

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Arif

1 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

2 Late Items

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

3 Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5 Chair's Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the first Executive Board meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year, and in doing so specifically welcomed Councillors A Lamb and J Lennox to their first meeting as Board Members.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

6 Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership - Annual Report 2021/23

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report introducing the Annual Report of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP). The report provided details of the range of activity which had been undertaken by the LSCP over a 24-month period between 2021-2023 in relation to the Partnership's priorities, leadership, progress and its impact. The report also provided details of the learning from reviews undertaken during this period.

The Board welcomed to the meeting Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, Independent Chair of the LSCP; together with representatives of the LSCP Executive Group: Chief Superintendent Steve Dodds, West Yorkshire Police; Gill Marchant, Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children, NHS Leeds; and Julie Longworth, Director for Children and Families, Leeds City Council.

By way of introduction, the Executive Member highlighted several key points including the strength of the partnership and the key role played by all partners including the third sector; the ongoing learning processes in place and the complex and challenging circumstances being experienced nationally which formed the backdrop to which all safeguarding work was being undertaken.

Throughout the discussion Board Members and partners extended their thanks to Jasvinder Sanghera, given that she was coming to the end of her term of office as LSCP Independent Chair. Members highlighted the dedication that she has shown throughout her time in the role and welcomed the challenge that she brought as Independent Chair.

Chief Superintendent Dodds, as a member of the LSCP Executive Group, provided a summary of the key issues highlighted within the annual report together with the identified priorities moving forward. This was followed by Jasvinder Sanghera providing a precis of the annual report from her perspective as Independent Scrutineer.

Responding to questions from Members and associated discussion arising from the report, the Board was provided with further detail on the following:-

- how the dissemination and embedding of learning from reviews was being implemented in practice;
- clarification was provided that the intention was for the partnership to continue to have an 'independent scrutineer' in place which would follow on from the role of the Independent Chair of the LSCP, with it being noted that the recruitment process for the new 'scrutineer' was underway;
- an update regarding the role and ongoing work of the LSCP sub groups;
- the process, associated consultation and timeframe for the review of the partnership's priorities moving forward;
- the current position regarding children being educated at home in Leeds, and the work being undertaken in this area;
- the ongoing relationship between the LSCP and the Council's Scrutiny Board;
- the levels of demand and challenging circumstances that continued to be experienced in the delivery of safeguarding services, and the need to ensure that such matters continued to be raised with Government.

In conclusion, Members welcomed the detailed discussion which had taken place and thanked all of the partner organisations for the ongoing role that they played in relation to the provision of safeguarding of children and young people across the city.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, the contents of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual Report for 2021/23, as appended, together with the comments made during the discussion, be noted;

- (b) That the journey of significant improvements to the safeguarding system within Leeds, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (c) That the areas for further improvements and/or assurance, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted.

7 'Thriving': The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Further to Minute No. 68, 19 October 2022, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting a further update on 'Thriving' – the Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds and the ongoing activity that sat beneath the strategy. The report presented an update on each workstream, including outcomes to date and next steps, and considered the impact that the national cost of living crisis continued to have upon local levels of poverty, including the effect upon children and families.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted the key themes within the update and provided clarification on the statistics for the number of people living in 'relative poverty' from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), underlining that the DWP had advised that such figures should not be used in comparison with previous years.

In considering the report, Members discussed the respective roles that both the Council and Government had in mitigating the levels and impact of child poverty in Leeds. In addition to the work already being undertaken by the Council in this area, it was highlighted that any suggestions of ways in which the Council could further mitigate the impact of child poverty would be welcomed.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the ongoing strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, together with the work being undertaken by the Council and other partners in the key areas of activity, be endorsed;
- (b) That the need to promote the work of the 'Thriving' strategy across the city and across Council directorates and through our wider city partnerships, in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families, be acknowledged;
- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for such matters is the Chief Officer for Family Help, Children and Families.

8 Report to consider a Council Resolution agreed at a meeting of Full Council on 22 March 2023

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report following a White Paper Motion resolution of Full Council at its meeting on 22nd March 2023 regarding the issue of Children's Safeguarding (Minute No. 99, meeting of Full Council, 22 March 2023 refers).

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted key points arising from it, together with the cross-party approach which had been taken during the compilation of the report via a recent meeting with Political Group Leaders and given the report's recommendation for the Council to issue a cross-party letter to Government.

Responding to questions from Members, the Board was provided with further detail on the following:-

- The learning which had been undertaken and the effective procedures established to ensure that appropriate notification procedures were in place in the event of a serious safeguarding incident;
- The robustness of the referral process in place to the Review Advisory Group, and the actions being taken to ensure that the correct culture was being embedded so that colleagues felt able to escalate a matter at the appropriate time; with a Member seeking further information on the number of referrals which had been made and the source of those referrals;
- The level of notifications regarding serious safeguarding incidents in Leeds, when compared to other Authorities, and how such matters were being monitored;
- Emphasis was placed upon the commitment to openness and transparency in relation to safeguarding matters, but with the acknowledgement that the welfare of any children involved would always take priority;
- In discussing the Local Authority's legal responsibility regarding the reporting of serious incidents and responding to a Member's question and comments about the relevant processes established in Leeds, the Board discussed the current position in Leeds and the partnership approach being taken. Also, given the complex nature of this area, strong partnership working alongside the embedding of learning were highlighted as key factors in ensuring that such processes remained effective. It was also emphasised that consideration of such matters would continue.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work the Council is undertaking to safeguard children where they may be linked to persons posing risk of sexual harm, in the circumstances as set out within the submitted report, be noted and endorsed;
- (b) That it be noted and endorsed that the Council upholds and enacts the principles of openness and transparency for independent and democratic scrutiny of children's safeguarding;
- (c) That it be noted and endorsed that the Council is committed to continuing the current model of independent oversight, by having a role of Independent Scrutineer;
- (d) That agreement be given for a cross-party letter to be sent to central Government, addressed to the newly established Child Protection

Ministerial Group, and in view of the issues raised by the submitted report and the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, this letter will request a review of legislation and statutory guidance, in order to identify improvements and/or amendments to legislation; in particular those that will strengthen the voice of the child and the child's need and right to know about their individual circumstances. This letter will also highlight the multiple use of different assessment risk tools, across agencies, and request a review into these, and whether a more standard approach could be adopted.

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

9 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Years 2 and 3

Further to Minute No. 70, 19 October 2022, the Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update on the development and progress of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Leeds and which proposed arrangements for the delivery approach and authorisation of expenditure for projects in years 2 and 3.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the progress made regarding delivery, together with the challenges experienced in relation to the UKSPF hyper local programme in Leeds in year one, be noted;
- (b) That the Leeds City Council delivery plan for years two and three, as detailed within the submitted report, which form part of the West Yorkshire Local Investment Plan (LIP), be supported;
- (c) That approval be given to the delegation of the necessary authority to the following for the authorisation of expenditure for projects in years two and three:-
 - (i) The Director of City Development who also retains overall responsibility for UKSPF Programme delivery;
 - (ii) The Director of Adults and Health in relation to those projects designated for delivery by Adults and Health in paragraph 24 of the submitted report;
 - (iii) The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment in relation to those projects designated for delivery by Communities, Housing and Environment in paragraph 24 of the submitted report;
 - (iv) The Director of Strategy and Resources in relation to those projects designated for delivery by Strategy and Resources in paragraph 24 of the submitted report.

10 Leeds' Cultural Investment Programme

Further to Minute No. 20, 27 July 2022, the Director of City Development submitted a report setting out proposals to enable the Council to modernise its cultural investments and relationships with the independent cultural sector across the city following the review and consultation undertaken. The report

summarised the headline findings from the work undertaken and presented the recommendations arising for the period April 2024 to March 2027.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted the range of economic, social and wellbeing benefits arising from a strong cultural sector in Leeds.

Responding to an enquiry regarding the impact of the LEEDS 2023 initiative, the Board received an update on the delivery of the programme to date, providing details of key events and the economic impact being realised as a result of LEEDS 2023.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That approval be given to redesignate the current grant programmes (arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired) to the 'Leeds Cultural Investment Programme', which will work to the shared aims, priorities, principles and implementation approach, as set out in the submitted report;
- (b) That approval be given to a new three-year investment programme for 2024/25 to 2026/2027, based upon the existing annual investment of £1,835,720 across the two present funds (arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired), and that it be noted that funding commitments will be subject to annual Council budget setting and therefore subject to potential change;
- (c) That following resolution (b) (above), agreement be given to the Director of City Development using his existing delegated powers to approve grant funding decisions for these programmes, with awards of grants being made in accordance with the proposed aims, principles and priorities, and in support of the Best City Ambition.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

11 Being Our Best - Our Organisational Plan for 2023 Onwards

The Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report presenting a revised organisational plan for the Council from 2023 onwards. The proposals respond to the recommendations of the 2022 Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge across a range of areas and sets out the vision to be the best Council in the best city, whilst also further establishing the Council's role as a key partner in the Best City Ambition.

Responding to a specific enquiry regarding the proportion of Council employees working from home and how this affected productivity levels, it was undertaken that information would be provided to the Member in question with regard to workplace occupancy levels and also relevant details from the recent staff survey.

In response to concerns raised by a Member regarding the principle of no longer displaying comments from the public on the Council's Planning Portal and the process by which that change was made, the Board was provided

with further information on the reasons for the change together with details of the process and consultation undertaken to implement it. The reasons for the change included resourcing constraints and key risks in relation to the inappropriate use of Public Access as a forum for antagonistic comments and a number of implications arising from that. It was emphasised that, consistent with the statutory process, comments from the public on planning applications could still be submitted and although not publicly visible, would still be recorded and considered. It was also noted that this was a 6 month trial and that the matter would be considered by Scrutiny at the conclusion of the trial. In conclusion, it was undertaken that the Member in question would be provided with specific details of the consultation process.

Reflecting on the issues experienced with regard to the online portal and any lessons that could be learned, it was suggested that further consideration with Members could be given to the way in which the Council interacts with the public more generally in future.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Council's 'Being Our Best – Our Organisation Plan for 2023 Onwards', as appended to the submitted report, and which has been established in response to the Best City Ambition and the findings and recommendations of the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the 'Being Our Best' publication has been considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board at its 19 June 2023 meeting;
- (c) That it be noted that the Director of Strategy and Resources will be responsible for the refresh of the 'Being Our Best' plan following feedback during the year as the 'Be Your Best' manager development programme is implemented and progressed.

RESOURCES

12 Financial Health Monitoring 2022/23 - Outturn financial year ended 31st March 2023

The Chief Officer Financial Services submitted a report presenting details on the financial health of the Authority in respect of both the General Fund revenue budget and the Housing Revenue Account, as at the financial outturn position for 2022/23. The report also sought several related approvals from the Board.

The Executive Member extended her thanks to the Chief Officer, Financial Services and her team for the work that had been undertaken throughout the year, given the range of extremely challenging circumstances that continued to be faced.

As referenced within the report it was highlighted that at the financial outturn position for 2022/23 there was an overspend of £12.4m on the Authority's

General Fund services, with the recommendation that the Strategic Contingency Reserve be used to balance that overspend.

Responding to an enquiry, it was noted that HRA reserves would be used to balance the 2022/23 HRA overspend.

Again, responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received an update and assurances upon the range of ongoing actions being taken to mitigate the significant financial pressures that continued to be faced across the Children and Families directorate, with reference being made to the significant levels of demand being experienced and the fact that this remained a national issue, with dialogue continuing with Government on such matters.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That it be noted that at the outturn position for 2022/23, the Authority's General Fund services show an overspend of £12.4m and that the Housing Revenue Account shows a net overspend of £6.8m;
- (b) That it be noted that during the year where an overspend was projected, directorates, including the Housing Revenue Account, were required to present action plans to mitigate their reported pressures in line with the Revenue Principles agreed by Executive Board in 2019, with it also being noted that savings actions identified are included within the reported overspend position;
- (c) That it be noted that increased inflation and impacts of the rising cost of living, including the agreed 2022/23 pay award, have been incorporated into the reported outturn position;
- (d) That the use of £12.4m Strategic Contingency Reserve to balance the General Fund overspend, be approved;
- (e) That the use of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves to balance the HRA overspend of £6.8m, be approved;
- (f) That the updated planned use of flexible use of capital receipts, specifically the additional planned use in 2022/23 of £0.8m, as shown at paragraph 3.12.1 of the submitted report, be approved;
- (g) That the creation of earmarked reserves, as detailed at Appendix 5 to the submitted report, be agreed, and that approval be given to delegate their release to the Chief Officer, Financial Services;
- (h) That the following injections into the Capital Programme, as detailed at Appendix 6A(iii) of the submitted report, be approved:-
 - £13,529.9k of Capital Receipt injections, primarily in relation to the East Leeds Orbital Road and District Heating Phase 3 schemes;
 - £1,967.0k of Departmental Borrowing injections, primarily to provide matched funding for a Local Authority Housing Fund scheme; and
 - £26,600.7k of external contributions, primarily relating to:

- o £9,524.6k Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway (Network Rail);
- o £5,918.7k HRA Schemes (Local Authority Housing Fund);
- o £5,400.0k A653 Beeston to Tingley (West Yorkshire Combined Authority);
- o £2,267.4k of external contributions for works on School schemes;
- o £1,492.9k of external contributions for works on Highways schemes;
- o £680.0k Armley Mills (Art Council England); and
- o £1,317.1k of other external contributions.

- (i) That the additional Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme (CRIS) allocations to Wards and Community Committees for the period October 2022 to March 2023 of £0.3m, be noted;
- (j) That it be noted that the Chief Officer, Financial Services will be responsible for the implementation of the resolutions detailed above following the conclusion of the associated “Call In” period.

13 Treasury Management Outturn 2022/23

The Chief Officer Financial Services submitted a report presenting the Council’s Treasury Management outturn position for 2022/23.

Members welcomed the report and paid tribute to the officers involved in the area of Treasury Management for the outcomes which had been achieved.

RESOLVED – That the Council’s Treasury Management outturn position for 2022/23, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted, with it also being noted that treasury activity has remained within the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy Framework.

14 Reducing Gambling Harm

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment and the Director of Public Health submitted a joint report which presented a series of recommendations to the Executive Board in response to the statement issued by the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) to the Executive in relation to ‘Reducing Gambling Harm’.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted the range of Council services and partner organisations involved in the reduction of gambling harm.

On behalf of the Board, Members thanked all involved, including the Executive Member for Communities, the continuing work of Council services, such as the Financial Inclusion Team and Public Health, and with tribute being made to the valuable role of the Scrutiny Board Communities, Housing and Environment, with special reference to the Scrutiny Board’s previous Chair, Councillor B Anderson.

In considering the report, whilst the significance of the gambling industry and its contribution to the economy was acknowledged, Members highlighted the key importance of ensuring that robust safeguards were in place at a national

level to reduce gambling harm, with the gambling industry being required to play its part in the delivery of such safeguards. It was also highlighted that the relevant legislation needed to be reviewed in order to reflect the significant changes which had occurred across the industry with regard to online gambling.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the conclusions of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) as set out in the Scrutiny Board’s statement appended to the submitted report, be noted, together with the further information and recommendations provided to the Executive Board in response;
- (b) That the approach, as set out in the submitted report, be approved, specifically:-
 - (i) The formalisation of the Leeds Gambling Harms Group;
 - (ii) The introduction of an annual reporting process;
 - (iii) Respond to consultations resulting from the Government’s White Paper on gambling reform;
 - (iv) Respond to Government consultations regarding exposure to gambling products;
- (c) That the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment be responsible for the implementation of such matters.

COMMUNITIES

15 Tackling Inequality and Disadvantage in Communities: Locality Working in Our Priority Wards

Further to Minute No. 129, 16 March 2022, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which provided an update on the progress being made in relation to expanding the city’s approach towards Locality Working within our Priority Wards and which provided details regarding the range of actions intended to be taken as part of the next stage of implementation.

In introducing the report the Executive Member highlighted the key themes within it including an update on the continuing work being undertaken alongside partners. Specific reference was also made to the respective reviews of Community Committees and Community Centres proposed to be undertaken, with it being highlighted that Members would be invited to be involved in both reviews. Also, emphasis was placed upon the links between this report and the ‘Thriving: The Child Poverty for Leeds’ report considered earlier in the meeting within the ‘Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships’ portfolio.

Members welcomed the inclusion of the Social Progress Index data in the report.

Responding to a Member’s comments around the potential role of Community Committees moving forward regarding the consideration of further localised

decision making, and separately, highlighting the need to continue to consider the needs of those pockets of deprivation located outside of the Priority Wards, it was emphasised that any review and associated work relating to such matters would be undertaken in the most transparent and engaging way as possible.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Board, the Executive Member extended her thanks to Councillor B Anderson, previous Chair of the Scrutiny Board Communities, Housing and Environment for the related work that the Scrutiny Board had undertaken and highlighted that the Scrutiny Board's continued work in this area moving forward would be welcomed.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the progress made in delivering the new locality ways of working within Priority Wards, together with the comments made during the consideration of this report, be noted;
- (c) That the review of Community Committees and their constitutional role in helping to shape and influence place, as referenced within the submitted report, be supported;
- (d) That the development of the new Priority Ward Partnership Plans, as detailed in the submitted report, together with the comments made during the consideration of this report, be noted.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

16 Transpennine Route Upgrade - Transport and Works Act Order

The Director of City Development submitted a report summarising the progress made as a result of ongoing consultation with Network Rail regarding works proposed under the Transpennine Route Upgrade Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for the East of Leeds. In addition to outlining the key consultation undertaken to date, the report also provided details of the works proposed in the TWAO and concerns identified. Finally, the report sought support for the Council's proposed approach in response to the TWAO, and approval of the letter appended to the report which set out the Council's current and substantive position.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted the key points within it and the significant implications arising from the proposed TWAO.

A Member made enquiries regarding the actions which were proposed to mitigate the disruption to those communities directly affected and also the wider area, and the processes for the associated communications strategy. In response, the significance of the wide ranging impact arising from this project was highlighted. As a result, the importance of the associated consultation process as referenced within the report together with the appended letter proposed to be submitted Network Rail were underlined, as the Council would

look to use these processes to demonstrate its views and raise its concerns, with the aim of such matters being taken into consideration moving forward as part of the formal TWAO process.

A concern was raised on the proposals specifically affecting a public right of way in Micklefield.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the proposed Transpennine Route Upgrade Transport and Works Act Order for the East of Leeds, be noted;
- (b) That the approach to respond to the TWAO under the Director of City Development's delegation scheme within the statutory 42-day period, as detailed within the submitted report, be supported;
- (c) That the letter to the Programme Director of the Transpennine Route Upgrade, as detailed at Appendix B to the submitted report, which sets out the Council's current and substantive position, be approved.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 23RD JUNE 2023

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00 P.M., FRIDAY, 30TH JUNE 2023