



Community Committee Review Update

Date: 6th December 2023

Report of: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Community Committees were set up in June 2014 to improve the way the council works locally. They form part of our commitment to involving our residents more closely with the priorities for their local area and decision-making on funding and services, contributing towards the Best City Ambition and the council's overall aim of creating safer and stronger communities.

The city's ten Community Committees provide the infrastructure through which the council executes one of its democratic functions and community engagement ambitions. As formal council meetings held in public, they are one of the few structures through which the council has delegated its decision-making powers to the local level.

Community Committees play a key role in helping to address a range of local issues by developing committee and ward level programmes of work that help to improve the places where people live. This includes work to improve the local environment or deliver activities that address specific local issues and/or create new opportunities which local people can benefit from.

Together, the committees create an invaluable city-wide network, through which communities are encouraged to engage and influence how the Council and its partners delivers it's business functions.

In June 2023, the Council's Executive Board supported a recommendation to undertake a full review of Community Committees involving all 99 Councillors, facilitated through the Council's Scrutiny structures. This report gives the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board an update on the progress of the review, to date.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Board is asked to note the content of the report and:

- a) Support the review of Community Committees and their constitutional role in helping to shape and influence place.

What is this report about?

1. This report gives the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board an update on the progress of the Community Committee Review as agreed by the Council's Executive Board in June 2023.
2. A further report to the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board in July set out in more detail the work aligned to the review from September 2023, in which five specific workstreams were identified:

✓ **Executive Delegated functions:**

[S3Da Community Committee Executive Delegation - Issue 1 Last amended on 26th May 2022.pdf \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#), currently:

- Well Being; covers a range of delegated budgets
- Community Centres
- CCTV
- Neighbourhood Management and Coordination
- Street Cleansing & Environmental Enforcement Services
- Community parks, cemeteries, closed churchyards, recreation grounds, urban woodland, natural areas, maintenance of roundabouts, other floral features and local green space
- Community Infrastructure Levy; Neighbourhood Fund

✓ **Delegated budgets:** Wellbeing Fund and Youth Activity Fund.

✓ **Community engagement and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD):** linked to the Local Government Association Peer Review and Member Development.

✓ **Community Committee Champions:** review of current themes, with a proposal to change Jobs & Skills to Cost of Living, or link to Inclusive Growth.

✓ **Governance and Meeting Structure:** review of reports and agenda structure and review of links to other related locality working arrangements e.g., Local Care Partnerships and School Clusters.

3. This report updates specifically on the progress made on establishing a cross party Elected Member working group as well as the initial feedback from the two workshops that have taken place on the workstreams of the Community Committee Champions role and Delegated Budgets.

Elected Member Working Group

4. The role of the Elected Member working group will be to support the development of four member workshops as well as the development of recommendations on changes to the way that Community Committees operate from June 2024.
5. The 10 Community Committees sit within the portfolio of the Environment, Housing & Communities (CHE) Scrutiny Board. The CHE Scrutiny Board will play a key role to review the Review recommendations prior to being formally approved by Executive Board, support the review via representation on the Elected member working group and will receive progress update reports containing feedback from member workshop.

6. An Elected Member working group, chaired by the Executive Board Member for Communities, has now been established, with the first meeting taking place on the 20th October 2023. The Elected Member Working Group has cross party representation from all political parties (that meet the criteria for sitting on a Scrutiny Board), with representation as follows:

- ✓ **Labour Party Members:** 6 nominees.
- ✓ **Conservative Party Members:** 3 nominees.
- ✓ **Liberal Democratic Party Members:** 2 nominees.
- ✓ **Morley Borough Independent Party Members:** 1 nominee.
- ✓ **Green Party Members:** 1 nominee.

Specific representatives from each of the Scrutiny Boards are listed as follows:

- ✓ **Adults, Health & Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board:** Councillor Kidger & Councillor France-Mir.
- ✓ **Children & Families Scrutiny Board:** Cllr Cohen & Cllr Blackburn.
- ✓ **Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board:** Cllr Golton & Cllr B Anderson.
- ✓ **Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board:** Cllr Hamilton, Cllr Wilson & Cllr N Buckley.
- ✓ **Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board:** Cllr Burke, Cllr Bithell & Cllr Chapman.
- ✓ **Corporate Governance & Audit Committee:** Cllr Wray and Cllr Bithell (already nominated via Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board).

7. A 'Terms of Reference' document has been drafted for the Elected Member working group and this was discussed in the meeting on the 20th October. Further work on the document is now taking place, following feedback.

8. The 'Terms of Reference' sets out the proposed governance arrangements for the review and the role that the working group plays, including the frequency of meetings and reporting; the purpose of the Member Working Group; working methods; key milestones; the Chairs role in the working group, as well as the role of nominated Elected Members and council officers.

9. A second meeting of the Member Working Group took place on 27th November 2023. At this meeting, feedback from both the Champions and Delegated Workshops were discussed, and the agenda for the next workshop, which will consider how the committees can increase Community Engagement and Empowerment, was drafted.

Member Workshops

10. Following on from Full Council on the 13th September 2023 and the conversation that took place regarding the Community Committee Review, the themed committee review workshops will aim to engage and seek feedback and ideas from Elected Members.

11. All Councillors will have the opportunity to attend and participate in the workshop sessions, which will take place at the Civic Hall, Committee Room 6 & 7, before Full Council, on the dates below (the exception is the Community Committee Champions session which was restricted to members who currently hold themed Champion positions for their committee).

- ✓ **Workshop 1: Community Committee Champions, 25th Oct 2023 (10am)**

In the Community Committee Champions Workshop there was a proposal to look at:

- The role of the Champion.

- Support and focus for the Champion.
- Themes (option to change Jobs & Skills to Cost of Living or linked to Inclusive Growth).

✓ **Workshop 2: Delegated Budgets, 15th Nov 2023 (9.30am)**

As part of the Delegated Budgets Workshop, focus was on:

- Refining the criteria for wellbeing funding.
- The potential merger of the Wellbeing and Youth Activity Fund (YAF).
- Consideration on how delegated committee funds can better support local priorities, for example the impact of the cost of living crisis.

✓ **Workshop 3: Community Engagement & Empowerment, 17th Jan 2024 (10am)**

As part of the Community Engagement & Empowerment Workshop there will be focus on:

- The role of the committees in relation to community engagement and place shaping.
- Member development and Asset Based Community Development.
- How we make meetings more engaging.
- Other issues such as the meeting structure and committee reports.

✓ **Workshop 4: Delegated Functions, 21st Feb (10am)**

As part of the Executive Functions workstream there will be a focus on involving services and agreeing what is realistic in terms of delegations to the committees.

12. Since the last report to the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board in July, two workshops have now taken place on the themes of the Community Champions role and Delegated Budgets.

13. Following input from the Elected Member working group a format was designed for the workshop sessions that fell into two distinct parts. Part one was a listening exercise to allow Elected Members the opportunity to download their thoughts on what works well and what doesn't and part two of the workshop allowed space for Elected Members to feedback their ideas on improvements and recommendations for the review.

14. Each workshop was organised and facilitated by the Communities Team and included inputs from the Executive Board Member for Communities and Leader of Council. Highlighted below, are some headlines emerging from both workshop sessions that will be fed into the Elected Member Working Group for consideration and further investigation.

15. The Community Committee Champions Workshop was held on 25th October 2023. **30** Elected Members participated:

- ✓ Not all Community Champions role are created equally, at present. Some function well; other roles could do with development.
- ✓ A consensus that there needs to be clarity on the role, the support offered, accountability and the relationship to the relevant services.
- ✓ Member development is a gap. Corporately, it is unclear who owns this space. A Champions peer support network was suggested.
- ✓ Appetite from existing champions do more, connect the strategic ambitions of the council with localities and have local intelligence shaping policy. A two way relationship.

- ✓ Elected Members want to be informed, communicated with and be seen as 'experts in their field'. There is a knowledge gap, specifically around data. The role of Social Progress Index needs exploration.
 - ✓ The current reporting framework at Community Committees can see some Champions passive or even bypassed in the delivery of messages and updates. The role needs to be pro-active and owned by the Elected Member, not officers.
 - ✓ The architecture to support the Champions varies by geography. Some Champion themes have dedicated some sub groups and a relationship with the relevant Executive Board Member. Others simply don't.
 - ✓ Champion Roles could evolve to better suit the council's strategic ambitions. Employments, Skills and Welfare suggested to change to Inclusive Growth (specially the People strand).
 - ✓ The Champions role is a way that Members can engage with local issues, so important there is representation from across the full committee area.
 - ✓ The Champions role is a voluntary one, so is hard to dictate 'the role' to volunteers/get buy in. Chairs could speak with committee members before the AGM to identify willing Champions. Service Leads could chat to prospective Champions regarding the Champion theme before appointments are made (would help in getting Champions that are passionate about the theme/role & want to become involved).
16. The Delegated Budgets Workshop was held on 15th November 2023. Approx. 40 Elected Members participated.
- ✓ A consensus that the Community Committees are good funders. Agile, flexible and play a significant role in local capacity building and targeting resource to address local need.
 - ✓ Discipline around the funding process could be improved. At times, Elected Members have too little information and too little time to make informed decisions.
 - ✓ Funding rounds linked to the Committee cycles is an option to explore. Would provide rigour to the process and time for scrutiny of applications but it is acknowledged there needs to be some flex for reactive issues.
 - ✓ Some existing funding streams – Housing Advisory Panel and Ward Based Initiative monies – allow for Elected Member influence but sit outside of the Community Committee decision making framework. Could this influence be systemised better? At present, it can feel ad hoc and varies by area.
 - ✓ Some appetite to take direct control over some funding streams. HAP being one possible example. Climate Action grants another. The rationale being reducing bureaucracy and the better targeting resources locally.
 - ✓ Those funds that are linked to development but not under Community Committee control like Section 106 and elements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (be that the central fund or the Neighbourhood Fund passported directly to Town and Parish Council) need joining up. A local vision or priorities statement could help that. Too often Elected Members aren't involved or influencing how these funding agreements are designed at the planning stage. Could that be looked at?
 - ✓ At present the criteria for Wellbeing funding is broad. Some Elected Members like that, others felt it could be more refined and a revisiting of Community Committee priorities could help inform that. Localised data and intelligence key to this.

- ✓ Providing value for money was seen as important, especially in the current climate. Monitoring of projects post-approval needs work. Also, some ideas around stipulating match funding and a tapering of funding, year on year, for repeat applications in a bid to encourage sustainability.
- ✓ The suggestion of amalgamating revenue funding pots i.e. Wellbeing and Youth Activity Funding (YAF) received a mixed response. Some resistance to the idea completely, some felt this could be revisited mid-year to encourage the spending of pots with a more rigid criteria YAF was seen as important to delivering for children and young people aged 8-17.
- ✓ Potential to explore the possibility of a Finance Sub Group operating in each committee (works well in one area). Would possibly provide rigour & robustness to the committee funding process?

Forward Plan

17. Some of the key milestones for the Community Committee Review are listed below:

- ✓ **July 2023:** Communities, Housing & Environment Scrutiny Board agree review.
- ✓ **October 2023:** 1st Member Working Group meeting.
- ✓ **February 2024:** Working group recommendations presented.
- ✓ **March 2024:** Scrutiny Board draft recommendations presented.
- ✓ **April 2024:** Executive Board report for approval of final recommendations.
- ✓ **May 2024:** Full Council Annual Meeting approve arrangements.
- ✓ **June 2024:** Some new Community Committee arrangements commence.

18. The Forward Plan is as follows:

- ✓ **July 2023:** Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board agree review scope and Member Working Group representative sought.
- ✓ **September 2023:** 1st Member Working Group meeting (Elected Member workshops TBC). Up to four member workshops to be developed between October 2023 and February 2024, to engage and seek feedback and ideas from Elected Members.
- ✓ **March 2024:** Working Group recommendations presented and approved via appropriate governance arrangements.
- ✓ **June 2024:** Some new Community Committee arrangements commence.

Other Considerations

19. The Community Committees provides an infrastructure through which the council executes its democratic renewal ambitions, by bringing Elected Members and service providers closer to residents, to help shape and influence the places they live.
20. They are formal council meetings held in public and form a key element of the councils constitution and hold devolved powers from the council's Executive Board. Public attendance however at committee meetings in some areas is low and there is a danger that opportunities are being missed to fully engage with the public about the issues that matter most to them, in the areas they live and work.

21. The review will need to consider therefore how the committee infrastructure can improve community engagement and better empower local people, so that they can become more involved in their community and influence how services are delivered.
22. Elected Members will be fully aware that the council is under increasing pressures due to a range of factors. This includes the ongoing financial challenge, which has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the current cost of living crisis, as well as demographic changes which bring increased demands upon local services. The Community Committee Review must also consider effective use of public resources to deliver better outcomes for communities.
23. For any Elected Member that is unable to attend any of the workshops, there will be other opportunities to engage with the Community Committee Review. The Safer Stronger Communities Team have offered individual briefing sessions to all Elected Members and a dedicated email address has now been set up to capture feedback and thoughts regarding the review: communitycommitteereview@Leeds.gov.uk
24. Further consideration is needed to consider how services and partners will be engaged in the review.
25. The review will support the delivery of actions identified through the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, specifically:

Theme

Locality and Community Working
Supporting our city ambition to tackle poverty and inequality

- Recommendation**
- Use the Peer Review recommendation to take stock of Locality and Community approaches with a focus on People, Assets and Governance, using this as the primary vehicle for delivering the Best City Ambition right across the city.
 - Consider how to further strengthen place-based networks.
 - In this context, review and develop the community committees and draw on the work of the Social Progress Index to measure progress.
 - 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.

What impact will this proposal have?

26. Community Committees play an important role in understanding and addressing issues of concern to local people. One of the many ways they do this is by funding projects that address local priorities. In 2021/22, this was once again apparent as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect Leeds. With it came some very specific and immediate needs for our communities; challenges that the Community Committees addressed by funding much needed projects that tackled the immediate effects of the pandemic in each of the 33 wards in the city.
27. The commitment to locality based working continues to be demonstrated in the broad range of projects that the Community Committees fund, spending nearly £1.8 million in 2021/22, totalling

just under 500 separate grants that were provided to local grass-root organisations, voluntary groups and charities, to tackle the immediate and specific needs of our communities.

28. Work takes place through our Community Committee structures proves invaluable in making sure our approach is tailored to meet the direct needs of our local communities in a responsive and effective way, therefore the review will need to take into consideration any impact that changes may have.
29. In addition to this, as the Community Committees have an engagement function, the review will need to consider how any changes will affect local communities in Leeds. The Community Committee Facebook pages and the social media activity that takes place through the Community Committee structures, ensure we reach a large number of residents every month through local stories and conversations.
30. During the pandemic our Community Committees played an essential role in providing a responsive information service to all our diverse communities in the city, by being a key source of reliable and up to date information. The Coronavirus Help Facebook Groups were set up as a way of promoting services, supporting communities and cascading information in an attempt to tackle the pandemic. The pages were also there to generate discussion and debate but also facilitate conversations around being neighbourly during the national pandemic and assist in some of the volunteering efforts in the city.
31. A universal approach continues to be delivered using the city-wide Community Committee infrastructure, to ensure that all parts of the city continue to benefit from the learning, experience and improvements delivered through the model of Locality Working. As such, a new Communities Team structure is now in place, providing a more integrated and flexible approach to Locality Working around the citywide, targeted and seasonal and responsive work strands.

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

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

32. The Best Council Ambition reflects the current post COVID-19 and cost of living context, while maintaining the three pillar priorities of inclusive growth; health and wellbeing; and climate change, under the overarching priority of tackling poverty and inequalities. These nationally significant issues continue to have a huge impact on all areas of the Best Council Ambition, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, which will undoubtedly limit progress towards our ambitions.
33. Community Committees will be a key factor in guiding the response to the multiple challenges the city faces, particularly as we begin to better understand the long-term health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.
34. Swings in climate and more extreme weather will create inequality, as financial disparity creates pressures between those able to invest in measures to maintain comfort, diet and activity that may be denied to those least able to afford it. A range of initiatives within the Community Committees supports the climate emergency agenda, including creating pocket parks, hanging baskets, planting additional trees, as well as creating areas of greater natural biodiversity that all help to improve air quality, by working with 'In Bloom' and 'Friends of' groups throughout the city; also work to improve greater energy efficiency in buildings.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

35. The Community Committee Review was approved by Executive Board on 21st June 2023. A meeting of the 10 Community Committee Chairs took place on the 3rd July 2023 to canvas their feedback on the scope and timescales for the review.
36. Consultation has also taken place with strategic leaders and service managers.
37. The review will seek to consult with both attendees of committees, including co-opted members, where these exist, and non-attendees. Further discussions will take place with the Member Working group to agree the best way to deliver this aspect of the review.

What are the resource implications?

38. The work articulated through the Community Committees and the Locality Working approach makes best use of existing resources already working in neighbourhoods and seeks to do things differently by making best use of the leadership role and knowledge of locally elected representatives; working with residents to shape their neighbourhoods and inform service re-design to address the needs of all our communities in Leeds. It also seeks to help communities to be more resilient and strengthen cohesion.
39. The council is under increasing pressures due to a range of factors. This includes the ongoing financial challenge, which has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the current cost of living crisis, as well as demographic changes which bring increased demands upon local services. A new Communities Team structure is now in place, providing a more integrated and flexible approach to Locality Working around the citywide, targeted and seasonal and responsive work strands.
40. The Community Committees review must therefore consider the effective use of public resources to deliver better outcomes for communities. Aligning the distribution of Community Committee funding to local priorities will help to ensure that the maximum benefit can be provided.

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

41. The city's community committee structure provides an infrastructure through which the Council executes its democratic renewal ambitions, by bringing elected Council members and services providers closer to residents to help shape and influence the places where they live. They are formal Council meetings held in public and form a key element of the Council constitution and hold devolved powers from the Council's Executive Board. However, public attendance at committee meetings in some areas is low and there is a danger that opportunities are being missed to fully engage with the public about the issues that matter to them most in the areas where they live and work. The review will consider how the Committee infrastructure can improve community engagement and better empower local people so that can become more involved in their local community and influence how services are delivered.
42. The Council has determined a risk to community cohesion, and it has established this risk on its corporate risk register. It has also been discussing a need to change radically the way we work in localities and implemented a new approach to locality working in November 2017. Pressures

in some of our most challenged and disadvantaged neighbourhoods are now greater than ever due to a range of factors. The communities of Leeds have changed rapidly over the past decade, this is much more apparent in the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A failure to fully engage and be inclusive to all the communities of Leeds may result in increased tensions leading to a sense of alienation and isolation.

43. These fractures may increase the city's risk of becoming more susceptible to the influences of those who want to divide our communities, making them more polarised and vulnerable to extremism and other harmful influences. The locality working approach through the Community Committees, seeks to engage with all communities, with a strong focus of the work on strengthening communities and building self-reliance and resilience.
44. Resources in many front-line operations have already been deployed on a needs-led basis with limited capacity from simply shifting where staff work to another area. Additionally, the agility of organisations to respond in the context of broader economic changes could challenge the pace of improvement. Locality Working through the Community Committees cannot just be about addressing poverty but also about more effective use of resources with all our communities, delivering better outcomes. Aligning the distribution of Community Committee funding to local priorities will help to ensure that the maximum benefit can be provided.
45. Failure to fully engage and get 'buy in' from a range of partners and council services to support the work of the Community Committees and the delivery of the locality working approach will hamper the council's efforts to deliver significant and sustainable change in our neighbourhoods. It is therefore imperative that we maintain and build on the whole Council approach, working with local communities to drive change and much needed improvements. An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document is included at **Appendix 1**.
46. Risk implications and mitigation are considered on all Community Committee funding applications. Projects are assessed to ensure that applicants are able to deliver the intended benefits.

What are the legal implications?

47. Community Committees are a statutory function of Leeds City Council. As such they are written in to the Council's constitution. Any changes to the way that the committees operate therefore, will need to be reflected in the Council's Constitution, under Article 10 (committee procedure rules and terms of reference).
48. There are no exempt parts of this report so there are no access to information issues.
49. There are potential legal implications for the work articulated in this report subject to any recommendations that the review makes. Officers from Governance services will be involved in the review and advise of any potential legal implications should they arise.
50. This report is eligible for call-in.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

51. The recommendation in the reports to the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board and Executive Board, is to evolve the way that we work through the Community

Committees, through a refreshed framework that enables greater impact and outcomes, delivered through a collective focus on all our communities in Leeds.

How will success be measured?

52. With IMD data only published sporadically, we have previously struggled to measure the impact of local intervention. However, with the publication of the Social Progress Index (SPI) for Leeds, this has changed. The Social Progress Index (SPI) is a tool that helps measure how well Leeds is doing in terms of Inclusive Growth. It helps us understand what's happening in different areas of the city, on a ward-by-ward basis and by looking at multiple indicators and offering us a clear and unbiased measure of overall wellbeing in the city. A link to Social Progress landing page can be found here: [The Leeds Social Progress Index | Inclusive Growth Leeds](#)
53. The SPI compliments the IMD data, allowing us to compare each ward against its peers, as well as allowing us to track change over time. The SPI is made of three main parts: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing and Opportunity. The various indicators measure specific outcomes, with the scores of each area showing on a scale from 0-100. This makes it easier to understand how well the city is doing and where our strengths and weaknesses lie.
54. In addition to this, each year the Community Committees produce an Annual Report. By listening to their local communities, the report has in the past, stated that the committees were able to allocate resources and funding where it was most needed; helping to protect the most vulnerable, helping to keep people safe from harm, assisting people with financial hardship and helping tackle social isolation and inequality. It also references wherever possible, Leeds City Council's Best City Ambition and the 3 key strategic pillars; Inclusive Growth, Health & Wellbeing and Zero Carbon, by linking projects funded through the committees to the strategies: [Leeds Best City Ambition.pdf](#)

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

- ✓ **July 2023:** Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board agree review scope.
- ✓ **September 2023:** 1st Member Working Group meeting (Elected Member workshops TBC). Up to 4 member workshops to be developed between September 2023 and February 2024, to engage and seek feedback and ideas from Elected Members.
- ✓ **March 2024:** Working Group recommendations presented and approved.
- ✓ **June 2024:** Some new Community Committee arrangements commence.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document.

Background papers

- None.

Appendix 1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Safer Stronger Communities Team	Service area: Communities
Lead person: Liz Jarmin	Contact number: 07891 278078

1. Title: Community Committee Review

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

Community Committees were set up in June 2014 to improve the way the council works locally. They form part of our commitment to involving our residents more closely with the priorities for their local area and decision-making on funding and services, contributing towards the Best Council Plan and the council's overall aim of creating safe, strong communities.

The committee's role and purpose have not been reviewed for a number of years, therefore the review of the Community Committee's role, purpose and governance arrangements, involving all 99 Councillors, will aim to use the scrutiny process as a mechanism for engagement and accountability.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community, city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	x	
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	x	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	x	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment• Advancing equality of opportunity• Fostering good relations	x	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above, please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and:

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

Community Committees and use of the Social Progress Index

All Community Committee funded projects are assessed in relation to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration. In addition, the Communities Team ensures that the funding process complies with all relevant policies and legislation.

From this year, 2023/24, we will also be using the Social Progress Index (SPI) for Leeds as an additional tool to measure impact and progress of our work with the committees. SPI is a tool that helps measure how well Leeds is doing in terms of Inclusive Growth.

It helps us understand what's happening in different areas of the city, on a ward-by-ward basis, by looking at multiple indicators and offering us a clear and unbiased measure of overall wellbeing in the city. The SPI compliments the IMD data, as it allows us to compare each ward against its peers, as well as allowing us to track change over time.

The SPI is made of three main parts: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity. The various indicators measure specific outcomes, with the scores of each area showing on a scale from 0-100. This makes it easier to understand how well the city is doing and where our strengths and weaknesses lie.

Recent events, such as COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, continue to have a hugely significant impact on all areas of the Best City Ambition, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, therefore, research and development and effective monitoring of impact on equality will form a focus of work going forward.

As part of the delegated budget workstream in relation to the Community Committee Review, specific focus will be on refining the criteria for wellbeing funding, to include a greater emphasis on the cost of living crisis, as well as the equality, diversity & inclusion agenda, in addition to the cohesion agenda.

Communication and Community Engagement

The Community Committees currently utilise a variety of engagement methods/tools, including face to face meetings, online meetings, social media, local engagement plans and email distribution lists.

During COVID-19 all Community Committees had to amend their engagement approach, with varying amounts of participation, however COVID-19 has provided a real opportunity for the committees to look at how they actively engage in the future with a much wider audience and discussions are ongoing around future meetings, looking at alternative ways of engaging with the public.

The proposal through the Community Committee Review is that we will review our engagement approach through research/sharing good practice, to identify the most appropriate channels and platforms to use and how these could be incorporated to create more inclusive engagement work; looking at how 'in person' and digital approaches could blend together to make effective and accessible engagement.

We are also aiming to look at agendas and reports that are taken to the Community Committee meetings; looking at how we can re-shape the Update Report to be more engaging; how we can better demonstrate the value and impact of projects taking place in their respective wards in reports that go to the committee; how they can link up with

Priority Ward Partnership Plans and how they can look more attractive and visually appealing to encourage people to read them.

Identify potential barriers on who may be affected

Work continues to take place in Leeds to understand and get a picture of the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality that is happening due to COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. However, the emerging evidence highlights that both of these have further exacerbated social and economic inequalities and we need to better understand what these impacts are on communities in Leeds. What it tells us so far mirrors national evidence and the local narrative that major events such as these do have a disproportionate and differential impact based on where you live, your gender, your ethnicity and your job.

The key issues pertinent to all communities of interest and the general public include:

- Navigating information & guidance: Challenges around accessing accurate, appropriate, and accessible information in a rapidly changing scene, littered with mis/dis-information and complex communications.
- Access to essential provisions and services: Challenges in gaining/maintaining access to food, essential personal and household items; and accessing support necessary to protect health, care, and wellbeing.
- Social isolation & boredom: Challenges around the loss of social bonds, relationships and contact; the loss of physical and intellectual stimulation.
- Mental Health – low level anxiety to crisis: Challenges around management of pre-existing mental health issues and the emergence of new concerns.
- Abuse, domestic violence and safeguarding issues: Challenges around imposed segregation of perpetrators and victims, accessing support whilst experiencing violence and abuse.
- Concerns about restrictions being lifted: Challenges around managing change uncertainty and the concerns and anxieties which this brings.
- Digital Exclusion: Communities and individuals having limited/no access to equipment and/or data thus exacerbated barriers to accessing information, support and social connection.

• Key findings

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The following paragraphs provide examples from the Community Committee Youth Summits to overcome inequality.

Youth Summits

A key objective for the Community Committees is that we engaged with a wide variety of young people and that this engagement reflected the true diversity of the city, not just young people who are academically inclined, or naturally engaged with these types of events.

With this in mind the Communities Team attended the SEND Youth Summit, alongside the Voice & Influence Team, to consult with young people that have special education needs & disabilities. At the SEND Youth Summit which took place in November 2022, the Community Committees engaged with 56 young people that have special educational needs & disabilities.

We're aware that at one of the Youth Summit events that took place, we had a small number of young people that were home schooled and this is an avenue we would like to explore for future events.

The Communities Team also delivered a Youth Summit to young people from the LGBTQ+ community and at this event in March 2023 there was 15 young people in attendance.

The Community Committee Youth Summits engaged with 57 young people that are identifiable as being entitled to free school meals (this number will increase as we are still awaiting data from events).

Youth Activity Fund Consultation

Alongside the physical Youth Summit, the Communities Team created a consultation survey for young people, as another objective is that we, "consult with as many young people as possible (hybrid approach), by ensuring that alongside the summits, other consultation is coordinated; for example, online consultation, Breeze Summer Events": <https://surveys.leeds.gov.uk/s/YouthActivities2022/>

The online survey had 2340 responses, with an additional online survey being created to engage with young people that have special educational needs and disabilities. In relation to this survey, we had 144 responses (in total = 2484 across both surveys).

• Actions

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

The Community Committees Annual Report covers some of the progress of all ten committees and demonstrates how they helped provide local residents with a voice. It also provides examples of 'real life' human stories and how some of the projects the committees have funded have benefitted local communities across Leeds, contributing towards the Best City Ambition and the council's overall aim of creating safe, strong communities.

All projects that are funded by the Community Committees are measured for outcomes, in accordance with localised priorities that have been agreed with each individual committee. Aligning the distribution of Community Committee funding to address local priorities helps to ensure that the maximum benefit can be provided.

Feedback and monitoring information is gathered upon completion of each project that is funded by the committees and this is provided as updates to Elected Members in their respective Community Committee meetings. Case studies are also regularly obtained from partners in various service meetings.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment.****

N/A

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	N/A
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Date to complete your impact assessment	N/A
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Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	N/A
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6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Paul Money	Chief Officer - Safer Stronger Communities Team	???

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

If this screening relates to a **Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, full Council** or a **Significant Operational Decision** a copy should be emailed to Corporate Governance and will be published along with the relevant report.

A copy of **all other** screening's should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk. For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file (but not published).

Date screening completed	13 th June 2023
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If relates to a Key Decision - date sent to Corporate Governance	N/A
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Any other decision – date sent to Equality Team (equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)	N/A
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