

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

**Meeting to be held remotely on
Monday 9 November 2020 at 12.00 pm**

MEMBERSHIP

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

Note to observers of the meeting: To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'View the Meeting Recording' 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=10212>

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</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>	

**Principal Scrutiny Advisor:
Rebecca Atherton
0113 37 88642**

EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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.
2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.
3. If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-

RESOLVED – 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:

No exempt items have been identified.

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.)

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.

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**Principal Scrutiny Advisor:
Rebecca Atherton
0113 37 88642**

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

CALL IN BRIEFING PAPER

7 - 12

To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services advising the Scrutiny Board on the procedural aspects of calling in the decision.

7

MERGER OF GROUNDWORK LEEDS WITH GROUNDWORK WAKEFIELD AND NORTH YORKSHIRE AND LEEDS CITY COUNCIL'S FUTURE ROLE IN GROUNDWORK YORKSHIRE

13 - 42

To consider a report from the Head of Democratic Services presenting the background papers to an Executive Board decision which has been called in in accordance with the Council's constitution. This relates to the merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire, and Leeds City Council's future role in Groundwork Yorkshire

8

OUTCOME OF THE CALL-IN

To consider the Scrutiny Board's formal conclusions and recommendations arising from the consideration of the called-in decision.

9

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Board's next meeting will take place on 12 November 2020 at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meet for all Board members at 10am.

**Principal Scrutiny Advisor:
Rebecca Atherton
0113 37 88642**

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0113 37 88642**

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Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 9 November 2020

Subject: Call In Briefing Paper

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<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
Is the decision eligible 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

Summary of main issues

1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an Executive Board decision has been Called In. The background papers to this particular decision are set out as a separate agenda item and appropriate witnesses have been invited to give supporting evidence.
2. This report advises the Scrutiny Board on the procedural aspects of Calling In the decision.
3. The Board is advised that the Call In is specific to the report considered by the Executive Board and issues outside of this decision, including other related decisions, may not be considered as part of the Board's decision regarding the outcome of the Call In.

Recommendations

4. The Scrutiny Board is asked to note the contents of this report and to adopt the procedure as detailed within it.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an Executive Board decision has been Called In. The background papers to this particular decision are set out as a separate agenda item and appropriate witnesses have been invited to give supporting evidence.
- 1.2 This report advises the Scrutiny Board on the procedural aspects of Calling In the decision.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Call In process provides the facility for the Scrutiny Board to require a decision taker to reconsider a decision within a specified time period. This is a separate function from the Scrutiny Board's ability to review decisions already taken and implemented. The eligibility of an Executive Board decision for Call In is indicated in the minutes.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Board is advised that the Call In is specific to the report considered by the Executive Board and issues outside of this decision, including other related decisions, may not be considered as part of the Board's decision regarding the outcome of the Call In.

Reviewing the decision

- 3.2 Because of the unique nature of Call In, particularly with regard to the requirement to conclude the meeting with a recommendation in one sitting, it is important that the meeting has a managed framework. The Scrutiny Board is therefore recommended to adopt the following process:
 - The Members who signed the Call In request will outline their reasons for calling in the decision, defining their concerns and explaining what remedial action they wish to see. If the Chair has agreed in advance that they may be accompanied by other witnesses, these witnesses will also be given the opportunity to briefly outline their concerns in relation to the decision in question.
 - Members of the Scrutiny Board will ask any questions and points of clarification.
 - At this point, the Members who signed the Call In request and any accompanying witnesses will leave the witness table.
 - The Executive Member(s) and/or officer(s) who are representing the decision maker will be invited to join the witness table.
 - The representatives of the decision maker will respond to the issues raised by the Call In request.
 - Members of the Scrutiny Board will ask any questions and points of clarification.
 - If necessary, this stage may involve further questioning by Board members of the witnesses in support of the Call In request. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no provision for the witnesses to cross-question one another.
 - Once Members of the Scrutiny Board have completed their questioning of witnesses, the representatives of the decision maker will leave the witness table.
 - A representative on behalf of each of the parties to the Call In will be invited to join the witness table to sum up. The representative of the decision maker will be invited

to sum up first if they wish to do so. Following this, the representative of the signatories to the Call In request will be invited to sum up having heard the discussion.

- The Scrutiny Board will then proceed to make its decision in relation to the Call In.

Options available to the Board

- 3.3 Having reviewed the decision, the Scrutiny Board will need to agree what action it wishes to take. In doing so, it may pursue one of two courses of action as set out below:

Option 1 - Release the decision for implementation

- 3.4 Having reviewed this decision, the Scrutiny Board may decide to release it for implementation. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option, the decision will be immediately released for implementation and the decision may not be Called In again.

Option 2 - Recommend that the decision be reconsidered.

- 3.5 The Scrutiny Board may decide to recommend to the decision maker that the decision be reconsidered. If the Scrutiny Board chooses this option a report will be submitted to the decision maker.
- 3.6 In the case of an Executive Board decision, the report of the Scrutiny Board will be prepared within three working days of the Scrutiny Board meeting and submitted to the Executive Board. Any report of the Scrutiny Board will be referred to the next Executive Board meeting for consideration.
- 3.7 In reconsidering the decision and associated Scrutiny Board report, the Executive Board may vary the decision or confirm its original decision. In either case, this will form the basis of the final decision and will not be subject to any further call-in.

Failure to agree one of the above options

- 3.8 If the Scrutiny Board, for any reason, does not agree one of the above courses of action at this meeting, then Option 1 will be adopted by default, i.e. the decision will be released for implementation with no further recourse to Call In.

Formulating the Board's report

- 3.9 If the Scrutiny Board decides to release the decision for implementation (i.e. Option 1), then the Scrutiny Support Unit will process the necessary notifications and no further action is required by the Board.
- 3.10 If the Scrutiny Board wishes to recommend that the decision be reconsidered (i.e. Option 2), then it will be necessary for the Scrutiny Board to agree a report setting out its recommendation together with any supporting commentary.
- 3.11 Due to the tight timescales within which a decision Call In must operate, it is important that the Scrutiny Board's report be agreed at the meeting.
- 3.12 If the Scrutiny Board decides to pursue Option 2, it is proposed that there be a short adjournment during which the Chair, in conjunction with the Scrutiny Support Unit,

should prepare a brief statement proposing the Scrutiny Board's draft recommendations and supporting commentary. Upon reconvening, the Scrutiny Board will be invited to amend/agree this statement as appropriate (a separate item has been included on the agenda for this purpose).

- 3.13 This statement will then form the basis of the Scrutiny Board's report (together with factual information as to details of the Called In decision, lists of witnesses, evidence considered, Members involved in the Call In process etc).
- 3.14 The Scrutiny Board is advised that there is no provision within the Call In procedure for the submission of a Minority Report.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Prior to submitting a Call In, a nominated signatory must first contact the relevant officer or Executive Member to discuss their concerns and their reasons for wanting to call in the decision. Part of this discussion must include the Member ascertaining the financial implications of requesting a Call In. The details of this discussion should be referenced on the Call In Request Form.
- 4.1.2 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any internal or external consultation processes that have been undertaken in relation to the decision.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any impact on equality areas, as defined in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any Council Policies and City Priorities relevant to the decision.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any significant resource and financial implications linked to the decision.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.
- 4.5.2 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any legal implications linked to the decision.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The background papers to this particular decision will make reference to any risk management issues linked to the decision.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an Executive Board decision has been Called In. This report advises the Scrutiny Board on the procedural aspects of Calling In the decision.
- 5.2 In particular, the Board is advised that the Call In is specific to the report considered by Executive Board at its meeting on 21 October 2020 and issues outside of this decision, including other related decisions, may not be considered as part of the Board's decision regarding the outcome of the Call In.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Board is asked to note the contents of this report and to adopt the procedure as detailed within it.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 none

¹ 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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Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 9 November 2020

Subject: Call In – Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire and Leeds City Council's Future Role in Groundwork Yorkshire

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<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
Is the decision eligible 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:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This paper presents the background papers to a decision which has been Called In in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.
2. Papers are attached as follows:
 - Copy of the completed Call In request form
 - Report of Director of Communities and Environment presented to Executive Board at its meeting on 21 October 2020.
 - Extract from the draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 21 October 2020.
3. Appropriate Members and officers have been invited to attend the meeting in order to explain the decision and respond to questions.

Recommendations

4. The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) is asked to review this decision and to determine what further action it wishes to take.

Background documents¹

5. None used

¹ 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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CALL IN REQUEST

Date of decision publication:...**23 October 2020**
.....

Delegated decision ref:or

Executive Board Minute no: **Executive Board 21 October 2020 Minute 57**
.....

Decision description: **Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire**.....
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Discussion with Decision Maker:

Prior to submitting a Call In, a nominated signatory must first contact the relevant officer or Executive Member to discuss their concerns and their reasons for wanting to call in the decision. Part of this discussion must include the Member ascertaining the financial implications of requesting a Call In.

Please identify contact and provide detail.

- Director/author of delegated decision report.
- Executive Board Member

Detail of discussion (to include financial implications) Meetings held with Director of Communities and Environment and Recreational Development Manager before the Executive Board and with the Recreation Development Manager prior to submitting this call-in request. I stressed that my Group's reason for a call-in was so that issues which the Group had some misgivings about could receive a level of scrutiny and explanation that was not available at the Executive Board meeting. Details of these misgivings are outlined in the Reason for Call-in section. The officer contended that there was sufficient evidence to support the decision and was happy for this to be further scrutinised at a call-in. There were no direct financial implications for the Council or partners arising from the call-in.

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Reasons for Call In:

All requests for Call In must detail why, in the opinion of the signatories, the decision was not taken in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 of the Council constitution (decision making) (principles of decision making) or where relevant issues do not appear to be taken into consideration. *Please tick the relevant box(es) and give an explanation.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Proportionality (ie the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect for human rights
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A presumption in favour of openness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clarity of aims and desired outcomes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An explanation of the options considered and details of the reasons for the decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive promotion of equal opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural justice

Explanation

- No evidence of an independent due diligence exercise prior to recommending dissolution of Groundwork Leeds and Groundwork North Yorkshire and transferring assets to Groundwork Wakefield.
- No risk assessment or legal advice on the merger process recommended
- No clear options appraisal justifying the recommendation.
- Significant information not included in the Executive Board report

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As a company member (trustee) of Groundwork Leeds the Council has an obligation to act in the best interests of the organisation. The Executive Board report does not demonstrate that this obligation was taken into account.

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Leeds City Council Scrutiny Support


A Call In request may be made by a **minimum** of:


5 non-executive Members of council from the **same political group**;

or;


2 non-executive Members of council if **they are not from the same political group**.


This Call In request should be submitted to Scrutiny Support, 1st Floor West, Civic Hall by 5.00pm by no later than the fifth working day after the decision publication date. The following signatories (**original signatures only**) request that the above decision be called in.

 Nominated Signatory Print name: Cllr Jonathan Bentley Political Group: Liberal Democrat Group
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 Signature... Print name: Cllr Colin Campbell Political Group: Liberal Democrat Group
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 Signature Print name: Cllr Chris Howley Political Group: Liberal Democrat Group
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 Signature Print name: Cllr Diane Chapman Political Group: Liberal Democrat Group

 Signature Print name: Cllr Ryk Downes Political Group: Liberal Democrat Group
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Signature.....

Print name

Political Group.....

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Print name

Political Group.....

For office use only: (box A)

Received on behalf of the Head of Democratic Services by:

Rebecca Atherton

Date: 29 October 2020 Time: 15.01 SSU ref: 2020/21 – 57-72

For office use only: (box B)

Exemption status checked:

Call In authorised: Yes

Date checked:

Signed: Rebecca Atherton

Signatures checked:

Date: 29/10/20

Receipts given:

Validity re article 13

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Report of Director Communities & Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 21st October 2020

Subject: Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire and Leeds City Councils future role in Groundwork Yorkshire.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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

Summary

1. Main issues

- South Leeds Groundwork Trust (now Groundwork Leeds) is a registered charity and was established in 1986 to work with local people, schools and businesses. In 2003 the Trust expanded its charitable area beyond the Leeds boundary to cover the whole of Leeds and consequently it presently operates projects and programmes in Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees. Groundwork Leeds presently employs 99 people and generates circa £1.6m income through the provision of community services, life and skills employment, support for young people, business support and landscape services.
- Following an extensive period of consideration and due diligence, detailed proposals have been developed for the merger of Groundwork Leeds, Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire. The proposal would see Groundwork Yorkshire established with new articles of association and company membership structure. The clear position of the groundwork executive team is that the merged entity will benefit from greater financial scale, sustainability and viability, which will safeguard the programmes being delivered in deprived neighbourhoods which will benefit vulnerable people across the region. Merger will safeguard the jobs of Groundwork staff and will enable Groundwork to continue to deliver, on a long-term basis, programmes that benefit the people of Leeds.
- A comprehensive independent financial review of the proposal to merge and the combined organisations 3-year business plan has been undertaken. This supports

the proposal to merger. Further consideration, has been given to this matter in light of Covid 19 and the likely impact of the pandemic on the business plan.

- Following merger, Leeds City Council would become a company member of Groundwork Yorkshire. As company member the authority will be able to nominate representatives onto the Groundwork Yorkshire board in the same manner it can do now with Groundwork Leeds. Furthermore, the present Groundwork Leeds board would form a local partnership in Leeds that provides a direct forum to channel the work of Groundwork Yorkshire in the Leeds area. If the proposal to merge is agreed and this board is established, this Leeds focussed partnership will set priorities for and direct any investment from Leeds City Council into Groundwork Yorkshire and its activities.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The proposals in this document support the Best Council Plan, particularly the following priorities: Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth, Culture, Sustainable Infrastructure and Age and Child Friendly Leeds.

3. Resource Implications

- There are no direct resource implications linked to this report. Leeds City Council's liability exposure is unchanged from its present liability exposure as a member of Groundwork Leeds.

Recommendations

- a) Executive Board is requested to support the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire.
- b) In endorsing the above, Executive Board is requested to approve the decision for Leeds City Council to dissolve its company membership of Groundwork Leeds and become a company member of Groundwork Yorkshire.
- c) Executive Board is requested to approve the establishment of a Leeds local groundwork partnership board to provide local input into schemes and programmes that are to be developed in Leeds in partnership with Groundwork Yorkshire post-merger.
- d) Executive Board is requested to delegate to the Director for Communities and Environment, the Chief Officer Financial Services and the City Solicitor the final agreement of the deed of transfer and any other agreement needed to formalise and complete the transfer process.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 For Executive Board to support the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire to form a new organisation Groundwork Yorkshire that will operate on a regional level.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Groundwork UK was established in 1981 with the objective of bringing together communities, business and government to deliver environmental improvements and promote sustainable development. The organisation is now a federation of charities that work locally and nationally.
- 2.2 South Leeds Groundwork Trust (now Groundwork Leeds) is a registered charity and was established in 1986 to work with local people, schools and businesses. The founding Chairman was Lord Merlyn-Rees and the two company members were, and still are, Groundwork UK and Leeds City Council. Detail on incorporation and articles of association are as follows.

Charity Name	Company Number	Charity Number	Date of Incorporation	Registered Office
Groundwork Leeds	2064992	518154	16 October 1986	Environment and Business Centre, Merlyn Rees Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9SL

- 2.3 Following extensive work by Groundwork Leeds, the former Wesley Street Mills complex in Morley was repurposed to what is now called the Environment and Business Centre and is the headquarters of the organisation. The building remains synonymous with the vibrant partnership that exists between Groundwork and both the local community of Morley, Leeds as a whole and Leeds City Council.
- 2.4 In 2003 the Trust expanded its charitable area beyond the Leeds boundary to cover the whole of Leeds and consequently it presently operates projects and programmes in Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees. Groundwork Leeds presently employs 99 people and generates circa £1.6m income through the provision of community services, life and skills employment, support for young people, business support and landscape services. These services are in line with the charitable objects of the organisation which are included in Appendix 1 of this report. In addition, the charity has a subsidiary affiliated trading company, with details provided as follows.

Subsidiary	Owned by	Company Number	Date of Incorporation	Registered Office
Groundwork Environmental Services (Leeds) Limited	Groundwork Leeds	02847274	16 October 1986	Environment and Business Centre, Merlyn Rees Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9SL

- 2.5 The board of Groundwork Leeds includes representatives nominated by both company members and remains a forum for positive change and initiatives that are jointly developed across the city. Furthermore, there has historically been a great deal of collaboration between Leeds City Council and Groundwork Leeds on many

projects across a broad spectrum of issues. This partnership working is supported and enabled by a service level agreement that facilitates the working partnership. Leeds City Council membership representation on the board is determined by the member management committee and has historically had cross-party political representation.

- 2.6 The Council provides an annual revenue contribution of £83k to Groundwork Leeds and annual capital funding of £70k. Although these are reviewed on an annual basis, it is not proposed to reduce the revenue contribution in 2021/22. However, as detailed in the Capital Programme Review, agreed at September's Executive Board, the Parks and Countryside service will seek to identify alternative sources of funding from 2020/21 onwards to enable the Council's £70k annual capital contribution to be met from non-LCC resources.

3. Main issues

3.1 Proposal

- 3.2 Following an extensive period of consideration and due diligence, detailed proposals have been developed for the merger of Groundwork Leeds, Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire (company membership of this trust is restricted to Selby District and Selby Town Council) into one single organisation. It is proposed that this will be achieved by subsuming both Groundwork Leeds and North Yorkshire into Groundwork Wakefield and in turn simultaneously renaming that organisation Groundwork Yorkshire with new articles of association and company membership structure. In advance of the decision by Leeds City Council, the other proposed company members have already taken the decision to support the merger.

- 3.3 The main body of this report provides supplementary detail in the following areas and will summarise the information provided to the Groundwork Leeds board that informed the decision to support the merger:

- Rationale and case for merger;
- Financial due diligence;
- The new company structure and proposed working relationship with Leeds City Council.

3.4 Rationale and Case for Merger

- 3.5 Following first consideration of the principle of merger in 2015, the three trusts have increasingly sought out means to work collaboratively and pool resource to achieve operational efficiencies. This has resulted in an expenditure reduction across the combined organisations of circa £750k per annum. The completion of the merger process will solidify this organisational change and provide opportunities for further efficiencies.

- 3.6 By merging organisations and forming a single entity, it is anticipated that this will support in stabilising activity and broadening the reach and profile of groundwork in the region. Areas of potential for the combined organisation such as design and community services have the potential for development and growth which can be achieved by drawing on the experience and skills of former single trust teams to create viable combined business unit. Their working collaboratively will provide increased income potential. Furthermore, operating at scale makes programmes where the social benefit is disproportionately more significant than the economic benefit more viable.

- 3.7 Combining teams across the trusts has broadened the skill base and shared experience within the holistic Groundwork organisation and as a result of sharing experiences this has allowed the organisation to develop stronger programmes across the region.
- 3.8 The clear position of the groundwork executive team is that the merged entity will benefit from greater financial scale, sustainability and viability, which will safeguard the programmes being delivered in deprived neighbourhoods which will benefit vulnerable people across the region. Merger will safeguard the jobs of Groundwork staff and will enable Groundwork to continue to deliver, on a long-term basis, programmes that benefit the people of Leeds. This view is shared by Groundwork UK. Failing to merge threatens the viability of all three Trusts and without operating on a merged basis it is anticipated that it will become increasingly difficult to achieve a breakeven position.
- 3.9 Financial Due Diligence
- 3.10 Running throughout the above benefits of merger are the improved prospects of financial viability and sustainability through efficiency the potential for improved income through expertise and knowledge share. To support this position, prior to merger, a 3-year business plan was developed that projected the trading viability of the combined organisation.
- 3.11 Following a recommendation by Leeds City Council officers and a subsequent request by Leeds City Council Members, an independent financial review of the 3-year business plan for the merged organisation along with other financial information was undertaken by BHP Chartered Accountants in March 2019.
- 3.12 The purpose of the review was to assist the Trustees in their decision making process by providing independent, objective information and analysis for use in the consideration of the options around a merger. The key issues considered by the review were as follows:
- 3.13 Business Plan:
- 3.14 The three trusts decided in 2015 to operate more collaboratively with a view to merging, and the three trusts now operate as Groundwork Yorkshire on a regional basis under a common management team. This has contributed significantly to a reduction in overhead costs in recent years and reduced the group deficits experienced in previous years to a position of a small surplus in 17/18 (£7k).
- 3.15 The three-year business plan reviewed by BHP shows improved performance and the potential for surplus, with £30k forecast in 18/19, £30k in 19/20 and £126k in 20/21. The projected surpluses in both 18/19 and 19/20 were realised with actuals of £22k and £30k achieved.
- 3.16 The review concluded that the three-year business plan reflected reasonable assumptions, although 20/21 was considered more speculative and carried a greater risk of non-achievement than the other years. It was noted that the key risks to the plan related to management's ability to secure future income, whilst also noting that those concerns naturally reflected the uncertainties associated with forecasting the longer-term performance of a contract based business.
- 3.17 Balance Sheet:
- 3.18 The aggregated balance sheets as at 31st March 2018 showed net assets (before pension deficits) of £1.522m of which fixed assets were £2.054m. The main asset in Leeds is the Environment and Business Centre building at Morley, valued at £572k. Given that Leeds City Council are a company member of Groundwork Leeds, the

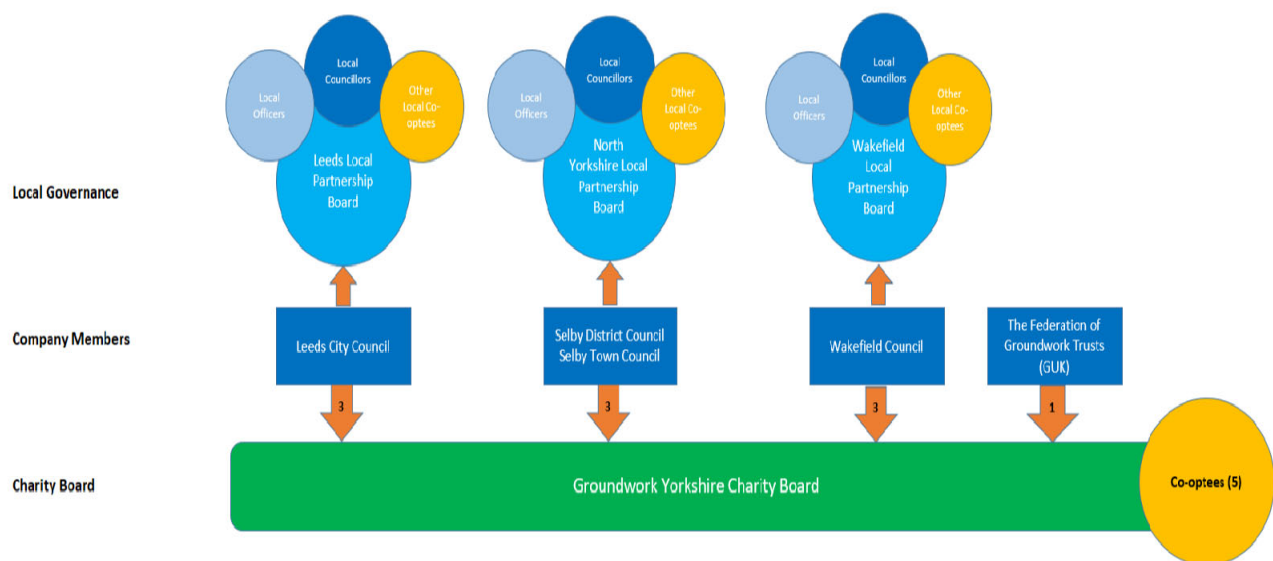
authority own 50% of the net assets on the balance sheet of Groundwork Leeds. The other significant asset (£1.25m) is held by Groundwork Wakefield and relates to a 99-year lease from Network rail for offices situated within Wakefield Kirkgate Station. Under the merger proposal, the assets will belong to the new organisation and the combined assets will be jointly owned by Leeds City Council, Wakefield Council, Groundwork UK and Selby District/Town Councils.

- 3.19 There is a significant liability (£635k) in respect of a payroll loan between Groundwork Wakefield and Wakefield Council, as Wakefield previously managed the payroll free of charge on behalf of Groundwork Wakefield. Wakefield have now stopped offering this service to external parties and have offered a long-term payment arrangement to the merged organisation and Groundwork have now brought the payroll function in house. This loan has now been secured against the Kirkgate Station, with the appropriate agreement from Network Rail confirmed.
- 3.20 Groundwork Leeds and Groundwork Wakefield are members of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and the combined balance sheets showed a significant deficit of £1.8m, meaning that after pension deficits, there was a negative net asset position on the aggregated balance sheet of £326k. However, as noted in the audited financial statements, this accounting calculation of the pension deficit is not expected to have any material impact on the financial viability of the organisation. Unlike an actuarial valuation, the accounting position does not take into account the future income which is expected to be earned by the pension fund assets before the liabilities are due to be paid out. A full pension scheme valuation is undertaken every three years by the scheme actuary which addresses the actions necessary over the long term to ensure the sustainability of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund.
- 3.21 Other Merger Options
- 3.22 The review also considered a number of alternative merger options including merging into a new company, creating a charitable holding company, creating a larger merger than the one proposed, maintaining the status quo and demerging altogether. However, none of the alternatives were considered to provide a clear advantage over the proposed approach and it was noted that there would likely be significant additional operational costs if the current operational merger was undone and each trust was to operate wholly independently.
- 3.23 Conclusion of the Review
- 3.24 The review concluded that there was no reason for the merger not to take place, but also that there was no immediate requirement to merge as many benefits of the merger had been achieved already through the current collaborative method of operation. It noted that whilst the plan showed an improving performance and the potential for surplus, this should not provide grounds for complacency and, regardless of merger, ways of improving the financial strength of the Trusts should be sought. A number of implications in respect of pensions were identified in the event of a merger and these are addressed below:
- 3.25 Pension Transfers
- 3.26 Groundwork Leeds currently has an Admission Agreement with the West Yorkshire Pension Fund, with Leeds City Council as the guarantor. There are currently 10 members, with 1 active member, 3 deferred and 6 pensioners.
- 3.27 Under the merger proposal, the following transfers in respect of the WYPF are recommended, following in principle agreement from the respective Chief Finance Officers of Leeds and Wakefield Councils:

- The one active pension scheme member of Groundwork Leeds will transfer to Groundwork Wakefield on a fully funded basis.
- Leeds City Council will confirm to the WYPF that in accordance with the Guarantor Agreement it will subsume the deferred and pensioner assets and liabilities of Groundwork Leeds.
- The Admission Agreement for Groundwork Leeds with the West Yorkshire Pension Fund will be closed and any surplus/deficit will be subsumed by Leeds City Council as the Guarantor. A final actuarial valuation will take place when Groundwork Leeds ceases to exist but the most recent actuarial valuation as at 31st March 2019, showed a surplus of £100k. The current Covid-19 pandemic may adversely impact on the pension fund position and if the revised position does show a deficit, this will be subsumed by the Council, although the impact on the Council's overall pension position will likely be minimal.

3.28 The new company structure and proposed working relationship with Leeds City Council

3.29 The proposed structure of Groundwork Yorkshire's Charity Board is visually outlined in the below drawing;



3.30 The four company members will be Leeds City Council, Wakefield Council, with North Yorkshire represented by Selby District Council and Selby Town Council and finally Groundwork UK. The proposal is that the board will be made up of 3 representatives from Leeds City Council, 3 from Wakefield Council and 3 representatives from the Selby authorities with a further additional 1 representative from Groundwork UK. This company member representation of 10 will be supported by a further 5 co-opted board members. The determination of company membership representation and co-opted member representation will be done by the company members, with each company member determining their respective representatives. However, it is anticipated that these will be drawn from present groundwork Leeds board members subject to a formal decision under the councils outside bodies procedure rules.

3.31 Clearly the role of the Groundwork Yorkshire board will be to support and guide the direction of the organisation and ensure it operates in line with its charity objects.

The objects of Groundwork Yorkshire incorporate those of Groundwork Leeds and include in Appendix 2 of this report. In addition to the board, the proposal is to also establish a local partnership in Leeds that provides a direct forum to channel the work of Groundwork Yorkshire in the Leeds area. If the proposal to merge is agreed and this board is established, this Leeds focussed partnership will set priorities for and direct any investment from Leeds City Council into Groundwork Yorkshire and its activities. It is proposed in advance of merger that the funding presently provided by Leeds City Council to support Groundwork will continue to directly benefit initiatives and work undertaken by the trust in the Leeds area only and would not underpin any activities outside of the authority boundary. At inception it is anticipated that this will be the present Groundwork Leeds board which is made up of members, local people of interest/value to the work being undertaken and relevant officers from within Groundwork.

- 3.32 The Board of Groundwork Leeds has been clear in setting out its preference that as long as is practical for Groundwork, its operations should be based in and use the Morley building. It is the desire of the Groundwork Leeds Board that the long-established positive relationship between Leeds, Leeds City Council and Groundwork should continue. The maintenance and use of the Morley asset is a symbol of this partnership.
- 3.33 Combined with the renaming of Wesley Street as Meryn Rees Avenue to commemorate Groundwork Leeds's founding Chairman, Lord Merlyn-Rees, and the creation of Beryl Burton Gardens, The Environment and Business Centre is a lasting testament to the strength of the relationship between Groundwork and its surrounding community.
- 3.34 In transferring this asset, the Board of Groundwork Leeds would like to make clear the hope and aspiration that the Environment and Business Centre will remain at the heart of Groundwork's operations in Yorkshire.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The proposals under consideration in this report have been subject to extensive discussion at the Groundwork Leeds Board since 2017. Having had full consideration of the risks, the board has supported the proposal to merger including Leeds City Council member representatives.
- 4.1.2 Each of the parties involved in the merger proposal are members of the Federation of Groundwork Trusts and consequently there has been a level of transparency and openness from the inception of the proposal to merge. All the parties understand, with a significant level of detail, the programmes delivered by each entity, the risks and benefits involved in the work delivered and the financial risks and opportunities facing the individual trusts and the trusts collectively.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening is attached to this report.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The objective of the proposals within this report are to safeguard a viable and prosperous Groundwork organisation within Leeds. Should this be achieved this has the potential to support in the delivery of the following Best Council Plan priorities through an effective partnership:

- Health and wellbeing by supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles through the provision of cycling, walking, children's play and golf facilities.
- Safe, strong communities by providing a new, inclusive community resource for local people and visitors from further afield.
- Child Friendly Leeds through improving health and wellbeing and enhancing the city 'now and for future generations'.
- Sustainable infrastructure through promoting the sustainable transport option of cycling and improving the resilience of the city's natural environment.
- Age friendly Leeds through making public spaces and buildings safe, clean and welcoming, and promoting opportunities for older people to be healthy, active and included.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 A viable Groundwork organisation operating within the city will be a valuable third sector partner in moving forward with the council climate emergency plans. This could be via support in the delivery of behavioural change or through the direct delivery of local environmental improvements through partnership working on initiatives such as the Green Challenge Fund.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 The review undertaken by BHP in March 2019 considered information available at the time, primarily financial statements for the year ended March 2018 and the 3-year plan as at February 2019, covering the financial years 18/19, 19/20 and 20/21. A high-level review of the latest available financial statements has been undertaken by Leeds City Council officers, together with a commentary on the impact of Covid-19 on the organisation, although this does not constitute financial advice to Groundwork Leeds and the decision to merge remains with the Groundwork Leeds Board of Trustees.

4.4.2 The unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020 indicate that an overall group surplus of £25k was achieved in 2019/20, compared to the original budgeted surplus of £87k and the revised forecast of £44k. The unaudited aggregated balance sheets as at 31st March 2020 show net assets (before pension deficits) of £1.552m of which fixed assets are £1.989m which is a broadly similar position to that reviewed by BHP. Net assets after pension funds have deteriorated since the March 2018 position, from an aggregated deficit of £326k to a deficit of £511k largely due to a £216k deterioration in the pension scheme deficit. However, as noted above, this accounting calculation of the pension deficit is not expected to have any material impact on the financial viability of the organisation.

4.4.3 The 3-year plan covering the financial years 2020/21 - 2022/23 initially forecast surpluses of £98k in 2020/21, £124k in 2021/22 and £187k in 2022/23 which, if achieved, would be a significant turnaround following losses incurred in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

4.4.4 However, in common with all organisations, the coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on the work and business of Groundwork. Actions to minimise the impact of the crisis on the financial position included:

- Accessing the Government's job retention scheme for more than half the staff
- Temporary pay reductions for some staff
- Negotiating service changes with funding partners.
- Making sure all sites and projects that could not continue were made safe and secure for the duration of the lockdown.
- Securing appropriate business support funding and grants as these became available.
- Discussing loan repayment holidays where appropriate
- Maintaining the cafe at Springhead Golf as a community facility whilst continuing to recruit members for the new season.
- Negotiating cost reductions and rebates with all suppliers.

4.4.5 An emergency budget was produced in April and subsequently reviewed during May and June as implications for each of the work streams became clearer. The latest revision (June) anticipates that a small surplus (of £5k) is still considered achievable for 20/21, which compares to the original budgeted surplus of £98k. Whilst this is positive given the circumstances, this position is based on a number of assumptions about recovery throughout the year and is by no means guaranteed.

4.4.6 However, the Groundwork management team are of the clear opinion that operating as a merged entity has allowed the group to keep all programmes and projects going with the whole senior management team remaining at work (albeit with reduced salary/hours), which has facilitated the sharing of information and ideas across the wider organisation and the efficient management of staff teams.

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

4.5.1 A legal review was undertaken by Groundwork Leeds which included a review of all three companies' Articles of Association, and there is no legal impediment to the merger within the article of association. This position was supported by concurring advice from Groundwork UK

4.5.2 The Articles of Association of Groundwork Leeds (Memorandum of Association, part 7), Groundwork Wakefield (Article 3.16, Articles of Association) and Groundwork North Yorkshire (Article 3.16, Articles of Association) support this view.

4.5.3 There are no provisions within the current Leeds Articles of Association that would prevent a merger if the Board agrees this is in the best interest of Groundwork Leeds in order to continue its charitable work in Leeds.

4.5.4 The Charity Commission in their guidance note CC34 states that unless prevented from merging by its own articles any charity can merge if doing so can be reasonably seen to further its own charitable objectives.

4.5.5 A deed of transfer agreement has been drafted to finalise the merger process in line with the terms agreed by the Groundwork Leeds board and will be finalised and completed subject to approval by Executive Board.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 As noted by the BHP review, it is likely that there could be significant additional operational costs associated with service delivery were each trust to operate wholly independently. Whilst the existing risks and concerns will remain post-merger and there is no guarantee of future performance, especially considering the impact of the current pandemic, there appears to be no impediment to formalising the merger.

The authorities' liability exposure is limited to £1 both in terms of its present membership of Groundwork Leeds and moving forward to its proposed membership of Groundwork Wakefield.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Groundwork Leeds as an organisation has delivered significant positive change in the city of Leeds. In order to safeguard future income streams and improve operational efficiency it is considered advantageous to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire and to operate on a regional level. This has been the subject of extensive discussion and due diligence by the board of Groundwork Leeds and the detailed proposals have been supported by the board.
- 5.2 The proposal is to establish a new organisation called Groundwork Yorkshire which Leeds City Council will be a company member of. A future business plan for this combined organisation has been developed and independently assessed which concurs that a merged organisation has the potential to be a viable. Post-merger a local groundwork partnership will be established to ensure that Leeds continues to benefit from focused and concentrate work delivered by groundwork in the communities of Leeds which will continue to be supported and facilitated by direct funding from the authority. Furthermore, groundwork have committed to continuing to base the regional operation for the organisation from within the present Morley based head office.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is requested to support the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire.
- 6.2 In endorsing the above, Executive Board is requested to approve the decision for Leeds City Council to dissolve its company membership of Groundwork Leeds and become a company member of Groundwork Yorkshire.
- 6.3 Executive Board is requested to approve the establishment of a Leeds local groundwork partnership board to provide local input into schemes and programmes that are to be developed in Leeds in partnership with Groundwork Yorkshire post-merger.
- 6.4 Executive Board is requested to delegate to the Director for Communities and Environment, the Chief Officer Financial Services and the City Solicitor the final agreement of the deed of transfer and any other agreement needed to formalise and complete the transfer process.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ 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.

Appendix 1

Charitable Objects of Groundwork Leeds

The objects of the Company are to promote firstly the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural and social environment in the Leeds area which consists of all wards in the Leeds Metropolitan District and secondly to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for those living or working or resorting to the Leeds area and thirdly to advance public education in environmental matters and of the ways of better conserving, protecting and improving the same wheresoever.

Appendix 2

Charitable Objects of Groundwork Yorkshire

Objects

The objects of the Company are:

- 1.1 To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in the Area.
- 1.2 To provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for those living in or working in or resorting to the Area.
- 1.3 To advance public education in environmental matters and of the ways of better conserving, protecting and improving the same wheresoever.
- 1.4 To promote for the public benefit, urban or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation within the Area by all or any of the following means:
 - 1.4.1 the relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit;
 - 1.4.2 the relief of unemployment in such ways as may be thought fit including assistance to find employment;
 - 1.4.3 the advancement of education, training or re-training particularly amongst unemployed people and providing unemployed people with work experience;
 - 1.4.4 the provision of financial assistance, technical assistance, business advice or consultancy in order to provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed people in cases of financial or other charitable need through help:
 - (a) in setting up their own businesses; or
 - (b) to existing businesses;
 - 1.4.5 the creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of work space, buildings and/or land for use on favourable terms;
 - 1.4.6 the provision of housing for those who are in conditions of need and the improvement of housing in the public sector or in charitable ownership provided that such power shall not extend to relieving any local authorities or other bodies of a statutory duty to provide or improve housing;
 - 1.4.7 the maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities, including the provision of route ways such as footpaths and cycle ways and access to main transport routes;
 - 1.4.8 the preservation of buildings or sites of historic or architectural importance;
 - 1.4.9 the provision or assistance in the provision of recreational facilities for the public at large and/or those who by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances, have need of such facilities;
 - 1.4.10 the protection or conservation of the environment, including the reclamation of derelict land for use as open space;
 - 1.4.11 the provision of public health facilities and childcare, including the provision of schemes to promote healthier lifestyles and crèche facilities to increase the ability of parents to take up employment;
 - 1.4.12 the promotion of public safety and prevention of crime, including the alleviation of anti-social behaviour;

- 1.4.13 Such other means as may from time to time be determined subject to the prior written consent of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.
- 1.5 To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public within the Area by:
- 1.5.1 the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
- 1.5.2 the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and disadvantaged communities;
- 1.5.3 The promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.
- 1.6 To advance the education of the public in subjects relating to sustainable development and the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment and to promote study and research in such subjects provided that the useful results of such study are disseminated to the public at large.
- 1.7 Sustainable development in this Article and in Article 2.5 above means
“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- 1.8 To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of charities within the Area in the direct furtherance of their objects (or any one of them) by the provision of information, advice and assistance in the establishment, administration and management of such charities including assistance of all types in connection with the raising and distribution of funds.
- 1.9 To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the voluntary sector for the benefit of the public by the provision of information, support and advice to local community-based groups anywhere in the Area.

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Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



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

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

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

Directorate: Communities and Environment	Service area: Parks and Countryside
Lead person: Tony Stringwell	Contact number: 0113 3786002

1. Title: Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire and Leeds City Councils future role in Groundwork Yorkshire.

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify: a decision for a third party organisation to restructure management arrangements.

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

To support the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire to form a new organisation, 'Groundwork Yorkshire' that will operate on a regional level.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

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

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

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening		
Name	Job title	Date
Tony Stringwell	Recreational Development Manager	1 st October 2020
Date screening completed		1 st October 2020

7. Publishing	
<p>Though all key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council only publishes those related to Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions or a Significant Operational Decision.</p> <p>A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council. • The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions. • A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record. <p>Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:</p>	
For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor J Blake in the Chair

Councillors R Charlwood, D Coupar, S Golton, J Lewis, L Mulherin, J Pryor, M Rafique and F Venner

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER: Councillor A Lamb

APOLOGIES: Councillor A Carter

ENVIRONMENT AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

57 Merger of Groundwork Leeds with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire and Leeds City Council's Future Role in Groundwork Yorkshire.

The Director of Communities and Environment submitted a report which sought the Executive Board's support for the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and North Yorkshire in order to form a new organisation entitled, 'Groundwork Yorkshire' that would operate on a regional level.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was provided with clarification and reassurance regarding the status of a property on the balance sheet of Groundwork Leeds which was located in Morley, with it being noted that the property would transfer to Groundwork Yorkshire as part of the merger.

Further to this, responding to another enquiry regarding an existing liability in the form of a loan between Groundwork Wakefield and Wakefield Council, it was also noted that a legal agreement was in place confirming that the loan was specifically secured against a site in Wakefield, and as such would have no effect upon the building in Morley. In conclusion, officers undertook to provide the Member in question with a further briefing note on such matters.

RESOLVED -

(a) That the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board to merge with Groundwork Wakefield and Groundwork North Yorkshire, be supported;

(b) That in endorsing the decision of the Groundwork Leeds Board (above), approval be given for Leeds City Council to dissolve its company membership of Groundwork Leeds and become a company member of Groundwork Yorkshire; (c) That the establishment of a Leeds Local Groundwork Partnership Board be approved, in order to provide local input into schemes and programmes that are to be developed in Leeds in partnership with Groundwork Yorkshire post-merger;

(d) That the necessary authority be delegated to the Director for Communities and Environment, the Chief Officer Financial Services and the City Solicitor in order to enable those officers to conclude the final agreement of the deed of transfer and any other agreement needed to formalise and complete the transfer process.

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

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