't beat 1 to 1 talking to someone."

"The advisor was amazing in her customer service and knowledge on the matter! Having called three times over the last three weeks, I was finally able to get this matter resolved and couldn't be more grateful to her! You've made my week and I truly appreciate your help on this matter! Massive thanks"

"Exceptional customer service from the advisor. He was really polite and caring. I'm impressed with service and satisfied."

"Professional and courteous assistance from the person on the phone - thank you."

"The adviser was very helpful, excellent and helped me with my problem."

"Nothing needed improving for me - what a wonderful, polite, helpful man I spoke to. Wish there was more like him when phoning other companies up. He made my day."

"Very impressed with how quickly my call was answered. Very polite and helpful and I cannot see how you could improve anything."

"I'm pleased with whom I spoke with today. Thanks a lot."

"I think this particular section of LCC is excellent. Advisor was personable, knowledgeable and friendly. He made a worrying enquiry easy to navigate and reassured me there was a solution to be found. His information was clear and succinct. Excellent service."

"The advisor who dealt with my problem was amazing. I called at 11:45 and told them my problem, she contacted the appropriate department for me and spoke to them on my behalf. At 12:08, she called me back to let me know it had already been sorted. I hope you know what an asset she is to LCC. Absolutely brilliant young lady she is."

"The service was excellent. Very nice, friendly and helpful!"

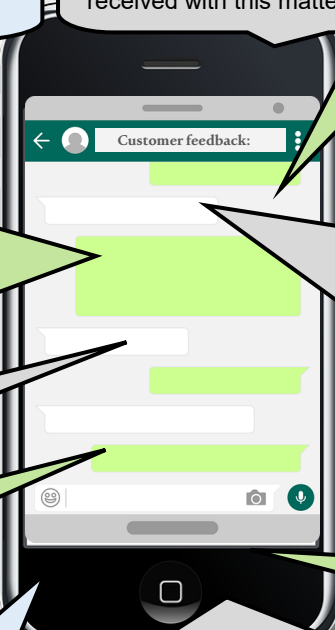
"The advisor was absolutely brilliant. Can't thank him enough. He was helpful, prompt, and resolved my query ASAP. Overall a credit to Leeds Council, give this man a promotion!"

"The lady who dealt with my call was fantastic. She was extremely helpful taking the time to find the right service to help my child. She was very kind, caring and extremely understanding to the needs. She made the referrals needed immediately. From today's experience I can't see the service needing any improvement it does a fantastic job. Well done to your staff especially the advisor I spoke to."

"Many thanks for your help - I was a bit sceptical of messenger but you have shown it works just great."

"I couldn't do the repairs online as there wasn't any instructions after putting my rent number in. The lady I spoke to was very nice and polite and had my repairs booked very efficiently. I couldn't have asked for it done better - was very impressed."

"It was very good, the lady was superb! Brilliant."



**A huge well done to everyone who has had some great feedback this month!**

**Send**

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Every month, each manager has the opportunity to submit a compliment received for someone in their team. Here is the selection for this month - keep up the amazing work!

"I'm very satisfied with the whole process. The lady was kind, caring, and explained everything to me - so for my experience, nothing needs changing."

"None, perfect. Was lovely how caring the lady was."

"Excellent! I'm glad of how simple it's been. Very stress free, thank you."

"There is nothing else you can do, you're doing everything right."

"Great service and a positive experience with the advisor."

"Very helpful and thanks to the lady I spoke to who was very knowledgeable and patient with my questions. I have had a pleasant experience today. Thank you."

"If all personnel is as helpful and pleasant as the advisor I spoke to - no improvement is necessary."

"There's no need for improvements, thank you."

"Not sure you need to, I spoke with a lady and she was very helpful."

"The adviser was very helpful, excellent, and helped me with my problem."



"Not a lot of people are website literate. Regarding the council website, it can be confusing if you don't know how to click on the right option (like myself). Luckily I didn't have to experience that today, so keep up the satisfying job you do via the phone calls. It's much easier talking to someone than having confusing websites. From one happy customer - thank you."

"You can't improve excellence, the lady I spoke to was well mannered, polite, and very helpful. The gentleman who came to fix the issue came within the 3 hours time slot on this emergency repair, it's nice to know that our health and safety is important to Leeds city council. Thank you."

"First time I used the service - the advisor was excellent and I was promised a call back ASAP. 2nd advisor called back in less than 24hrs, she was so helpful and considerate to my elderly father's needs. As it's my first experience, I can't really offer suggestions of improvement, but my experience so far has been excellent."

"Exceptional customer service from the advisor, he was really polite and caring. I'm actually impressed with the service and satisfied."

"Great experience, advisor was so lovely and understanding. I felt stupid asking for help with a commode for my bedroom as my toilet is downstairs. I'm only 38 but suffer with a lot of pain, so I felt stupid asking for help, but the lady more than helped me. Thank you."

"The person I spoke to was unsure of the help I needed but found out for me which I thought was very professional and I was happy with the service I received".

"I was very pleased with the phone call and the advisor I spoke to. She was very helpful and very professional."

"The service provided during my call was thorough, professional and the advisor was engaging. I therefore have no comments to improve the service."

"The advisor I spoke to was extremely helpful and professional."

"Difficult to improve, the advisor was so kind in attitude and compassion. The help and advice given during our time of bereavement was unlimited and very important to us. Please pass on our grateful gratitude, thank you."

"The lady was very helpful and explained everything clearly. I'm very happy how she dealt with my query."

"No improvement needed. The advisor who I spoke with was very efficient in her work and very nice to talk to, and solved everything I needed to know in a polite and professional manner. Thank you."

"If I'm been honest, you couldn't do anything more than what you already are. We had a council tax query but that was sorted out promptly and the question today was resolved perfectly. Thank you."

"Thank you so much for solving my problem love. Thanks a lot. I was so happy to talk to you, you were so nice and friendly as well."

"It was very good, the lady was superb - actually both ladies I spoke to. Brilliant."

"The advice and service I received was excellent. The adviser was helpful and courteous, and answered my query timeously."

"Excellent in every way."

"The lady I spoke with today couldn't do anymore. The level of service was fantastic, she was very helpful and a pleasure to have spoken to. Thank you for your time and help today."



**A huge well done to everyone who has had some great feedback this month!**



## Work Programme

Date: 11 December 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

The report sets out the draft 2023/24 work programme for the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) and reflects initial views from Board members at the June Board meeting and through subsequent consideration of work programme reports at each public meeting.

All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year. In doing so, the work programme should not be considered a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year.

The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include 'to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme.'

Members will be invited to review and discuss the work programme at each public Scrutiny Board meeting that takes place during the 2023/24 municipal year.

### Recommendations

- a) Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

## What is this report about?

- 1 A draft work programme for the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the programme are known items of scrutiny activity, including performance and budget monitoring and identified Budget and Policy Framework items.
- 2 The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 22 November 2023 are also provided at Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.
- 3 Under the Sources of Work agenda item considered at the 19 June meeting of the Board initial views on work programming were put forward by Board Members, Executive Board Members and comments were also heard from senior officers. In addition, discussion at subsequent Board meetings under this item are reflected in Appendix 1.
- 4 Board members may note some adjustments to the timing of agenda items. Plans to bring an item forward on the Councils continuing corporate approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) featuring input from the staff networks has now been moved from the December meeting to February 2024 with an update item on West Yorkshire Joint Services now replacing that on the agenda for today's meeting.
- 5 The Leeds 2023 Evaluation item has moved from February to March 2024 to provide additional time for evaluation approaches to be developed and commenced. In addition, there is a digital strategy update report planned for the March 2024 meeting of the Board this will cover the approach to AI item that was previously a standalone report and the Contact Centre item being considered at today's meeting does have some content on development of chatbot technology.
- 6 Following discussion on staff well-being and staff mental health at the October meeting of the Board an item will be brought back to the Board in 2024 to provide a further update on that work stream. It is noted that members considered well-being and mental health to be separate issues, and this will be reflected in the planned report.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 7 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year.

## How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 8 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the priorities in the Best City Ambition.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 9 To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to establish and maintain an effective, early dialogue with relevant Directors, senior officers and Executive Board Members.
- 10 The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.
- 11 The Board's Work Programme is the subject of consultation with Board members at each public meeting and is subject to input from relevant Directors, senior officers and Executive Board Members both early in the municipal year and on an ongoing basis.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 12 Experience has shown that the Scrutiny process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time.
- 13 The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.
- 14 Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
  - Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
  - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
  - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 15 This report has no specific risk management implications.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 16 This report has no specific legal implications.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Draft work programme 2023/24
- Appendix 2: Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 22 November 2023.

### **Background papers**

- None

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## Appendix 1 Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2023/24 Municipal Year

June	July	August
<b>Meeting Agenda for 19 June 2023</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 17 July 2023</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.</b>
Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference / Sources of Work / Co-opted members reports (Development Briefings)  Performance Update (Performance Monitoring)  Organisation Plan (Pre-decision Scrutiny)	Leeds 2023 Progress Update (Performance Monitoring)  People Management Update (Policy/Service Review)  Financial and Treasury Management Outturn (Performance Monitoring)	
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Site Visits</b>		



## Appendix 1 Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2023/24 Municipal Year

September	October	November
<b>Meeting Agenda for 18 September 2023</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 16 October 2023</b>	<b>No meeting</b>
Electoral Services Update – 2023 Election Review/Postal Voter Validation (Performance Monitoring)  Staff Survey Analysis (Performance Monitoring)  Office for Local Government (OFLOG) (Pre-decision Scrutiny)	Medium Term Financial Strategy (Performance Monitoring)  Financial Health Monitoring 2023/24 (Performance Monitoring)  Best City Ambition (Pre-decision Scrutiny)  Attendance Management and Mental Health Well Being (Performance Monitoring)	
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Site Visits</b>		
	<i>Contact Centre Site Visit - TBC</i>	



## Appendix 1 Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2023/24 Municipal Year

December	January	February
<b>Meeting Agenda 11 December 2023</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 15 January 2024</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 19 February 2024</b>
West Yorkshire Joint Services Update (Policy/Service Review)  Customer Contact – Performance Update (Performance Monitoring)  LGA Peer Challenge – Progress Review (Performance Monitoring)  Annual Corporate Risk Management Report (Performance Monitoring)	Performance Report (Policy/Service Review / Performance Monitoring)  Financial Health Monitoring 2023/24 (Performance Monitoring)  The Proposed Budget 2024/25 and Provisional Budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 (Pre-decision Scrutiny)  Best City Ambition (Performance Monitoring)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Corporate Approach & Staff Networks – Feedback (Policy/Service Review)  Procurement Update (Performance Monitoring)  DIS Helpdesk (Performance Monitoring)
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
Budget Working Group – 20/12/2023 at 10.00AM		
<b>Site Visits</b>		
	Visit to the Contact Centre – TBC	



## Appendix 1 Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2023/24 Municipal Year

March	April	Notes
<b>Meeting Agenda for 25 March 2024</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.</b>	<b>Items to be scheduled</b>
Leeds 2023 Evaluation and Legacy (Performance Monitoring)  Digital Strategy Update – (Performance Monitoring)		
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Site Visits</b>		



## EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2023

**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

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

**RESOLVED** – That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt from publication on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-

- (A) That Appendix 1 to the report entitled, ‘Delivery of New Affordable Housing at Sugar Hill, Oulton’, referred to in Minute No. 66 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 and be considered in private. This is on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular parties (including the Council). This information is not publicly available from the statutory registers of information kept in respect of companies and charities. It is considered that since this information was obtained through the grant application process then it is not in the public interest to disclose this information at this time. Also, it is considered that the release of such information would, or would be likely to prejudice the Council’s financial interests in relation to other similar transactions. It is therefore considered that in these circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- (B) That Appendix 1 to the report entitled, ‘Eastgate and Harewood Quarter (Phase 2)’, referred to in Minute No. 68 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 and be considered in private. This is on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and affected parties (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that the release of this information is likely to be prejudicial to the commercial interests of both the Council and affected parties and could have a negative impact on negotiations on this matter and/or matters of a similar nature. This information is not publicly available from the statutory registers of information kept in respect of certain

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to be held on Wednesday, 13th December, 2023

companies and charities. It is therefore considered that in these circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**63 Late Items**

There were no late items of business submitted to the Board for consideration.

**64 Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

**65 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

**HOUSING**

**66 Delivery of New Affordable Housing at Sugar Hill, Oulton**

The Director of City Development and the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a joint report providing an update on the Council's ongoing support for the residents of Sugar Hill and Wordsworth Drive, Oulton, and detailing a proposal to continue to work collaboratively with Leeds Federated Housing Association (LFHA) to support the appropriate redevelopment of the site to deliver 70 new affordable homes. The report also set out a recommendation to approve the allocation of a sum from the Council's Affordable Housing Commuted Sums programme to fund a grant to LFHA, which would support the delivery of 30 Affordable Rented homes in total as part of the scheme.

The Executive Member introduced the report, providing an overview of the proposals and details of the work undertaken by the Council and in collaboration with LFHA to support the former residents.

Responding to enquiries, the Board received further information regarding:

- the timing of the proposals, which it was noted were in response to the ongoing engagement with former residents and the desire shown by former residents to return. It was also noted that the proposals would enable the Council to provide a formal commitment to LFHA in relation to the delivery of housing on the site so that the appropriate mix of housing tenure could be determined; and
- the implications for the proposed housing delivery on the site should the allocation from the Affordable Housing Commuted Sums fund not be provided. Specifically, it was noted that the mix of tenure would change, reducing the number of Affordable Rented Homes available, which would in turn reduce the potential for former residents who wanted to rent a home to return.

In addition, assurance was provided on the extensive and ongoing engagement which continued to be undertaken with the former residents, including engagement on how affordable housing on site would potentially be

allocated. It was also noted that consultation would be undertaken on the proposed Local Lettings Policy.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the submitted report designated as being exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the public part of the meeting, it was

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Council's continued engagement with former tenants of the Sugar Hill and Wordsworth Close estate and their representatives, be noted; and that the actions undertaken to prevent homelessness following eviction by the previous landlord, and the positive way in which Leeds Federated Housing Association has engaged with previous tenants and supported the remaining protected tenants on the estate following acquisition of the site also be noted;
- (b) That a commitment of £2,824,553 Affordable Housing Commuted Sums funds to Leeds Federated Housing Association, be approved, which will uplift the delivery of Affordable Rented homes on the site from 14 to 30;
- (c) That approval be given for the Council to enter into a grant agreement with Leeds Federated Housing Association on the terms as set out within the submitted report; and that full details of the agreement be delegated to the Director of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing;
- (d) That approval be given for the Council to implement a Local Lettings Policy for all of the 30 grant-funded Affordable Rented homes, on the terms as set out within the submitted report, with full details of the agreement being delegated to the Director of Communities, Housing & Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing.

#### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

- 67 Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy Action Plan Annual Update 2023**  
Further to Minute No. 113, 8 February 2023, the Director of City Development submitted a report which presented the second Annual Progress Report of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy (CLTS) Action Plan, covering the period from October 2022 to October 2023. The full Annual Progress Report was detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

In considering the report, a Member raised several concerns regarding the approach being taken as part of the transport strategy, which he felt was resulting in a reduced level of accessibility to, and around the city centre, and also reduced transport connectivity for communities in the outer areas of Leeds.

Responding to the concerns raised, further detail was provided on a number of areas, as summarised below:

- The extensive consultation which had been undertaken over a number of years as part of the establishment of the strategy was highlighted, together with the actions taken in response to the feedback received. The delivery of infrastructure in the city centre to facilitate faster and more reliable bus services was specifically referenced as an example;
- Clarification was provided on the respective levels of accessibility in the city centre that remained for taxis and private vehicles, with the city centre's car parking offer also being highlighted;
- Emphasis was placed upon how the actions being taken via the strategy aimed to ensure that Leeds has a world class city centre and is an attractive and welcoming environment for all users;
- The high level of activity over the past 12 months on a range of schemes was acknowledged, together with the practical issues arising from the delivery of some schemes in the city centre. However, the benefits from those schemes were highlighted.

The Board also received an update on the recent footfall levels in the city centre. It was noted that people continued to steadily return to the city centre following the pandemic, with the statistics referenced in the meeting evidencing that city centre footfall continued to increase when compared to this time last year.

The teams involved in the delivery of key city centre schemes, such as City Square, over the past 12 months were thanked for their efforts, which it was acknowledged were often being undertaken in challenging circumstances.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the submitted Annual Progress Report of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy - Action Plan 1 (2021 - 2024), including key successes and progress towards objectives, be noted;
- (b) That the funding challenges relating to meeting related ambitions and targets, as outlined in the submitted report, be noted;
- (c) That it be noted that further significant new measures may be required by the end of 2024 in order to meet our net zero targets, and that agreement be given for a further report to be brought to Executive Board to detail these as part of the development of Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy Action Plan 2.

#### **RESOURCES**

##### **68 Eastgate and Harewood Quarter (Phase 2)**

The Director of City Development submitted a report providing an update on the current position regarding the development of the Eastgate Phase 2 site and which presented the key next steps requiring the Council's approval which looked to ensure that this regeneration opportunity could proceed in a deliverable way.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member provided an update on the current position regarding Phase 2 of the development and highlighted the changing property market conditions which the proposals within the report were looking to respond to.

The Board welcomed the report, with a Member suggesting that the potential for residential provision be explored as part of any future Phase 2 development.

The Chief Executive provided further context on the engagement which had taken place with key partners and the approach which had been taken over the past decade to successfully reconfigure the retail offer in the city. It was also highlighted that the proposals within the report provided an opportunity to complement what had been achieved with a mixed use development.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the submitted report designated as being exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the public part of the meeting, it was

**RESOLVED** – That approval be granted to:-

- (a) Progress the heads of terms, as outlined within the submitted report; and
- (b) Delegate to the Director of City Development (in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources) the ratification of the final details and any further amendments to the terms agreed and to the developer selected by Hammerson.

## **69 Financial Reporting 2023/24 - Quarter 2**

The Chief Officer, Financial Services submitted a report which presented the Council's financial position as at the end of the first six months of the 2023/24 financial year. Specifically, the report reviewed the current position against the 2023/24 Budget and provided an update in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund, the Capital Programme and the Treasury Management Strategy. Additionally, the report sought approval of several injections into the Capital Programme.

In presenting the report the Executive Member provided an overview of the key points which included the current forecasting of an overspend of £30.5m for the General Fund as at month 6 of the financial year. In considering this, specific reference was made to the increased demand that continued to be experienced in services relating to Looked After Children, with it being emphasised that this was a national trend. Further detail was also provided on the other key aspects of the Financial Health Monitoring section of the report, the Capital Programme and the Treasury Management Strategy.

In considering the report, it was anticipated that further discussion would be had on such matters when the Board considered the initial budget proposals

in December 2023, and leading up to the budget setting discussion in February 2024.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That in respect of the Financial Health Monitoring 2023/24 – Month 6 (September 2023), as detailed at Appendix A to the submitted report:
- (i) As at Month 6 (September 2023) it be noted that the Authority's General Fund revenue budget is forecasting an overspend of £30.5m for 2023/24 (5.3% of the approved net revenue budget) within a challenging national context, with it also being noted that a range of actions are being undertaken to achieve a balanced budget position;
  - (ii) As at Month 6 (September 2023) it be noted that the Authority's Housing Revenue Account is forecasting an overspend of £1.9m for 2023/24 (0.7% of the approved gross expenditure budget);
  - (iii) It be noted that known inflationary increases, including demand and demographic pressures in Social Care and known impacts of the rising cost of living, including the NJC pay settlement of £1,925 and the JNC pay settlement of 3.5%, have been incorporated into this reported financial position. 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 in order to absorb any additional pressures;
  - (iv) 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 2019;
  - (v) The Month 6 positions with regard to the use of Invest to Save, Covid Backlog and Flexible Capital Receipt resources, be noted, together with the additional planned use of £1m of Capital Receipts in 2023/24 to support transformation projects and deliver savings in addition to the budgeted use approved by the Board in September.
- (b) That in respect of the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Quarter 2, as detailed at Appendix B to the submitted report:
- (i) The following injections into the Capital Programme, as detailed at Appendix B1 (iii) of the submitted report, be approved:
    - £15,325.8k of grant funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) for Active Travel Tranche 3 and 4 Schemes;
    - £3,998.0k of DFE Post 16 Capacity Fund Grant for Pudsey Grammar School;
    - £1,474.8k of Disabled Facilities Grant re Additional Allocations for 23-24 and 24-25; and
    - £1,728.3k of other secured external funding contributions.

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to be held on Wednesday, 13th December, 2023

- (ii) That it be noted that the resolutions above to inject funding of £22,526.9k will be implemented by the Chief Officer Financial Services;
  - (iii) That the latest position on the General Fund and HRA Capital Programme, as at quarter 2 2023/24, be noted;
  - (iv) That the additional Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme (CRIS) allocations to Wards and Community Committees for the period April 2023 to September 2023 of £144.1k, be noted;
  - (v) That the spending priority for investment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategic Fund, as matched funding contributions for Strategic Highways and Transportation Schemes, be agreed.
- (c) That in respect of the Treasury Management Strategy Update 2023/24, as detailed at Appendix C to the submitted report:
- (i) The update on the Treasury Management borrowing and investment strategy 2023/24, be noted.

## **ECONOMY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

### **70 Friendship Oath with the City of Kharkiv**

The Director of City Development submitted a report which sought the Board's approval for a Friendship Oath to be signed between the city of Leeds and the city of Kharkiv in Ukraine to officially mark the development of a more formal link between the two cities and the start of negotiations with the aim of forming a Friendship Agreement.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member provided the Board with an overview of the context which had led to the proposals within the report, including a White Paper Motion resolution of Full Council from 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Also, it was noted that the proposed signing of the Friendship Oath was now scheduled to take place in Prague, rather than Brno, as had been referenced within the submitted report.

In considering this matter, Members highlighted the importance of the support being provided by Leeds to the Ukrainian community via a range of different initiatives, and that the signing of the Friendship Oath would mark the next step in developing further relations with Ukraine and Kharkiv.

Members welcomed and supported the proposals within the submitted report.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the signing of a Friendship Oath between the city of Leeds and Kharkiv in Ukraine be agreed;

- (b) That the proposal for the Lord Mayor of Leeds to sign the Friendship Oath in the presence of the Mayor of Kharkiv City Council on 2nd December 2023 in the city of Prague, be supported;
- (c) That the start of negotiations with the city of Kharkiv on the terms of a Friendship Agreement with a May 2024 deadline, be approved, with the detail of any Friendship Agreement being subject to securing external funds to support partnership activity;
- (d) That the resolutions of the Board arising from the submitted report be exempted from the Call In process pursuant to paragraph 5.1.3 of the Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules on the grounds of urgency, as set out in full at paragraphs 10, 23 and 24 of the submitted report.

(The Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules state that a decision may be declared as being exempt from the Call In process by the decision taker if it is considered that the matter is urgent and any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's, or the public's interests. In line with this, the resolutions contained within this minute were exempted from the Call In process, as per resolution (d) above, and for the reasons as set out within sections 10, 23 and 24 of the submitted report)

## **COMMUNITIES**

### **71 Cost of Living - Update Report**

Further to Minute No. 26, 26 July 2023, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which provided an update on the cost-of-living situation in Leeds and which reflected upon national policy interventions and the actions being taken by the Council and partners in response to such matters.

The Executive Member introduced the report highlighting the key aspects within it and made specific reference to the work being undertaken in this area by the Council and its partners. The increased demand being faced across a range of related support services was highlighted, together with the impact arising from such increased demand. The proposed programme of work scheduled to provide a range of support over the coming winter months was also specifically noted.

Thanks was extended to those officers and partner organisations involved in the continued provision of services in this area.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report be noted, and that the approach being adopted, be endorsed;
- (b) That it be noted that the Director, Communities, Housing and Environment will be responsible for overseeing and implementing any actions arising from the submitted report.



**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** FRIDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00PM, FRIDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023

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