

Being Our Best – our organisation plan for 2023 onwards

Date: 21 June 2023

Report of: Director of Strategy and Resources

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

- 'Being Our Best – our organisation plan for 2023 onwards' sets out the vision for Leeds City Council to be the best Council in the best City, and our role as a key partner in the Best City Ambition. The plan responds to recommendations from the [Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge in 2022](#). The Peer Challenge provided recommendations covering our values, culture and workforce; locality and community working; transformation approach across the organisation; financial planning and our role and influence within and beyond Leeds. A copy of the Being Our Best plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- Being Our Best is aimed at the 2000+ appraising managers across the council to support and assist them in bringing the best out of their staff and teams to deliver the best services to people who live and work in our city. The plan is underpinned by our council values and refreshed behaviours providing a framework for all our managers and staff.
- To ensure accountability, four clear expectations for our appraising managers are set out with the plan: live the council values and behaviours; lead your teams to be their best; engage in the Be Your Best Manager programme; and influence and deliver the changes affecting us all. Managers will be supported through the Be Your Best Manager Development Programme.
- To ensure we continue to evolve to meet the ongoing financial and demand pressures, five interdependent cross council change priorities are identified that will ensure we modernise as an organisation: improving efficiency in how we do business in the council; improving our digital offer; improving how we serve customers; improving how we work with people and families; and improving the coordination of our services locally.
- This is a transitional year for the organisation plan, with feedback from managers, services, and scrutiny important to help shape implementation and future refinement. To ensure Being Our Best remains aligned to the Best City Ambition, the plan will be reviewed over the year with a revised version presented to Executive Board in Spring 2024. Progress will be measured through the council's performance management framework including regular reporting to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and Annual Performance report to Executive Board.

Recommendations

Members of Executive Board are asked to:

- a) To approve 'Being Our Best – our organisation plan 2023 onwards', established in response to the Best City Ambition and the findings and recommendations of the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- b) Note that this report and the Being Our Best publication will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board at their June 2023 meeting.
- c) Note that Director of Strategy and Resources will be responsible for the refresh of the Being Our Best plan following feedback during the year as we implement and progress the Be Your Best manager development programme.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report provides Executive Board with our revised organisation plan 'Being Our Best – our organisation plan for 2023 onwards', setting out the vision for Leeds City Council to be the best Council in the best City, and our role as a key partner in the Best City Ambition. The plan responds to recommendations from the [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Corporate Peer Challenge in 2022](#). The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report was considered by Executive Board at their December 2022 meeting, with the action plan developed in response to the recommendations considered by Executive Board and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board at their February 2023 meetings.
- 2 The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge provided recommendations on the following themes:
 - **Values, culture and workforce** - keep being Leeds, keep being ambitious and living the values of collaboration, compassion and convening; be mindful of the risk of staff burnout and provide clarity about priorities especially as budgets further reduce; build on the success of the EDI and staff networks to embed EDI in the council.
 - **Locality Working** - review locality working to improve clarity and coherence for the council, partners and communities; review and develop the community committees; invest in member development.
 - **Financial planning** - consider a more outcomes focused and evidence-based approach to medium-term financial planning; prepare for the financial challenges ahead; share internally best practice on specialist commissioning.
 - **Transformation approach as an organisation** - develop capacity for transformation and change; use the opportunity of the digital transformation to co-produce with middle managers systems that are more agile and responsive to their needs.
 - **Work beyond the city** – strengthen relationships with the Mayoral Combined Authority; explore opportunities to be a new national exemplar for community-led integrated public service delivery; continue to influence and improve policy and practice in partnership with national and local government.
- 3 Underpinned by our shared organisation values and refreshed behaviours for all staff across the organisation, the Being Our Best plan sets out the transformation required for the council to meet the ongoing financial challenge and delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. A copy of the Being Our Best plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4 Across the council we have committed and passionate staff who take pride in delivering a wide range of services, do fantastic work with local councillors, city partners and the public to achieve the Best City Ambition. The energy and enthusiasm for our city-wide Team Leeds approach that values everyone, is mirrored by our values-led culture that's open, fair and by our staff working to help us tackle poverty and inequality and improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. We know that we don't always get everything right, so are constantly aiming to improve further, with this plan and the associated Be Your Best manager development

programme important aspects of that improvement, alongside other major developments such as improving our digital offer.

- 5 The Being Our Best plan was developed through engagement with leaders and managers across the council. This plan is aimed at our 2,000+ appraising managers recognising their role in driving forward our values-led culture, leading high performing teams that deliver innovative services meeting the changing demands and expectations of the people who live and work in the city.
- 6 In addition to a range of resources appraising managers can access in their day-to-day roles, the Being Our Best plan includes four clear expectations of our manager. These expectations provide an accountability framework for all our appraising managers.
- 7 We continue to have an ambition to be an efficient, enterprising, healthy, and inclusive organisation. To achieve this and meet the financial and demand pressures we need to keep evolving, through maximising digital opportunities and redesigning how we deliver our services to our customers, families, and communities across the city. Within the plan, five interdependent cross council change priorities are identified which all appraising managers will need to help drive forwards to ensure we modernise as an organisation.
- 8 This is a transitional year for the organisation plan, with feedback from managers, services, and scrutiny important to help shape implementation and future refinement. To ensure Being Our Best remains aligned to the Best City Ambition, the plan will be reviewed over the year with a revised version presented to Executive Board in Spring 2024.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 9 At the heart of the Being Our Best plan is the direction of the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 10 Informed by the LGA Corporate Challenge recommendations, the Being Our Best Plan has been developed through consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team, Chief Officers and appraising managers from across the council.
- 11 The LGA Corporate Challenge action plan that Being Our Best has been drawn from was discussed at the February 2023 meetings of Executive Board and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board. This report will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in June 2023, and managers will feed back during the year about its implementation so that further refinement can be made in future years.

What are the resource implications?

- 12 There are no specific resource implications at this stage, although it is expected that improving coherence of the main organisational changes and having clearer expectations of managers will help deliver savings for the Financial Challenge. Any subsequent implications will be picked up as part of the regular budget planning, monitoring, and reporting cycle.

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

- 13 Any risks associated with the five interdependent change priorities will be considered in line with the regular approach to risk management and reporting.

What are the legal implications?

- 14 There are no specific legal implications arising from the Being Our Best plan. 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?

- 15 The Best City Ambition is the overarching vision to tackle inequality and improve lives for a better future in Leeds. The Being Our Best plan, whilst not part of the Budget and Policy Framework, sets out the organisational direction and provides our organisation response to the Best City Ambition and the LGA Peer Challenge.

How will success be measured?

- 16 A follow up visit by the LGA Peer challenge team to assess progress against the peer challenge recommendations will take place in September 2023. This will be a method of assessing the progress of this plan. Alongside this, progress will be measured through the council's performance management framework including regular reporting to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and Annual Performance report to Executive Board.

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

- 17 The Being Our Best – our organisation plan for 2023 onwards is being reported to Executive Board for approval in June 2023 via this report and will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in June 2023.
- 18 The Director of Strategy and Resources and the Head of Corporate Support will be responsible for the implementation of this organisation plan and the review ahead of a revised plan reported to Executive Board in Spring 2024.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Being Our Best – our organisation plan for 2023 onwards.

Background papers

- None.