

## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

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**Meeting to be held remotely via Zoom on  
Thursday 15 October 2020 at 10.30 am**

*A pre-meeting will take place for all Members of the Board at 10.00 a.m.*

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### **MEMBERSHIP**

B Anderson (Chair)	- Adel and Wharfedale;
J Akhtar	- Little London and Woodhouse;
J Bentley	- Weetwood;
A Blackburn	- Farnley and Wortley;
K Brooks	- Little London and Woodhouse
D Collins	- Horsforth;
M Dobson	- Garforth and Swillington
A Gabriel	- Beeston and Holbeck;
P Grahame	- Cross Gates and Whinmoor;
P Gruen	- Cross Gates and Whinmoor;
M Harland	- Kippax and Methley
A Khan	- Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
N Sharpe	- Temple Newsam;
T Smith	- Pudsey;

**Note to observers of the meeting:** To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'View the Webcast' link which will feature on the meeting's webpage (linked below) ahead of the meeting. The webcast will become available at the commencement of the meeting.

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1091&MId=10013>

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**Principal Scrutiny Adviser:  
Rebecca Atherton  
Tel: (0113) 37 88642**

# 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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</li> <li>3. If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</li> </ol> <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>	

3

**LATE ITEMS**

To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.

(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)

4

**DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

To disclose or draw attention to any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13-16 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

5

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

**MINUTES - 24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

5 - 8

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020.

7

**BUDGET CONSULTATION**

9 - 22

To receive a report from the Head of Democratic Services presenting details of initial 2021/22 budget savings proposals, as considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on 24 September 2020, such that they relate to the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

8

**NITROUS OXIDE MIS-USE**

23 - 30

To receive a report from the Chief Officer for Safer Leeds, which updates members of the Board on issues associated with nitrous oxide use in Leeds. This is provided in response to a referral to the Board from Cllr Matthew Robinson.

9

**HOUSING ACTIVITY UPDATE**

31 -  
40

To consider an update report from the Chief Officer for Housing on the response of Housing Leeds to the COVID-19 pandemic and the progress of remobilisation following the last update on 18 June 2020.

10

**WORK SCHEDULE**

41 -  
62

To consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2020/21 municipal year.

11

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board will take place on 12 November at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meeting for Board members at 10am.

## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, J Bentley,  
A Blackburn, D Collins, A Gabriel,  
P Grahame, A Khan, M Harland, N Sharpe,  
K Brooks, T Smith and D Ragan

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

There were no appeals.

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

There were no exempt items.

### **23 Late Items**

There were no late items.

### **24 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors M Dobson and C Gruen. Councillor D Ragan was in attendance as substitute.

### **26 Minutes - 9 July 2020**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

### **27 Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) Review**

The Chief Officer (Safer Leeds) submitted a report on the implementation of the recommendations of the recent Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) review.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Paul Money, Chief Officer, Safer Leeds

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Thursday, 15th October, 2020

- Harvinder Saimbhi, Head of Operational Delivery
- Claire Smith, ASB Service Delivery Manager

The Chief Officer (Safer Leeds) introduced the report, providing an overview of the recently launched triage system for all incoming calls to the LASBT service, and highlighting the increase in the volume of referrals throughout the pandemic, particularly in relation to domestic noise. Members were also advised that an additional out-of-hours triage service, and a mediation programme, are currently in development.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Timeline for triage of referrals.* In response to a query, Members were advised that the service level agreement for the triage service sets out that customers will be referred to the relevant service within two to five working days, depending on the level of risk for each individual case. To assist Members in their case work, officers suggested that monthly briefings for Members could be arranged to provide updates on high risk or delayed cases in their wards.
- *Domestic noise complaints.* Members noted the increase in volume of calls relating to domestic noise due as a result of people spending more time at home, and were assured that officers are reassessing the current workforce and opportunities for further co-located settings to wrap the right level of resource around the issue. In addition, Members were advised that teams are working closely with universities and ward members to manage noise pollution in areas highly populated by students. Members wished for their thanks to be passed on to teams for their hard work throughout a period of unprecedented demand and challenges.
- *Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.* In response to a query, Members were advised that a launch date for the upcoming strategy had not been confirmed, however local action plans are in development with the relevant teams, and further updates will be provided to the Board in due course.

**RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

## 28 Waste Management Services

The Director of Communities and Environment submitted a report that set out further progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Board's earlier inquiry into Waste Management Services.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor M Rafique, Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles
- James Rogers, Director of Communities and Environment
- John Woolmer, Chief Officer for Environmental Services

Members discussed the following matters in relation to the recommendations as set out in the report:

- *Missed bins.* In discussion of recommendation 6, Members suggested that the service could be more proactive in their approach to identifying missed bins and managing relevant data. Related to this, Members reported cases of missed assisted bin collections, a service that supports some of the most vulnerable residents of Leeds, due to the current software not facilitating automatic renewal of assisted collection arrangements. Members were assured that the issues raised would be looked into further and addressed accordingly. Members also noted their thanks to the teams for their key work throughout the pandemic.
- *Provision of brown bins.* In discussion of recommendation 9, Members asked for an update on the responsibility for payment of brown bins for new housing developments, following previous inconsistencies between developments. It was confirmed that developers will now pay for all brown bins to be provided to homes within new developments.
- *Fleet Replacement Programme.* In discussion of recommendation 10, Members commented that the whole fleet had not yet been replaced to low emission vehicles and therefore questioned whether the recommendation had been achieved as suggested in the report. Members were advised that the recommendation was given the suggested status of achieved within the report because the service is now up to date with Fleet Replacement Programme, and future upgrades are ongoing in line with the timescales of the broader programme.

The status of each recommendation was agreed as follows:

Recommendation 1 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 2 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 3 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 4 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 5 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 6 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 7 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 8 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 9 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 10 – 2 (Achieved)  
Recommendation 11 – 2 (Achieved)  
Recommendation 12 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 13 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 14 – 4 (Continue monitoring)  
Recommendation 15 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

**RESOLVED –**

- a) That the responses to the recommendations as set out above be noted;
- b) That the report, along with Members comments, be noted.

## **29 Work Schedule**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser introduced the report and also highlighted that arrangements had been made to hold a remote working group meeting linked to the Board's work surrounding budget saving proposals.

**RESOLVED** – That the work schedule for the remainder of the municipal year be noted.

## **30 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next public meeting of the Board will take place on 15 October 2020 at 10.30am (there will be a pre-meeting for all Board members at 10am).



Report author: Rebecca Atherton  
Tel: 0113 37 88642

**Report of the Head of Democratic Services**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)**

**Date: 15 October 2020**

**Subject: Revenue budget update 2021/22 and budget savings proposals**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) with details of the latest revenue budget update for 2021/22 and budget savings proposals, as considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on 24 September 2020.
- 1.2 The full Executive Board report can be found [on the meeting webpage](#). Attached to this report is a presentation which provides a breakdown of the Budget Savings Proposals as they relate to the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider, review and comment on matters and proposals relating to service areas that fall within the Scrutiny Board’s remit. Other Scrutiny Boards will also be considering elements of the budget savings proposals relevant to their terms of reference.

**2. Background information**

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26, also reported to the Executive Board on 24 September 2020, reports an estimated budget gap of

£166.3m for the period of the strategy, of which £118.8m relates to 2021/22. Of this £118.8m, £59.7m is due to pressures identified prior to the impact of COVID-19 with the balance of £59.1m resulting from the ongoing financial impact of COVID-19, £66.1m, offset by a £7m net reduction in other identified pressures.

- 2.2 In response to this financial position, the council has carried out a review of its capital programme and established a 'Financial Challenge' programme of service reviews to identify savings that will contribute towards closing the estimated budget gap and enable the authority to present a robust, balanced budget position in 2021/22.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The Chief Officer – Financial Services submitted [a report to the Executive Board on 24 September 2020](#). This report details the actions underway and proposed to address the financial gap for 2021/22, currently estimated at £118.8m.
- 3.2 The report explains that a 'Financial Challenge' programme of service reviews has been established to identify savings that will contribute towards closing the estimated revenue budget gap and enable the authority to present a balanced budget position in 2021/22.
- 3.3 The Financial Challenge programme is being carried out across all services with a cross-council 'Silver' group set up to provide support and ensure a co-ordinated, consistent approach. Directors have also carried out peer reviews of each other's emerging proposals to provide additional high support and high challenge.
- 3.4 The outcome from the reviews has led to a set of savings proposals which are categorised as either 'Business as Usual' (BAU) or 'Service Review' proposals:
- BAU proposals are those that do not require consultation to implement: for example, they relate to improving the efficiency of the service, are cost reduction measures with no impact on service users or, where there are budgeted staffing reductions, these are anticipated to be met through deletion of vacant posts or voluntary means, as has been collectively agreed. Where voluntary measures have a modest and/or residual impact on the workforce, local / BAU consultation would be expected.
  - Service Review proposals (some cross-council, some service-specific) are those requiring consultation: for example, the way in which a service is delivered or the level of service provided is impacted and so meaningful consultation with service users is needed; and/or the proposal relates to a significant internal restructure, requiring consultation with trade unions and staff.
- 3.5 A full summary of all the BAU proposals is provided at [Appendix 1 of the Executive Board report](#). The total value of these proposals is £24.2m. The Service Review proposals are summarised at [Appendix 2 of the Executive Board report](#), with a total value of £8.2m.
- 3.6 The combined value of the BAU and Service Review proposals is £32.3m (rounded). With an additional £0.3m savings resulting from a review of the capital programme (also reported to September's Executive Board), the total savings figure is £32.6m which would reduce the estimated budget gap for 2021/22 to

£86.2m. The Scrutiny Board is therefore asked to note that further savings proposals to address the remaining gap are also expected to be brought to the Executive Board during October and November 2020.

- 3.7 A strategic approach with regard to the level of savings which can be achieved in 2021/22 is also currently being considered with further alternative measures being explored that will take into account this autumn's Comprehensive Spending Review and subsequent local government provisional financial settlement in December.
- 3.8 The budget savings proposals are now being submitted to Scrutiny for consideration, review and comment; and the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) is asked to consider matters and proposals relating to service areas that fall within its remit. Other Scrutiny Boards will be considering elements of the budget savings proposals relevant to their terms of reference.

#### **4. Corporate considerations**

##### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Senior officers and elected members have been engaged in developing the savings proposals set out in the Executive Board's report. Trade unions have also been informed in headline terms of the emerging proposals. Where required, further consultation and engagement will be carried out with staff, trade unions, service users and the public as appropriate on the Service Review proposals set out at [Appendix 2 within the Executive Board's report](#).
- 4.1.2 All Scrutiny Boards will be considering the budget savings proposals, as relevant to their remits, during their October meeting cycle, as well as holding additional working group meetings to further engage in the development of the budget savings proposals.
- 4.1.3 Relevant Executive Members and senior officers contributed to the Scrutiny Board's working group meeting on 25 September 2020 as well as attending today's meeting to discuss the attached report and address any issues raised by the Scrutiny Board.
- 4.1.4 The attached report explains that the outcomes of any consultation will inform the council's decision-making and be incorporated into the 2021/22 to 2023/24 Budget Report timetabled for initial consideration by the Executive Board at its December meeting.
- 4.1.5 Linked to this, any comments and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) during this consultation process are to be captured within a composite report from Scrutiny to be submitted to the Executive Board.

##### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The law requires that the duty to pay "due regard" be demonstrated in the decision making process. Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can show "due regard"

4.2.2 Equality impact screenings have been carried out on the service review savings proposals and included with those proposals at Appendix 2 of the attached Executive Board report. It is also acknowledged that, where appropriate, equality impact assessments will be carried out as part of the decision-making process.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 The Best Council Plan sets out the council's ambitions, outcomes and priorities. The current plan is therefore aligned with both the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and its annual budget.

#### **4.3.2 Climate Emergency**

4.3.3 There are no specific implications for the climate emergency resulting from this report.

### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.4.1 All resources, procurement and value for money implications are detailed in the main body of the attached Executive Board report.

### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 All associated legal and access to information implications are detailed in the main body of the attached Executive Board report.

### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 All associated risk management issues are detailed in the main body of the attached Executive Board report.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1.1 The [Budget Savings Proposals report](#), as considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on 24 September 2020, presents the latest revenue budget update for 2021/22 and budget savings proposals. The proposals that relate to the remit of this Board are included in the attached presentation slides.

5.1.2 All Scrutiny Boards will be considering the budget savings proposals, as relevant to their remits, during their October meeting cycle, as well as holding additional working group meetings to further consider the option appraisal process linked to the development of the budget savings proposals at this stage.

5.1.3 Any comments and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) during this consultation process are to be captured within a composite report from Scrutiny to be submitted to the Executive Board.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1.1 The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) is asked to consider review and comment on matters and proposals relating to service areas that fall within the Scrutiny Board's remit.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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## £32.3m Savings Proposals Identified (September Executive Board)

Directorate	Business as Usual	Service reviews - consultation	Total
	2021/22 savings / £'000s	2021/22 savings / £'000s	2021/22 savings / £'000s
Adults & Health	8,116	0	8,116
Children & Families	4,254	0	4,254
City Development	3,550	1,830	5,380
Communities & Environment	3,219	0	3,219
Resources & Housing	5,016	6,337	11,353
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,155</b>	<b>8,167</b>	<b>32,322</b>



## Environment, Housing & Communities Proposals

Proposal (Communities & Environment)	2021/22 saving / £'000s	FTE budgeted posts
Environmental service managerial and supervisory restructure and realignment of functions	635	-13.2
Additional income from commercial trade waste services	100	0
Remove subsidy to developers for provision of new bins for new houses	70	0
Cleaner Neighbourhood Teams: general expenditure budget savings	75	0
Environmental Health: general expenditure budget savings	68	0
Woodhouse Lane Car Park: increased commuter tariff of 50p	100	0
Additional income from on-street parking tariffs	100	0
Additional income from bus lane enforcement	50	0
Car Parking: general expenditure budget savings	100	0
3% increase in bereavement fees	220	0
Review grounds maintenance contract e.g. more relaxed mowing in appropriate areas to deliver 10% saving	65	0
Increased income from developers for Public Rights of Way and integration of maintenance functions with parks operational teams	100	-2
Temple Newsam Cycle Trails and Road Safety Park	31	2



## Environment, Housing & Communities Proposals

Proposal (Communities & Environment)	2021/22 saving / £'000s	FTE budgeted posts
Reduced contribution to Third Sector Infrastructure Fund budget	36	0
Increase in income from Migration Yorkshire to cover support costs	40	0
Communities: general expenditure budget savings	25	0
Savings in Safer Leeds through restructuring and increasing grant income	171	-5
Reduced contribution to Leeds City Credit Union	63	0
Use of European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) funding for existing senior customer services staffing costs	429	0
Staffing reductions in Directorate Improvement Team through voluntary means	35	-1
Contact Centre: channel shift savings and increased productivity (total savings £420k, of which £350k already included in financial strategy)	70	-18.9
Welfare & Benefits: increased New Burdens grant funding	100	0
Welfare & Benefits: general expenditure budget savings	126	0
<b>Total 'BAU' Communities &amp; Environment 2021/22 savings</b>	<b>2,809</b>	<b>-38.1</b>
Proposal (Housing)	2021/22 saving / £'000s	FTE budgeted posts
Housing general fund: use of reserve	120	0



# Implications of proposals upon staffing

Reduction in FTE budgeted posts

Directorate	FTE budgeted posts
Communities & Environment	-38.1
Housing	-50.0





## HRA – Pressures 21/22

Pay Award / Inflation £1,989k

FYE Enhanced Security in MSF £290k

Contribution to Capital £1,785k

Maintain £80m annual programme

Fall Out of use of reserves £1,188k

Contribution to PFI reserve £216k

Charges to Capital £216k

**Total £5,684k**



## HRA – Proposals

### Income £2,250k

Rent increase as per formula (CPI+1%)

Service Charges inflationary uplift

Sheltered Charge for Self Payers £2/wk

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### Staffing / Expenditure £3,100k

5% reduction in staffing budgets  
(£1m+ vacant posts; £0.5m target)

£1.6m target of reducing spend across  
all votes (exc repairs)

### Investment

- Plan to maintain £80m annual capital programme
- >£200m Housing Growth programme (5 years); 300 p.a new homes
- Annual repairs budget increased to £48m over 5 years.

**Gap £339k**



## Timescales

### October onwards

- Consultation & implementation
- Executive Board

### November

- Conclusion of consultation
- Executive Board
- Capital programme review

### December

- Outcome of Consultation
- Provisional Settlement
- Budget Report to Executive Board
- CT and BR Tax bases



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Report author: Harvinder Saimbhi  
Tel: 07891 272111

**Report of Chief Officer of Safer Leeds**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)**

**Date: 15 October 2020**

**Subject: Request for Scrutiny – Use of Nitrous Oxide in Leeds**

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

**1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following a request from Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board Members to understand the context of Nitrous Oxide use in Leeds, in light of a referral to the Board from Cllr Matthew Robinson.
- 1.2 It highlights the volume of reported usage and associated issues linked to nitrous oxide in the city.

**2 Background information**

- 2.1 The number of complaints related to nitrous oxide use has increased, recently (see table below). However, it is difficult to determine whether this is an indication of increased use, or use being displaced into more public/ visible settings, due to the current temporary closure of venues and events where use would usually take place, due to the Covid-19 pandemic e.g. nightclubs and music festivals. In addition, unlike many other drugs, nitrous oxide use is particularly visible, due to the fact silver canisters are often left behind following use.

- 2.2 Although the number of deaths caused by nitrous oxide are significantly lower than many other drugs, inhaling it directly from the canister is especially dangerous, as the gas is stored under high pressure – which can cause a spasm of the throat muscle and stop a person breathing. Taking too much can also cause users to fall unconscious and, in some cases, suffocate although actual instances are rare.
- 2.3 Nitrous oxide slows down the brain and the body's responses. The effects of the drug vary, depending on how much has been inhaled. It can cause feelings of euphoria, relaxation and calmness, fits of giggles and laughter, as well as sound distortion and hallucinations. It can also cause severe headaches, dizziness, confusion or short-lived, but intense, feelings of paranoia. How long the effects last depends on how much has been taken, physical build, metabolism, whether the users has recently eaten and other drugs consumed.
- 2.4 Although nitrous oxide is not physically addictive, it may be possible to become psychologically dependent – meaning those who use it develop an increased desire to use the drug, but there is limited evidence (some anecdotal reports of developing cravings, etc.) to support this.

### **3 Legislation**

- 3.1 Nitrous oxide falls under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. A 'psychoactive substance' for the purposes of the Act means a substance capable of stimulating or depressing the person's central nervous system, affecting the person's mental functioning or emotional state. The legislation excludes substances such as alcohol, tobacco and caffeine.
- 3.2 Offences are committed by those who:
- Produce psychoactive substances
  - Possess psychoactive substances with intent to supply
  - Supply or offer to supply psychoactive substances
  - Import or export psychoactive substances
  - An aggravated offence occurs where the supply, or offer to supply, took place at or in the vicinity of a school, involved the use of a courier under the age of 18 or took place in a custodial institution.

Note; It is not currently an offence to be in “simple possession” of a psychoactive substance, with nitrous oxide legitimately used in dentistry, midwifery, and in catering for whipping cream.

### **4 Main issues**

#### **4.1 Current Trends in Leeds**

- 4.2 The most common trends in recent reports small groups of males in vehicles parking up and inhaling from canisters/ balloons. The below are typical of these types of incidents in recent weeks:

- Van pulled up outside the property; three males in the vehicle inhaling from balloons
- Male has parked up at locus; and is seen inhaling gas from a canister;
- Caller is reporting males driving around possibly shooting what the reporting person believes to be a gas canister
- Large gathering of young teenagers at locus doing helium gas canisters
- Students house parties' reports of usage.

4.3 There also continue to be reports of residents finding gas canisters in gardens or on streets;

- My 11 year old daughter has found some metal canisters in our garden that looked like they had either been thrown in or someone has come in our garden and used them
- Caller reported a number of gas canisters when she got off the bus.

## 5 **Current Intelligence – Leeds-wide.**

5.1 Complaints involving the use of psychoactive substances are not currently recorded in a standard manner- the figures below refer to the term “canister” being used in reports relating to concern, nuisance, drug use or similar.

5.2 The number of complaints is higher in inner ward areas, with the majority referring to cars parking on roads, supermarket car parks etc with the occupants either seen using nitrous oxide or leaving “bullet” canisters behind afterwards.

5.3 There are some reports of canisters being found in park and ginnel areas.

5.4 The below updates the reported volumes of potential incidents for the most recent 3 months (in blue)

Month – 2020	Number of Complaints Leeds-wide.
January	20
February	22
March	19
April	19
May	51
June	50
July	40
August	35

- The higher volumes of identified incidents seen in May have continued through June and July, but have reduced slightly in August.

## 5.5 NPT Areas

NPT Area	CITY	EAST	NORTH EAST	NORTH WEST	SOUTH	WEST
June	6	7	10	12	8	7
July	3	9	4	9	8	7
August	10	5	4	6	9	1

- Over the last 3 months, there have been increased incidents reported in the City area, relatively similar prevalence in South, but reductions in East and West Leeds.

5.6 There appears to have been a reduction in reports relating to larger groups of youths using canisters/ balloons or use of these at house parties (although these issues are not absent). It is of note that a number of these reports state “helium” rather than “nitrous oxide” being used, although the accuracy of reporting and volumes of possibly different types of gas cannot be determined accurately.

## 6. What we are doing in tackling nitrous oxide

- 6.1 **Enforcement** - Both criminal and civil legal remedies to control the use of nitrous oxide are available to the authorities. The police have powers to address the unlawful supply and production of nitrous oxide and local authorities can use a raft of anti-social behaviour legislation including the introduction of PSPOs and other court orders to keep communities safe and reduce the impact of littering. The use of these ‘powers’ compliment ongoing national and local harm reduction media and youth engagement campaigns aimed at educating young people to make safer choices. Unlike the misuse of ‘controlled drugs’ there is little evidence to suggest the use of nitrous oxide is linked to other crime types. Its use appears to be principally linked to festivals, parties and in other social gatherings/groups with the supply chain being predominantly made up of friends and the internet being the most likely source of supply.
- 6.2 Both the police and Council are aware of issues around the use of substance misuse and neighbourhood policing are working in partnership to reduce incidents affecting the wider community. This includes groups congregating and causing a nuisance while under the influence of nitrous oxide. A health warning on the risk of inhaling laughing gas has been issued by West Yorkshire Police after a worrying trend hitting Leeds' streets June 2020 YEP.
- 6.3 **Trading Standards** are not currently aware of Leeds based businesses retailing nitrous oxide or laughing gas capsules to members of the public. The main supply seems to be done informally through individuals, face to face, shadow economy, Facebook and items can be purchased on Amazon. The prevalence seems to be the City Centre, linked to night time economy and such areas with a large student population.
- 6.4 **Littering** - Our street cleaning teams are picking up discarded canisters from estates, parks, and streets.

- 6.5 **Preventative** information that discourages people from using drugs and substances including nitrous oxide are widely available such as guidance and valuable resources for parents when talking to their children. Work with school children about the dangers and effects of nitrous oxide are part of the substance abuse schools programmes, also partner agencies working with young people outside of school settings. Safer Schools Police Officers Police are teaching young people about the dangers of using nitrous oxide in schools.
- 6.6 **Campaigns** - The Leeds Drug and Alcohol Social Marketing Group (S-MAP), a collaboration between Leeds City Council and Forward Leeds (Leeds integrated drug and alcohol service), is currently running a harm reduction campaign on recreational drug and alcohol use. The campaign focuses on the harms associated with drug and alcohol use, and particularly the increased risk of mixing drugs with other drugs and/or alcohol, as well as looking after your friends on nights out and not being scared to seek help if needed. Due to the current pandemic, the campaign is online (comprising of animations and videos), and utilises a number of social media channels, particularly those popular with younger people, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Since the beginning of September, a number of these animations have also been played, hourly, on the big screen in Millennium Square.

## **7 Corporate considerations**

### **7.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 7.2 The community safety partnership and a range of key stakeholders to consider the report and ensure wider consultation and agree preventative and enforcement initiatives to address community concerns.
- 7.3 Like many issues this cannot be tackled by one agency alone. A number of key organisations such as Police, Trading Standards, Local Authority, Youth Offending, ASB, Public Health and Drugs work towards reducing the harm caused by gas to both individuals and our communities.
- 7.4 All plans ensure a robust multi-agency approach is in place to undertake preventative activity alongside enforcement action. Examples of work undertaken include:
- Use of social media to encourage reporting of incidents and raising awareness through campaigns of the harm of substance misuse and staying safe.

## **8 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 8.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken should this item be subject to a detailed scrutiny session.

## **9 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 9.1 The Best Council Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21 includes Safe, Strong Communities as a Best City Priority and one of the intended outcomes of the plan is for people to ‘be safe and feel safe.’
- 9.2 The community safety partnership aims to work towards priorities set out in the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy, which was approved by Executive Board in October 2018.

## **10 Climate Emergency**

- 10.1 Officers recognise the ambition to tackle the Climate Emergency in Leeds as declared at the Council meeting in March.
- 10.2 Nitrous oxide is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide, and it also depletes the ozone layer. Since it also has a shorter life span, reducing it could have a faster, significant impact on global warming. (Ref: Inside climate news)

## **11. Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 11.1 If this item is subject to detailed scrutiny, existing planning arrangements and initiatives will be reviewed in order to maximise the value derived from existing resources.

## **12 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 12.1 There are no exempt items so there are no access to information issues.
- 12.2 There are no legal implications for the work set out in this report.

## **13 Risk management**

- 13.1 Local residents have raised concerns around the use of gas canisters affecting individuals and see it as a mitigating factor to causing ASB and littering. This can be a distressing time for some of the most vulnerable groups within our communities.
- 13.2 A range of different partners are required to work on this agenda and resources will be required to be agreed/aligned if bespoke work is required in this area.

## **14 Conclusions**

- 14.1 Nitrous Oxide is considered less harmful than other controlled drugs and many other psychoactive substances. The term ‘hippy crack’ is a term derived from the tabloid media a few years ago but it could be argued there are no real comparisons to be made between it and crack cocaine. Nitrous oxide is not known to have any short / medium term adverse effects and there doesn’t appear to be any evidence of people being at risk of becoming dependent on it due to it being non addictive.

- 14.2 It could be argued the current legal status of nitrous oxide and its ease of purchase may be important factors in contributing to any recent perceived increase in its use - and this use will be more visible in communities now as a consequence of Covid-19 pandemic related social distancing guidance which has led to the widespread cancelling of festivals, events, clubs and parties where nitrous oxide is known to be used.
- 14.3 The Government Advisory Body appear to have so far assessed the harmfulness of nitrous oxide as not warranting its control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 preferring public safety advice as a key component part of what it considers a more proportionate and appropriate harm reduction strategy. Whilst the use of nitrous oxide with alcohol increases health risks it is also known to be used by young people as an alternative to alcohol – a substance that most would consider much more harmful.
- 14.4 Beyond this, there appear other options to be potentially explored include a review of the legislation should it be warranted and opportunities for government to work with the industry and retailers to better understand and disrupt supply chains at source as part of a problem solving approach, early intervention approach rather than in the community with the police and local authority community safety resources remaining focused on other partnership priority issues and demands including the supply of drugs as identified in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. These priority issues include tackling the supply of Class A controlled drugs are known to cause significant harm to communities in a multitude of ways.
- 14.5 Bearing in mind the context associated with the use of nitrous oxide, it could be said that the best policy approach to addressing its use should principally continue to be within a wider public health setting rather than one centred on enforcement and control measures. This public health approach has gained much momentum in recent years and could be seen as a shift that brings the approach to drugs and psychoactive substances close to that currently offered to other harmful substances such as alcohol and tobacco.

## **15 Recommendations**

- 15.1 The Board is asked to use the information provided to inform the decision of future work programming.

## **16 Background documents - None**

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**Report of Chief Officer Housing**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)**

**Date: 15 October 2020**

**Subject: Update on Housing Leeds' COVID response and remobilisation**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**1. Purpose of this report**

1.1 To provide a further update to Scrutiny Board members on Housing Leeds' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and remobilisation following on from the last update on 18 June 2020.

**2. Background information**

2.1 On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the UK Government introduced restrictions on movement, social contact and business practices aimed at controlling and limiting the spread of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

2.2 In response to these restrictions Housing Leeds responded quickly to ensure that measures were put in place to safeguard residents, employees and partners, whilst also maintaining essential service delivery. An essential service offer was in place throughout lockdown, ensuring that services were provided in line with national guidance and harmonious with other local authority housing service providers. A big focus of this essential offer was on maintaining the safety of homes and customers during lockdown. This essential service offer remained in place until restrictions were lifted from May onwards.

2.3 From May onwards Housing Leeds began its remobilisation of services on a phased basis, as and when restrictions were lifted.

**3. Main issues**

- 3.1 Housing Leeds has taken a robust approach to the remobilisation of services, in line with the Council wide approach. A weekly meeting has been in place with Trade Union colleagues since May to discuss remobilisation plans and to review risk assessments linked to the resumption of each activity. All risk assessments were developed in close consultation with Health and Safety colleagues and activity approved by Bronze and Silver Group as appropriate.
- 3.2 During lockdown, many teams worked flexibly across the wider service to ensure that essential services were provided and that customers were supported. As services have been remobilised staff teams have worked hard to ensure that we remobilise safely and with customers at the heart of everything we do.
- 3.3 Outlined below is an update on each of the areas of Housing Leeds activity, with any volumes / performance reported as at the end of August 2020.

### 3.4 Responsive Repairs

- 3.4.1 Since the start of 'lockdown' a total of 47,982 repairs have been completed across the city. Completions have risen significantly since the previous reported period (14,199) with the number of weekly repair completions doubling from 1,385 per week to 2,768 at present. This movement reflects the service resuming the completion of non-essential repairs in July and the return from furlough of external contractor resources by the end of the period. At the end of August, the service has returned to a 'business as usual' service offer with the reintroduction of appointment slots for tenant's citywide going live the first week in September.

Total repairs completed since 23-3-20	47,982
Weekly Completions (Current 4 weekly average)	2,768
Reported repairs not completed	18,852
Assessed non-reported repairs	56,828

- 3.4.2 Across the city, work is ongoing to clear the backlog of 'non-essential' repairs which had accrued since lockdown began. This number is currently standing at 18,852. Plans are in place with repairs partners to achieve this by mid-October however this may take longer to deliver for a small number of trades such as plastering where the pull on available resources has had to be managed along with other key priority services (such as voids), and because of nationwide shortages in materials that delayed initial progress.
- 3.4.3 It remains the case that the volume of new repairs reported is significantly lower than the same period in previous years and whilst order raising has steadily risen since the previous reporting period, it is currently circa 30% lower than historic volumes. As such, analysis of the repairs volumes for the last 3 years indicates that a demand of an additional c.57, 000 repairs is likely. The return of Annual Home Visit activity, albeit some virtual, it's likely to generate an increase in orders reported along with the delivery of a business as usual service offer that will hopefully continue to drive confidence in the service.

### 3.5 Gas Compliance

- 3.5.1 Domestic gas compliance is a legislative requirement for Leeds City Council as a landlord. The services are delivered by external contractors and work to maintain gas safety inspections where safe to do so has been a key focus for the Mechanical and Electrical team and repairs partners. National guidance has been closely followed to ensure Leeds remains in step with industry and government guidance.

Gas Safety Inspections Completed since 23-3-20	21,172
Current Properties Overdue	284
Gas Compliance %	99.32%

3.5.2 Of the 42,382 Leeds City Council homes with domestic gas, 284 are currently overdue which represents a significant positive movement since the previous reported position when this number stood at 773. The main reasons behind this improved position have been the ending of shielding for vulnerable tenants (who have subsequently rearranged the visits), the ability for Housing Leeds staff to engage more proactively with tenants who will not allow access and most recently, the reopening of the courts for warrant applications (where tenants refuse access) through a virtual platform. All properties that are overdue have a plan in place to address this.

3.5.3 It should be noted that through benchmarking undertaken, the Leeds position remains relatively strong compared to that of our peers.

### 3.6 Other Compliance

3.6.1 In addition to gas compliance, Property Management teams worked to maintain other compliance obligations throughout lockdown which meant that the overall position was reasonably healthy once lockdown measures were eased. These include Fire Risk Assessment, water hygiene inspections, asbestos inspections and electrical inspections.

3.6.2 In total, over **6,000 compliance inspections** have been completed since 23 March 2020 (1,200 at the previous reporting period), including 353 Fire Risk Assessments (95 at the last reporting period). These visits are all essential to maintaining the safety of Housing residents and properties. Due to the intrusive nature of Electrical Periodic Inspections inside tenant's homes, this activity was paused at the initial onset of lockdown measures however this programme resumed in July and a catch-up programme is now being delivered.

### 3.7 Investment Programme

3.7.1 The Strategy and Investment Team has achieved 100% remobilisation of the Capital Investment programme since activity recommenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. There are currently 20 projects actively delivering improvement projects to resident's homes and across the wider HRA estate. The importance of getting remobilisation of activity in and around people's homes right was recognised therefore additional time was invested in communicating with residents with over 5000 letters issued. These included assurance on how Health and Safety would be prioritised along with contact details for the team for any queries or concerns. Feedback from elected members during this time was both supportive and positive. The re-opening of schemes was undertaken over a period of weeks starting first with external, communal and environmental schemes and gradually moving to work inside properties, (where safe to do so).

3.7.2 Current active projects cut across 60 High Rise blocks in the city including major projects such as: District Heating; CCTV; Ground Source Heat Pumps; Communal Rewiring; Fire Safety and Sprinkler installation. There is ongoing improvement to several hundred individual homes (kitchen/bathrooms/ re-roofing/windows and doors) running concurrently. In order to maintain our forward plan of investment activity new contracts have continued to be procured, with contracts to the value

c£15.2m being awarded since lockdown. Major projects currently within in the tender process include 6 new District Heating Clusters (24m) and Ground Source heat pump Phase 2 (£1.5m). To support our data led investment approach we have completed comprehensive stock condition surveys in more than 50% of our tower blocks since restrictions were eased and took the opportunity created during lockdown to refresh our asset data and review the HRA Asset Management Strategy which is intended to go live in November 2020.

### 3.8 Voids and Lettings

3.8.1 In accordance with national guidance, lettings were suspended between late March and mid May, and only critical moves took place in accordance with the Emergency Lettings Policy, introduced in late March. Up to the end of August 149 applicants were rehoused into Council homes and 26 into Housing Association homes via the Emergency Lettings Policy.

3.8.2 The total number of voids at the end of August is outlined below:

Total Voids (23/03/20)	510
Total Voids (31/08/20) Of which:	833
• Properties Ready to Let	204
• Properties with Contractor / in voids process	629
Of 833 voids 31/08/20:	
• No. void 23/03/20	65
• No. void 29/06/20	229
• No. become void since 29/06/20	539

3.8.3 Throughout lockdown, void property repairs continued so as to maintain an appropriate pool of ready to let properties that could be utilised in-line with the emergency lettings policy. The void repairs service returned to a business as usual service offer in early June albeit with some restrictions due to the need to maintain social distancing at all times (restricting the number of operatives that can work in a property at any one time) and also some delays in the supply of materials due to the impact of the pandemic on supply chains.

3.8.4 Housing teams began to let homes which had been offered prior to lockdown in mid-June, and Choice Based Lettings resumed on 24 June. For the first few weeks a small number of Council and Housing Association homes were advertised and this has increased on a phased basis back up to pre-COVID levels, with 546 Council homes and 88 Housing Association homes advertised up to the end of August. The Emergency Lettings Policy remains in place, to ensure that critical moves linked to COVID impacts can be facilitated.

3.8.5 The total number of voids peaked at 897 in early July and reduced to 833 by the end of August. 337 Council tenancy commencements took place between June and the end of August. 539 of the 833 voids at the end of August had become void since 29/06/20.

3.8.6 The backlog is taking longer to reduce than expected for a number of reasons. There have been higher than usual tenancy termination levels since restrictions on moving home lifted, the letting of new build homes handed over during lockdown, a higher than usual level of tenant transfers (particularly for the new build homes) and team pressures of processing additional homes with enhanced risk assessment

measures in place to ensure the safety of staff and residents. Whilst the majority of issues around material supply have been resolved now, this has impacted on the initial pace at which homes could be repaired and the restrictions around social distancing continue to impact on repair timescales given the restrictions that remain around numbers of operatives in properties at any one time. All external contractors, staff and operatives have now returned from furlough and the recovery plans in place have brought in additional resources in-order to clear the backlogs.

- 3.8.7 Voids are a critical priority for the service, and a plan is in place which is being monitored and managed via weekly meetings of senior managers. This plan aims to address the backlog by the end of November.

### **3.9 Rent Collection**

- 3.9.1 In line with national guidance all formal arrears and possession activity was suspended at the start of lockdown, with a primary focus on supporting tenants who were having difficulties paying their rent. During April arrears increased by £590k and in the first four weeks of lockdown we saw a spike of 1498 Universal Credit claims.
- 3.9.2 From May onwards the number of Universal Credit claims has returned to pre-COVID levels of around 300-400 per month. Housing Teams have been in regular contact with tenants in arrears to offer support to maximise benefit / income entitlement, make affordable arrears payment plans and encourage payment. This supportive approach has been effective for most tenants. On 24 August pre-notice formal arrears activity resumed, with 3.5k formal arrears letters being issued within the first week. Next steps are being considered for re-introducing the serving of notices and pre-court activity in due course, but these stages will only be followed once all other options have been exhausted, and in accordance with national guidance.
- 3.9.3 Following the immediate increase in arrears in April to 4.01%, arrears have gradually reduced and by end of August rent collection performance was 96.33% compared to 95.96% in August 2019, and rent arrears were 3.47% (£7.3m) compared to 3.3% at the end of August 2019.

### **3.10 Tenancy Management / Tenancy Support**

- 3.10.1 Housing teams continued throughout lockdown to carry out essential tenancy management activity remotely, managing customer contact by telephone, text and email. Most site based tenancy management activities were suspended, including annual home visits, estate inspections / walkabouts and block inspections.
- 3.10.2 During lockdown the main focus was on supporting tenants. We made telephone contact with 12,400 tenants over 60 or with a known vulnerability to check their wellbeing and signpost to additional support where needed. We also contacted 4,000 tenants who were shielding to encourage tenants to register with the national helpline and to signpost to additional support where needed. Where there were concerns about a tenant and contact couldn't be made then a home visit was undertaken to check a tenant's wellbeing.
- 3.10.3 Whilst Annual Home Visits have not been possible, we have introduced an Annual Telephone Contact, focusing initially on tenants where there are no tenancy issues or arrears, no repair issues and no vulnerabilities / concerns identified at the last AHV. To date 3613 of these Annual Telephone Contacts have been undertaken.

- 3.10.4 As measures have been lifted almost all on site tenancy management activity has been remobilised, including home visits linked to tenancy breaches, suspected abandonments and estate / block inspections. Where contact can be managed by phone and email activity is continuing to be managed remotely, and so in most cases New Tenancy Visits and Annual Home Visits have been replaced with a telephone contact, reserving a visit only for tenants where this is needed.
- 3.10.5 10,000 wellbeing telephone calls per week were made to Retirement Life tenants throughout lockdown, with a small number of visits for particularly vulnerable tenants. Communal lounges were closed. Some doorstep visits resumed in August, but the main service offer remains by telephone. Individual building risk assessments are underway to consider if communal lounges can reopen as COVID secure venues over the coming weeks.

### **3.11 Leeds Housing Options / Homelessness**

- 3.11.1 Leeds Housing Options has continued to support vulnerable homeless customer with additional emergency accommodation, via hotels, which peaked at over 230 units during the pandemic. Through robust move-on work and proactive engagement with partners, this number has now reduced to less than 60 hotel rooms still being used and around 80 customers in total in temporary accommodation.
- 3.11.2 Despite increasing demand, the Housing Options service have maintained a positive prevention rate of around 90% - this means that 9/10 people who approach the service in housing need have a positive/secure outcome achieved with the national average being around 50%.
- 3.11.3 Following a proactive media campaign the private sector lettings team have increased the number of private rented tenancies becoming available for homeless households and are forecast to secure 30% more tenancies than the same period last year.

### **3.12 Private Rented Sector Regulation**

- 3.12.1 During lockdown the Private Sector Regulation Team continued to address conditions in the private sector wherever possible remotely as per the Government guidance. The service continued to inspect properties where there was immediate risk to any occupiers, ensuring the safety of all concerned. In additional properties offered to provide homes for people as part of the Leeds Landlord Scheme to help with the homeless prevention and support people coming out of the hotels post lockdown were all inspected.
- 3.12.2 Since the easing of lockdown officers have increased the number of inspections undertaken including empty homes. Since lockdown started at the start of April a total of 302 different visits have been undertaken with 85 in August, the highest number since the end of March.
- 3.12.3 To support the sector during lockdown the Council suspended requesting fees for all types of licence application, both mandatory HMO and selective licensing. However since the start of August the Council has started to request payment of all fees. The main request has been for around 2800 outstanding selective licensing fees be paid. This will allow both schemes to now progress towards the issuing of licences later in the year / early new year.

### **3.13 Council Housing Growth Programme**

3.13.1 The vast majority of the new council housing growth programme continued during lockdown. 59 new build homes were completed and handed over, 12 homes received planning approval and planning submissions were made for 71 homes up to the end of August. During lockdown we also celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> property acquisition of former Right To Buy homes and completed the purchase of 5 off the shelf new homes from a developer.

3.13.2 Our ambitious housing growth plans remain largely on track albeit with some delays likely to future delivery as a result of the impacts on the construction industry.

### **3.14 Outbreak Planning**

3.15 Housing Leeds has been working closely with colleagues in Public Health to support and plan for further outbreaks. Arrangements are in place to share intelligence of COVID cases in Council owned homes at a higher risk, to enable a proactive response. COVID testing kits are available in extra care schemes, and Support Officers in Retirement Life schemes are able to signpost tenants who are unable to leave the home but need a test to the portal. Housing is also sharing key COVID outbreak messages via social media and with key housing partners, such as private landlords and housing associations. Signage is in place in Retirement Life schemes and high rise blocks encouraging tenants to social distance.

3.16 Housing Leeds officers recently supported some local community door knocking in the Harehills area to raise awareness of COVID-19, self-isolation and local testing facilities available.

## **4. Consultation and engagement**

4.1 A key priority during the pandemic has been to ensure continued customer access into services and teams. At the start of lockdown as teams shifted to working from home arrangements were put in place to ensure that customer facing telephone lines and email addresses continued to be resourced to meet demand. Call volumes reduced initially into the Contact Centre and Housing Office teams but then returned to pre-COVID levels as services were remobilised. Call volumes into Leeds Housing Options increased significantly as restrictions on moving home were lifted but then gradually reduced up to the end of August. From 1 April to 31 August the Contact Centre answered 95% calls made (72,583 calls) in an average of 129 seconds.

4.2 Regular communications have been shared with customers throughout the pandemic. The Council's Coronavirus and Housing web pages have been updated on a regular basis to update customers on customer access and service delivery. Regular emails have been sent to Council tenants with an email address, with more targeted communications to Retirement Life tenants. As lettings were remobilised there was targeted communications with those on the Leeds Homes Register. Key messages have been shared on social media and texting has been used to delivery specific messages to particular schemes or blocks.

4.3 Actual meetings with customer groups as part of customer engagement have been suspended since March. All Housing Advisory Panels have now held skype / zoom meetings and are focusing on supporting projects which support COVID impacts on the community. Up to the end of August HAPs have supported 77 projects, of a value of £132,400. Tenant Scrutiny Board are holding regular zoom meetings and are

progressing their new inquiry. Other citywide forums are suspended, but with regular email updates. Instead we are engaging with tenants in different ways. Some online tenant engagement software is currently being piloted which offers a number of different way of engaging with customers, via surveys, polls, forums etc.

4.4 Throughout the pandemic Housing Leeds has worked closely with BITMO and BITMO has remobilised its services in close alignment to Housing Leeds. BITMO is also connected into Council wide updates and is promoting key messages to tenants. Housing Leeds has also met regularly with Housing Association partners to share the Council's COVID response and seek their support, particularly to support lettings via the Emergency Lettings policy.

#### **4.5 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.5.1 A key focus of Housing's response to the pandemic has been to ensure that the most vulnerable customer groups remain supported. Council tenants with a known vulnerability, disability or aged over 60 were contacted in the early days of lockdown to check their wellbeing and offer additional support where needed. Tenants who were medically shielding were also contacted to encourage them to register with the national helpline. For a number of these tenants, regular contact continued throughout lockdown to monitor wellbeing.

4.5.2 Since March, additional emergency temporary accommodation has been made available to house rough sleepers, including ineligible EEA nationals, to ensure that all residents of Leeds were able to self-isolate as required. This accommodation, usually provided in hotels, helped to ensure a safe place for very vulnerable residents during the pandemic. Work is ongoing to support these residents to achieve a positive longer term housing solution.

#### **4.6 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

4.6.1 Housing Leeds response to the COVID pandemic supports a number of priorities in the Best Council Plan. It supports the Housing priorities of providing housing of the right quality, tenure and affordability in the right places, minimising homelessness and providing the right housing options to support older and vulnerable residents. The response also supports other priorities:

- Safe, Strong Communities - keeping people safe from harm, helping people out of financial hardship and being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities.
- Health and Wellbeing – reducing health inequalities and supporting self-care.

##### Climate Emergency

4.6.2 Since lockdown in late March most of Housing's workforce (approx. 1100 staff) has worked from home, and where possible managed service delivery by telephone and email. It is projected that Housing will spend £65k less on staff transport costs during 2019/20 linked to an increase in home working.

4.6.3 Housing Leeds is piloting software and business process changes which may help to achieve more efficient service delivery and support the Council's client emergency ambitions:

- Customer engagement software – instead of meeting / writing to customers to seek their view, some software is being piloted to seek customers' views digitally via forums, online surveys and ballots.
- Remote video tool – allowing an officer to view inside a tenant's home via a tenant's smartphone in order to diagnose a repair issue and offer self-help guidance if needed.
- Digital survey for transactional repairs – via automated telephone call / text message.
- Some Annual Home Visits for Council tenants are being carried out as telephone calls, where there are no tenancy issues.

4.6.4 All services are evaluating lessons learnt during COVID, and considering whether there are some service changes which have been put in place for COVID we may wish to retain as a longer term approach. A focus of this evaluation is on how services can be delivered more efficiently and with a lower carbon impact.

#### **4.7 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.7.1 The pandemic has had an impact on 2020/21 revenue budgets. For the HRA, at the end of August there was a projected additional loss of rental income from voids of £559k, and associated council tax on these voids of £161k along with an increased bad debt provision of £353k. This loss will be funded from savings in staffing costs and associated budgets, and a £4.4m reduction to the capital programme.

4.7.2 For the Housing General Fund, the overall budget pressure at the end of August is £2.43m, made up of the provision of COVID related emergency accommodation via hotels at £1.54m, along with £610k security costs. Some of this pressure will be offset by Housing Benefit and the Next Step Accommodation Project grant.

#### **4.8 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.8.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

#### **4.9 Risk management**

4.9.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

### **5. Conclusions**

5.1 Since the last update to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board, Housing Leeds has made considerable progress in remobilising of services and reducing backlogs in service delivery. Many services are now fully remobilised and operating a largely business as usual service.

5.2 Remobilisation work will continue alongside planning for further changes to service delivery linked to changes in national or local restrictions and to local outbreaks.

### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board to note and comment on Housing Leeds' work to maintain essential service delivery during COVID-19, remobilise services and prepare for further restrictions / outbreaks.

**7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

**Report of Head of Democratic Services**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)**

**Date: 15 October 2020**

**Subject: Work Schedule**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**1. Purpose of this report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Scrutiny Board’s work schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

**2. Background information**

2.1 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. In doing so, the work schedule 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; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.

**3. Main issues**

3.1 The latest iteration of the Board’s work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.

3.2 Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 24 September 2020 are attached as 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 identify any matter where specific scrutiny activity may be warranted, and therefore subsequently incorporated into the work schedule.

- 3.3 The Board will continue to maintain an agile approach to engagement in early budget consultation following initial discussions in September 2020.
- 3.4 The Board requested an update on Nitrous Oxide use in Leeds following the receipt of a referral for Scrutiny from Cllr Matthew Robinson in July 2020. That update report has been provided to members as a separate item on today's agenda to inform the Board's discussion about whether or not further inquiries should be carried out into this subject matter.

#### Developing the work schedule

- 3.5 When considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
- Avoid unnecessary 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.
  - Avoid pure "information items" except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
  - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
  - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
- 3.6 In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where necessary and appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

#### Covid-19 and Scrutiny Board meetings

- 3.7 The On 16 March 2020, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, Leeds City Council took the necessary step to cancel a number of planned meetings of various Committees, Boards and Panels. This included all Scrutiny Board meetings and any joint scrutiny arrangements where the Council acts as the lead authority.
- 3.8 In cancelling Scrutiny Board meetings it was acknowledged that, after the urgency of the initial stages of the pandemic response, there would be opportunity to reflect and identify any lessons learned across different service areas and statutory local authority scrutiny functions would have an important role to play in this process.
- 3.9 With Council services focused on the urgent pandemic response and subsequent city recovery plan, the usual collaborative process of annual work programming for Scrutiny Boards was also suspended. However, in May 2020 all Scrutiny Boards were briefed on decision making relating to the areas of the pandemic response that fell within their respective remits and this may influence members' priorities for the 2020/21 work programme.
- 3.10 In June 2020 remote public sessions of all Scrutiny Boards were introduced. There is a degree of continuing uncertainty about how future meetings will be hosted – they may be hosted remotely, be buildings-based or involve a hybrid approach. However,

all meetings have been scheduled in such a way as to ensure they can continue to be resourced remotely if that is the required approach.

#### **4. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The Vision for Scrutiny states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director(s) and Executive Member(s) about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

#### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules 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 and Diversity Scheme'.

#### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the best council objectives.

##### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 When considering areas of work, the Board is reminded that influencing climate change and sustainability should be a key area of focus.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 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 and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.
- 4.4.2 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.

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.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Members are asked to consider the matters outlined in this report and agree (or amend) the overall work schedule (as presented at Appendix 1) as the basis for the Board's work for the remainder of 2020/21.

6.2 Members are also asked to note the earlier discussion in relation to Nitrous Oxide use and the impact of that on local communities. The Board is asked to agree that, if required, the work programme will be updated to reflect the outcome of that discussion.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

June	July	August
<b>Meeting Agenda for 18 June 2020</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 9 July 2020</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.</b>
<p>*REMOTE SESSION*</p> <p>Outcome of the consultation on the proposals for the land currently occupied by Temple Newsam Golf Course</p> <p>Safer Leeds (verbal update)</p>	<p>*REMOTE SESSION*</p> <p>Volunteer Hubs – learning lessons to ensure the future resilience of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector</p> <p>Referral to Scrutiny: Nitrous Oxide (Cllr Robinson)</p>	
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
	Discussion re: parameters of River Cleanliness Inquiry	
<b>Additional Notes</b>		
	Request for detailed Nitrous Oxide Report	

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### Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

September	October	November
<b>Meeting Agenda for 24 September 2020</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 15 October 2020</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 18 November 2020</b>
<p>Waste Management Services: update on the recommendations of the 2018 scrutiny inquiry [PM]</p> <p>LASBT Review: update following the introduction of changes to the service in early 2020. [PSR]</p> <p><i>Work programme to include: update on River Cleanliness inquiry &amp; Statement regarding volunteer hubs to be noted</i></p>	<p>Housing Activity Update [PM]</p> <p>Budget consultation – review of September proposals</p> <p><i>*Nitrous Oxide report to inform discussion around work programming in response to referral*</i></p>	<p>Locality Working and Priority Neighbourhoods [PM]</p> <p>Voluntary Sector: reflections on lessons learned from the Covid 19 experience [following July 2020 discussion]</p>
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
Budget – Early Consultation - 25 September 10am-12pm	River Cleanliness [HG Co-Ordinating]	River Cleanliness [HG Co-Ordinating]  Fireworks partnership, parameters of proposed inquiry, following the 2020 referral to scrutiny  <b>Budget Consultation [Oct/Nov Proposals]- TBC</b>
<b>Additional Notes</b>		

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PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

January	February	March
<b>Meeting Agenda for 14 January 2021</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda for 25 February 2021</b>	<b>Meeting Agenda 25 March 2021</b>
Reducing Poverty and improving Financial Inclusion – update report, including impact of Universal Credit. (PSR)  Financial Health Monitoring and Initial Budget Proposals [PDS]  Best Council Plan [PDS]	Standards in the Private Rented Sector – update report [PSR]  CEAC update on progress and activity  Parking Strategy and Management update [PM]	Fuel Poverty Update / Energy Efficiency in Council Housing Stock / Carbon reduction in the Private Rented Sector [PM]  <i>Clean Air Zone – post implementation review (PSR)</i>
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
		Universal Credit Update: Service user experience as per discussions in January 2020 <i>Current deferral in light of CV19 impact</i>
<b>Site Visits</b>		

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PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response

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## EXECUTIVE BOARD

THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Blake in the Chair  
**(REMOTELY)**  
Councillors A Carter, R Charlwood,  
D Coupar, S Golton, J Lewis, L Mulherin,  
J Pryor, M Rafique and F Venner

### 32 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 2 to the report entitled, 'Estate Realisation and Accelerated Capital Receipts', referred to in Minute No. 46 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council. It is considered that the release of such information would, or would be likely to prejudice the Council's commercial interests in relation to other similar transactions. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information at this point in time. (Minute No. 46 refers).

### 33 Late Items

Agenda Item 10 - Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic - Response and Recovery Plan

With the agreement of the Chair, a late item of business was admitted to the agenda entitled, 'Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan'.

Given the scale and significance of this issue, it was deemed appropriate that a further update report be submitted to this remote meeting of the Board. However, due to the fast paced nature of developments on this issue, and in order to ensure that Board Members received the most up to date information as possible, the report was not included within the agenda as originally published on 16th September 2020. (Minute No. 40 refers).

### 34 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared at the meeting.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2020

**35 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

**LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

**36 Design and Cost Report for the Allerton Grange School Permanent Expansion of 60 Places for September 2021**

Further to Minute No. 11, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the Director of Children and Families and the Director of City Development submitted a joint report which set out the context regarding the proposed permanent expansion of Allerton Grange School and which sought approval for the necessary authority to spend and to incur related expenditure to facilitate the delivery of works for the permanent expansion of Allerton Grange School from September 2021.

In response to a Member's enquiries, the Board received further information regarding the extent of the PFI and other associated fees which would be incurred as a result of the proposals and also in respect of the level of costs for the project.

With regard to the highways considerations associated with the scheme and the finalised details regarding fees incurred, officers respectively undertook to provide the Member in question with further information on these matters.

In addition, Members also discussed the approach nationally towards the provision of schools and school places.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That authority to spend and incurring expenditure of £5,051,606 from Capital Scheme number 33177/AGR/000 for the redevelopment and expansion of Allerton Grange School for September 2021, be approved;
- (b) That the overall scheme costs of £7,202,806, which incorporates the existing approval of £2,151,200.80 for the bulge expansion for September 2020, be noted;
- (c) That it be noted that the expenditure for the construction of the permanent expansion works are subject to planning approval;
- (d) That it be noted that the former CLC building is in the ownership of Leeds City Council and not part of the PFI; with it also being noted that the extension to the former CLC building will be subject to a deed of variation to remove this section of the site from the PFI agreement such that the extended building remains wholly in Leeds City Council ownership. Finally, it be noted that a further deed of variation will be required for PFI approval to undertake remodelling works within the main school building;

- (e) That the implementation of a City Council Change under the PFI contract, be approved, and that approval also be given to the entering in to of any associated documentation, including without limitation a deed of variation (as required), with the Head of Service, Learning Systems being authorised to review and approve any such documentation;
- (f) That the programme dates, as identified in section 3.2 of the submitted report, in relation to the implementation of this decision, be noted, with it also being noted that this represents the critical path for project success and must be adhered to where possible;
- (g) That it be noted that the officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Service Learning Systems in Children's and Families Directorate.

## **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ADULTS**

### **37 Asset Based Community Development and Asset Based Approaches**

The Director of Adults and Health submitted a report which provided an update on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) activity in Leeds, highlighting achievements and challenges experienced to date. The report also detailed the importance of ABCD in supporting the city's response to Covid-19 and community resilience and which presented an outline plan for the further proliferation of ABCD, with details also being provided on the potential for this way of working to further deliver the Council's ambitions.

As part of the introduction to the report, the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults introduced the newly appointed Chief Officer for Transformation and Innovation.

Responding to a Member's enquiries, it was noted that a further report to the Board presenting the outcomes from the evaluation work being undertaken by Leeds Beckett University would be submitted either in December 2020 or early in 2021.

A Member highlighted the importance of the approach being further embraced by other services within the Council, such as the Communities team, in order to maximise the benefits from the initiative. In response to this, the Board was provided with further detail on the actions being taken to develop the ABCD approach in the short to medium term, specifically with regard to greater partnership working both internally and with external organisations.

In conclusion, Members highlighted how this work was crucially important in helping to address the issues being faced across the city during the current time.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the positive impact that Asset Based Community Development and asset based approaches have made across the city, be noted

together with the important role that they have played in the Covid-19 response;

- (b) That the outline plan for the development of Asset Based Community Development in Leeds, be noted;
- (c) That agreement be given to work with key partners across the city in order to develop Asset Based Community Development and asset based approaches as a key vehicle for meeting the city's priority outcomes;
- (d) That it be noted that the officer responsible for the development of ABCD is the Chief Officer for Transformation and Innovation in Adults and Health, working with key partners within the Council and externally.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES**

### **38 Temple Newsam Indoor Play Barn**

The Director of Communities and Environment submitted a report highlighting an opportunity to conserve and transform heritage buildings to develop an all year round visitor attraction at Home Farm, Temple Newsam, which would be achieved by creating an indoor play barn, café and retail facility within the heart of the existing farm attraction. The report also set out the business case to achieve a financially sustainable future for the buildings, improve the visitor experience as well as continue to conserve rare breeds.

A Member raised concerns regarding the timing of the proposal given the current financial challenges being faced by the Council, the potential impact on such a scheme by restrictions introduced in response to the pandemic and whether the matter would be further considered by the Board. In response, Members received further detail regarding the business case for the proposals and also an undertaking that the proposals would be reviewed in February 2021, to ensure that it remained financially viable before an award of tender was progressed.

During the discussion it was emphasised that local Ward Councillors were supportive of the proposals.

Responding to a specific enquiry, officers undertook to provide the Member in question with information regarding the interest that would be charged on the proposed £3.68m prudential borrowing.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That approval be given to implementing the proposals as contained within the submitted report, subject to a review being conducted before the award of tender (anticipated in February 2021) in order to assess the potential impact of COVID-19;
- (b) That agreement in principle be given to inject £3.68 million investment into the Capital Programme, with approval also being given to delegate

the authority to spend approvals for the full scheme to the Director of Communities and Environment following the associated review in February 2021;

- (c) That it be noted that the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside will be responsible for implementation of this scheme.

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

**39 Proposals for Road Safety Park, Family Cycle Trails, Children's Play Area, Cafe, Remodelled Golf Provision and Landscape Improvements at Temple Newsam**

Further to Minute No. 86, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Director of Communities and Environment submitted a report outlining the findings of the recent public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of proposals for the land currently occupying the golf course at Temple Newsam Estate, with the report making proposals for the future of this area of land based upon the consultation findings.

Responding to a Member's enquiries, officers provided an update on the liaison which had taken place to date with Temple Newsam Golf Club regarding the golf course layout proposals, and with a view to progressing such matters and provide the club with any further clarification as necessary, it was requested that dialogue between the Council and the club continued. Also, officers undertook to provide Board Members with the associated plans which had been shared with the club for their consideration.

As part of the discussion on such matters, the Board was provided with further details of the consultation exercise which had taken place.

A Member highlighted the vital role played by community parks throughout the city, especially during the current pandemic, with it being noted that the work in the community parks across Leeds would continue.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the following changes to the area of Temple Newsam that is currently a golf course be approved:-
- (i) A reduction in the size of Temple Newsam golf course from 27 to 18 holes;
  - (ii) The re-development of the building which currently serves as the golf clubhouse to include an attractive and accessible café, toilets and other supporting recreational facilities alongside golf provision;
  - (iii) The development of a road-safety park, children's play area, walking and cycling trails and other historical, educational and environmental landscape improvements;

- (b) That approval be given to inject £1.2m into the Capital Programme for the delivery of the scheme;
- (c) That the necessary 'authority to spend' approvals for the full scheme be delegated to the Director of Communities and Environment, subject to consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles;
- (d) That it be noted that the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside will be responsible for the implementation of the scheme.

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

### **INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND CULTURE**

#### **40 Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic - Response and Recovery Plan**

Further to Minute No. 21, 20th July 2020, the Chief Executive submitted a report which provided an update on the continued Coronavirus (COVID-19) work being undertaken across the city including the recovery approach, outbreak management, and current issues and risks. The report also noted that the city's multi-agency command and control arrangements continued to be used alongside the Response and Recovery plan with the aim of mitigating the effects of the outbreak on those in the city, especially the most vulnerable, and to help prepare for the longer term stages of recovery planning.

With the agreement of the Chair, the submitted report had been circulated to Board Members as a late item of business prior to the meeting for the reasons as set out in section 9 of the submitted report, and as detailed in Minute No. 33.

By way of introduction to the report, the Chair paid tribute on behalf of the Board to Council officers, all partners, the community and Councillors for the continued work being undertaken right across the city to address the challenges continuing to be faced as a result of the pandemic.

Members were provided with an update on the latest developments, both locally and nationally which had occurred since the publication of the submitted report, which included the introduction of new national restrictions, the launch of the NHS Covid-19 App and the current position regarding testing provision. The Board also received an update regarding the latest infection rates in Leeds, with it being noted that Members and relevant parties would continue to be kept informed of any developments or announcements from Government which impacted upon the city.

Emphasis was also placed upon the unprecedented challenges that the Council and the city continued to face and the 'asks' such as funding, improved testing and more local contact tracing, which were being made to

Government to help address such challenges. Members also reiterated the crucial role played by local government and partners in such circumstances and the benefits that a localised approach could often provide. Regarding the approach being taken in Leeds, emphasis was placed upon the need to ensure that the correct balance was struck between preventing infection whilst at the same time also looking to maintain people's broader health and wellbeing needs.

In addition, it was noted that communication continued with neighbouring Local Authorities in order to ensure that a partnership approach was being taken, whilst Members also received information on the work being undertaken across a range of sectors, including care homes, schools and work places to address the specific challenges within those settings.

In conclusion, the Chair reiterated the unprecedented financial challenges that the Council continued to face and the importance of a cross-party approach being taken when making representations to Government for further support. Also, emphasis was placed upon the key importance of ensuring that clear communications and messaging on the current regulations to all communities in Leeds was consistently delivered.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the updated context, progress and issues as we move into a new phase of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the emerging issues for consideration during the next phase of recovery, including the new school and university term, winter pressures, and the concurrent pressure of EU exit, be noted;
- (c) That the need for new levels of engagement with the public, and everybody taking ownership of the need to be safe and responsible in order to reduce levels of transmission and avoid further restrictions, be recognised;
- (d) That in respect of the financial implications for the Council arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, the contents of the submitted report be used as context when the Board considers the more detailed financial health monitoring report, as detailed at Minute No. 41.

#### **RESOURCES**

##### **41 Financial Health Monitoring 2020/21 - Month 4**

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report providing the projected financial health position of the Authority for 2020/21, as at month 4 of the financial year.

As part of the introduction to the report, the Board received an update on the ongoing discussions which continued with Government regarding the provision of further financial support for the current financial year, with it being

noted that the Government's response was expected in mid-October, and it would be at this point when it would be known whether or not the Council would need to consider an emergency budget.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was provided with further information regarding the proportion of the current year's deficit which related to the Minimum Revenue Provision and the proportion which could be attributable to the impact of Covid-19.

Members discussed a number of issues relating to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and also regarding the approaches being made to Government for further support. Members also discussed whether the Government could potentially be approached in relation to support for the Council's loss of income, whilst emphasis was placed upon the key 'ask' of spreading the unprecedented costs associated with the pandemic over a longer term, an approach which it was noted, would be consistent with much of the public sector.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority, as at Month 4 of the financial year, be noted, together with the projected impact of COVID-19 on that position;
- (b) That it be noted that the remaining gap will still require significant savings and further support from Central Government;
- (c) That it be noted that the Authority is awaiting confirmation of further Government financial support this year, which will inform the action the Council will need to take in terms of how a balanced budget position can be delivered.

**42 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2025/26**

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report which presented an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26, together with the budget assumptions underlying that Strategy.

Members discussed the uncertainty around the funding basis for Local Authorities moving forward, and highlighted the importance of a Spending Review announcement by the Government in order to provide the Council with as much certainty as possible.

A Member highlighted the need for the Council to approach the financial challenges which it continued to face in an agile way, so that it could adapt as required.

**RESOLVED –** That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted.

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

#### **43 Revenue Budget Update 2021/22 and Budget Savings Proposals**

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report detailing the actions underway and proposed to address the financial gap for 2021/22, currently estimated at £118.76m. The report presented a series of savings proposals to contribute towards the Council achieving a balanced budget for 2021/22 Budget and where appropriate, sought agreement to begin meaningful consultation with staff, trade unions, service users and the public as required. The report also outlined the budget savings proposals that will contribute towards the Housing Revenue Account delivering a balanced budget position for 2021/22.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member for Resources highlighted that the proposals in the submitted report were the first step in a process towards the submission of the initial budget proposals later in the year.

In response to a Member's enquiries, the Board was provided with further information on the anticipated reduction in the workforce as part of the proposals in terms of the number of full time equivalent posts, received an update on the Early Leavers initiative ahead of the deadline for employees to reaffirm their expression of interest, and in response to an enquiry regarding the provision of funding for the 'Year of Culture 2023' initiative, it was noted that such matters would be taken into consideration as part of the budget setting process moving forward.

Members also discussed the approach being taken across directorates towards meeting the financial challenges being faced in each respective area and how that formed part of the budget setting process.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the financial position for 2021/22, as outlined within the submitted report, be noted, with it also being noted that further savings are required to deliver a balanced budget position;
- (b) That it be noted that the 'Business as Usual' savings and decisions to give effect to them shall be taken by the relevant Director or Chief Officer in accordance with the Officer delegation scheme (Executive functions);
- (c) That agreement be given that consultation is commenced with regard to the 'Service Review' proposals, and that it be noted that the decisions to give effect to them shall be taken by the relevant Chief Officer, following the consultation period, in accordance with the Officer delegation scheme (Executive functions);
- (d) That the savings proposals in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, be noted.

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

#### **44 Capital Programme Review**

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report providing the outcome of the review of the Capital Programme which had been undertaken during the summer. The aim of the review was to reduce the level of borrowing undertaken by the Council in the short term in order to enable a revenue saving to be achieved which would help to address the financial impact of Covid-19.

Responding to a Member's enquiry regarding details in the submitted report which noted that since 2010/11 significant capital investment, funded by borrowing, had occurred which had led to an increase in the quantum of debt and the cost of maintaining that debt, officers undertook to provide the Member in question with details of the quantum of that debt and the cost of the related interest payments per year.

In addition, the Board noted a Member's comments highlighting the importance of continuing to invest in local town and district centres during the current time.

Also, by way of a correction to the submitted report, it was noted that section 57 within Appendix A should read, 'Section106 Schemes' rather than 'Climate Emergency'.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That subject to the correction as detailed above, the contents of the submitted report, together with the following be noted:-
  - (i) That the Capital Programme review has identified a number of schemes which are proposed to be stopped £81.989m; allow alternative funding £30.021m; or can be re-phased into future years of £19.511m. Totalling £131.5m of proposed changes, which are detailed within Appendix A to the submitted report;
  - (ii) That the aspiration is to limit the increase in debt.
- (b) That the following injections into the Capital Programme be approved:-
  - (i) £7.7m of CIL funding split £5.0m for Basic Need and £2.7m of CIL for flood alleviation; and
  - (ii) £8.58m of capital receipts to fund the Core Systems Review;
- (c) That the above resolution to inject funding of £16.28m will be implemented by the Chief Officer (Financial Services).

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

**45 Annual Performance Management Report**

The Director of Resources and Housing submitted a report presenting a year-end review, both looking back on how the Council has performed during 2019/20 in delivering the Best Council Plan, but also signposting to future performance challenges. The report also considers how the Council's performance has, and will continue to be, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the annual performance report, as submitted, be noted, together with the progress made during 2019/20 in delivering the ambitions and priorities set out in the Best Council Plan;
- (b) That the details in the submitted annual performance report indicating how performance has, and will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, be noted.

**46 Estate Realisation and Accelerated Capital Receipts**

The Director of City Development submitted a report which sought support for the estate rationalisation and remodel approach, as detailed, in addition to the accelerated capital receipt programme through a series of targeted auction disposals. By way of background, the report also provided details around the Council's home working approach, given that this underpinned the Council's core office estate rationalisation.

In considering the submitted report, a Member highlighted the need to ensure that local Ward Members were kept informed and included in dialogue as part of any proposals relating to this programme which affected their respective Wards.

Also, a Member highlighted the importance of maintaining the city's heritage assets.

Following consideration of Appendix 2 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 approach proposed within the submitted report to rationalise and remodel the estate, be supported;
- (b) That the acceleration of the Capital Receipt Programme through a targeted number of disposals by auction and through one to one negotiations, be agreed, with agreement also being given for the first tranche of properties, as set out in exempt Appendix 2 to the submitted

report, being taken to auction in October 2020; with it being noted that a further report detailing additional properties to be included in the Capital Receipt Programme will be brought back to Executive Board for consideration;

- (c) That the work ongoing to explore opportunities to extract additional value from the Council's estate, as set out within exempt Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be noted;
- (d) That it be noted that the draft Estate Management Strategy will be brought to Executive Board at a later date;
- (e) That it be noted that the rationalising workstream is ongoing and that further reports will be presented throughout the course of the workstream;
- (f) That it be noted that the disposal of properties and bringing forward an updated Estate Management Strategy which reflects the Council's future operational requirements is the responsibility of the Director for City Development;
- (g) That the engagement work undertaken so far with staff on both current and future working from home, which is being overseen by the Director for Resources and Housing, be noted.

#### **47 Core Business Transformation: Technology Refresh**

The Director of Resources and Housing submitted a report which sought approval to proceed with the Core Business Transformation programme to the next stage, which would be the procurement phase, and in doing so the report also sought approval to provide the necessary 'authority to spend' in order to enable the required procurement activity.

In considering the proposals detailed within the submitted report, it was suggested that the Chief Digital and Information Officer be included in this process, in order to maximise the benefit of the initiative.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That approval be given for the Core Business Transformation programme to proceed to the next stage, which is the procurement phase, and in doing so, approval also be given to the authority to spend £1.01M on the required procurement activity;
- (b) That it be noted that the Chief Officer (Financial Services) is responsible for this matter (such as supporting the programme to the next stage and steering the £1.01m spend), together with adhering to any timescales involved;
- (c) That a report be brought back to Executive Board in 12 months' time (September 2021), prior to the awarding of a contract to the successful bidder.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** MONDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00 P.M. ON MONDAY, 5TH OCTOBER  
2020

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