

## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

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**Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on  
Thursday 25 November 2021 at 9.45 am**

(A pre-meeting will take place for all Members of the Board at 9.30 a.m.)

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### **MEMBERSHIP**

B Anderson (Chair)	-	Adel and Wharfedale;
J Akhtar	-	Little London and Woodhouse;
A Blackburn	-	Farnley and Wortley;
K Brooks	-	Little London and Woodhouse;
R Charlwood	-	Moortown;
D Collins	-	Horsforth
R Finnigan	-	Morley North
A Gabriel	-	Beeston & Holbeck
P Grahame	-	Crossgates and Whinmoor
C Howley	-	Weetwood;
M Midgley	-	Kippax and Methley;
D Ragan	-	Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
K Ritchie	-	Bramley and Stanningley
T Smith	-	Pudsey;

Please Note - Members of the public are now able to attend the meeting in person but please be mindful that Coronavirus is still circulating in Leeds. Therefore, even if you have had the vaccine, if you have Coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, you should NOT attend the meeting and stay at home and get a PCR test. For those who are attending the meeting, please bring a face covering unless you are exempt.

Note to observers of the meeting: To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'To View Meeting' 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.

[211125 Scrutiny Board \(Environment, Housing & Communities\)](#)

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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 INTERESTS**

To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council's 'Councillor Code of Conduct'.

5

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

### **MINUTES - 21 OCTOBER 2021**

5 - 12

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021.

7

### **REFERRAL REQUEST: TREE MAINTENANCE**

13 - 20

Members are asked to consider the referral at appendix 2, along with representations from Cllrs Wadsworth and Richards, in order to determine whether or not to schedule detailed scrutiny of this issue later in the municipal year.

8

### **HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW**

21 - 26

To receive the report in the name of the Head of Housing and Homelessness on the proposed approach to reviewing the Housing Strategy.

9

### **LOCALITY WORKING AND PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS**

27 - 50

To receive an update from the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment on the work that has taken place so far on the city's new Locality Working model and the next stage of its development.

10		<p><b>INQUIRY RESPONSE: TACKLING THE ANTISOCIAL USE OF FIREWORKS</b></p> <p>To receive a formal response to the Board’s inquiry into Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Fireworks and to receive a verbal update on the 2021 experience of Bonfire Night and Halloween.</p>	51 - 90
11		<p><b>LOCAL WELFARE SUPPORT SCHEME</b></p> <p>To receive the report in the name of the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment, which asks the Board to provide comment and recommendations relating to the further improvement of the Leeds Welfare Support Scheme.</p>	91 - 118
12		<p><b>WORK SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>To consider the Scrutiny Board’s work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.</p>	119 - 140
13		<p><b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next public meeting of the Scrutiny Board will take place on 20 January 2022 at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meeting for all members of the Board at 10am.</p>	

## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2021

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

Councillors J Akhtar, A Blackburn,  
D Collins, A Gabriel, P Grahame, K Brooks,  
T Smith, K Ritchie, R Charlwood,  
M Midgley and D Ragan

### 12 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

### 13 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

### 14 Late Items

There were no formal late items. However, some supplementary information relating to the minutes from the previous meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021, was distributed to members prior to the meeting.

### 15 Declaration of Interests

Although there were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests made at the meeting, Councillor J Akhtar required an 'other interest' to be recorded in relation to Agenda Item No. 8 (Housing Activity Update) because he is a tenant of a local housing provider.

### 16 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received of behalf of Councillor C Howley.

### 17 Minutes - 23 September 2021

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021, be approved as an accurate record.

#### Matters Arising

Minute 9 – Scrutiny Inquiry – Waste Services – Terms of Reference. The Chair provided an update on the discussion of the terms of reference at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and the suggestion put forward that their remit should look at contractual issues relating to the RERF. It was noted that an invitation for a remote working group has been circulated to members,

to discuss issues relating to the current 'baseline' for refuse and recycling services

## **18 Housing Activity Update**

The report of the Chief Officer (Housing) provided an update on housing activity during quarter 1 of 2021/22.

Appended to the report included the Housing Activity Report – Quarter 1 2021/22.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Rafique, Executive Member for Communities
- Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing
- Adam Crampton, Head of Property Management
- Nahim Ruhi-Khan, Head of Strategy and Investment

The Chief Officer Housing, introduced the report and provided the following information in relation to housing activity:

- 16k tenants have moved onto Universal Credit, and the challenges surrounding this;
- A face-to-face service has resumed with 237 walkabouts being carried out in quarter 1;
- The backlog of responsive repairs has reduced to 9k, although challenges remain with supply chain and labour market issues – the difficulty with building supplies has impacted on repairs and investment;
- There are currently 700 properties in void;
- There has been an increase in complaints regarding the delay in improving properties and responding to repairs. It was confirmed the service has been tweaked to ensure better engagement with customers and to also benefit social isolation;
- Homelessness is being prevented by 90%, putting Leeds in a strong position when compared against the national figure;
- Private sector housing colleagues are working with various agencies, landlords to identify ASB related issues and strengthening links with local authorities;
- The Housing Strategy Review is due for renewal, and consultation continues with a report being brought to the next Board meeting in November.

The Board discussed the following key matters:

- The effectiveness of communication between residents regarding the timeliness of repairs and the different forms of communication for elderly residents.
- Concerns regarding contractors not fulfilling repairs and communication between contractors and residents. It was noted that the new contract with MEARS set out new expectations and Key Performance Indicators. Additionally, it was reported that there has been a 15%

reduction of responsive repairs recorded, albeit the demand is returning, and backlog is anticipated. It was of the opinion of officers that the backlog of repairs will be cleared by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, and it was confirmed that of those repairs, they are deemed non-essential.

- Wider issues relating to damp, and clarity on the type of properties suffering such issues. It was confirmed that there is a dedicated team to deal with complex repairs and there are strategies being developed to implement longer term actions. It was noted that the majority of properties were Pre-1919 stock and traditional brick properties;
- It was confirmed that issues relating to the extended lettings period is primarily due to covid safe practises and labour market issues.
- It was confirmed that updated information relating to contact details for housing offices across the city will be provided to Board members.
- The variety of issues associated with homeless people migrating into Leeds. It was confirmed that this was primarily due to domestic violence and abuse.
- Clarity on the process to regain housing stock.
- Clarity on the processes in place when dealing with landlords failing to apply or hold a licence. It was noted that a timescale on the time taken for enforcement action, will be provided to members outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – To note the contents of the report and detailed update in relation to housing activity, together with comments raised during discussion of this item.

## **19 Capital Programme Investment to Improve Energy Efficiency in Council Housing Stock**

The report of the Head of Strategy and Investment provided an update in relation to capital investment to improve energy efficiency in Council Housing Stock.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Rafique, Executive Member for Communities
- Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer Housing
- Nahim Ruhi-Khan, Head of Strategy and Investment

The Head of Strategy and Investment provided an update on projects within the 5-year investment programme that will contribute to decarbonisation of council housing, as well as an update on the capital investment planned to council high rise buildings that will contribute to the climate emergency agenda.

Responding to questions, officers provided the following information:

- In high rise buildings the most expensive form of heating is the current electric storage heating system. It is not possible to install individual Air source heat technology in high rise building, therefore Ground source heat pump technology offers the lowest running costs to tenants

living in high rise buildings and the greater CO2 savings compared to Air source heat technology.

- Clarity on the assessment for investment across properties in all wards – there are a number of considerations when determining where to target investment, this includes: worse first, lowest energy performing properties, condition of the property (if other priority works are required) including Health and Safety, whether the project would go into a priority area and those properties that meet criteria for external funding. If all things are equal, consideration will also be given to the spread of investment across the city.

Members thanked the officers in attendance, specifically for the work undertaken to accelerate delivery of programmes and saving monies for tenants.

**RESOLVED** – To note the contents of the report, together with comments raised during discussion of this item.

## **20 Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime**

The report of the Head of Democratic Services provided background information regarding the transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions to the West Yorkshire Mayor and the ongoing development of a West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan.

Appended to the report included copies of the public consultation papers and the partner consultation documents.

The following were in attendance:

- Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor for Crime and Policing
- Paul Money, Chief Officer Safer Leeds

The Deputy Mayor for Crime and Policing discussed the priorities of the new West Yorkshire Mayor in relation to policing and Crime, and the ongoing development of the new West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan. Members were also provided with an overview of the consultation and variety of partners involved, as well as timescales for the consultation process and Draft Plan. Additionally, it was noted that there is a commitment from West Yorkshire Police to re-write an internal plan in accordance with the Police and Crime Plan.

The Board discussed the following points:

- Ensuring ‘catching criminals’ remains a priority – the effectiveness and efficiency of the police force remaining a number one priority that will be reflected in the Plan, as well as understanding local priorities to provide better outcomes for people.
- Clarity on the consultation process for harder to reach communities – it was confirmed there has been contact with various organisations, LGBT / BAME groups, Faith Leaders, and individuals during the

consultation process as well as messages being sent out radio stations, TV, places of worship and public transport.

- Concerns regarding issues affecting women's safety, and more specifically, issues relating to targeted date rape drugs. It was confirmed that a meeting is being established with the Students' Union and Alex Sobel MP to look at the prevalence of women's safety. It was reported that there has been 1 case of spiking with a needle in Leeds in the last 3 years, and possible underreporting concerns; supporting victims will be a focus in the Plan. The Chief Officer Safer Leeds discussed a variety of work ongoing with strategic / operational groups, as well as a campaign for 'Ask Angela', linking to vulnerabilities in night-time economy for women. The Deputy Mayor raised concern regarding CPS Charging Protocol and confirmed such concerns have been sent to the APCC.
- Resourcing implications relating to disability hate crime. The Deputy Mayor encouraged use of the Mayors funding.

The Chair reiterated the importance of ensuring all communities respond during the consultation process, more specifically the harder to reach communities and thanked the Deputy Mayor for her attendance. The Chair suggested an invitation be extending to the Deputy Mayor at a future meeting, to discuss progress on women's safety.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) To note the contents of the report, together with comments raised during discussion of this item.
- b) To note the intention to receive an update from the Deputy Mayor at a future meeting, relating to women's safety and a broader update.

## **21 Reducing Carbon Emissions Across the Council Estate**

Further to the minutes of the meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, the report of the Chief Officer for Sustainable Energy and Air Quality provided an update on progress with measures intended to reduce carbon emissions across the Council's estate.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Walshaw, CEAC Chair
- Polly Cook, Chief Officer Sustainable Energy and Air Quality

The Chief Officer Sustainable Energy and Air Quality introduced the report and provided an update on the work to reduce emissions from the corporate estate and a range of the Council's activities including an update on sustainable Council fleet and staff business travel schemes and measures being implemented.

It was noted that work is underway to quantify scope 3 emissions, to include areas such as food. It was anticipated that an action plan for scope 3 will be pulled together prior to Executive Board in February 2022.

The Board discussed the following matters:

- Clarity on the Council's position to move to 100% electricity provided from green sources, as well as the deliverability for large scale solar schemes within Leeds.
- The importance of ensuring viable alternatives will be in place in relation to the car leasing scheme.
- The partnership approach to discuss different investment opportunities at an early stage and supporting business approaching the Council.
- Public transport options for staff to encourage people to use busses / trains, instead of cars. It was noted that further work is required to inform staff of available options.

The Board commended the work undertaken so far, as well as the commitment to meet the City target of net zero carbon by 2030.

**RESOLVED** – To note the contents of the report, together with comments during discussion.

(Councillor J Akhtar vacated the meeting at 12:50, during consideration of this item)

## **22 Tackling Anti-Social Use of Fireworks: Inquiry Response**

The report of the Head of Democratic Services set out the advice of senior officers in response to the recommendations set out in its Tackling Anti-Social Use of Fireworks Inquiry Report.

The Chair informed the Board that a service update will be provided at the November meeting from the Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities and the ASB Service Delivery Manager, to discuss how the service has responded to Bonfire Night and Halloween.

**RESOLVED** –

- a) To note the contents of the report and the response of senior officers to the recommendations set out in the inquiry report.
- b) To agree the final version of the report and associated advice to be shared with Executive Board.
- c) To note that an update will be provided to the Board in November on the experience of Bonfire Night and Halloween 2021.

## **23 Safer, Stronger Communities Leeds Plan 2021-24**

Further to the minutes of the meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021, the report of the Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities introduced the final version of the Safer, Strong Communities Leeds Plan 2021-24 following formal consultation and ahead of consideration by Executive Board.

The Board unanimously supported the final version of the Plan.

**RESOLVED** – To note the contents of the report and agreed to recommend the final version of the Plan to Executive Board.

#### **24 Work Schedule**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which detailed the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year. This was appended to the report together with the Executive Board minutes from the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.

The Chair informed the Board of the possibility for a forthcoming Inquiry at the meeting to be held in November 2021, regarding a review of a policy around tree maintenance.

**RESOLVED** – To note the contents of the report and the work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year.

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

**RESOLVED** – To note the date and time of the next meeting as 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 9.45 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 12:45 pm)

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## Referral to Scrutiny

Date: 3 November 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

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

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### What is this report about?

#### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report presents details of a referral that falls within the remit of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities).
- The referral has been made by seven councillors (see **Appendix 2**) and, in line with [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#), has subsequently been added to the agenda of the next formally constituted Scrutiny Board meeting.
- The detail of the referral is attached at Appendix 2.
- All referrals are subject to a member-led process of examination and review, in line with the principles set out in the Vision for Scrutiny within [Article 6 of the Council's Constitution](#) and the procedures outlined in sections G&H of the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#).
- The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards also promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on city's and council's ambitions.

### Recommendations

- a) The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) is asked to determine what - if any - further scrutiny activity is required in relation to the matter referred.
- b) If further scrutiny is requested by the Board the work programme will be amended accordingly.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, any member of a Scrutiny Board may request that the Scrutiny Board of which they are a member considers a matter relevant to that Board's functions. Such requests are generally considered as part of a Scrutiny Board's standard agenda item to review its work programme
- 2 Any referrals that arise from outside of the relevant Scrutiny Board membership are to be dealt with in accordance with sections G and H of the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#). This request at **Appendix 2** is being progressed as a formal referral.
- 3 An invitation to today's meeting has been extended to two of the referral signatories - Cllrs Richards and Wadsworth - to make representations as to why it would be appropriate for the Board to exercise its functions in relation to the matter. The Scrutiny Board Chair will decide how much time will be given to the referrer to address the Scrutiny Board.
- 4 The Scrutiny Board shall consider whether to exercise its power to review or scrutinise the matter referred and may have regard to:-
  - Any relevant information provided by or representations made by the Referrer as to why it would be appropriate for the Scrutiny Board to exercise any of its powers in relation to the matter;
  - The principles set out within the 'Vision for Leeds at Scrutiny' document as part of [Article 6 of the Council's Constitution](#).
- 5 A verbal response will be provided by officers to inform the discussions of the Board.
- 6 The Scrutiny Board may wish to consider:
  - If further information is required before considering whether further scrutiny should be undertaken.
  - If the matter links in with the scope of any current / planned scrutiny inquiries.
  - If a similar or related issue is already being examined by Scrutiny or has been considered by Scrutiny recently.
  - If the matter raised is of sufficient significance and has the potential for scrutiny to produce realistic recommendations that could be implemented and lead to tangible improvements.
  - The impact on the Board's current workload.
  - The time available to undertake further scrutiny.
  - The level of resources required to carry out further scrutiny.

## What impact will this proposal have?

### Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 The member-led examination of the referral will determine whether further scrutiny is required in relation to the matters outlined.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

- 8 The Vision for Scrutiny states that the relevant scrutiny board should seek the advice of the Scrutiny Officer, relevant Director(s) and Executive Board member(s) about available resources before agreeing to items of work.
- 9 An invitation has therefore been extended to the relevant Director and Executive Board Member to contribute to the Board's initial discussion about the referral.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 10 Should there be a request for further scrutiny the Board is advised to consider any potential impact on its current work programme, including the level of resources required to support additional work items.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 11 This report has no specific legal implications.

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

- 12 This report has no specific risk management implications.
- 13 However, in reaching its conclusions the Board is asked to take into account any specific risks identified during the review of the referral.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

- 14 Issues associated with all three pillars will be discussed as is appropriate within the context of the Board's deliberations.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **a) What other options were considered?**

- 15 In line with the requirements of the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, members of the Board are asked only to determine whether further scrutiny is required in relation to the issues outlined in the referral.

#### **b) How will success be measured?**

- 16 Officers will support the member-led examination of the referral in line with procedural guidance to help ensure a successful conclusion of the process.

#### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 17 Should there be requests for further scrutiny the Board's work programme will be amended accordingly.

## **Appendices**

18 Appendix 1: Extract of the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules Section G&H

19 Appendix 2: Referral letter

## **Background papers**

20 None

## Appendix 1: Extract from [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#)

The extract below sets out the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules so far as they relate to the referral of matters to scrutiny boards (as amended May 2019).

### **G - REFERRAL OF MATTERS TO SCRUTINY BOARDS<sup>1</sup>**

25. The Scrutiny Officer may receive referrals for scrutiny from:-

25.1. The Executive Board;

25.2. Full Council;

25.3. Healthwatch Leeds<sup>2</sup> in relation to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Leeds City Council area<sup>3</sup>, or social care services<sup>4</sup>; or

25.4. Any Member of the authority<sup>5</sup> in relation to a matter which is relevant to the functions of a Scrutiny Board<sup>6</sup> and is not<sup>7</sup>:-

a a planning decision;

b a licensing decision;

c Any matter relating to a person in respect of which that person has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment;

d Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

e For the avoidance of doubt the following matters will not be considered reasonable to include in the agenda for a meeting of a Scrutiny Board:-

i Matters which are subject to ongoing judicial proceedings, Ombudsman or audit inquiry;

ii Matters which are subject to an ongoing complaint under the Council's formal complaints procedure;

iii Matters which relate to individual personnel issues.

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<sup>1</sup> S9FC Local Government Act 2000; S19(3&4) Police and Justice Act 2006; Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013/218

<sup>2</sup> As the Local Healthwatch Organisation for the Leeds area

<sup>3</sup> Reg 21 Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013/218; S221 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act

<sup>4</sup> S226 Local Government and Involvement in Health Act 2007

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes known as a Councillor Call for Action - In considering whether to exercise this right to refer the Member shall consider any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State.

<sup>6</sup> Local Crime and Disorder Matters shall only be referred to the Scrutiny Board with responsibility for Crime and Disorder functions S19(3b) Police and Justice Act 2006 and S9FC(5a) Local Government Act 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Local Government Act 2000 S9FC; Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors)(Excluded Matters)(England)Order 2012/1022

25.5. The exclusions set out in Rule 28.4 shall not prevent a Member from referring an allegation that a function for which the authority is responsible has not been discharged at all or that its discharge has failed or is failing on a systemic basis.

26. Referrals under this Part shall be made in writing to the Scrutiny Officer who will:-

26.1. Acknowledge receipt of the referral within 20 working days<sup>8</sup> beginning with the date on which the referral was made; and

26.1.1. add the referral to the agenda for the next meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Board and advise the referrer as to which Scrutiny Board will consider the referral and the date of the meeting at which that consideration will take place; or

26.1.2. inform the referrer that the matter will not be considered by a Scrutiny Board giving reasons for this decision; and

26.2. keep the referrer informed of any action taken in relation to the matter.

27. The Scrutiny Officer will receive requests for Call In in accordance with Part 5 of the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules

#### **H – CONSIDERATION OF REFERRAL**

28. Any matter referred to a Scrutiny Board in accordance with Part G of these rules shall be included in the agenda and discussed at a meeting of that Scrutiny Board.

29. The person making the referral will be invited to attend the relevant Scrutiny Board's meeting to make representations as to why it would be appropriate for the Board to exercise its functions in relation to the matter. The Scrutiny Board Chair will decide how much time will be given for the person to address the Scrutiny Board.

30. The Scrutiny Board shall consider whether to exercise its power to review or scrutinise the matter referred and may have regard to:-

30.1. Any relevant information provided by or representations made by the Referrer as to why it would be appropriate for the Scrutiny Board to exercise any of its powers in relation to the matter; and

30.2. The principles set out within the 'Vision for Leeds at Scrutiny' document as part of Article 6.

31. If the Scrutiny Board decides not to exercise its powers in relation to the matter it will notify the Referrer of its decision and the reasons for it.

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<sup>8</sup> Acknowledgement of receipt and all other correspondence will be with the Referrer, in the case of a petition requesting Scrutiny this will be the petition organiser.

Cllr Barry Anderson  
Chair, Scrutiny Board (Environment,  
Housing and Communities)  
Leeds City Council

Via Email

Conservative Group Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor East  
Civic Hall  
Leeds  
LS1 1UR

Tel: 0113 37 88557

7 October 2021

Dear Cllr Anderson,

### **Tree Management Policy**

We are writing to request that your Scrutiny Board undertakes a review of the Council's Tree Management Policy.

We understand that the policy was last updated five years ago in 2016. The approach to trees has changed significantly since then, and the Council is planning further mass tree planting initiatives that will have implications for tree management in the future.

Meanwhile, residents across the city are increasingly becoming concerned at a perceived lack of regular tree maintenance and the impact this is having on their daily lives. Our fear is that if this is not addressed the public mood will turn against tree planting and in favour of tree removal, something which we would want to avoid.

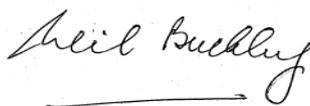
In our view, regular and effective tree maintenance is essential, and if people are to support plans for future tree planting, they must have confidence that the Council can manage the trees it already has.

We would ask that the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) undertakes work to establish the Council's current approach to tree maintenance and what steps are needed to update it and make it fit for purpose.

Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Trish Smith**



**Councillor Neil Buckley**



**Councillor Sam Firth**

Paul Wadsworth

Linda Richards

Caroline Anderson

**Councillor Paul Wadsworth Councillor Linda Richards Councillor Caroline Anderson**



**Councillor Jonathon Taylor**

## Leeds Housing Strategy update

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Report of: Head of Housing & Homelessness

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

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

### **What is this report about?**

#### **Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

- The current Housing Strategy has been in place since 2016 and sets out the long-term plans for providing housing that is of a good standard, that meets the needs of the city's growing population, protects the quality of the environment, and fosters cohesive communities. There needs to be an appropriate level of affordable housing, and all the city's housing stock needs to be energy efficient and play its role in helping the city to meet the zero-carbon target by 2030. As the strategy expires in 2021 a review of the strategy is underway.
- Housing has a critical role to play in helping the Council to achieve its overarching goal of meeting its 'Three Key Pillars' outlined in the Best Council Plan of delivering Inclusive Growth, improving the Health and Wellbeing of all our citizens, and tackling Climate Change.
- The condition of the city's housing stock directly affects each of these three pillars. A good supply of affordable housing, that has high energy efficiency, helps to deliver inclusive growth. Good housing fosters good health and wellbeing in many ways, affecting both physical and mental health. The energy efficiency of the city's housing stock, in both the social and private sectors, will play a huge role in determining how the city progresses in reaching its zero carbon goals.
- Since the last strategy was developed, the Council has declared a Climate Emergency. Climate change is increasingly having an increasing impact globally and locally. Whilst the Council is already taking steps to reduce carbon emissions of housing stock, such as targeted energy efficiency improvements, e.g. cavity wall insulation, air source heat pumps and external wall insulation, and major schemes such as the Leeds PIPES network, the need to do the utmost to mitigate the impact of the climate emergency must be a key part of the Housing Strategy.
- The current Strategy is comprised of six key themes which represent the priorities for the city. It is proposed to largely retain these themes, but with some tweaks from the previous strategy. The proposed updated themes are:

- **Affordable Housing Growth** – to maximise the number of affordable homes available to buy and rent, through measures such as help to buy schemes, promoting starter homes and to increase the quality of new housing.
  - **Improving Housing Quality** – to improve the quality and energy efficiency of homes, particularly in the private sector, and reducing the number of empty homes.
  - **Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping** – formerly called ‘Promoting independent living’, this theme has been renamed to reflect the fact that its fundamental aim is to reduce homelessness in the city. Elements of the old theme that are not directly linked to homelessness will be included within the health and housing or Age Friendly theme.
  - **Creating sustainable communities** – to create confident communities through effective management the neighbourhood environment and tackling anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and crime. Links to the Inclusive Growth Strategy will be identified within this theme.
  - **Improving health through housing** – promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing health inequalities, and supporting people to meet health needs through housing options. Links to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be identified within this theme.
  - **Age Friendly Housing** – formerly ‘Meeting housing needs of older residents’, this theme seeks to ensure that the right housing options are available which allow older people to remain active and independent in their homes and communities.
- These themes we are proposing are broadly in line with those of the other Core Cities. It was considered whether the new strategy should include a theme directly addressing climate change and the role housing can play in reducing carbon emissions, but it was felt that this agenda is sufficiently embedded and considered in the six themes proposed above so a standalone theme is not necessary.
  - This report outlines the planned approach to reviewing the Leeds Housing Strategy. The strategy will be for the next five years, 2021-2026, to ensure that there continues to be a framework that guides the city in meeting the housing needs of all citizens. The planned approach will include the following:

***October–December 2021 - Consultation and engagement phase:***

Significant engagement took place with partners and Council teams on each theme of the 2016-21 Housing Strategy during 2018-19 via a series of Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership workshops. These workshops helped to identify a series of collaborative priorities and organisational commitments. In most cases these priorities remain very relevant and actions are underway to progress these commitments. The focus of this consultation and engagement phase will therefore be on reviewing whether there is any change to these priorities over the last couple of years. Consultation and engagement will take place via the following:

- An online workshop is planned for 16<sup>th</sup> November, to which a wide range of stakeholders both internal and external. Breakout sessions will be held to give stakeholders the opportunity to engage directly on particular themes.
- Discussions are taking place with Council’s Policy Network members and Directorate Leadership Teams to ensure that the Housing Strategy is closely aligned to other Council strategies and policy.
- As part of the Equality Impact Assessment, the city’s five Equality Hubs have been approached to ensure that consideration is given to the equality impacts of the strategy.

- The Health and Wellbeing Board will be considering the strategy at their December meeting.
- A website will be launched, via the Council's Your Voice Leeds portal which will offer the opportunity for citizens to provide input into the Housing Strategy. It will be publicised via the Council's social media channels and via email directly to Council tenants.

### ***January 2022 – Collation and Drafting of the Housing Strategy***

The outcomes of the consultation phase will be brought together, and a draft strategy produced.

### ***February – April 2022 – Final Consultation and Scrutiny***

- A workshop will be held with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in February to provide an update on the consultation and engagement phase and provide an opportunity for the Board to scrutinise the draft strategy priorities. A particular focus will be placed on the improving housing quality, reducing homelessness and rough sleeping and age friendly housing themes at the workshop.
- The draft strategy will be shared with the Leeds Strategic Housing Board for final comment.
- The draft strategy will be shared with Executive Board in April 2022 for final consideration and decision making.

### ***May 22 onwards – Roll Out and Promotion of the Housing Strategy***

- Once approved the updated Housing Strategy will be promoted across Council teams and with partners. The strategy will be published on the Leeds City Council website and promoted via social media.
- The Leeds Strategic Housing Board is overseeing the development of the new strategy and has approved the process that is being followed.
- The Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board is asked to note that there is a separate review is currently underway of the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan. To prevent duplication of consultation and engagement the Housing Strategy Review will not include engagement on the 'Affordable Housing Growth' theme. This consultation will be undertaken as part of the review of the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan.

## **Recommendations**

- a) The Scrutiny Board is asked to:
  - Note and comment on the proposed approach to reviewing the Housing Strategy.
  - Agree to hold a workshop with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board to consult in detail on key themes of the strategy in February 2022.

### Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The current Housing Strategy was finalised in 2016 as a five-year strategy from 2016 to 2021.
- 2 Originally scheduled for review in 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for the Council to meet the operational demands it brought has led to a delay in reviewing strategy.
- 3 Therefore, a review of the Strategy is now a priority area of work.

### What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards Affected:** All wards.

Have ward members been consulted?      Yes      No

- 4 The condition of the city's housing stock, and the communities those homes are embedded in, have a huge role to play in the wellbeing of the city. Housing of a good standard helps to promote good health, mental and physical. Affordable housing helps to promote financial stability, which in turn aids good mental health. A good supply of affordable housing helps people to join the housing ladder, promoting inclusive growth.
- 5 The updated strategy will help the city to meet the 'Three Pillars' of delivering Inclusive Growth, improving the Health and Wellbeing of all our citizens, and tackling Climate Change. The city's Housing Strategy has a direct impact on each of these pillars.
- 6 The Council has an important role to play in providing good quality housing across the city, both in its role as a landlord and in its responsibilities in monitoring the condition of private sector rented housing. Whilst approximately 60% of the housing stock in the city is owner-occupied, this number is dropping over time and the proportion of privately rented housing is increasing. The Council is directly responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of 54,000 properties.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 7 As outlined above, an online workshop is planned for 16<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the new Housing Strategy, that was attended by a wide range of stakeholders, both internal and external. This gave representatives from the housing sector and other stakeholders such as third sector organisations, universities, and the NHS the opportunity to have their input to the proposals.
- 8 The city's five Equality Hubs have been approached and meetings have been arranged to discuss the proposals with their members, to gain their input. This will form part of the wider Equality Impact Assessment that will be carried out. It is important that the Strategy is inclusive and considers the diversity of the city and its communities.

- 9 As part of the Council's Your Voice Leeds portal, developed to give an effective way of consulting with the citizens of Leeds, a Hub has been launched that looks at the Strategy update and seeks input from all the citizens of Leeds on the proposals. This consultation on the Strategy is being promoted across the Council's social media to all citizens and to tenants directly via their regular update email, to give all citizens of Leeds the opportunity to have their say.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 10 The Housing Strategy will help outline the city's housing priorities over the next five years, and as such will help the city to focus its resources on the city's biggest priorities and make sure efforts across all sectors are focused on the Key Pillars of delivering Inclusive Growth, improving the Health and Wellbeing of all our citizens, and tackling Climate Change.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 11 The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

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

- 12 The main risk is that the updated Strategy fails to meet the housing needs of the city in the coming years in the areas it is considering. The Strategy's themes have a major impact across all the city's communities and all age groups. If the Strategy fails to reflect the needs of the city, then there is the risk that the development of housing in the city doesn't properly reflect the city's needs.
- 13 This risk is being managed by carrying out an extensive consultation and engagement exercise, that is aiming to get the input of the widest number of stakeholders, communities, and citizens as possible, to tailor a strategy that is robust and has the buy in from stakeholders across the city. The Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership will help to ensure continued engagement with the wider sector during the period of the updated Housing Strategy.
- 14 Another risk is that we do not finalise the Strategy within the planned timescales. This risk is being managed by putting in place a clear project plan to cover the consultation and decision-making phases. This plan will be overseen by the Leeds Strategic Housing Board.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

- 15 The city's Housing Strategy plays a key role in supporting the Council's Three Key Pillars as outlined earlier in the report.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **a) What other options were considered?**

- 16 None. It is important that the city's Housing Strategy is updated to reflect the current needs and demands of housing across the city.

#### **b) How will success be measured?**

17 Success will be measured by having a Strategy that is fit for purpose, is agreed by partners and stakeholders, and provides a framework for progress over the coming years. Success will see progress in the areas contained in the Strategy's themes and strategy targets being met. Ongoing progress in meeting the Housing Strategy priorities and targets will be monitored by the Leeds Strategic Housing Board.

**c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

18 It is intended to that the Housing Strategy will be finalised for consideration by Executive Board in April 2022. Once finalised the strategy will be promoted across the Council, with key partners and published on the Council's website.

**Appendices**

19 None.

**Background papers**

20 None.



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Tackling Inequality and Disadvantage in Communities: Locality Working

Date: 25 November 2021

Report of: Director of Environment, Housing and Communities

Report to: Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

## **What is this report about?**

**Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and receive feedback from the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board, on the work that has taken place so far on the city's new Locality Working model and the next stage of its development. This includes:

- Continuing to have a whole city focus through our locality working model and particularly the functioning and support of Community Committees.
- Expanding the current geographical remit for priority neighbourhoods to the 12 most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Leeds (1%) and develop a more focused approach across the 6 most disadvantaged wards where these neighbourhoods reside, including the development of Local Area Plans for these geographies.
- Continue to build on the work of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board as part of the city-wide strategic approach to tackle inequality and poverty linked to the new Best City Plan.
- Establish a new Inequality and Poverty Delivery Group.
- Consider how the new approach can be supported by other Scrutiny Boards and how their role and influence can add value to the work of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board.
- Continue to build strong relationships with our partners locally through localised partnership infrastructure.
- Seek and secure corporate support to implement cultural change through workforce development across the council and across our local partnerships, so that we can learn and apply improvements across the whole city.

Operating alongside the city's Community Committee structure, the city's approach to Locality Working provides a vehicle through which the Council and many of its partners, deliver our ambition to help tackle inequality and poverty across our most disadvantaged communities.

## **Recommendations**

- a) The Board is asked to note the content of the report.
- b) To provide feedback on the proposed new ways of working.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Executive Board report and Communities, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Board reports in 2020 demonstrated the positive impact that locality working is having, how it is making the best use of the physical and human assets we have in our local areas and how we are harnessing the community spirit within our localities. It is rooted in the democratic accountability of local ward members to their wards, community committees, strong community leadership and early intervention.
- 2 The Communities, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Board has been instrumental in helping to shape and influence the city's Locality Working model and the programme of work that has been delivered. As the approach seeks to move towards the next phase of its delivery, the ongoing involvement and feedback of the Board is considered pivotal.

## What impact will this proposal have?

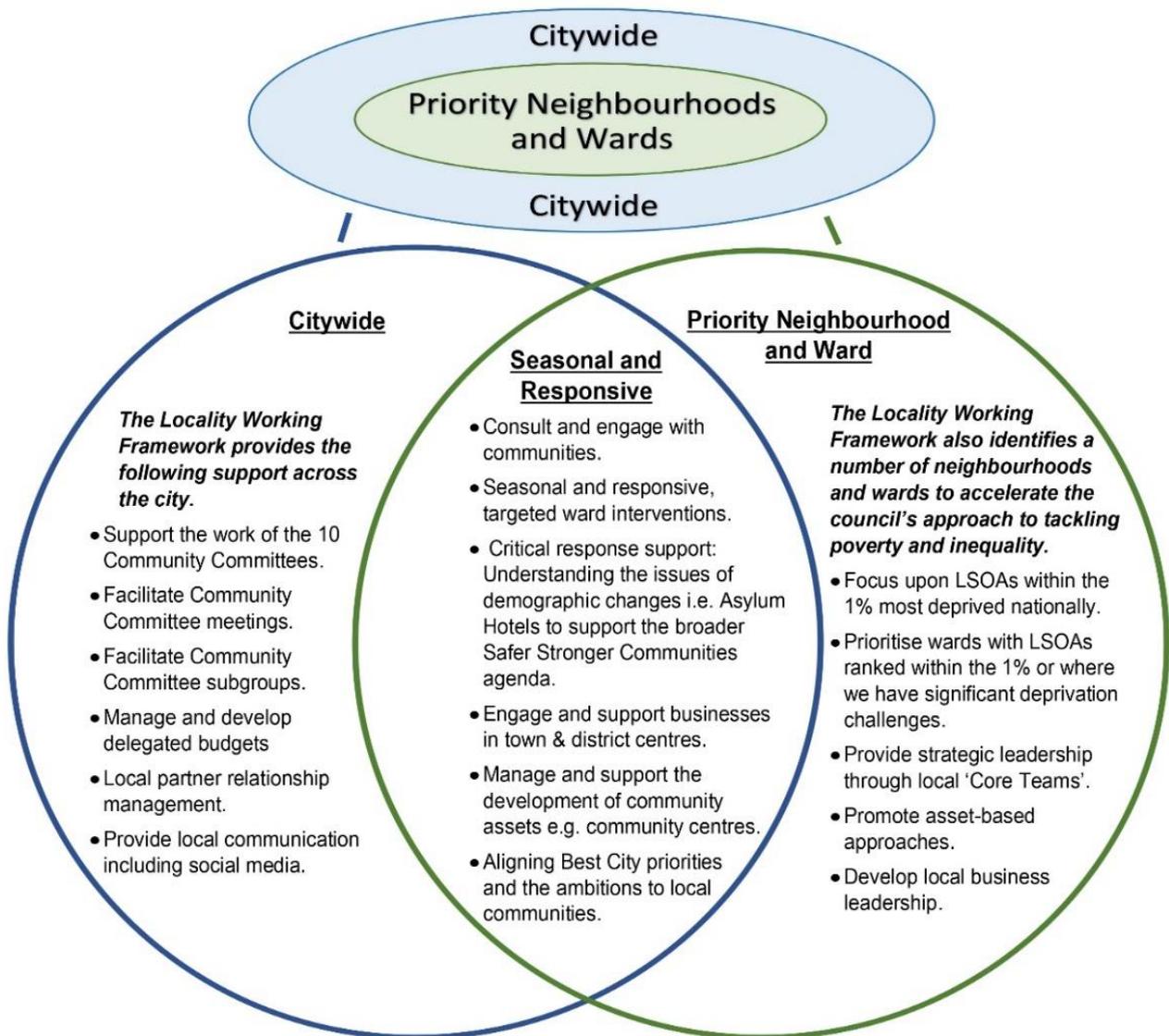
### Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

- 3 The Locality Working model aims to respond to the National Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, a set of descriptive statistics that are published by the Office for National Statistics every 3-4 years. In 2015 the IMD identified sixteen neighbourhoods in Leeds that were categorised as being in the most disadvantaged 1% of neighbourhoods nationally.
- 4 The Locality Working model initiated in 2017, sought to establish what the possibilities could be if as a Council and partners, we worked differently in specific areas of the city. This was always predicated on the potential to extend the Locality Working approach to all the city's 1% most deprived communities.
- 5 In 2019 the IMD data was refreshed, the main findings for Leeds were:
  - 24% of Leeds LSOAs now fall within the most disadvantaged 10% nationally (compared to 22% in 2015).
  - Ranked 33 out of 317 local authorities on the proportion of LSOAs in the most disadvantaged 10% nationally (ranked 31 out of 324 local authorities in 2015).
  - 186,000 people in Leeds live in areas that are ranked in the most disadvantaged 10% (compared to 164,000 people in 2015).
  - The most disadvantaged areas are concentrated in the communities of Inner East and Inner South.
  - 12 LSOAs in Leeds have been ranked in the most disadvantaged 1% nationally down from 16 in 2015.
- 6 The new model seeks to continue and build on the good work that has taken place so far, by working more intensively in targeted areas of the city to reduce poverty and inequality through the delivery of a range of innovative and new ways of working. The model will increase the footprint for working in priority neighbourhoods to cover all 12 (1%) most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, whilst also retaining a focus at the ward level on the city's 6 priority wards. The 6 Priority Wards are the six wards with at least one neighbourhood ranking in the 1% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, whilst also ranking highly in deprivation in the 2019 IMD data.

- 7 In addition, the operational teams will develop more agile ways of working to allow resources to be 'flexed' into other areas of the city to provide a seasonal and responsive approach based on both known local issues and using more predictive and dynamic analysis tools to track trends and emerging issues at ward and neighbourhood level.
- 8 A universal approach will continue to be delivered using the city-wide Community Committee infrastructure, to ensure that all parts of the city continue to benefit from the learning, experience and improvements delivered through the new model of working. Diagram 1 outlines how it is proposed this new model of working will operate.

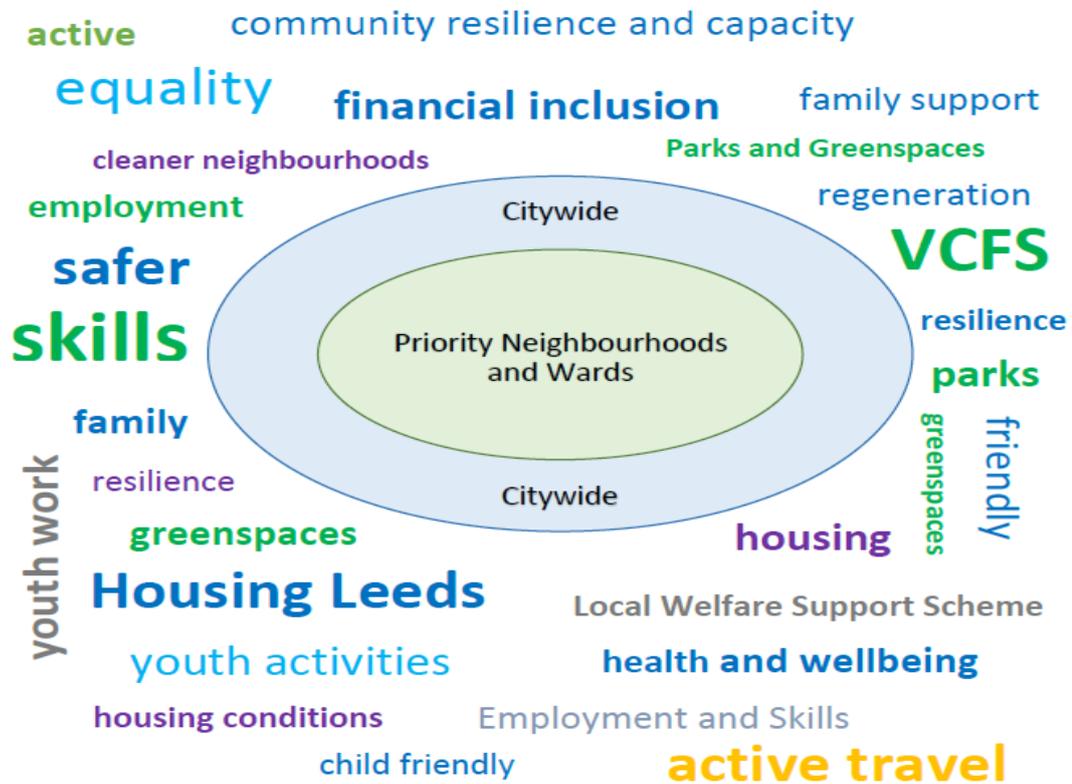
Diagram 1



- 9 By adopting this new way of working, building on our experiences so far and extending the reach and benefits that new ways of work can achieve, our aim is to reduce poverty and inequality and create stronger and more resilient local communities.

10 This new model, will therefore be key in guiding the recovery period and mitigating the social and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. See Diagram 2.

Diagram 2



### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 11 Locality working places the active involvement of citizens, which includes locally elected Councillors, as a vital ingredient that underpins this approach. All six-priority neighbourhoods have placed significant emphasis on community engagement and working with local communities to harness a local voice, develop local solutions through social action.
- 12 Throughout the initial phase of the programme, consultation took place across all Council services and key partners such as West Yorkshire Police; NHS; Further and Higher Education providers; Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector; local Councillors and residents through a wide range of forums and formats.
- 13 The next stage of the consultation process to support the formalisation of the new arrangements will include consultation and engagement with the following:
  - The Neighbourhood Improvement Board
  - Community Committees
  - Local partnership networks
  - Executive Board

- 14 A timetable for consultation and engagement is currently being developed and will be formalised in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities and following feedback from the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 15 The work articulated in this report currently makes best use of existing resources already working in neighbourhoods and seeks to do things differently by making best use of the leadership role and knowledge of locally elected representatives, working with residents to shape their neighbourhoods and inform service re-design to tackle poverty and reduce inequality. It also seeks to help communities to be more resilient, strengthen cohesion and prevent issues and challenges escalating in priority neighbourhoods.
- 16 To make continued progress, an investment-oriented approach is needed whereby available resources, for example, capital investment schemes are better targeted to these priority areas through a more joined up working across services.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 17 A citywide neighbourhood improvement board led by the Executive Member for Communities holds the responsibility for these developments and oversight for the programmes of work that they will require. Local ward members are instrumental in both the local arrangements and the citywide Board.
- 18 There are no exempt parts of this report so there are no access to information issues.
- 19 There are no legal implications for the work articulated in this report.
- 20 This report is eligible for call-in.

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

- 21 The Council has determined a risk to community cohesion and it has established this risk on its corporate risk register. It has also been discussing a need to change radically the way we work in localities and implemented a new approach to locality working in November 2017. Pressures in some of our most challenged and disadvantaged neighbourhoods are now greater than ever due to a range of factors. The communities of Leeds have changed rapidly over the past decade, this is more apparent in the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A failure to fully engage and be inclusive to all the communities of Leeds may result in increased tensions leading to a sense of alienation and isolation.
- 22 These fractures may increase the city's risk of becoming more susceptible to the influences of those who want to divide our communities, making them more polarised and vulnerable to extremism and other harmful influences. The locality working approach seeks to engage with all communities, with a strong focus of the work on strengthening communities and building self-reliance and more resilient communities.

- 23 This approach also seeks to mitigate against deterioration in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and a worsening of these neighbourhoods nationally in future IMD analyses. Moreover, we will not deliver against our key aim of tackling poverty and inequality and delivering on our ambition to be a compassionate city.
- 24 It would be simplistic to assume that priority neighbourhoods could be supported by redirecting resources from communities and neighbourhoods, which are largely self-sustaining and thriving. The reality is that resources in many front-line operations have already been deployed on a needs led basis with limited capacity from simply shifting where staff work to another area. The agility of organisations to respond in the context of broader economic changes could challenge the pace of improvement.
- 25 Furthermore, failure to fully engage and get the full buy in of a wide range of partners and council services to support the delivery locality working approach will hamper the council's efforts to deliver significant and sustainable change in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is therefore imperative, that we maintain and build on the whole Council approach, maintain momentum, working with local communities to drive change and much needed improvements.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 26 The newly updated Best Council Plan 2020-2025 reflects the current Covid-19 context, while maintaining the three pillar priorities of inclusive growth; health and wellbeing; and climate change, under the overarching priority of tackling poverty and inequalities. Covid-19 continues to have a hugely significant impact on all areas of the Best Council Plan, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, which will undoubtedly limit progress towards our ambitions.
- 27 Locality working in our most disadvantaged communities, tackling poverty and inequalities, will be key to guiding the recovery period, particularly as we begin to better understand the long-term health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.
- 28 Swings in climate and more extreme weather will create inequality, as financial disparity creates pressures between those able to invest in measures to maintain comfort, diet and activity that may be denied to those least able to afford it. A range of initiatives within the priority neighbourhood approach supports the climate emergency agenda. These include planting additional trees, helping to improve air quality; also work to improve housing conditions, delivering greater energy efficiency and thereby reducing fuel poverty.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **What other options were considered?**

- 29 From the onset, this approach was predicated on a move towards a model of working that could be delivered across all the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and the first phase of this work sought to demonstrate the value and success of locality working as a scalable approach to tackle inequality and poverty across the city. If we stay as we are, working in just six of the priority neighbourhoods, this limits impact, scalability, flexibility,

consistency, and a collective focus on all the most disadvantaged 1% LSOAs nationally in the city. The recommendation throughout this paper is to evolve the way we are working to be able to upscale this approach through a Locality Working Framework that will enable greater impact and outcomes, through a collective focus on our most disadvantaged communities to tackle inequality and poverty and build more thriving, more resilient communities. There is the opportunity to shape a refreshed locality-working framework that encompasses whole system change, to more integrated locality working multi-disciplinary approaches.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 30 We have been working to adopt a consistent approach to establishing baselines and tracking trends within the priority areas. Profiles have been developed for each priority neighbourhood to track changes over time. Given that the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 was the primary basis on which the Areas were first identified, it is logical that where possible we draw on the same underpinning data and analysis as the IMD. We can also adopt the same broad categories where recent data is available these are claimant count; children in low-income households; educational attainment and absence; crime, public health indicators, long-term empty properties.
- 31 It is important to note that due to the time lag in the data that underpins the IMD that these profiles provide a baseline for each area rather than a measure of progress since the priority areas programme was established in 2017. In addition, we believe that these profiles can be augmented by surveys of the local community to a common set of questions, to provide more immediate insights and perceptions of progress.
- 32 However, Covid-19 continues to have a hugely significant impact on all areas of the Best Council Plan, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, which will undoubtedly limit progress towards our ambitions and the outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. Therefore, the performance management framework will form a focus of work going forward and profiles will be reviewed to take account of the emerging impact in our priority neighbourhoods. It will also incorporate more predictive and dynamic tools to analyse trends and emerging issues at a ward and neighbourhood level.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 33 Initial discussion with Members of the Environments, Housing and Scrutiny Board to commence to gather feedback and comments – November 2021
- 34 Discussions and feedback with members of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board – November 2021.
- 35 Ongoing development of the new model of working incorporating comments where appropriate.
- 36 Discussions with Community Committees and local partnership networks – January / February 2022.
- 37 Final recommendations to Executive Board – February 2022

## **Appendices**

- 1 Appendix 1 – Background and proposals for the new Locality Working Model
- 2 Appendix 2 – Examples of Integrated working throughout Covid
- 3 Appendix 3 – Examples of Safer and Stronger Communities team led projects of work that have taken place over the past 18months

## **Background papers**

## Appendix 1

### Locality Working – Background and Proposals for Developing Further the City’s Locality Working Model

#### Background information

- 1.1 The Locality Working model aims to respond to the National Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, a set of descriptive statistics that are published by the Office for National Statistics every 3-4 years. In 2015 the IMD identified sixteen neighbourhoods in Leeds that were categorised as being in the most disadvantaged 1% of neighbourhoods nationally.
- 1.2 In 2019 the IMD data was refreshed, the main findings for Leeds were:
  - 24% of Leeds LSOAs now fall within the most disadvantaged 10% nationally (compared to 22% in 2015).
  - Ranked 33 out of 317 local authorities on the proportion of LSOAs in the most disadvantaged 10% nationally (ranked 31 out of 324 local authorities in 2015).
  - 186,000 people in Leeds live in areas that are ranked in the most disadvantaged 10% (compared to 164,000 people in 2015).
  - The most disadvantaged areas are concentrated in the communities of Inner East and Inner South.
  - 12 LSOAs in Leeds have been ranked in the most disadvantaged 1% nationally down from 16 in 2015.
- 1.3 As part of the first phase of Locality Working, six priority neighbourhoods were identified to accelerate the council’s approach to tackling poverty and inequality in the city. These six neighbourhoods are New Wortley; Beeston Hill; Cliftons and Nowells, Recreations; Lincoln Green and Boggart Hill.
- 1.4 The initial approach was predicated on the council’s ambition to be a compassionate city with a strong economy that is inclusive of the communities in the city and a view that a smaller neighbourhood focus creates the opportunity to develop a more detailed process for understanding and responding to communities affected by inequality and poverty. It also creates a locus for testing and aligning the approaches of council services and partner agencies, including, the alignment of investment and resources.
- 1.5 The Council implemented the locality working approach through a strategic framework, which placed the most disadvantaged communities in Leeds at its centre. The Locality Working Strategic Framework is predicated on a number of principles and different, more integrated ways of working:
  - a) Developing a shared sense of the assets of individuals and communities with a strong focus on building self-reliance and resilient communities;
  - b) A placed based more integrated working approach;
  - c) Early intervention and prevention to prevent reactive public service cost;
  - d) Getting to the root causes, sharing knowledge and avoiding duplication to develop effective local and/or citywide solutions;
  - e) New ways of working and driving system change.

- 1.6 This approach was split into the three key strands, working through: Community Committees; Target Wards; and Priority Neighbourhoods. Working in this way created a locus for council departments/services and partners, to target their existing investment and resources and align new resources - for example, through external funds, bids and grants - to best effect.
- 1.7 'Core Teams' were established in the priority neighbourhoods; alongside a number of partnership arrangements for improving the city's target inner city wards. Core Teams comprise of officers from within the council, elected members, NHS, Police, DWP and the Third Sector.
- 1.8 A number of reporting mechanisms were also developed to support this new way of working including, the appropriate Community Committees, the Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB) and the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.
- 1.9 To strengthen the council's commitment to being a compassionate city and reducing poverty and inequality, an Equality Improvement Priority was established, which aims to 'improve equality outcomes across the six priority neighbourhoods.
- 1.10 In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic emergency initiated a crisis that quickly brought to the fore a large number of needs across the communities in Leeds. The impact of Covid-19 has been greater in the poorer areas of the city where the ability to withstand shocks is restricted. Work continues to take place in Leeds to understand and get a picture of the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality that is happening due to Covid-19. However, the emerging evidence highlights that the Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated social and economic inequalities and we need to better understand what these impacts are on communities in Leeds. What it tells us so far mirrors national evidence and the local narrative that Covid-19 does have a disproportionate and differential impact based on where you live, your gender, your ethnicity and your job.

## **2.0 Emerging impact of Covid-19 in our most disadvantaged communities**

- 2.1 The last eighteen months have seen partners work in an unprecedented fast paced environment, with a wide range of complex and dynamic challenges to quickly overcome, coupled with regularly changing national and local restrictions and guidance being issued. Partners have had to come together rapidly to bend and flex our systems to respond to local and citywide needs. This has had a powerful impact on achieving the seemingly unachievable at times, for example the 33 community care hubs that were established in the very early days of the 1<sup>st</sup> national lockdown and the response to very localised surge testing. These approaches are a few of many, that demonstrate that our city-wide locality working infrastructure be can mobilised quickly and effectively in crisis situations.
- 2.2 Undoubtedly, the way that locality working has evolved and the connections it has made between the delivery of integrated services in neighbourhoods and the engagement of the communities of Leeds has underpinned a significant part of the COVID-19 response in the city, with positive and effective collaboration across council directorates and with partner

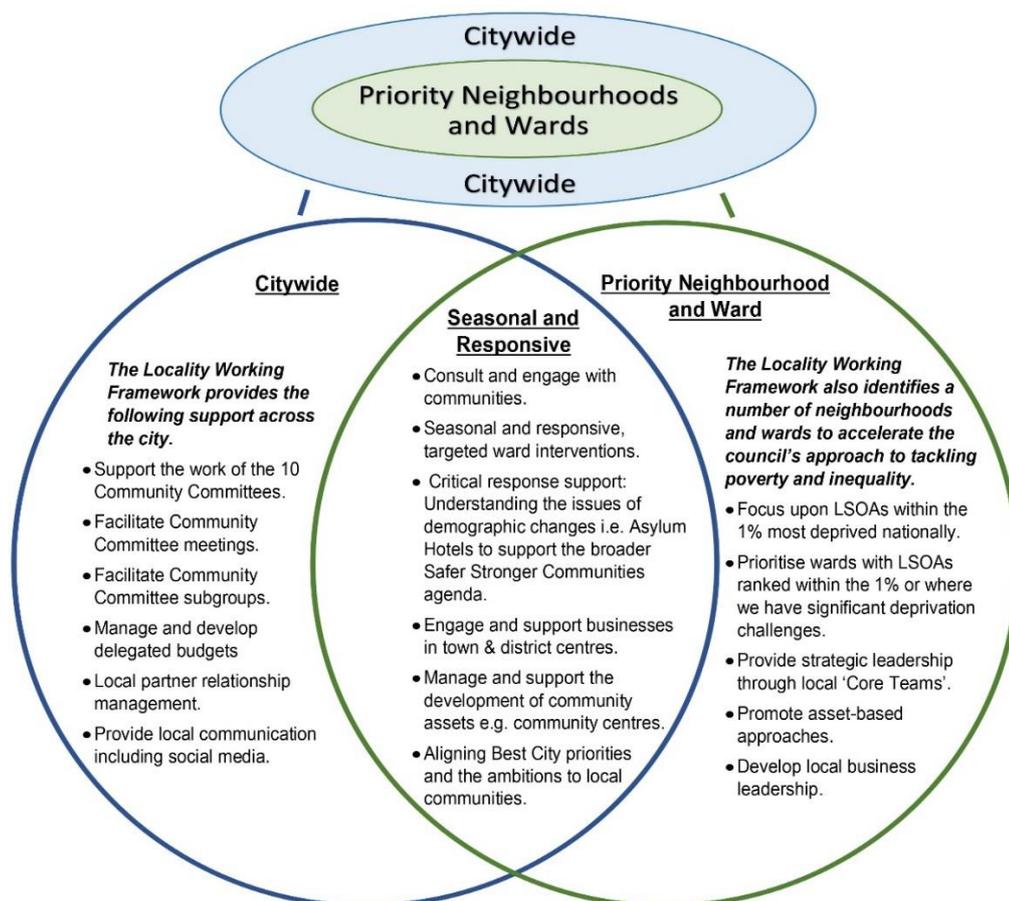
organisations at neighbourhood level. Appendix 2 provides examples of the work that has taken place in within the 6 Priority Neighbourhoods throughout Covid to support communities and continue to develop and build momentum in relation to our locality working arrangements.

2.3 It is now timely to consider what as a city council, working with partners and community's, we have learnt from the experience of the last eighteen months, and hardwire the best of this into the council's working practices and ensure that it drives organisational design activities in the months to come.

2.4 The Executive Board report and Communities, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Board reports in 2020 demonstrated the positive impact that locality working is having, how it is making best use of the physical and human assets we have in our local areas and how we harness community spirit within our localities. It is rooted in the democratic accountability of local ward members to their wards, community committees, strong community leadership and early intervention.

### 3.0 Locality Working - Safer Stronger Communities Team

3.1 The Safer Stronger Communities Team are responsible for the delivery of the locality working partnership and the Community Committee infrastructure across the city. The diagram below sets out how the Communities Team will work in the priority wards and our most disadvantaged communities and flex across the city, responding to seasonal interventions and critical need.



3.2 The examples summarised in appendix 3 illustrates the work that has taken place within the priority neighbourhoods and wards over the last twelve months that has been led by the Safer and Stronger Communities team.

#### **4.0 Tackling Inequality and Disadvantage in Communities: Locality Working Strategic Framework – Next Steps**

4.1 We have delivered on the initial ambition of Executive Board and updates on progress were incredibly well received by Executive Board and Scrutiny Board in 2020. Now that we have demonstrated that the locality working works, we are ready to upscale this agenda to address inequality and poverty and deliver transformational change across all 12 our most disadvantaged communities.

4.2 The next iteration of the Locality Working Strategic Framework, seeks to focus the capability and capacity of the whole council and its partners, through a transformational change programme. The new approach seeks to:

- Continuing to have a whole city focus through our locality working model and particularly the functioning and support of Community Committees.
- Expanding the current geographical remit for priority neighbourhoods to the 12 most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Leeds (1%) and develop a more focused approach across the 6 priority wards, where these neighbourhoods reside, including the development of Local Area Plans for these geographies.
- Continue to build on the work of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board as part of the city-wide strategic approach to tackle inequality and poverty linked to the new Best City Plan.
- Establish a new Inequality and Poverty Delivery Group.
- Consider how the new approach can be supported by other Scrutiny Boards and how their role and influence can add value to the work of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board.
- Continue to build strong relationships with our partners locally through localised partnership infrastructure.
- Seek and secure corporate support to implement cultural change through workforce development across the council and across our local partnerships, so that we can learn and apply improvements across the whole city.

#### **5.0 Leeds most disadvantaged communities - Priority Neighbourhoods and Priority Wards**

5.1 The 12 priority neighbourhoods identified for more intensive support are located in six of the cities wards. The 6 Priority Wards are the six wards with at least one neighbourhood ranking in the 1% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally, whilst also ranking highly in deprivation in the 2019 IMD data.

5.2 Work in each of these priority wards will be led by the Communities Team through a Core Team of key local stakeholders including: the council, NHS, Police, DWP and the Third

Sector. The Core Teams will cover the whole priority ward and programmes of work will be captured in an 'Area Delivery Plan' that will incorporate:

- a) Locality based programmes of work driven by local Core Teams and overseen by the newly established Inequality and Poverty Deliver Group, both of whom will be accountability to the city-wide NIB
- b) programmes of work that reflect the Community Committee's and ward priorities
- c) Seasonal and crisis interventions

5.3 Diagram 3 sets out a comparative analysis of the most deprived 1% LSOAs nationally in Leeds by Indices of Multiple Deprivation in 2015 and 2019. It evidences that seven LSOAs have moved out of the 1% category, three LSOAs have moved into the 1% category and twelve LSOAs remain in the 1% most deprived category in 2019.

Diagram 3:

(orange = most deprived 1% nationally, red = worsened rank, green = improved rank)

Ward	LSOA desc	2015 IMD Rank	2019 IMD Rank	IMD change
Armley	Holdforths, Clyde Approach	229	134	-95
Armley	Armley Grove Place, Hall Lane, Abbot View	261	222	-39
Beeston and Holbeck	Crosby Street, Recreations, Bartons	37	88	51
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	Bellbrooke Ave, Kimberley Road, Comptons	325	408	83
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	Cliftons and Nowells	126	216	90
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	East Park Drive, Glensdales, Raincliffes	1031	318	-713
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	St Hildas, Copperfields, Gartons	855	161	-694
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	Lincoln Green	66	355	289
Gipton and Harehills	Easterly Grove, St Wilfreds	348	326	-22
Gipton and Harehills	Comptons, Ashtons, Cowpers	310	474	164
Hunslet and Riverside	Bismarks, Dewsbury Road, Burton Street	274	360	86
Hunslet and Riverside	Stratford Street, Beverleys	22	38	16
Hunslet and Riverside	Trentham Street, Oakleys, Garnets	236	339	103
Hunslet and Riverside	Wickham Street, Seftons, Harlechs	215	152	-63
Killingbeck and Seacroft	Boggart Hill	167	166	-1
Killingbeck and Seacroft	Foundary Mill Drive, Hawkshead Cres, Alston Lane	113	211	98
Killingbeck and Seacroft	Foundary Mill Terr, Brooklands	123	60	-63
Middleton Park	Winroses, Whitebeams	259	404	145
Temple Newsam	Halton Moor, Kendal Drive, Cartmell Drive	328	501	173

5.4 The twelve LSOAs are situated within six wards, as shown in diagram 4 below. As part of this next phase, it is proposed that we upscale our locality working approach to incorporate all of Leeds 1% most deprived neighbourhoods, creating a focus on twelve priority neighbourhoods in the six Priority Wards.

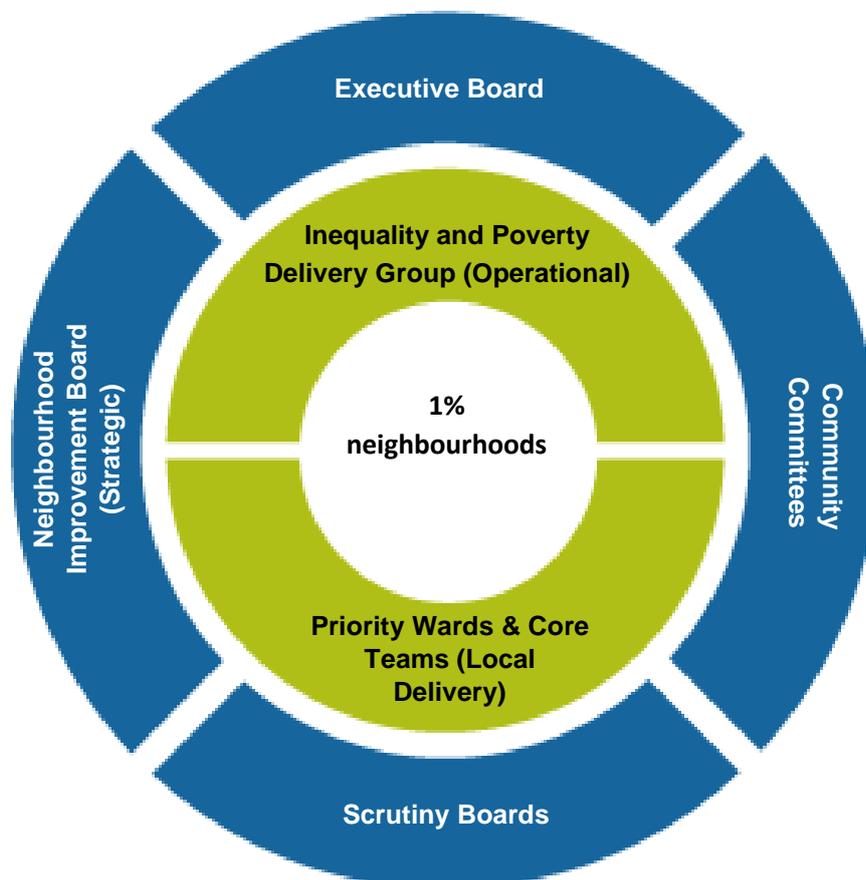
Diagram 4: Most deprived 1% nationally LSOAs in Leeds by IMD 2019 rank

Priority Wards	LSOA
<b>1. Hunslet &amp; Riverside</b>	Stratford Street, Beverleys Wickham Street, Seftons, Harlechs
<b>2. Killingbeck &amp; Seacroft</b>	Foundry Mill Terr, Brooklands Boggart Hill Foundary Mill Drive, Hawkshead Cres, Alston Lane
<b>3. Beeston &amp; Holbeck</b>	Crosby St, Recreations, Bartons
<b>4. Armley</b>	Holdforth, Clyde Approach Armley Grove Place, hall Lane, Abbot View
<b>5. Burmantofts &amp; Richmond Hill</b>	St Hildas, Copperfields, Gartons Cliftons, Nowells East Park Drive, Glensdales, Raincliffes
<b>6. Gipton &amp; Harehills</b>	Easterly Grove, St Wilfreds

## 6.0 Locality Working Partnership Infrastructure

- 6.1 Building strong local relationships and bringing people together is the cornerstone to locality working, from councillors, individual residents, businesses, community and faith groups, community leaders and public sector bodies, to create a focus around our most disadvantaged communities to target investment and resources.
- 6.2 The locality working partnerships are the foundations of the Locality Working Strategic Framework to address inequality and poverty through multi-agency place-based integrated and collaborative working.
- 6.3 The refreshed 'Locality Working Governance Framework' is set out below.
- a) **Neighbourhood Improvement Board** (Strategic Accountability) – Chaired by the Executive Member for communities, the NIB will be responsible for establishing and the overseeing the delivery of the city-wide NIB Delivery Plan
  - b) A new **Inequality and Poverty Delivery Group** (Operational Accountability) will be established, to oversee the operational delivery of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board Delivery Plan and associated local operational plans (see below for more detailed outline).
  - c) The existing **Priority Neighbourhood Core Teams** (Local delivery Accountability) will be expanded to encompass the new geographies (where this is appropriate to so) and will lead on the operational delivery of the new Local Area Delivery Plans.

Diagram: 5



## **7.0 New Inequality and Disadvantage in Communities: Delivery Group**

- 7.1 As we upscale the focus on inequality and poverty in our most disadvantaged communities, this delivery group will provide an operational platform to embed the Neighbourhood Improvement Board's Delivery Plan throughout the locality working partnership infrastructure.
- 7.2 The Locality Programme Managers will support the Head of Localities and the Safer Stronger Communities Team Chief Officer to develop local Area Delivery Plans that will demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Improvement Board's Delivery Plan is being translated locally in each of the priority neighbourhoods and priority wards.
- 7.3 The new Locality Working Strategic Framework seeks to evolve our approach to be more agile and flexible across the city, focusing on reducing inequality and poverty in our most disadvantaged communities, enabling critical response support and seasonal targeted interventions, alongside supporting the work of the Community Committees and the delegated grants across the city.
- 7.4 Our expected outcomes in the medium to long term is to see an increase in active citizenship and more community ownership of issues, challenges and solutions. Building community resilience is key to driving this change requiring investment and continual buy-in of all those involved and impacted.

## **8.0 Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB)**

- 8.1 The city-wide Neighbourhood Improvement Board will continue to provide strategic oversight of locality working in our priority neighbourhoods. The previous Chair of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board supported the locality working approach from inception, observing and championing the proof-of-concept last year. The new Chair of the Neighbourhood Improvement Board is keen to maintain the momentum, progress and focus on inequality and poverty in our most disadvantaged communities.

### Neighbourhood Improvement Board's response to Covid-19: NIB Delivery Plan

- 8.2 Since the outbreak of the pandemic and lockdown, there has been a significant focus on combatting the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. The Neighbourhood Improvement Board reconvened in July 2020, with renewed vigour to address poverty and inequalities in our most disadvantaged communities, exacerbated further by the disproportionate impact of Covid-19.
- 8.3 At the July Neighbourhood Improvement Board meeting, NIB Board Members requested the development of a Covid-19 Crisis and Recovery Plan, to build on the need to work differently due to the impact of Covid-19 and to ensure a continued focus on poverty and inequality in our most disadvantaged communities.

8.4 The Covid-19 Crisis and Recovery Plan was developed and featured six strategic strands:

**Strand 1:** Discovery: understanding the impact of Covid-19

**Strand 2:** Covid-19 response: Locality working

**Strand 3:** Locality working in our most disadvantaged communities

**Strand 4:** Big Asks

**Strand 5:** Contribution of the Third Sector

**Strand 6:** Strengthening the system and structures of locality working arrangements

8.5 The Covid-19 Crisis and Recovery Plan has evolved over the last 12 months, proceeding into a NIB Delivery Plan, with work underway to connect and align the plan with the new City Plan. The NIB Delivery Plan will be accountable to the Neighbourhood Improvement Board, it will inform the work in the priority wards and priority neighbourhoods, through the support of the Inequality and Poverty Delivery Group.

## **9.0 Communities, Housing and the Environment Scrutiny Board**

9.1 Working closely with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board is helping to continually shape locality working and this scrutiny board's support in working with other Council scrutiny boards will help to deliver the council's ambition for a system-wide approach with organisational development at its centre.

## Appendix 2 – Examples of Integrated Locality Working

- 1 There have been many examples of more integrated ways of locality working over the last four years, as documented in last year's Scrutiny Board and Executive Board reports. This way of working has evolved and demonstrated significant progression over the last eighteen months, as illustrated through the following examples.

### a) Covid-crisis response

*Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the way we have worked has changed. The first lockdown, and the challenges this imposed on the most vulnerable people in our communities, required us to look at innovative ways to provide support to them, despite the many restrictions required to combat Covid. Leeds City Council recognised that the local third sector, had strong networks and trusted connections within our local communities, along with the skills and expertise to rally and coordinate a multitude of volunteers. It was therefore felt that they could form a strong vehicle for delivering an emergency support offer across the City. Particularly, as there was already a strong relationship between the council and Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL).*

*However, there were a number of challenges to this approach. Given the smaller independent nature of the broader voluntary sector, there wasn't a uniform network of organisations that were ready to step forward. Many of the smaller organisations were particularly worried about having to stop their existing delivery and their longer-term financial survival. Additionally, there were few systems in place, which allowed for cross sector information sharing.*

*In order to deliver an effective model of support, a new system had to be built, in a very short timescale. The Communities Team were tasked with setting up this system, starting with identifying willing third sector partners that could take a lead as a Community Care Hubs across all 33 wards of the city. Often this required negotiating between organisations to ensure every neighbourhood was covered. There were also different aspects of support, such as food provision, support around medication, or support around mental health and social isolation, which required an understanding of local third sector partners and their differing strengths.*

*Alongside identifying who were the right organisations to deliver in each locality, a range of systems needed to be put in place. These included information sharing protocols between the council and the hubs (particularly around vulnerable individuals), reporting systems which allowed all of the different third sector partners to liaise with the statutory council and health structures, and a communications strategy that allowed for timely and consistent messaging across this large network of partners. Redistributing support from across the Council to help make the system work, including the Local Welfare Support Service, the Elections Team, Customer Service and Libraries staff. Finally, funding had to be identified to support this network of partners when many had lost their normal income streams.*

*This joint working between the council, the third sector and other statutory partners has proved to be very successful and has had a number of positive impacts beyond providing the required Covid support. Communication is now much stronger and there are greater levels of trust, between both the council and the voluntary sector, as well as between different third sector organisations themselves. A range of third sector partnership*

*networks now meet regularly, to look at how they further collaborate, with some looking at opportunities for legacy ways of working and joint bids to deliver local projects. Ultimately, this led to a greater understanding of each other's strengths, greater openness and stronger networks.*

*This approach shows the true essence of locality working and what can be achieved by working in collaboration.*

### **b) Covid partnership work**

*The effectiveness of this integrated, multi-disciplinary way of working can also be seen in the partnership response undertaken initially in Harehills and then across Headingley and Hyde Park, Little London and Woodhouse and parts of Kirkstall wards, during June 2021. With Covid rates being significantly higher here than in other parts of the city, enhanced support was agreed. The activity was a multi-agency effort mobilising reallocated council staff and community volunteers, carrying out extensive door knocking to encourage testing and vaccination, offer advice and support for those isolating and provide reassurance to residents. Additional testing sites were set up and widespread communications were undertaken to encourage and support people to get a PCR test, with or without symptoms, with the aim to break the chain of infection between age groups and ensure asymptomatic cases could be traced, treated and isolated before the virus had the chance to spread.*

*The enhanced activity was designed to provide short term, high impact, localised messaging to raise awareness of the current situation. Local Covid engagement plans were utilised for each ward, building upon local knowledge, local relationships, and trust. Although the approach was resource intensive, it had a positive impact. In Headingley and Hyde Park, Little London and Woodhouse and parts of Kirkstall wards, in the two-week period of the activity, over 18,510 doors were knocked, 10,000 advice leaflets were handed out, and over 5,000 useful conversations were held with residents. Additionally, discretionary and government support grants were accessed which helped people isolate, and rates flattened and then fell in the target areas. Learning from this way of working was applied to all wards where rates began to spike dramatically, continued to be much higher than the general Leeds rate for all ages and community transmission was high, it was also applied to the vaccination roll out, in targeted geographies to encourage vaccination take-up. This way of working is now being explored as a model to support emergency responses and in the delivery of very targeted programmes of work.*

### **c) Tackling youth violence and child criminal exploitation**

*The opportunities for more integrated multi-disciplinary working, through the convergence of the Safer Stronger Communities Team into one service, are becoming more and more evident. For example, there is a high prevalence of youth violence and child criminal exploitation in our priority neighbourhoods and across their respective wards. The opportunity for more integrated multi-disciplinary ways of working between the Communities Team, Safer Neighbourhoods and ASB Services, Safeguarding, the Police and Community Relations and Cohesion Team is enabling closer working arrangements leading to more positive outcomes, through the connection to local intelligence, collaborative local partnership infrastructure and strong local relationships with corporate strategic discussions and operations.*

*The Safer Stronger Communities Team are working closely with the Violence Reduction Unit, youth providers, third sector partners in hotspot areas to commission Violence Reduction funding, shape local provision to tackle youth violence and child criminal exploitation and embed programmes of work across local partnerships with multi-agency partners.*

*Hamara and Health for All are working with young people at risk of being involved in crime. Both projects engage with young people in the area to provide diversionary activities, working with local services to identify those young people at risk. As well as diversionary work other pathways were identified for the young people. For example, volunteer engagement has been instigated through outreach for our volunteering programme, which is doing well in engaging youths who are out on the streets, partaking in anti-social behaviour and vulnerable to grooming, being pressed by their social norms of seeing drug dealing, thefts, robberies, and assaults on their doorsteps on a regular basis. Both projects targeted hot spots to deliver outreach work to build positive relationships with young people.*

*In the Nowells CATCH are delivering a programme of work that focuses on the engagement, development and recruitment of young volunteers (aged 11 – 19), creating peer to peer mentoring support and youth leadership opportunities, alongside weekly youth sessions that are accessible to all young people aged between 9 – 17. Youth Association are delivering their StreetSafe programme in hotspot areas across Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, which aims to change attitudes to violence and crime among young people and prevent their potential involvement before it begins. The project provides wrap-around support for young people in a setting where parents, schools and most other services have little reach, i.e. at street level.*

*A further project involves New Wortley Community Centre and St Giles Trust working in partnership, delivering diversionary and engagement activities targeting young people that have been identified as vulnerable and at serious risk of being drawn into criminal behaviour. A youth worker from St Giles is working two evenings per week, until end of March 2022. The worker has started doing detached work, to build a relationship with identified young people. Then the hope is to engage them in sessions at New Wortley Community Centre. Sessions at the centre will include mentoring, 1-1 support if needed, thinking about positive pathways for the future, and sessions delivered by SOS+ within St Giles (reality of prison, gang exiting, exploitation). There will also be a session delivered for parents and staff, helping them to understand and spot the signs of exploitation.*

*The Safer Stronger Communities Team are actively connecting local intelligence from these programmes of work into strategic corporate discussions, such as the Silver Serious Organised Crime meetings, Silver ASB meetings and Children's Service Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meetings. Along with embedding these programmes of work locally and enhancing their impact through local connections and local partnership locality working support.*

## Appendix 3 – Examples of Place-based Locality Working

### a) Clifton's and Nowells: Nowell Mount Integrated Children, Youth and Community Hub

*Over £250,000, capital funding was sourced to build an extension to Nowell Mount Children's Centre, the extension was completed during lockdown in 2020. The overarching aim of the delivery phase is to create a safe space in which develop a multi-disciplinary integrated offer for the local community, that will encompass Early Years provision, with a focus on children 0-5 and their families, a multi-agency youth offer, with a focus on youth empowerment, youth work and youth activities through to a community offer that is being co-produced with the local community. This innovative early years, youth and community offer is being developed and delivered collaboratively with a range of partners, including Family Services, Communities Team, Youth Service, Youth Association, CATCH, Nowells Community Group, Leeds Community Spaces and Learning Partnerships, working together.*

*Both street-based and indoor provision are being delivered that are inter-connected, with Youth Association, CATCH and Youth Service, supported by BARCA, working collaboratively to enable pathways between provision and the support that is available. There are also several sporting sessions delivered on a weekly basis by Leeds United Foundation and LS-TEN. Broader than this, Family Services, Communities Team, Nowells Community Group, Learning Partnerships, Leeds Community Spaces and Elected Members are working collaboratively to bring activities and provision into the centre aligned to local need. The aim is to ensure that the community, including young people, have a clear role in influencing and directly supporting activities from the centre. A small grant was awarded from the Harnessing the Power of Communities Fund to secure specialist advice and support from Leeds Community Spaces to help establish a fit for purpose management structure that dovetails with LCC Children's Services and Facilities Management. The current timetable includes a Food Club, Employment and Skills Developing You, EPEC – Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities, Mental Health support, Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) drop-in, a Gardening Group and community activities, for example the Nowells Community Group Bingo and a Tai Chi class. This approach seeks to strengthen connections and share resources and knowledge across a number of disciplines leading to an effective collective response.*

### b) Problem Street Drinking

*The Armley Town Centre, Armley Moor and surrounding areas closure order was approved on 20th July 2021. The Magistrates agreed to grant the order, over an area rather than a property and is the first such order ever done in the UK. The aim is to stop street drinking in the area. Anyone with an open container of alcohol, (except in residential or licensed premises) is now committing a criminal offence by disobeying this order. Officers have the option to either report for summons or make arrests. Punishment can be up to 26 weeks custody. The order focusses on repeat offenders, as the aim is to target those sat regularly in public areas drinking then engaging in ASB and criminal acts causing harm to the community. Results for the initial three months have been positive and an extension to the order, for a further three months, was approved by Magistrates on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.*

*A multi-agency partnership in Harehills relating to problem street drinking was established in late October 2020 – it has met eight times since the group formed - to progress the issues associated with problem street drinking in and around Harehills' main arteries. Members of the partnership include Elected Members from both Gipton and Harehills and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward; officers from the Safer, Stronger Communities Team; the Police; Public Health; the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team and representatives from community and voluntary sector group, Touchstone.*

*This complex challenge is being taken up on a number of fronts. Focus is being given to disruption, which includes enforcing the existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and serving four injunctions on the more troublesome street drinkers. In tandem to this approach, there is also a concerted effort to engage with this cohort of drinkers to address their needs around addiction. This work has proven challenging for the partnership given the obvious tension between balancing the imperative to support individuals who are addicted to alcohol and the concerns wider community who are suffering as a result of their actions. A constant pressure for the partnership is allowing the space and time for the outreach work to pay dividends whilst demonstrating to residents that this issue is being taken seriously via enforcement activity that reduces unacceptable levels of anti-social behaviour.*

*Genuine relationships are being forged under difficult circumstances by Touchstone's dedicated outreach worker (who has conducted over 17 visits to the Harehills area to date). Allied to this, alcohol supply has sought to have been addressed through the continued defence of the council's Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) and the opposition of any new off licences (two applications have been declined in recent times but tens of off-licences remain in a less than square-mile radius). The derelict site on Compton Road has also been target hardened following work by Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team colleagues, as it was a magnet for street drinkers.*

*Looking forward, the partnership wants to continue momentum. Ward Members from both Gipton and Harehills and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill have committed to fund the Touchstone outreach for another year (with group sessions for this cohort starting at a local café in October 2021) and colleagues in both the Police and the Safer, Stronger Communities Team are currently investigating legislation that could mean even greater legal powers to enforce against problem street drinking. The 'Closure Order' approach, currently being piloted in Armley, if successful, is one that could perhaps be rolled out in Harehills, though scale of the issue in Harehills also remains a challenge. Given the limitations of the current PSPO, it is widely felt that the Closure Order (which makes street drinking a criminal offence in a designated area) could potentially give the partnership that balance of support and challenge it so craves.*

### **c) Boggart Hill: Kingsdale Court**

*As part of the 'Big Asks' for Boggart Hill, in April 2019, the Neighbourhood Improvement Board agreed to consider a long-term comprehensive solution to the challenge of Kingsdale Court, utilising the full powers of the council and partners to tackle this site in the short, medium and long term. As part of landmark action taken by the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) and West Yorkshire Police at Leeds Magistrates Court in February 2020, a three-month closure order was subsequently granted for each flat located in the worst block, Farnley House, with a further extension to this order being kept in place until August 2020. An additional closure order was granted for Gilstead House and*

*extended until November 2020. In securing these orders, this was the first-time wholesale action had been taken against private sector leaseholders and administrators in one block and the medium-term impact is that issues of ASB and criminality have reduced.*

*In addition, the Council agreed to progress a longer-term strategy for the Kingsdale Court site. Executive Board gave permission to acquire a portfolio of around 40 of the 88 flats, with other owners approached to determine any further interest to sell. Purchase of the original 40 flats has now been completed and these are now in the management of Housing Leeds. Further sales are also being progressed. Alongside this, the council is also working to acquire the remainder of the site, potentially through CPO.*

#### **d) Community Resilience Building: Asset Based Community Development**

*There are a number of ABCD workers across the city working in our priority neighbourhoods, in the Cliftons and Nowells, Lincoln Green, Beeston Hill and Boggart Hill. Community Builders have been organising regular local conversations, for example in Lincoln Green, the ABCD worker has organised local events, they have been small scale, but effective based around live music, food, and arts-based activities to attract people into the square. In July the Lincoln Green ABCD worker hosted a “You Chose” event – this event provided an opportunity for local informal groups to bid for small sparks funding to support their ideas for community-led activity in Lincoln Green. More engagement events are planned throughout Autumn and Winter including arts sessions, a world café, and Winter Warmer Event in December. In the Cliftons and Nowells the ABCD approach has to some extent reset the relationship between residents, the public and third sector services that work in the neighbourhood. At the outset of the priority neighbourhood work in 2018 a lot of residents lacked trust in services and in some cases had unrealistic expectations from the Council about the extent to which the Local Authority can “fix” problems, equally, professionals often undervalued or simply didn’t consider the role the community could play in driving improvements in the neighbourhood. Three years on the ABCD Pathfinder has generated numerous case studies of how individuals have been “connected” together to deliver an activity, whether this be a What’s App cooking group during Lockdown, a Community Multi- Sports event, a gardening group, Bingo or a weekly keep fit session. The area now has a constituted residents association – The Nowells Community Group. This group are heavily involved in developing the activity programme at Nowell Mount Community Centre and have the necessary governance to apply for funding to directly deliver projects. The Early Help Hub now deliver an EPEC (Empowering Parents Empowering Communities) course from the Nowell Mount Community Centre – this is done in partnership with local parents, very much a peer-to-peer model. There is a long way to go but we can say there has been a shift in how we approach our work in these neighbourhoods, less “doing to” and more “doing with”.*

#### **e) Seasonal responsive locality working – Halloween & Bonfire Night**

*Every year over the Halloween and Bonfire period, wards in Leeds suffer violence and anti-social behaviour during what is one of the "busiest times of the year" for emergency services in the city. Harehills in 2019, which saw lawless crowds throw fireworks and bricks at emergency services on Bonfire Night. Thirteen people have now been convicted following the incident, with five people receiving prison sentences of up to 36 months.*

*Beginning its origins in Harehills several years ago, officers pledged to clamp down on violence and anti-social behaviour, with a focus on continuous improvement in the way that we work, building on the learning and ways of working from previous years. This has culminated in a seasonal year on year locality working response, with a strong emphasis on more integrated multi-disciplinary ways of working.*

*Many wards in city now have a task-finish multi-disciplinary team that activates in advance and operates over this challenging period. As an illustration in microcosm, in Harehills partners from statutory services such as the Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service work in collaboration with council officers from the Safer, Stronger Communities Team, Youth Services, Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team, Youth Justice Service and Active Leeds as well as local schools and community and voluntary sector groups (inc. CATCH and Street Team) to create a programme of operational activities in a bid to offset the anti-social behaviour and criminality that occurs over this period.*

*This integrated way of working takes a number of forms; primarily bonfire meetings themselves ensure vital connections are made between key partners months in advance, where partners can work collaboratively to co-produce innovative local solutions. Examples include additional CCTV; pre-emptive visits are made by partners to schools, youth provisions and faith groups to warn of the risks in participating in ASB; outreach and diversionary activities are designed and put in place for the period to engage and dissuade young people from becoming drawn into any criminality; communication links are made between the frontline staff including the use of live Whats app groups to keep people informed of developments in real time and hotspot areas are targeted hardened and kept free of any debris by council services.*

*This year, in light of the postponement of all Leeds City Council bonfires in 2021, the Safer, Stronger Communities Team was allocated the task of upscaling this offer and help ensure that the £50,000 cost savings was redistributed into providing diversionary activity across Leeds. Given the tight timescales this proved a challenge, but the programme of activities proved comprehensive. Post Halloween and Bonfire Night, the feedback is that the majority of residents were able to enjoy bonfire night/weekend safely, there were only a small number of isolated incidents that were managed by West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, contrary to previous years, and all in all everything went well. This is true evidence that working in this way works.*

## Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Fireworks: Inquiry Response

Date: 21 October 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### What is this report about?

#### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- In 2020/21 the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) carried out an inquiry into tackling the anti-social use of fireworks in Leeds. The inquiry concluded in March 2021.
- Having heard evidence from various stakeholders, members of the Board determined that it was appropriate to set out their conclusions in a report, which would subsequently be brought to the attention of the Executive Board.
- In line with the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#) the report (attached at appendix 1) sets out:
  - An explanation of the matter reviewed or scrutinised
  - A list of participants involved in the review
  - A summary of the evidence that the Scrutiny Board has taken
  - An explanation of any recommendations
- The draft inquiry report was considered by Board members at the first meeting of the new municipal year in June 2021. However, due to Covid-19 health and safety advice that meeting was held as a remote consultative session. Agreement to the recommendations set out in the report was therefore provided by the Board in principle, subject to final agreement at a formally constituted session (from May 2021 legislation reverted to a pre-pandemic position with meetings required to be held physically in order to be formally constituted).
- In order to finalise the report, the response of the relevant senior officer(s) is also required to be reported to the Board at a formally constituted meeting of the Board.
- The advice of senior officers in response to the Board's recommendations is reflected in the table at Appendix 2 for consideration by the Board.
- Having received this advice members are asked to consider whether they wish to amend any of the recommendations in the report.

- Members are asked to agree whether they wish to share the final report and the associated advice with the Executive Board. If members are agreeable to doing so the Executive Board will be asked, in line with the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#), to respond to the Scrutiny Board indicating what action (if any) it proposes to take.
- Members are asked to note that at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board (be that a consultative or formally constituted meeting) an update will be provided about the 2021 experience of the peak period for anti-social use of fireworks following Bonfire Night, Mischief Night and Halloween.

### Recommendations

- a) The Board is asked to consider the response of senior officers to the recommendations set out in the attached inquiry report.
- b) The Board is asked to agree any amendments to the original recommendations in light of the officer advice provided.
- c) Members are asked to confirm whether they are happy to formally share the final version of the report and the associated advice with the Executive Board.

### Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules require the advice of senior officers to be reported to the Scrutiny Board in response to recommendations set out in an inquiry report.
- 2 This must be carried out in a formally constituted meeting – as of May 2021 there is a requirement for such meetings to take place physically.

### What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards affected:**

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 3 The Board is asked to consider the advice of senior officers in response to the recommendations set out in its Tackling Anti-Social Use of Fireworks Inquiry Report with a view to referring a final version of the report to the Executive Board for consideration.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 4 Consultation has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders – a full list is included in the inquiry report in line with the requirements of the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules.
- 5 Further consultation has taken place with the Executive Member and senior officers. The advice at Appendix 2 sets out a formal response to the recommendations.

### What are the resource implications?

- 6 There are no resource implications associated with this report.

### What are the legal implications?

- 7 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

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

- 8 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

## Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

- 9 The recommendations set out in the inquiry report attempt to address a range of concerns about the effect of the anti-social use of fireworks on Leeds' communities, including the impact on vulnerable citizens and partner organisations.

## Options, timescales and measuring success

### a) What other options were considered?

- 10 The attached report sets out the concluding recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) with the advice of the relevant senior officers attached.
- 11 It is for the Scrutiny Board to determine whether the final version of the report should now be subject to consideration by the Executive Board.

### b) How will success be measured?

- 12 It will be for the Executive Board to consider what (if any) action it wishes to take as a result of the recommendations set out in the Scrutiny Board report if scrutiny board members agree to its referral.

### c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 13 Once agreed by the Scrutiny Board the final report will be referred for consideration by the Executive Board.
- 14 It will be for the Executive Board to consider what (if any) action it wishes to take as a result of the recommendations set out in the Scrutiny Board report.

## Appendices

- 1 Tackling the Anti-Social use of Fireworks: Inquiry Report
- 2 Recommendation Table: Officer Response
- 3 2021 Peak Period Planning Summary (Bonfire Night/Halloween)

## Background papers

- 4 None

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Leeds  
CITY COUNCIL

# scrutiny



Environment, Housing  
and Communities

Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Fireworks

March 2021



# Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board

## Scrutiny Board Membership (2020/21):

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

## ***Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board***

*Focusing on services affecting the lives of citizens living and working in the council's neighbourhoods to monitor progress as a citizen focused city and prioritising environmental sustainability.*

Queries in relation to this report can be directed to the Principal Scrutiny Officer supporting the inquiry:

Rebecca Atherton

 [Becky.atherton@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Becky.atherton@leeds.gov.uk)

 0113 37 88642

Further information about the work of the committee can be found here:

[Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board](#)

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\*Board member until February 2021

\*\* Board member from February 2021



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# Foreword

## Foreword from the Chair

Our most recent inquiry left members of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in no doubt that the anti-social use of fireworks causes distress and concern for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

While some instances of this behaviour are clear cases of disorder, we also considered the impact of the increasingly frequent use of private fireworks for events and celebrations.

We heard about noise pollution affecting people with whose health conditions include sensory sensitivities, sheltered communities and veterans with PTSD. We also discussed the concerns of pet owners, those with livestock and the impact on wildlife.

The Board listened to evidence from frontline workers who had come under attack from fireworks used as missiles and we explored the increasing pressure on public sector organisations to respond to predictable peaks of firework related anti-social behaviour.

It should be said that throughout this inquiry Board members have been mindful of the fact that the majority of people in Leeds enjoy the safe, responsible use of fireworks, often as part of public – though not necessarily professional - displays. These displays have not fallen within the remit of this inquiry.

Many of the solutions to the challenges we have identified require national legislative change. This is already a highly regulated area. However, we are recommending that Government explores a series of changes to existing legislation to strengthen the suite of options available to those trying to prevent and respond to firework-related anti-social behaviour.

As a city we should be proud of all those involved in tackling dangerous and disorderly behaviour in our communities. The inquiry process highlighted many examples of good operational practice locally and we must ensure partners can easily share and learn from their experiences.

As the Chair of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board I want to thank all those elected members, council officers and partners who took part in our inquiry. Your time, expertise and insight was invaluable in informing the recommendations set out in this report.

**Cllr Barry Anderson**

**Chair, Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board**



# Summary

## 1. Aims of the Inquiry

### Best Council Priority: Supporting Safe, Strong Communities

- Examine the impact of the anti-social use of fireworks on local communities and public services, with particular reference to vulnerable citizens, emergency workers and animal welfare.
- Explore examples of good practice across local partnerships, which can inform the future planning of the city and the region's response to the anti-social use of fireworks.
- Develop recommendations for national legislators which could secure the changes necessary to reduce the harmful consequences of the anti-social use of fireworks.

## 2. Key Findings

- 2.1 During 2020/21 the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board explored the impact of an increase in the anti-social use of fireworks on Leeds' communities and local public services.
- 2.2 The conclusions of the Board are based upon evidence from a wide range of sources and emerged through a process of collaborative discussion with partners.
- 2.3 From the outset Scrutiny Board members acknowledged the considerable number of people in the city that enjoy safe, scheduled public firework displays that take place at key points of the year. There was recognition that these events bring real benefits in terms of community cohesion and often provide fundraising opportunities for local charities.
- 2.4 Members did, however, determine that it would be valuable to consider the concerns raised by Leeds residents about anti-social behaviour linked to predictable peaks in the use of fireworks and also a perceived increase in the frequency with which fireworks are used on private land throughout the year.

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*"Leeds has a strong and effective community safety partnership. A multi-agency approach ensures all available tools and powers are fully utilised to tackle environmental issues, anti-social behaviour and criminal activity."*

*Paul Money, Chief Officer Safer Leeds*

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# Summary

- 2.5 The Board welcomed the robust local approach to the planning and implementation of prevention and response strategies for predictable peak periods of anti-social behaviour such as Bonfire Night, Halloween and Mischief Night. The evidence suggests that these local partnership arrangements are delivering improved outcomes for communities often through effective engagement with known individuals, young people and community leaders.
- 2.6 However, the level of resource required to deliver these results - particularly in terms of frontline responders providing an on-street presence over the Bonfire Night period - is significant. Board members were concerned about the risks posed to those officers. They also remain concerned about the consequences for other activities of having to meet the service and budget demands created through annual occurrences of serious anti-social behaviour.
- 2.7 Local partners described going “above and beyond” to prevent anti-social behaviour linked to fireworks but agreed that legislative changes would provide them with additional tools to prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour more effectively.
- 2.8 Similarly the Board concluded that solutions to the harmful consequences of unrestricted frequent private firework use require changes in national legislation.
- 2.9 As well as making recommendations to national legislators, the Board has identified a number of recommendations relating to the local operational approach to disorderly behaviour linked to fireworks.
- 2.10 The recommendations of the Board are set out in full on pages 4 and 5.

## Purpose of the Board’s Recommendations

### Influence National Legislative Change

- Influence change in relation to the way in which fireworks can be purchased and used by private citizens.
- Empower partners to respond as effectively as possible to the challenge of fireworks - related anti-social behaviour.

### Strengthen Local Operational Practice

- Identify opportunities to strengthen and develop the local response to predictable peaks in the anti-social use of fireworks.



# Summary

## 3. Recommendations

### Recommendations to National Legislators

	Recommendations to National Legislators
Licensing of sales	Strengthen national restrictions governing how, when and where fireworks can be purchased, and in what volume per transaction.
Short term licences	Restrict firework sales to 'all year round' retailers to reduce risks associated with 'pop up' sellers who appear for short periods.
Targeting 'proxy purchasing'	Introduce stronger legislation to specifically target the 'proxy purchase' of fireworks by adults on behalf of children.
Predictability of Use	Enable the implementation of restrictions on how frequently fireworks can be used on private property where concerns are identified.
Exclusion Zones	Introduce a mechanism through which local authorities can more readily work with communities to identify areas of particular sensitivity with a view to prohibiting all firework use in those zones.
Notification	Introduce a requirement for community notification of firework use by venues hosting private events.
Decibel Levels	Consider, in partnership with industry and animal welfare representatives, reducing the decibel level for consumer fireworks.
Investment in awareness campaigns	Invest in a national campaign to raise awareness of safe firework behaviours and to advocate greater consideration of people and animals in close proximity to firework use.
Illegal fireworks	Further work should be carried out to consider how illegal sales of fireworks can be more effectively monitored to better understand behaviours and to increase opportunities for preventative interventions.



# Summary

## Strengthening Local Operational Practice

	Recommendations Regarding Local Practice
ASB Injunction	Pursue a variation to the current injunction to secure power of arrest.
Sharing of good practice	Establish a mechanism to regularly share and learn lessons from localised case studies.
Social Media Platforms	Explore options to target messaging about the consequences of anti-social firework use at a young audience through the use of a wider range of social media platforms
Communication Partners	Consider whether the existing network of partners can be expanded to reach a wider audience with messages about firework related behaviours.
Diversions Activities	Identify the resources required to safeguard and expand the localised provision of diversionary activities for young people.
Early engagement	Encourage early engagement with young people ahead of peak periods of firework related activity, ideally using trusted contacts who already have an established relationship with local young people.
Targeted Interventions	Support local partners to continue to deliver improved outcomes through the early identification of - and targeted engagement with - individuals for whom intelligence suggests there is a risk of becoming involved in disorder.
Accurate reporting	Explore ways in which to encourage the improved reporting of anti-social incidents linked to fireworks so as to ensure partners have more accurate information about the prevalence of such behaviour.
Licensing	Explore opportunities to include additional conditions on licences granted to venues where fireworks are regularly used in a manner that adversely impacts upon the local community.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement	It was agreed that the Scrutiny Board would share this report and its recommendations with Leeds MPs and the West Yorkshire Mayor.
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# Part One

## 4. Inquiry Approach

- 4.1 In response to the concerns of local residents, the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to give detailed consideration to the consequences of an increase in private firework use throughout the year, as well as the deliberate anti-social use of fireworks during predictable peak periods of activity such as Bonfire Night.
- 4.2 From the outset Scrutiny Board members acknowledged the considerable number of people in the city that enjoy safe, scheduled public firework displays that take place at key points of the year. Displays such as these did not fall within the remit of this inquiry.

### Inquiry Structure

#### Stage One

- Examine the impact of the anti-social use of fireworks on local communities and public services, with particular reference to vulnerable citizens, emergency workers and animal welfare.

#### Stage Two

- Explore examples of good practice across local partnerships, which can inform the future planning of the city and the region's response to the anti-social use of fireworks.
- Develop recommendations for national legislators which could secure the changes necessary to reduce the harmful consequences of the anti-social use of fireworks.



# Part One

## Contributors to the Inquiry

- 4.3 The Board brought together a range of partners with an interest in preventing, monitoring and responding to the anti-social use of fireworks. Those that were represented are listed below. A full list of individual contributors can be found at Appendix 2.

### Partners

West Yorkshire Police  
West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service  
West Yorkshire Joint Services (Trading Standards)  
The Dog's Trust  
Leeds Street Team  
Calderdale Council

### Leeds City Council

Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team  
Youth Services  
Communities

### Councillors (Non-Board Members)

Cllr Amanda Carter  
Cllr Matthew Robinson

### Written Submissions

Dynamic Fireworks  
RSPCA



# Part Two

## 5. Examining The Evidence

### Consequences for Communities and Public Services

- 5.1 The Board considered a number of specific issues of concern that had been brought to the attention of elected members by constituents, partner organisations and animal welfare organisations. Issues of disorderly behaviour, noise pollution, environmental concerns and unrestricted private firework use are considered below.
- 5.2 The Board recognised that the need to tackle the consequences of firework-related anti-social behaviour is not a challenge unique to Leeds. At a national level fireworks have been the subject of several e-petitions to Government in recent years, which were reviewed by the House of Commons Petitions Committee in 2019. Discussions are ongoing with other core cities to learn lessons about the different ways in which firework-related anti-social behaviour is addressed in other areas of the country.
- 5.3 Regionally, colleagues from Calderdale Council reflected on the “community tension” created by the increasingly frequent firework use at private venues that regularly host events. A Board member also attended a meeting about similar issues with Bradford City Council.

### Recording incidents of Anti-Social Disorder

- 5.4 The Board examined data detailing the number of incidents involving fireworks that were reported to West Yorkshire Police citywide. That data showed a 37% increase on the previous year and identified localities which have experienced an upward trend in calls for service in peak periods.
- 5.5 There is, however, difficulty in establishing precise data about the inconsiderate or anti-social use of fireworks. This has led to some disagreement about the extent of the concerns under discussion.
- 5.6 Industry representatives have challenged the assertion that there is general increase in the use of private fireworks given that imports had remained static for around 4 years. In contrast, community safety partners suggested the number of reported incidents underestimates the scale of the problem in Leeds and a social media campaign encouraging the reporting of incidents now forms part of the partnership’s approach to planning for Bonfire Night.



# Part Two

5.7 The legislative context for firework sale and use is discussed later in this report. However, with regards to the enforcement of legislation, where regulations are breached, there is often also inherent difficulty in identifying exactly when and where fireworks have been set off, and by whom. It was suggested by partners that a recognition of this challenge by the public further fuels an underreporting of incidents.

## Responding to Predictable Anti-Social Behaviour: Pressures for Local Partners

- 5.8 It was clear to the Board that there is a strong multi-agency approach to this aspect of community safety in Leeds with partners working closely and collaboratively together.
- 5.9 Considerable time was spent understanding local partnership arrangements designed to prevent and respond to firework-related anti-social behaviour in the period leading up to Bonfire Night, Halloween and Mischief Night.
- 5.10 The situation for emergency workers was discussed in detail with partners sharing their experiences of the “fear and hostility” experienced in some areas of the city after nightfall in peak periods of activity. As well as risks to the officers themselves, police vehicles and fire engines have become targets when responding to incidents of disorder, and a tactic of burning barricades has been adopted by perpetrators in previous years.
- 5.11 A number of contributors shared their experience of the significant disorder that took place in Harehills over Bonfire Night in 2019. The Board heard powerful descriptions of attacks on emergency workers, reports of the “fear and distress” of people living locally and the considerable cost and damage to property that resulted from the violence. The Board also reflected on the damage to the wider reputation of the city caused by the national media attention this generated.
- “Emergency workers came under attack from a barrage of missiles.”*
- West Yorkshire Police Officer*
- 5.12 In discussing the resource implications of the partnership response to anticipated annual disorder over this period it was noted that planning begins at least six months ahead of Bonfire Night and involves a wide range of stakeholders. Key preventative and enforcement initiatives are co-ordinated and delivered through the Neighbourhood Policing Teams’ Halloween and Bonfire Night Plans. A Silver Group led by a Police Superintendent then reviews all the planned activity across the Leeds district to ensure resources can be deployed to meet service demand.



## Part Two

- 5.13 As part of the multi-agency approach an officer from West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, which is a statutory partner linked to the Safer Leeds Executive, has also been seconded to Safer Leeds and is a key partner in bonfire night planning.
- 5.14 The Board welcomed the close partnership working in evidence. However, members expressed concern about the large numbers of police and outreach workers required to provide an on street presence in localities where intelligence suggests there is likely to be heightened potential for disorder over Bonfire Night. The risks posed to those individuals were judged to be considerable.
- 5.15 An intelligence-led approach is integral to the planning and response of partners in Leeds during these peak periods of activity. One of the ways this assists in prevention of anti-social behaviour is through the identification of individuals where there has been previous involvement in disorder or there is deemed to be a heightened risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour. This enables early engagement to deter such behaviour.
- 5.16 Additional Leeds Watch cameras and body cameras have assisted the police in being able to identify previous perpetrators of anti-social behaviour more easily, and a further bolstering of this approach through ward based funding was welcomed. Members also supported joint exercises with the police to review the footage recorded via these cameras in order to identify perpetrators and pursue individuals through the justice system.
- 5.17 In the years since the appalling disorder of 2019, the Leeds partnership has strengthened the range of tools at its disposal through the successful application for an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI). Recognising the important role of enforcement, the Board recommends pursuing a variation of the injunction to include the power of arrest.
- 5.18 Having explored evidence of successful locality working a persistent recommendation from the Board has been that mechanisms must be put in place to easily and regularly share good practice from all areas of the city, so that the partnership can continue to evolve and to be agile in its response to anti-social behaviour that emerges in peak periods.



# Part Two

## Key Aspects of Bonfire Night Planning

- Home visits to individuals involved in anti-social behaviour the previous year.
- Multi-agency community hub created at Elland Road control room
- Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction application obtained to prohibit firework use in an area with historic disorder issues
- Targeted communication in areas of concern
- Firework test purchase operation
- To reduce risk to fire crews and vehicles, joint fire/police service visits in unmarked vehicles to assess areas where fires are reported.
- Communication strategy to raise awareness around bonfire night and the consequences of anti-social behaviour.
- Social media campaign to encourage appropriate reporting of incidents
- High visibility police patrols (NPT / NRT)
- Use of LCC CCTV Van for public reassurance
- Funding for youth provision in area
- Fire prevention through clearing of rubbish and furniture in areas deemed to be at risk of disorder.

## Diversionary Activities for Young People

- 5.19 Diversionary activities for young people have proved to be a particularly effective way of reducing anti-social behaviour linked to peak periods of firework related disorder. In the last year this included the provision of safe spaces for young people in an evening, boxing sessions and activities run in coordination with local sports teams.
- 5.20 Officers and partners highlighted the importance of engaging with young people well in advance of predicted peaks in firework related disorder and doing so, where possible, through trusted contacts who already have established relationships with young people.
- 5.21 Partners outlined the proactive approach that is taken to identifying young people at risk of becoming engaged in disorder and visiting them and their families ahead of Bonfire Night. This approach has helped improve outcomes over the 2020 bonfire period with teachers, local pastors and community leaders involved in outreach work.



# Part Two

- 5.22 More broadly, it was agreed that co-ordination between officers from communities and youth services, and partner organisations contributed valuable intelligence which could be used to target interventions more successfully.

## Communication Strategies

- 5.23 A number of different communication strategies are used to raise awareness of the consequences and frequency of firework related anti-social behaviour ahead of peak periods.
- 5.24 As mentioned earlier in this report, one aspect of communication around this period seeks to encourage reporting of firework related incidents.
- 5.25 In addition, all partners seek to engage with young audiences to raise awareness of the consequences of anti-social behaviour and the dangers of unsafe firework use.
- 5.26 The Board acknowledged the work that is already taking place to deliver targeted messages across traditional and social media, and via an established network of partners including schools. Members also recognised the resource constraints that hamper levels of physical engagement with more organisations.
- 5.27 However, the Board felt that communication was a key element of successful preventative strategies. They recommended further work be carried out in this area to increase the numbers of people receiving those messages.
- 5.28 The Board recommended utilising a wider range of social media platforms to disseminate key messages and supported proposals to work with young people to design literature that could be sent out in future years.
- 5.29 More broadly the Board recommended more national investment is required in campaigns to raise awareness about both the considerate and safe use of fireworks.

## Noise Pollution

- 5.30 Noise pollution was considered a particular concern for vulnerable citizens, including veterans and those living in sheltered accommodation or with health conditions involving heightened sensory sensitivity such as autism or hyperacusis. While noise pollution was certainly a consideration during periods of peak anti-social activity it was also a recurring feature of those concerned by the increased use of private fireworks throughout the year.



## Part Two

5.31 A local authority cannot currently limit the frequency of firework use on private land and therefore has limited control over this type of behaviour. Members therefore recommended introducing a mechanism through which local authorities could limit the frequency of firework use in localities where substantive concerns have been identified.

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*"Some of our most vulnerable residents find noisy fireworks very distressing, especially when they are going off regularly over several hours."*

*Cllr Amanda Carter*

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5.32 Throughout the Board's deliberations it became apparent that predictability was a key issue for many people concerned about private firework use. This was reinforced by evidence of the impact of noise on livestock, pets and wildlife and the difficulty of planning for such occurrences without adequate notice of upcoming private displays.

5.33 In order to better prepare and protect people or animals sensitive to loud noises, it was recommended that government requires the introduction of a community notification mechanism to raise awareness of when private venues in particular will be using fireworks.

5.34 On the basis of the evidence examined through the inquiry the Board also concluded that within communities there may be some highly sensitive areas where firework used is deemed by residents to be wholly unacceptable. In those circumstances the Board recommended that there should be a streamlined mechanism through which local authorities could work with those communities to create 'exclusion zones' to entirely prohibit firework use even on private property.

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*"We have seen instances of dogs being seriously injured after bolting when a firework has exploded nearby."*

*Dog's Trust representative*

---

5.35 It was agreed there would be value in national legislators exploring options to reduce the decibel level of fireworks – currently limited to 120 decibels for consumer fireworks - to reduce the distress caused by the noise of traditional fireworks.



# Part Two

- 5.36 The industry response to previous proposals of this nature has been cautious with a suggestion that any substantial reduction in decibel limits could have an adverse impact on the marketplace, potentially leading to the illegal importation of more noisy and dangerous fireworks.
- 5.37 It is recommended that national legislators work with both industry representatives and animal welfare charities to consider what might constitute an acceptable compromise in this area.

## Environmental Concerns

- 5.38 In the context of the Council's declared Climate Emergency, the Board noted a number of environmental impacts associated with firework use. The Board acknowledged, for example, that fireworks can lead to elevated levels of dust particles, which are rich in toxic metals. The board also noted that the plastic waste from discarded fireworks, can pose a danger to wildlife.
- 5.39 Government has previously worked with the industry to reduce noisy and nuisance fireworks, with the eventual banning of bangers, crackerjacks, air-bombs and mini rockets for sale to the public. The Board considered a similar partnership could bring about improvements to make fireworks more environmentally friendly.

## Legislative Context

- 5.40 The Scrutiny Board members were provided with an overview of the regulatory and legislative framework governing the current sale, standards and permitted private use of fireworks and the responsibility of different bodies within that framework, including with regards to enforcement.
- 5.41 This is already a highly regulated sector with robust standards governing product quality, use and sales. A number of different agencies are involved in the regulation of different elements of the sector. Locally those include:
- West Yorkshire Joint Services (Trading Standards)
  - West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
  - West Yorkshire Police
  - Local Authority



# Part Two

- 5.42 In addition the British Fireworks Association is the UK's Association for professional firework display companies. It is committed to upholding high standards amongst its members, whose activities include the manufacture, importation, sale, transportation, training and use of display fireworks both by members of the public and professionals.
- 5.43 Scrutiny Board members explored the ways in which current regulations and legislation are enforced, and highlighted concerns about the ongoing ability of organisations to carry out proactive preventative and monitoring activity in the context of reduced public sector resources.
- 5.44 In a written submission to the Board an industry representative suggested that the legislation associated with fireworks is adequate but enforcement and the punishments for improper use could be strengthened – particularly with regard to the illegal use of fireworks in public places and the use of fireworks after 11pm.

## Sale and Purchase of Fireworks

- 5.45 Since January 2005 the sale of fireworks to the public has been restricted to licensed traders. However, fireworks can be sold by unlicensed traders for:
- Chinese New Year and the preceding three days
  - Diwali and the preceding three days
  - Bonfire Night celebrations (15 October to 10 November)
  - New Year celebrations (26 to 31 December)
- 5.46 The Board recommended restricting sales to 'all year round' retailers to reduce risks associated with 'pop up shops' in the periods above. It was suggested that there was increased potential for 'pop up' shops to be unable to provide customers with adequate safety advice.
- 5.47 Board members also felt 'pop up shops' increased the opportunity for adults to buy fireworks on behalf of young people. Given that a disproportionate number of reported firework injuries affect young people this was a significant concern for the Board. In addition, the Board heard evidence from partners that they have experienced challenges around the practice of adults buying fireworks on behalf of young people who were then identified as having been involved in disorder. The Board concluded that national legislation should specifically target such 'proxy purchasing'.



# Part Two

- 5.48 Board members further proposed that there would be value in tightening restrictions around when, where and how many fireworks could be purchased in a single transaction to reduce general ease of access to fireworks.

## Illegal Fireworks

- 5.49 The Board recognised the highly regulated environment in which fireworks sale, storage and use is governed in the UK. However, the view of members was that the holistic approach to managing the potentially harmful consequences of fireworks was to some degree undermined by the lack of up-to-date information about illegal fireworks entering communities. The Board recommends greater monitoring of such activity at a national level.

## Opposing an Outright Ban on Fireworks

- 5.50 In 2019 the House of Commons Petitions Committee concluded that any recommendation that there should be an outright ban on firework sales to the public was unnecessarily “drastic” and would risk unintended economic consequences for those working in the fireworks industry.
- 5.51 Similarly, there was no suggestion from the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board that an outright ban should be endorsed. Indeed, it was noted that such a change could reduce the ability of local communities to organise public displays that deliver local benefits and result in more dangerous products entering the country illegally, thereby creating a more challenging environment for enforcement and regulatory agencies.
- 5.52 However, like the Petitions Committee, the Board concluded that there were justifiable concerns informing calls for a tightening of restrictions and an increase in enforcement of some aspects of existing legislation.
- 5.53 Should national legislators introduce additional regulation the Board was clear that any associated activity, including heightened enforcement activity in the early stages of implementation, would have to be accompanied by sufficient resources to enable any such activity to be conducted effectively and without detriment to other services.



# Appendix 1

## Appendix 1: Legislative Framework for the Storage, Supply and Use of Fireworks

<p><b>Consumer Protection Act 1987</b></p>	<p>Under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 suppliers of all consumer goods (including fireworks) are required to supply goods that meet an acceptable standard of safety. Under section 11 of the Act it is an offence to supply goods which fail to comply with general safety requirements.</p>
<p><b>Fireworks Act 2003</b></p>	<p>The Fireworks Act 2003 makes provision for the control of fireworks and explosives by regulation in order to secure that there is either no risk, or a minimal risk compatible with use, that fireworks will cause death, injury or distress to persons or animals, or damage to property.</p> <p>The aim of this Act is to reduce the noise, nuisance and injuries caused by the misuse of fireworks – which forms part of the broader public concern with the problem of anti-social behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Fireworks Regulations 2004, as amended by the Fireworks (Amendment) Regulations 2004)</b></p>	<p>The current Fireworks Regulations 2004 came into force on the 7 August 2004. The Regulations introduced a package of measures to regulate the sale, possession and use of fireworks.</p> <p>Those intending to supply fireworks to the public outside the traditional selling periods (i.e. all year round) are required to hold a licence to supply fireworks, either from the Local Authority, Fire Service or HSE.</p> <p>Regulation 7 of the Fireworks Regulations 2004 imposes a curfew on when fireworks can be let off in England and Wales.</p> <p>Specifically, regulation 7 sets an 11 pm curfew on the use of fireworks, with later exceptions for seasonal celebrations.</p> <p>The curfew is enforced by the police, with any breach subject to an unlimited fine and/or six months in prison. The police can also issue on-the-spot fines of £90 to persons aged 18 or over committing that offence.</p>
<p><b>Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015</b></p>	<p>The Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, an economic operator (i.e. retailer) must <b>not</b> sell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Christmas cracker to anyone under the age of 12 years;</li> <li>• F1 category fireworks to anyone under the age of 16;</li> <li>• F2 and F3 category fireworks to anyone under the age of 18;</li> <li>• F4 category fireworks to members of the public (supplied only to a person with specialist knowledge).</li> </ul>



# Appendix 1

	<p>It is not a legal requirement to have any kind of licence or training to buy “consumer fireworks” (category F1, F2 and F3 fireworks). There is no such thing as either a licence or training that entitles a member of the public to buy category 4 (professional display) fireworks. These are only available to professional fireworks companies with all year insurance and licenced storage. Under the 2015 Regulations, retailers are also required to display a notice at the point of sale stating:</p> <p>“It is illegal to sell category F2 fireworks or category F3 fireworks to anyone under the age of eighteen” and</p> <p>“It is illegal for anyone under the age of eighteen to possess any category F2 fireworks or category F3 fireworks in a public place.”</p>
<b>Explosives Act 1875</b>	<p>Under section 80 of the Explosives Act 1875 (as amended) it is an offence to throw or discharge a firework in a street or public place. This is enforced by the police, and a fixed penalty applies.</p> <p>Fireworks should only be let off on private land (such as a garden) or on land where the landowner has given permission.</p>
<b>Explosives Regulations 2014</b>	<p>The Explosives Regulations 2014 provide for the regulation of the manufacture, storage and acquisition of explosives by means of a series of defined duties, the granting of approvals and a system of licensing.</p> <p>For example, the Regulations require a licence to store fireworks except where the quantity is less than 5 kg. It is a breach of the Regulations to store more than that quantity of fireworks without a licence.</p> <p>In all areas, local authority Trading Standards officers are responsible for enforcing regulations on consumer safety and age of purchase. Enforcement of the Regulations in respect of other pyrotechnics will fall primarily to the Health &amp; Safety Executive.</p>
<b>Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974</b>	<p>The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 provides for the making of health and safety regulations for the general purposes of securing the safety of persons at work.</p> <p>In the context of fireworks, this would generally apply to firework display operators and those events where pyrotechnic or firework displays take place in the course of a business.</p>
<b>Animal Welfare Act 2006</b>	<p>Under the Act, powers exist for secondary legislation and codes of practice to be made to promote the welfare of animals.</p> <p>Under section 4 of the Act, it is an offence to cause any unnecessary suffering to any captive or domestic animal. The offence carries a fine of up to £20,000 and/or a prison term of up to six months.</p>



# Appendix 1

	<p>The Act is enforced by local councils, animal health officers and the police.</p>
<b>Excessive noise - statutory nuisance</b>	<p>There is a noise limit of 120db on all consumer fireworks. In addition to the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (as amended), there is other legislation that may also be used in certain circumstances to tackle excessive noise from fireworks.</p> <p>Under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990), a local authority's Environmental Health officer must take "all reasonable steps" to investigate a complaint about excessive noise. If they believe a statutory nuisance is occurring or is likely to occur or recur they must act.</p>



# Appendix 2

## Appendix 2: Contributors

The following individuals have contributed to the various stages of this inquiry.

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Cllr Barry Anderson	Scrutiny Board (Chair)
Cllr Javid Akhtar	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Jonathan Bentley	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Ann Blackburn	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Kayleigh Brooks	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Dawn Collins	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Angela Gabriel	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Pauleen Grahame	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Mary Harland	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Asghar Khan	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Nicole Sharpe	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Trish Smith	Scrutiny Board
Cllr Amanda Carter	Referrer
Cllr Matthew Robinson	Referrer
Paul Money	LCC, Chief Officer Safer Leeds
Claire Smith	LCC, ASB Delivery Manager
Lisa Ramsden	LCC, ASB Delivery Manager
Adrian Tonge	LCC, Principal Legal Officer Resources and Housing
Margaret McKean	LCC, Advanced Youth Work Practitioner
James McCarthy	LCC, ENE Team Leader, Youth Services
Allison Dixon	LCC, Advanced Youth Work Practitioner



# Appendix 2

Grace Lawrenson	LCC, Senior Localities Officer
Stephen Harper	LCC, WNW Team Leader, Youth Services
Leah Dyer	LCC, Advanced Youth Work Practitioner
Inspector Jonathan McNiff	West Yorkshire Police
Inspector Jodie Scatchard	West Yorkshire Police
Inspector Richard Horn	West Yorkshire Police
Inspector Mick Preston	West Yorkshire Police
Sergeant David Walker	West Yorkshire Police
PC Edel Fox	West Yorkshire Police
David Strover	West Yorkshire Joint Services (Trading Standards)
Billijo Jones	West Yorkshire Joint Services (Trading Standards)
Matthew Goodall	West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
James Craven	West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
Cllr Ashley Evans (Calderdale)	Calderdale Council
Cllr George Robinson	Calderdale Council
Alex Hunter	Calderdale Council
Mike Lodge	Calderdale Council
Adam Aslam	Leeds Street Team Coordinator
Emma Wakefield	Dogs Trust
Matthew Howden	Dogs Trust

**Written Submissions were received from:**

Nigel Claydon	Dynamic Fireworks
RSPCA	

**Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)**  
**Tackling the Anti-Social Use of Fireworks**  
**March 2021**

**Report author: Rebecca Atherton**



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## Appendix 2: Response to Recommendations

### A. Recommendations to National Legislators

1. While the specific recommendations to national legislators fall, by definition, outside of the remit of the Council, it is recognised that the conclusions set out in the report are a direct response to the evidence provided to the Scrutiny Board by local partners.
2. With that in mind any further exploration of these issues at a national level would be welcomed, particularly in cases where the implementation of such recommendations could potentially provide local partners with additional tools and resources through which to prevent and/or respond to the sort of anti-social behaviours described throughout the Scrutiny Board's inquiry.
3. It should, however, be noted that the planning and delivery of interventions intended to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour on our communities in peak periods is - as the Scrutiny Board identified - already resource intensive.
4. Should national policy makers decide to delegate new responsibilities to local partners such activity must be appropriately and additionally resourced.
5. Furthermore, it would be strongly recommended that national legislators engage proactively with local partners from the outset to ensure that the development of any mechanisms such as exclusion zones are suitably agile, so as to enable partners to continue to respond in different ways to the varying demands of our communities.
6. As was illustrated during the inquiry, partnership working in Leeds is strong, effective and well established. The planning and delivery of education and intervention strategies is intelligence led and partners work closely and effectively with community leaders in areas where instances of anti-social behaviour in peak periods of activity have historically been particularly high.
7. An increased national focus on areas such as education as set out in the recommendations would, if appropriately resourced, further strengthen the local response to this issue with the potential that activity could also be increased in breadth.

	Recommendations to National Legislators
Licensing of sales	Strengthen national restrictions governing how, when and where fireworks can be purchased, and in what volume per transaction.
Short term licences	Restrict firework sales to 'all year round' retailers to reduce risks associated with 'pop up' sellers who appear for short periods.
Targeting 'proxy purchasing'	Introduce stronger legislation to specifically target the 'proxy purchase' of fireworks by adults on behalf of children.
Predictability of Use	Enable the implementation of restrictions on how frequently fireworks can be used on private property where concerns are identified.
Exclusion Zones	Introduce a mechanism through which local authorities can more readily work with communities to identify areas of particular sensitivity with a view to prohibiting all firework use in those zones.
Notification	Introduce a requirement for community notification of firework use by venues hosting private events.
Decibel Levels	Consider, in partnership with industry and animal welfare representatives, reducing the decibel level for consumer fireworks.
Investment in awareness campaigns	Invest in a national campaign to raise awareness of safe firework behaviours and to advocate greater consideration of people and animals in close proximity to firework use.
Illegal fireworks	Further work should be carried out to consider how illegal sales of fireworks can be more effectively monitored to better understand behaviours and to increase opportunities for preventative interventions.

Table 1: Recommendation to National Legislators (tackling Anti-Social use of Fireworks: Inquiry report)

## B Strengthening Local Operational Practice

8. The table below sets out the activity that is taking place in relation to each of the recommendations relating to local operational practice.
9. The acknowledgement by the Scrutiny Board of the breadth and strength of local partnerships, particularly in peak periods of activity, is welcome and the recommendations that emerged from the inquiry are reflective of the existing 'direction of travel' for those partnerships.
10. Further information will be provided to the Board at a future date in respect of evolving pieces of work such as the proposed communications strategy currently being drafted by LASBT officers.

	Recommendations Regarding Local Practice
ASB Injunction	Pursue a variation to the current injunction to secure power of arrest.
	<p>We have previously obtained injunctions against “persons unknown” in certain specific contexts – firework misuse</p> <p>However, in a judgment given by the High Court, the scope for obtaining such injunctions has been considerably narrowed. (The judgement can be found here : <a href="http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2021/1201.html">http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2021/1201.html</a> ). For convenience it can be described as the “Barking” decision.</p> <p>In particular :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Court has held that ASBIs cannot be sought against “persons unknown” (this is the first time the High Court has considered this point); other types of injunction (such as to restrain breach of the criminal law or to restrain trespass may be sought)</li> <li>• A “persons unknown” injunction is practically unenforceable after a final injunction has been granted unless the parties have been named in the meantime</li> </ul> <p>We have therefore had to discharge the injunction.</p> <p>However, it is an offence to set off or throw any firework in a public space or highway and depending on the severity and frequency of incidents, we will use any tools and power available in which to tackle this behaviour along with our partners at WYP, this could include acceptable behaviour contract, anti social behaviour injunction warnings etc. This action would depend on the behaviour that is being caused including the severity of the incident and the frequency.</p> <p>In the Inner North West we have a Public Space Protection Order in place and one of the prohibitions is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person(s) within the 'restricted area' will not: be in groups of two or more and engage in anti-social behaviour likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress to any other person in</li> </ul>

	<p>a public space</p> <p>Breaching a PSPO is a criminal offence and can be dealt with at a magistrates court with a maximum fine of £500 for breaches of anti social behaviour</p> <p>The police also have stop and search powers if they believe a person has in their possession a firework illegally.</p>
Sharing of good practice	Establish a mechanism to regularly share and learn lessons from localised case studies.
	<p>Multi Agency Partnership Meetings are held every 4 – 6 weeks starting approximately February. At the meetings the group identify areas of best practice from the previous year and from other organisations including Core Cities. This detail is then input into the action plan for deployment over the Bonfire/Halloween period.</p> <p>Within a short period following bonfire night a briefing meeting is held to look what has gone well and where any lessons are learnt</p>
Social Media Platforms	Explore options to target messaging about the consequences of anti-social firework use at a young audience through the use of a wider range of social media platforms
Communication Partners	Consider whether the existing network of partners can be expanded to reach a wider audience with messages about firework related behaviours.
	<p>LASBT are currently working on a communication strategy to identify the best social media platforms available to ensure a wider audience is reached around the vulnerabilities and consequences of the anti-social use of fireworks. This is due for completion by 15<sup>th</sup> October which will be reported into the board for feedback.</p> <p>Work is also being carried out in Schools with the Safer Schools Officers to address the issues in relation to fireworks/bonfires and the dangers around this.</p>
Diversionary Activities	Identify the resources required to safeguard and expand the localised provision of diversionary activities for young people.
	We are currently working with Community Committees and Community Safety Champions to assess local geographic risks and support/fund additional engagement activity where opportunity presents itself
Early engagement	Encourage early engagement with young people ahead of peak periods of firework related activity, ideally using trusted contacts who already have an established relationship with local young people.

Targeted Interventions	Support local partners to continue to deliver improved outcomes through the early identification of - and targeted engagement with - individuals for whom intelligence suggests there is a risk of becoming involved in disorder.
	<p>In response to all 3 of the above</p> <p>There are numerous activities and interventions across Leeds on the run up to the Bonfire period. All areas are busy identifying their top 10/20 nominals who have previously been involved in firework incidents or bonfire disorder and will be visited from Police to advise of dangers. Older teens and adults identified will also be visited to remind them of the sanctions they could face if involved in any firework incidents and any LCC tenants will receive a warning if they are involved with ASB/ nuisance over the period.</p> <p>There has been a push on submitting intelligence for this period, including vehicles.</p> <p>Safer Schools Officers will be delivering advice in Secondary schools and there has been fireworks awareness delivered to Primary schools with Fire attending also. Community engagement with youth services and free pumpkins given out and advice to parents with a leaflet. This is supported by NPT's and Councillors.</p> <p>Police and LCC are involved in leaflet drops and the Councillors have agreed to pay for the leaflets. There are also Community engagement days set up, the first being this Friday. We are using the Engagement van at East. Housing are also attending to conduct a visual audit of the estate to identify any address that have started to stockpile wood/logs etc. Off Road bikes team will be attending to support staff on the day and Cleaner Neighbourhoods are attending to assist with any fly tipping or piles of rubbish in the street.</p> <p>There are also numerous other activities arranged across Leeds, Halloween and Bonfire safety events and treasure hunts. Various Youth Clubs and leisure centres are to be visited to engage with the children and their parents.</p>
Accurate reporting	Explore ways in which to encourage the improved reporting of anti-social incidents linked to fireworks so as to ensure partners have more accurate information about the prevalence of such behaviour.
	On Leeds City Council's ASB reporting page it clearly gives complainants the option to report any type of anti social behaviour including anti social use of fireworks, this will give the public the confidence that the Local Authority are able to address these issues/concerns.

	<p>When a customer enquiry is logged we are able to extract the information regarding the anti social use of fireworks and then log this separately so e are able to report accurate figures.</p> <p>From 18<sup>th</sup> October until 12<sup>th</sup> November LASBT Triage will be responding to complaints regarding fireworks/bonfires as a priority, the intelligence will be fed into our police partnership portal to be address at the earliest opportunity by the partnership.</p>
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Table 2: Recommendation Regarding Local Practice (Tackling Anti-Social use of Fireworks: Inquiry report)

**Partnership Tactical Responses**

**Bonfire/Halloween 2021**

Service	Tactical Response	Lead for Service
West Yorkshire Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Op Brimgate has been running which gives extra visible reassurance across specific areas of the East of Leeds in the run up to Carnival, a similar deployment will also lead us into the bonfire period.</b></li> <li>• <b>Each NPT have bespoke plans providing extra resourcing in the lead up to this period with a focus on education and early intervention.</b></li> <li>• <b>WYP working with Local Authority and Trading Standards in respect of ‘pop-up’ firework shops – last year this was mainly in East of District and Armley in the West.</b></li> <li>• <b>Consideration has been given and awareness of potential ‘ride outs’ with plans in place.</b></li> <li>• <b>Alley gating work that’s was progressed last year will be reconsidered, to prevent ‘rat runs’ issues for youth in the East.</b></li> <li>• <b>Test purchase efforts being stepped up for under age firework sales, focus on West and East.</b></li> <li>• <b>We will be looking again at having spots on radio Fever FM which the NPT Inspectors will look to take and get key messages across.</b></li> <li>• <b>Community intervention cell operating from Elland Road with a duty NPT Inspector in there along with staff to assist quick time deployment and liaison with support services both internally and externally.</b></li> <li>• <b>Educational inputs to be delivered in secondary schools and primary schools</b></li> <li>• <b>Test purchasing at key locations</b></li> <li>• <b>Audit of all shops selling fireworks</b></li> <li>• <b>Religious and faith groups be spoken to in relation to safety messages and prevention of ASB</b></li> </ul>	Kevin Pickles

LASBT – Leeds City council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support Community Intervention Cell</b></li> <li>• <b>Support around Alleygates</b></li> <li>• <b>looking at temporary CCTV in key locations</b></li> <li>• <b>Proactive joint visits to known youths/addresses who we suspect may become involved in trouble before the period</b></li> <li>• <b>Warning letters to be issued to some people about possible action should they be involved</b></li> <li>• <b>Follow up work to be done in the form of enforcement action should there be any issues &amp; positive ID's</b></li> <li>• <b>Monitoring reports of firework nuisance leading up to the bonfire period and sharing with the tasking group.</b></li> <li>• <b>ASB Data to be circulated daily</b></li> </ul>	LASBT Managers Heather – South John – West Neil - East
Leeds Watch – Leeds City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>deploying 2 x CCTV vans</b></li> </ul>	Diane Goodfellow Dawn Asquith
Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth outreach (although depleted and with issues around Covid) will be deployed as appropriate.</b></li> <li>• <b>All youth providers to consider what activities can be provided during the half term week and over the bonfire period to divert young people from being present on the street</b></li> </ul>	Shaun Watson
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WYFRS raised specifics last year around arson incidents and therefore increased visibility in Halton Moor, Richmond Hill, Cross Green and Beeston Hill</b></li> </ul>	Toby May
Trading Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>deal with any complaints received on those matters as our resources allow, and refer any other complaints received to the appropriate enforcer</b></li> </ul>	

Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CNT will be providing a cleansing response similar to previous years where any accumulations of waste on either public or housing maintained land will be removed asap.</b> This will be done on a referral basis and only where there is a clear risk identified by the fire service. CNT cleansing staff work 7 days a week across the City from 0600hrs-1630hrs.</li> <li>• <b>Bonfires built prior to bonfire night will be dismantled and removed only where there is a significant risk as there have been incidents where staff have been subject to verbal abuse and put into confrontational situations previously.</b> Again these will be done on a referral basis ideally where identified by WYF unless CNT Team Leaders feel that it is dangerous and warrants immediate removal.</li> <li>• <b>Where waste is on private land unless deemed as being a significant danger and imminent threat to properties or persons, we will look to take enforcement action through the use of CPW/CPN which do have specified time limits on. This will include some bin yards where they are under private ownership.</b></li> </ul>	Chris Chamberlain
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing to report any damages to fences</b></li> </ul>	
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supporting allocation of funding around youth diversionary activities</b></li> </ul>	

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## Review of Local Welfare Support Scheme

Date: 2/11/2021

Report of: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Scrutiny Board for Environment, Housing and Communities

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

### What is this report about?

#### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report provides details on the existing Leeds City Council Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWSS); setting out details of what support is in place, how the scheme currently runs and overall costs/budget available to run the scheme.
- LWSS is designed to support residents who may find themselves in an emergency/crisis - offering short term support to ease that position. This typically consists of an award made up of one or a number of the following: food hamper/e-voucher, fuel vouchers, white goods, furniture and flooring, all of which is underpinned by the provision of advice, guidance and signposting to additional services and partner agencies.
- However, the scheme, in its current form, requires improvement as the short-term support provided to customers in financial crisis often results in customers re-presenting for further support. The COVID-19 pandemic has put further pressures on low-income households and the most vulnerable in our society and has also pushed many more households into financial uncertainty, hardship, to seek support and advice, and to claim benefits. A review of the scheme is needed in order to provide better support to customers in-need over the short, medium and long-term and to ultimately reduce dependency on local welfare support across the city, whether through Leeds City Council, our partner advice services or third sector organisations.
- The provision of a more effective and wide-ranging LWSS scheme contributes to the Best Council Plan focus of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities and achieving the council's ambition for a strong economy and compassionate city. The provision of an LWSS scheme also supports the Best City Priorities of Safe, Strong Communities, Inclusive Growth, Health & Wellbeing, Child-Friendly City, Age-Friendly Leeds and Housing.

## Recommendations

- a) It is recommended that the members of Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board consider the content of this report, in order to make recommendations around improvements and efficiencies to the running of the LWSS scheme moving forward.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The proposal to review the LWSS scheme is being brought forward due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic highlighting the need to consider how the existing scheme is currently run. This includes areas of focus such as streamlining processes, strengthening city wide partnerships and the consideration of what support can be offered to residents over the short, medium and longer term when experiencing crisis.

### Context

Leeds City Council and partners have been working to address financial inclusion in Leeds since 2003. The work, which is key to reducing poverty in the city, has been based on building knowledge and research, and a strong collaborative partnership to develop innovative and sustainable actions for the residents of Leeds. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic the scale of the challenge was significant, with an estimated 174,000 people in Leeds in relative poverty, and local research in 2018 highlighting that households were less resilient and worse prepared for an external financial shock or crisis than in 2004.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put further pressures on low-income households and the most vulnerable in our society and has also pushed many more households into financial uncertainty, hardship, to seek support and advice and to claim benefits. Advice agencies have reported a significant rise in enquires related to benefits and Universal Credit, employment and housing. In addition, partners are also reporting that many more people presenting to services are unable to manage or cover basic living costs.

As a result, is imperative that emergency and crisis support in the city is fit for purpose, well managed and connected in order that people are able to access support when needed.

## LWSS Background and Funding

Following the abolition of Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants in April 2013, the government provided funding for local authorities to establish local welfare schemes. This funding was ring fenced until 2015. The contribution of £2.89m in 13/14, &14/15 was used by LCC to for the following; to deliver Local Welfare Support, to fund welfare initiatives to tackle poverty (Fareshare, FAN, CAB, Advice services, LCU), to offer section 17 support to Children and families, to contribute to Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Council Tax Support, and to offer wider support to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector.

From 15/16 funding became part of the settlement, and LCC have continued to allocate a proportion of this to deliver LWSS.

The table below details the budget reduction experienced in Leeds from 2013/14 up to 2020/21 for the LWSS element of the funding only. The removal of ringfenced funding and the subsequent drop in identified replacement funds continues to present challenges to how LCC can operate the LWSS scheme.

Year	LWSS scheme budget
2013/14 (Ring fenced Government Funded)	£1,317,000
2014/15 (Ring Fenced Government Funded)	£1,054,000
2015/16 (LA Funded from this point)	£742,000 (HRA £100k contribution)
2016/17	£694,000 (HRA £100k contribution)
2017/18	£685,000 (HRA £100k contribution)
2018/19 (from this year SIF funded other initiatives)	£600,000 (HRA £100k contribution)
2019/20	£600,000 (HRA £100k contribution)
2020/21	£600,000 (HRA £200k contribution)

The changes in **LWSS** spending following the removal of the ringfenced funding, and the subsequent years reduction in LA funding can be summarised as follows:

- Funding of things other than direct awards was significantly reduced / withdrawn following removal of Government funding
- The scheme moved away from the costly direct awards of store cards and food hampers to customers and moved to the, lesser cost, funding of Food Banks with associated referrals by us to them
- The budget for the funding of Foodbanks eventually moved from LWSS to Financial Inclusion SIF budget

Despite the reduction in funding shown above many Local Authorities although not all, continue to operate an LWSS scheme, although delivery models can vary quite significantly.

## The Current Scheme

The main aim of the Local Welfare Support Scheme is to support residents who may find themselves in an emergency or crisis, offering short term support to ease that position. As referred to above, this typically consists of an award made up of one or a number of the following: food hamper/e voucher, fuel vouchers, white goods, furniture & flooring all of which is underpinned by the provision of advice, guidance and signposting to additional services/partner agencies. Priority groups identified for the support within the existing policy document are as follows:

- Families or vulnerable people under exceptional pressure
- Homeless people or rough sleepers
- Vulnerable older people
- People fleeing domestic violence
- Young people leaving care or living independently
- People moving out of institutional or residential care into the community
- Ex-offenders leaving prison or detention centres
- People with disabilities

The LWSS team sits currently within the Contact Centre environment. There is a dedicated Team Leader overseeing the work of a group of claim assessors. An assessor will take evidence from customer/s to gather information regarding their current emergency/crisis position, and to gain an insight into their financial circumstances (including any income expenditure). Council systems are utilised to perform an additional check against any information provided, and in some circumstances the customer may be required to provide proofs before an award is made. This process is always accompanied by a quality conversation regarding how we can help with any wider support needs and suitable onward referrals are subsequently made.

In terms of demand/uptake of the scheme and the funding required to deliver in its current format, **Appendix 1** details per annum the number of beneficiaries and associated costs running from 2013/14 right up to and including the last 12 months. It should be noted that COVID 19 has impacted delivery over the last 18 months and this will have impacted the figures. Before the pandemic approximately 3,000 customers received support each year. Over the last two financial years, the majority of the budget has been used for furniture and flooring (84%), followed by food and fuel (14%) and removals (2%).

### Current Customer Journey

Marketing of the scheme at present time largely relies upon word of mouth, with partner agencies recommending that a customer contact the Council to request support being the main entry point. This is not sufficient and is in need of development/improvement – flyers/posters/web presence and social media platforms amongst others could all be brought into use, along with a directly referral option.

In addition, the existing LWSS policy document (**see appendix 2**) has not been updated for many years, this has resulted in outdated, time consuming and inefficient customer journeys. Marketing of the scheme, referrals into the scheme and processes including decision making around granting an award are in need of a significant update.

The Communities, Housing and Environment Development team have undertaken a mapping exercise which details the current customer journey, this can be found in **appendix 3**. At present the LWSS experience can create unnecessary contact with the customer, for example – certain customers having to present physically at a LCC Community Hub site to show proof of income/benefit claim to a Customer Service officer. This can also delay the customer accessing food/fuel etc for a number of days. It can also result in a ‘no show’ meaning a customer does not actually benefit from an award they could badly need.

The customer journey can and should be significantly improved. Automation within the process would streamline the experience for the customer and would allow assessors to complete their work more efficiently. This is the case for both uploading of proofs/evidence, the granting of an award, as well as other areas such as onward referral/signposting (circumstances depending).

## Links to Wider Support Networks

Although information, advice and guidance are built into the current system, on the whole the current scheme operates separately from other welfare support, advice and guidance provision in the city. This results in a disconnect between agencies and impacts both accessibility for the customer and in ultimately providing the support they need.

There is a wide range of support available within the third sector in Leeds and nationally, which can be broadly broken down into the following categories: food, advice, housing, fuel/energy, white/brown goods and health & wellbeing. There are several existing partnerships that the LWSS would benefit from being better linked into as part of the review. An overview of the Leeds welfare offer can be found in **appendix 4**. There are many examples of duplication but also of successful partnerships that LWSS could work with to maximise support for vulnerable residents in Leeds.

Although assessors do currently refer customers to wider support if needed, this is largely dependent on how up to date the assessor is with their knowledge and is reliant on them following up work with a manual referral. Signposting being followed up is also dependent on the customer proactively taking up the opportunities offered, which are shared verbally over the phone. The team have access to a small directory of key organisations that can offer support, but this needs substantial development to encompass the broad range of organisations both in Leeds and nationally.

An example of good partnership working is demonstrated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector run Community Care Hubs (CCH) who have been taking referrals from and referring into LWSS during the pandemic. This has worked well, however the funding for the CCH arrangement is currently due to end in March 2022 and further consideration is needed around a permanent partnership arrangement.

Ideally a future LWSS would successfully incorporate elements of automation within the process, this should be done taking into account access to other services (internal and external to the council). This would help to ensure that when a customer presents in crisis, a suitable 'package' of options could be put into place which could cater for both the short, medium and longer terms through a more systematic approach. There is a need for a city-wide approach to local welfare support with LWSS as a key component that is fully integrated with the other support that exists in the city. This would create a wider welfare support package for Leeds residents, something that does not current exist in any of the core city offers.

## Comparison with other Core Cities

Other Core Cities have been contacted in relation to their welfare support schemes and **appendix 5** details how they currently run their LWSS. Learning should be taken from how these schemes run and certain elements could potentially be adapted by LCC.

## Next steps

A group has been formed to undertake a review of the scheme, with representation from the following services: Customer Access, Financial Inclusion, Benefits, Housing and the third sector. The group have started to identify the changes needed within the scheme including customer journey mapping, comparisons with other local authorities and a review of the wider welfare offer in Leeds to ensure that efficiencies and improvements are made and that support for customers is maximised by avoiding duplication of support. The group will focus on the scope and remit of the scheme, process, funding, partnership arrangements, marketing and where the scheme sits in the Council structure.

It is proposed that each strand of work will have a dedicated working group who will review and propose changes, an update on which will be presented to the Scrutiny Board in Spring 2022 for consideration providing details of progress.

A Cash Grant Pilot began on 3 October 2021 and provides an opportunity to trial a new approach and new systems as part of the LWSS offer with a view to making it part of the permanent offer, subject to its success and available funding. This pilot will also allow for learning to be taken from new, more structured approaches to welfare awards, from which learning will be taken as part of the wider review.

### What impact will this proposal have?

#### Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted?      Yes      No

- 2 This proposal to review the LWSS scheme will affect all ward areas due to the scheme being delivered city wide.

A full review of the existing scheme will ensure that LCC are providing the best possible support to communities that are most disadvantaged. It is anticipated the demand for the scheme will increase due to a number of factors such as the ending of furlough, the removal of the U/C £20 uplift, rising living costs including energy price hikes. This makes the provision of an efficient and high quality LWSS scheme of paramount importance.

As part of the review a stakeholder survey will be developed which will gather information from a number of key sources including from those with lived experience. This will provide comprehensive feedback and will ensure that in line with Poverty Truth Commission, the views of people actually experiencing poverty are taken into account. Evidence will also be gathered from other LA schemes and a number of reports including publications from the LGA and Trussell Trust amongst others.

In addition, as we develop the new look scheme an expert panel will be put into place in order to test and shape options before they are embedded long term. As well as including key local agencies/partners, the panel will also draw from the LGA reshaping financial inclusion work that is currently taking place on a national level.

The review of the LWSS scheme will take into account equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues. In order to do so effectively an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and a copy of this can be found in **appendix 6**.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 The relevant Chief Officers and Directors have been consulted on these proposals.

To understand the approach being adopted by other local authorities, colleagues across Core Cities and other West Yorkshire local authorities have been contacted.

The Financial Inclusion Team have developed a stakeholder survey to ensure all partners have the opportunity to comment/feedback on how they feel an LWSS scheme could operate more effectively.

An internal working group with representatives from Benefits, LWSS, Financial Inclusion, Housing, Customer Access is also in place and will oversee development and implementation of the new scheme.

Member of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group have been made aware of the LWSS review and will receive the stakeholder survey so they can comment and provide feedback.

### **What are the resource implications?**

A new-look scheme depending on proposals brought forward could require additional funding, both in terms of the support offered to the customer and resources to deliver the scheme. This will need to be carefully considered as proposals are brought forward and developed.

### **What are the legal implications?**

There is no legal requirement for local authorities to have a Local Welfare Support Scheme.

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

There are no key risks associated with this work.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **a) What other options were considered?**

There are no other options to be considered.

#### **b) How will success be measured?**

Success will be measured through the development of an affordable, new-look LWSS scheme. Data detailing the number of customers accessing the scheme which drills into each area of support offered will be reviewed and mapped against previous data to ensure an improved scheme is in place.

#### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

Implementation will begin following recommendations made by the initial scrutiny board meeting scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### **Appendices**

- 1 LWSS data report
- 2 LWSS policy document
- 3 Customer mapping document
- 4 Wider Leeds welfare offer
- 5 Core City comparison

### **Background papers**

There are no background papers.

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	2021/22 FY (Up to and including 31.07.2021)	Last 12 months (01.08.20 to 31.0721)	2019/20
<b>Food &amp; fuel</b>			
Total apps	736	2617	2115
Awarded apps	529	1774	1626
Award %	72%	68%	77%
Total spend	£27,850	£83,779.63	£62,519.00
Average spend per app	£52.65	£47.23	£38.45
<b>Furniture &amp; Flooring</b>			
Total apps	778	2385	1847
Awarded apps	631	1891	1553
Award %	81%	79%	84%
Total spend	£161,033.44	£494,694.91	£446,884.25
Average spend per app	£255.20	£261.60	£287.76
<b>Removals</b>			
Total apps	10	29	23
Awarded apps	9	19	18
Award %	90%	66%	78%
Total spend	£4,650	£9,950.00	£10,950.00
Average spend per app	£516.67	£523.68	£608.33
<b>Total</b>			
Total apps	1524	5031	3985
Awarded apps	1169	3684	3197
Award %	77%	73%	80%
Total spend	£193,533.44	£588,424.54	£520,353.25

Please note:

- \* Fareshare introduced in April 2015 to accommodate reduced budget - 2015 saw 1083 food parcels issue
- \* Since we began recording tenure type, of the 6177 applications 67% were CT's, 22% were PT's, 10% were

	Period				
2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
1813					
1354					
75%					
£55,910.00	£34,642.33	£55,317.25	£69,649.13	£205,531.24	£261,999.94
£41.29					
1537					
1250					
81%					
£471,846.62	£518,320.00	£657,079.15	£602,743.90	£841,147.54	£1,115,097.85
£377.48					
31					
24					
77%					
£12,890.00	£8,600.00	£11,325.00	£12,890.00	£27,845.00	£14,623.29
£537.08					
3381	2841	3860	4302	6126	8038
2628	2150	3006	3378	4840	6482
78%	76%	78%	79%	79%	81%
£540,646.62	£561,562.33	£723,721.40	£685,283.03	£1,074,523.78	£1,391,721.08

s by Fareshare  
e HA's/RSL's and 1% were OO's

# Local Welfare Support Scheme

## **Contents:**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Purpose**
- 3. Eligibility**
- 4. Application and Assessment**
- 5. Method of Payment**
- 6. Reviews**
- 7. Monitoring**
- 8. Next Steps**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 From April 2013 the government is abolishing the Community Care Grants and the Crisis Loans for Living Expenses elements from the national discretionary Social Fund. It considered them to be expensive, ineffective and outdated. As a result Local Authorities will receive a settlement for 2013/14 and 2014/15 to create and support local welfare provision. This settlement is not ring fenced. Future funding will be subject to the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

1.2 The settlement for Leeds has been confirmed for 2013/14 and indicative figures have been supplied for 2014/15:

### **2013/14**

Scheme Funding	£2,886,082
Administration Funding	£609,851
Set Up Funding	£28,861

### **2014/15**

Scheme Funding	£2,886,082
Administration Funding	£558,994

From 2015 onwards the scheme is solely funded by Leeds City Council and will be reviewed yearly.

1.3 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) view is that the new local welfare provision should not be a replication or a new version of the discretionary Social Fund. It considers that it is for Local Authorities to deliver support to their community which best meets its needs through their local welfare services.

## **2.0 Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to specify how Leeds City Council will operate the Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWSS) and to outline the factors that will be considered when deciding if a LWSS payment can be awarded.

2.2 Although there is no intention in the long term to recreate the national discretionary Social Fund at a local level it is recognized that expectation will continue to remain in the community after the abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses. Therefore in Leeds we intend to provide support for basic household goods, clothing, curtains and certain travel costs and removal costs. It is also

intended to meet the need arising from a crisis or disaster in the form of emergency provision. This will be operated by the Revenues and Benefits Service.

- 2.3 The scheme will seek to assist vulnerable people in meeting their needs for subsistence or financial support where they are unable to meet their immediate short term needs or where they require assistance to move into or maintain their independence within the community
- 2.4 However, the intention is also to start to develop local, community based and sustainable welfare schemes within Leeds. This will mean the need for financial support from the settlement for initiatives for advice capacity in order for vulnerable people in Leeds to obtain advice and support from the most appropriate services. These competing demands will shape the future development of the LWSS. Therefore the system that will operate from April 3<sup>rd</sup> will be subject to a thorough review following three months after its introduction.
- 2.5 The development of the LWSS will be aligned to the Council's key principles of tackling inequality and deprivation, promote social cohesion across all communities in Leeds including support for vulnerable older people and the safeguarding of children. This will be achieved by giving due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## **3.0 Eligibility**

### **Priority Groups (1)**

- 3.1 The Local Welfare Support Scheme is to help the most vulnerable people in Leeds. People who are perceived to be vulnerable include the following:
  - Families or vulnerable people under exceptional pressure
  - Homeless people or rough sleepers
  - Vulnerable older people
  - People fleeing domestic violence
  - Young people leaving care or living independently
  - People moving out of institutional or residential care into the community
  - Ex- offenders leaving prison or detention centres
  - People with disabilities

This list is not exhaustive and provision is subject to the availability of funding.

'Exceptional' means something greater than the normal range of pressures experienced by most people.

## **Priority Groups (2)**

3.2 There will be some supported applications which will automatically be accepted as a priority. These cases of vulnerable people will be deemed to have the highest priority to receive support from the Local Welfare Support Scheme.

**Housing Options:** Homeless people who have obtained a tenancy.

**Mental Health/Learning Disability Housing Support Workers:** People with mental health problems or a learning disability who are moving into independent living.

**Families First:** Families under exceptional pressure and where children are at risk.

**Leeds City Council Domestic Violence Team:** People fleeing domestic violence.

## **Income and Savings:**

3.3 Eligibility criteria for support under the Local Welfare Support Scheme for the provision of basic household goods and for emergency provision will be linked to a low income threshold. This will in the first instance be based on receipt of certain benefits. This may be waived if application for emergency provision is due to a disaster.

Where these benefits are not in payment an additional assessment may need to be made to take into account an individual's financial circumstances. This could be where the applicant is in employment or is homeless and not receiving any of the benefits listed below. The benefits are:

- Income support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income based Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Low income of less than £10,000

Receipt of these benefits is no guarantee of a successful application.

- 3.4 Any award for basic household and other household items will be reduced by any savings in excess of £750.
- 3.5 An application for emergency provision will not be accepted where there is access on application to other income or savings to meet the needs arising from the emergency.

## **Basic Household Goods**

- 3.6 Local Welfare Support Scheme is part of a menu of support that applies to the locality. It should not be seen as the sole means of meeting basic needs and people are expected to apply to other agencies such as Jobcentre Plus or charities for support. Therefore help from the Local Welfare Support Scheme will be limited.

Basic household goods are limited to:

- Cooker
- Fridge
- Washing Machine
- Bed
- Bedding
- Flooring
- Clothing on the grounds of the effects of disability
- Removal costs where it is linked to the Homelessness Prevention Fund and approved by the Homeless Support Team/Housing Options
- Travels costs on the grounds that it is linked to avoiding domestic violence or in the welfare of children
- Curtains in cases of a move due to domestic violence and in certain mental health cases.

The provision itself will subject to the availability of funding. The applicant may have to prioritize between items.

## **Emergency Provision**

- 3.7 Customers needing assistance with Emergency Provision:  
These include people who:
  - Have no essential food to sustain basic living
  - Need essential goods associated with infants/children
  - Have suffered a major upheaval or disaster

3.8 People are expected to seek support from families and friends before they apply for help with emergency provision. Qualification for Emergency Provision will be dependent on the priority of the application.

3.9 Emergency provision from the Local Welfare Support Scheme may include:

- Food
- Baby provisions
- Items resulting from loss due to a disaster

It is expected that applicants will receive only one award from the Local Welfare Support Scheme. The Scheme would not be sustainable as a repeated or regular supplement to personal incomes.

## **4.0 Applications and Assessments**

4.1 To be eligible to apply for an award under LWSS the applicant needs to be:

- A resident of Leeds.
- At least aged 16.
- Not be a person subject to immigration control who has no recourse to public funds.

4.2 An application for an award under LWSS should be made on line or by telephone. A supported application would be encouraged in order to shorten processing times and enable applicant to receive additional relevant advice. Applicants are therefore encouraged to use existing sources of support within the council and within the community. These include;

- Adult Social Care and Childrens Services
- Families First
- Domestic Violence Team
- Probation Service
- Housing Options
- Housing Leeds and HA Housing Officers
- Advice Leeds agencies

4.3 Calls will be taken by Customer Services staff on a designated local telephone number. Applications will be screened in order to reject inappropriate applications.

4.4 The final assessments and decision-making will be undertaken by Leeds Revenues and Benefit Service. Applications for emergency provision will

be prioritized with service standards in place for quick and accurate decision making, payment of awards and review processes

## **5.0 Method of Payment**

5.1 The Local Welfare Support Scheme will not make payments in cash. Awards may be made by the following methods:

- Standard food parcel/store card for food
- Payments to suppliers of suitable goods or services
- Pre-payment cards for goods
- Goods from local suppliers

5.2 The value of awards for basic household goods will be subject to a maximum. However, higher values may apply for supported applications aimed at tackling or preventing homelessness. Award values will be at the discretion of the Council but will be based on standard prices for items required to include the cost of delivery and installation.

5.3 Subject to availability of funding not all needs may be met and the applicant may need to prioritize the expenditure. As the scheme will be expected to be self-financing regular reviews will monitor the pattern of spending and put a limit on spending where necessary.

## **6.0 Reviews**

6.1 An applicant can ask for the decision to be looked at again if there has been:

- A factual error in the decision making
- An omission or oversight in the decision making
- New evidence since the application which was not put forward at the time.

6.2 The review request will need to be sent/logged within 14 working days of the date of decision.

6.3 The review process will involve a re-assessment by a more senior officer than the original decision maker. Their decision will be final.

6.4 If the applicant remains dissatisfied they will retain the right to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or seek a Judicial Review.

## **7.0 Monitoring**

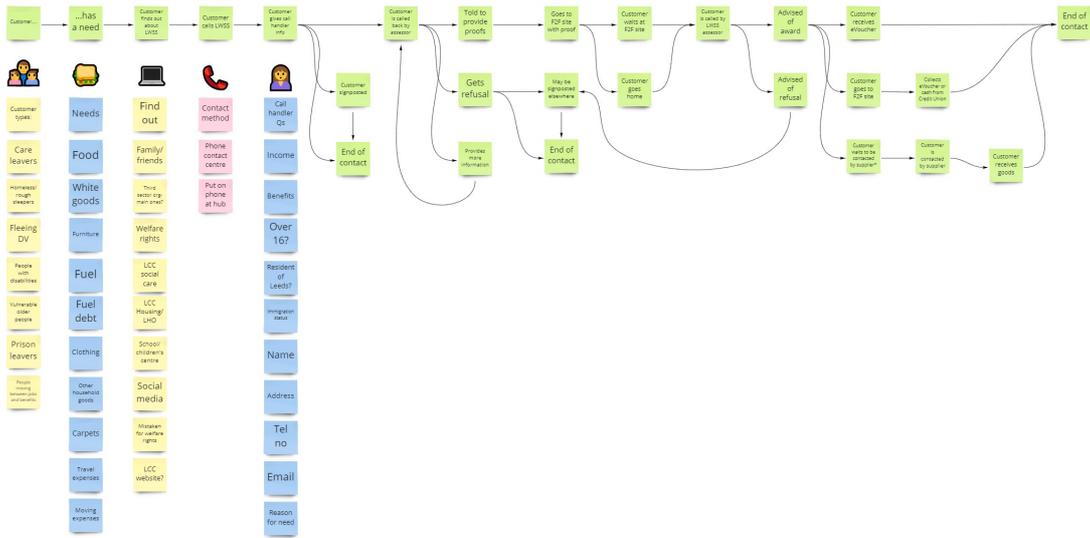
7.1 The scheme will be closely monitored and will be subject to monthly and quarterly reporting providing data and information on the;

- Number of applications and reasons
- Number successful/unsuccessful
- Value of awards
- Speed of awards and appeals
- Remaining funding and implications for scheme

7.2 The Revenues and Benefit Service will also monitor a number of cases where a request has been refused to ensure decisions are being made fairly and consistently. This is in line with our general equality duties in the exercise of our functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

7.3 Where funding is allocated to support community initiatives aimed at tackling financial exclusion, debt, fuel poverty and food poverty, additional reports will be provided in order to detail the effectiveness of the initiatives.

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## Appendix 5

**Food** – Leeds has a history of strong partnership working via the Leeds Food Aid Network and has a significant number of organisations that can offer food, including hot meals, food parcels and food vouchers, across the city. These range from being Trussell Trust Food Banks with specific referral processes in place to religious buildings and voluntary organisations where no referral is needed. During the COVID 19 pandemic, these food provisions became better connected and shared resources through the Leeds Food Aid Network. There is an opportunity to build on these existing links to better link in with the LWSS offer.

**Advice** –Citizens Advice Leeds are a key partner within the city and currently hold our Advice Contract. They can provide advice on benefits, debt/money management, rent arrears, energy and fuel, homelessness, housing repairs, immigration and much more.

In addition to Citizens Advice Leeds a number of other organisations are able to provide budgeting and benefits advice including: Better Leeds Communities, Ebor Gardens Advice Centre and Money Buddies, St Vincent's Support Centre, Stepchange, Learning Partnerships and Scope.

The Leeds Advice Network brings many of these organisations together and some are part-funded by Leeds City Council, however, are not all linked into the LWSS.

**Fuel/energy** – Green Doctor are regularly signposted to by assessors and can provide advice around reducing utility bills, resolving issues with suppliers, arranging repairs of broken appliances, improving energy efficiency and much more. Fuel Bank Foundation have more recently offered support to food bank users in Leeds (and nationally) and provide support with managing fuel debt, arranging payment breaks and providing vouchers for heating for vulnerable customers. There are opportunities to maximise resources by identifying and filling of gaps in existing provision to reduce duplication with other agencies.

**Housing/Homelessness** – Whether an individual has become homeless, is struggling in their current accommodation or is a care leaver, support is available through Leeds Housing Options and several third sector organisations who can offer emergency accommodation, support with identifying a more long-term solution including Council properties and support with wider needs. Shelter, St George's Crypt, LATCH, GIPSIL, Engage Leeds are key agencies providing support with a range of housing-related needs across the city, including to young people.

**White and brown goods** – The Leeds Reuse Network consists of a number of charities that collect, distribute and/or sell furniture, household appliances and items to vulnerable individuals. The network is formed of Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store, Revive Leeds, SLATE, Emmaus Leeds, St Vincent de Pauls and others. LWSS already has linked to some of these organisations

in order to purchase good quality, second-hand white and brown goods for customers.

Aside from immediate financial needs, there would be great benefit to signposting to relevant health, wellbeing and safety related support agencies in order to have a more holistic approach to supporting customers in need that present to the LWSS. Customers experiencing challenges relating to their mental health, domestic violence, addiction or experience of a bereavement can be shared as part of referrals into the scheme and signposting to essential support could benefit the customer and give them the greater wraparound support that they require, without having to present to each agency individually.

## Core City Local Welfare Support Schemes

LA	Applicat ion Process	Online Form Provider	Webpage	Eligibility	Welfare Provision		
					Furniture	Fuel Support	Crisis Support
Manchester	Online	Capita	<a href="#">Help with debt, bills and borrowing   Manchester City Council</a>	Must have no savings & be in receipt of eligible benefit	Basic furniture/ goods.	Successful applicants receive a utilities voucher for between £30 & £49 which can be used at PayPoint terminals. Can only apply once and H/H must have a child under 5, someone with disability/health needs, someone over pension age or vulnerable. Can only apply once in 12 mths.	Can apply for a cash grant between £30 & £60. Can only apply once in 12 months. Must not be experiencing hardship following a decision by DWP. Also temporarily offering support to Carers – the carer does not need to meet the eligibility criteria. Successful applicants are emailed a voucher which they can use at a PayPoint terminal
Birmingham	Online	In-house	<a href="#">Help in a short-term crisis   Help in a short-term crisis   Birmingham City Council</a>	Must have recourse to public funds Must be in receipt of, eligible benefits or If not in receipt of any of the benefits be able to demonstrate financial hardship	Beds, table top cookers and table top fridges.	An applicant must be able to show they have already asked their energy supplier for help. If an award is made, a Pre-Payment card is made available to collect.	A Crisis Grant made by pre-paid card. No minimum payment for Crisis Grants. Each case assessed on individual circumstances. Period of awards will also be considered depending on applicant's circumstances. No restriction on the number of applications that can be made in a 12 month period.
Bristol	Online & by phone	Northgate	<a href="#">Emergency payments - local crisis and prevention fund - bristol.gov.uk</a>	Must be experiencing a financial crisis and have no other means of support	Limited to 1 award in 24 mth period. Basic furniture/ white goods.	No specific mention of fuel awards.	One off supermarket vouchers for food, clothing/other essentials. Can apply for 2 payments within 12 months. May consider further applications in exceptional circs. No minimum amount. Repeat applicants will be referred to other services. Applications for help with School Uniforms also considered and awards made by Tesco voucher.

Liverpool	Free Phone-number	N/A	<a href="#">Liverpool Citizens Support Scheme - Liverpool City Council</a>	Unemployed, or on a low income or in receipt of eligible benefits Normally limited to 2 awards in 12 months but exceptions made.	Furniture resource centre/ used goods	Paper Energy vouchers which can be cashed at PayPoint outlets. No mention of values.	Voucher issued by email or text. Also collectable at OSS. No mention of values.
Sheffield	Online and Phone	IEG4	<a href="#">Local Assistance Scheme (sheffield.gov.uk)</a>	Anyone with insufficient income to meet their needs and no alternative	White goods/seating/Carpets/Curtains/bedding issued in disaster situations	Issued as cash payment for pre-payment meters No values mentioned	Limited to 2 awards in 12-month period. Can only apply if insufficient income and help needed because of an emergency/disaster and health and safety of applicant or family member at risk. Vouchers for food., housekeeping and clothing. No values mentioned.
Newcastle	Online	IEG4	<a href="#">Crisis Support   Newcastle City Council</a>	For people who have suffered a disaster/crisis/exceptional hardship including no access to food/clothing/heating and a risk to health & safety which includes no access to food/clothing/fuel/emergency travel Must have insufficient income and in receipt of an eligible benefit	No mention of furniture support	Pre-paid utility top up vouchers	Tesco food/clothing cards or vouchers Shopping packages ordered online and delivered to an applicant Travel costs through the council's travel office Clothing through voucher/gift card scheme. Payments may be made to bank accounts or by pre-paid cash vouchers in extreme circumstances.
S'hampton			<a href="#">Support in a crisis (southampton.gov.uk)</a>	Southampton do not appear to offer any Local Welfare Support provision			

Coventry	Online	In-house	<a href="#">COVID local grant scheme</a> <a href="#">  COVID local grant scheme</a> <a href="#">  Coventry City Council</a>	Re-branded as a Covid support scheme One hh member must have recourse to public funds, Exceptions to this rule are where there are community care needs, serious health problems and/or risk to a child's wellbeing.	Support for essential items may be via a grant-funded appliance award	Support for gas, electricity, oil, water/sewerage will be made by either a Paypoint Energy top-up or Paypoint voucher	Food awards will be made by food parcel or a food voucher.  The award made to residents will be based on need. No further detail re eligibility criteria.

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## Work Schedule

Date: 25 November 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

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

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### **What is this report about?**

**Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

- 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.
- The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also 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'.
- Reflecting on the information in this report and also information presented as part of other agenda items at today's meeting, Members are requested to consider and discuss the Board's work schedule for this municipal year.

### **Recommendations**

- a) Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.
- b) Members are asked to formally ratify the working group recommendation to endorse the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy subject to consideration being given to the comments from members at the working group

### **Why is the proposal being put forward?**

1. A draft work schedule for the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the work schedule are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, identified Budget and Policy Framework items and recommendation tracking.

2. The Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 20 October 2021 are also 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 consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.
3. The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) held a working group on 19 October as part of an ongoing consultation on the draft Parks and Greenspaces Strategy. Members were updated on changes that had been made to the draft in light of earlier comments from the Scrutiny Board in the initial stages of consultation, as well as feedback received during a subsequent public consultation.
4. A summary of the meeting is attached at **Appendix 3** for information. Members are asked to formally ratify the recommendation to endorse the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy subject to consideration being given to the comments from members at the working group.

Areas of work carried forward from the former Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board

5. At its final meeting of 2020/21 the former Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board consider a number of ongoing priorities that members recommended the successor board continue to scrutinise. These are reflected in the work programme at Appendix 1.

**What impact will this proposal have?**

<b>Wards affected: All</b>		
Have ward members been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

6. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.
7. The draft work schedule is reflective of the views of the former Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

8. In order to enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to establish an early dialogue with the Directors and Executive Board Members holding the relevant portfolios. The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

**What are the resource implications?**

9. 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.
10. 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.

11. 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.

### **What are the legal implications?**

12. This report has no specific legal implications.

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

13. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

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

### **Appendices**

15. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.

16. Appendix 2 – Draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 20 October 2021.

17. Appendix 3 – Parks and Greenspaces Strategy Working Group Summary

### **Background papers**

18. None.

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## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2021/22 Municipal Year

June	July	August
<b>Agenda for Thursday 17 June 10.30am</b>	<b>Agenda for Thursday 15 July 10.30am</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.</b>
<p><b>*CONSULTATIVE MEETING*</b></p> <p>Performance Update</p> <p>Parking Strategy and Management update [PM]</p> <p>LASBT Review: update following the introduction of changes to the service in early 2020. [PSR]</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>Sources of Work Report</p>	<p><b>*CONSULTATIVE MEETING*</b></p> <p>Safer Leeds: including Community Safety &amp; Antisocial Behaviour Strategy Updates</p> <p>Domestic Violence – update including impact of CV19 and Domestic Abuse Bill.</p> <p>Co-optees report [<i>roll f/w for June 22</i>]</p>	
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Additional Notes</b>		

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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 2021/22 Municipal Year

September	October	November
<b>Agenda for Thursday 23 September 10.30am</b>	<b>Agenda for Thursday 21 October 10.30am</b>	<b>Agenda for Thursday 25 November 9.45am</b>
Waste Strategy – ToR and supporting statement.	Reducing carbon emissions across the Council's estate	Locality Working & Priority Neighbourhoods [PM]
Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy	Housing Activity Update [PM]	Local Welfare Support Scheme Proposals
Safer Leeds Strategy – post consultation (in line with BPF PR)	Deputy Mayor (Crime & Policing): crime & policing priorities (post-devolution update)	Housing Strategy Review
	Safer Leeds: Final Version for note	Fireworks: incl. update on 2021 experience
	Fireworks response: <i>to note for discussion in November</i>	Referral: tree maintenance (verbal response from officers)
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
	19/10/21: draft Parks and Green Space Strategy: consultation	3/11/21 Waste Inquiry Working group 1
<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 2021/22 Municipal Year

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December	January	February
<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.</b>	<b>Agenda for Thursday 20 January 10.30am</b>	<b>Agenda for Thursday 24 February 10.30am</b>
	<p>Reducing Poverty and improving Financial Inclusion – update report, including impact of Universal Credit. (PSR)</p> <p>Financial Health Monitoring and Initial Budget Proposals [PDS]</p> <p>Performance monitoring</p> <p><i>TBC – Referral follow up (Tree Maintenance) depending on the outcome of November’s discussion.</i></p>	<p>Standards in the Private Rented Sector – update [to include Selective Licensing]</p> <p>Climate emergency:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CEAC update on progress and activity</li> <li>▪ Annual Climate Emergency EB report</li> </ul> </p> <p>LeedsWatch: Update on the implementation of new model</p> <p>Ensuring the future resilience of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector Update (following 2020/21 volunteer hub)</p>
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<p>10/12/21 – NR Tree Clearance 1-3pm [TBC]</p> <p>17/12/21 – Budget Working Group 10am-12pm</p>	Waste working group 2 - TBC	7/2/22 - Housing Strategy Review
<b>Site Visits</b>		

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 2021/22 Municipal Year

March	Items for follow up
<b>Agenda Thursday 31 March 10.30am</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Fuel Poverty Update	Universal Credit Update: Service user experience as per discussions in January 2020 [deferred due to CV19] <i>Working Group - TBC</i>
Energy Efficiency in Council Housing Stock	Engagement with Tenant Scrutiny Board re: Housing Advisory Panels [March?]
Carbon reduction in the Private Rented Sector [PM]	<b>2022/23</b>
Final inquiry report: Future of Waste Services (TBC)	Migration (as per ExB discussion Oct21) Safer Leeds: Serious Violence Safer Leeds: Domestic Violence Selective Licensing
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>	Police: PCSO resources
<b>Site Visits</b>	

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, A Carter, D Coupar,  
S Golton, M Harland, H Hayden, J Pryor,  
M Rafique and F Venner

**60 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, 'Housing Estate Redevelopment at Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive, Oulton', referred to in Minute No. 67 be designated as being exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 and considered in private. This is on the grounds that this appendix contains information relating to the identity and business affairs of a third party to the Council which does not wish to be publicly identified at this stage, but which is relevant to the understanding of the Board. Releasing the identity of this third party may prejudice their commercial interests and as such, withholding the information is considered to outweigh the public interest benefit of its release given that there is a risk that if the details of the Housing Association are made public at this stage, they may withdraw their interest.

**61 Late Items**

There were no late items of business considered by the Board.

**62 Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

**63 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## **ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS**

### **64 Update on Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds**

Further to Minute No. 26, 23 June 2021, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report which provided a further update on the 'Thriving: The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds' and the work which continued to be undertaken as part of the strategy, including actions in response to issues arising from the pandemic. Specifically, the report provided an update on each of the strategy's workstreams in terms of recent activities, outcomes and next steps.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member provided an update regarding the current position with regard to child poverty in Leeds, together with further details on actions being undertaken as part of each of the workstreams within the strategy.

Responding to a question regarding the application of the Household Support Grant, the Board was advised that a proportion of the funding would be used for the provision of free school meals during holiday periods, which would apply across the city. Parallel to that, it was noted that there was a range of criteria which would need to be adhered to when allocating the funding in other areas. It was noted that such criteria was being worked through and that further details would be provided to Members in the near future.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was provided with further information on the actions being taken to mitigate against the impact of child poverty linked with housing provision and the quality of accommodation.

In discussing the report and in welcoming the data within it, a suggestion was made that in future the update report further reflected upon and evaluated the services being provided in this area to demonstrate the impact being made. Also, in highlighting the crucial role played by Children's Centres across Leeds, it was undertaken that future reports would reference the work of the Children's Centres moving forward.

Members discussed the definition of poverty, as detailed within the report.

Reference was made to the recent Children's Services Ofsted Inspection which had been undertaken, with a brief update being provided on the actions being taken in response to the inspection's recommendations.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the strategic framework in place to mitigate against the impact of child poverty, together with the work being undertaken by the Council and other partners in the key areas of activity, as detailed within the submitted report, be endorsed;
- (b) That the need to promote the work of the 'Thriving' strategy across the city and in particular in each respective Member's portfolio in order to highlight the impact of poverty on children and their families, be acknowledged;

- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for such matters is the Head of Workforce Development and Change.

## **COMMUNITIES**

### **65 Annual Update on Migration Activity in Leeds**

Further to Minute No. 58, 21 October 2020, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery of migration activity in Leeds and which provided information on key migration population trends and the responses to national policy changes, together with details of the activities undertaken across the Council to support new and emerging communities.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted her desire for the issue of migration to once again be added to the relevant Scrutiny Board work programme next year, should the Scrutiny Board and its Chair be agreeable. The Executive Member thanked the migration programme team for their continued work in this area, and also highlighted a forthcoming and related training session being delivered for Elected Members.

Responding to a specific enquiry, the Board was provided with details of the actions being taken with Children and Families to identify local school places for those recent Afghan migrants of school age who were residing in Leeds.

Reference was made to the provision of data relating to trends of outward migration from Leeds and it was undertaken that such information would be provided to the Member in question.

Responding to an enquiry regarding the provision of appropriate and permanent accommodation for Afghan migrants coming into Leeds, the Board received an update on the current position and the liaison which continued with the Home Office and Migration Yorkshire to provide such accommodation.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, together with the appended update overview, be noted; and that the approach adopted within the Council's strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach towards migration for Leeds, as detailed, be endorsed;
- (b) That it be noted that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is responsible for leading this work through the Council's Stronger Communities Programme;
- (c) That it be noted that the Chief Officer for Safer, Stronger Communities is responsible for leading the work of the Leeds Strategic Migration Board which oversees the delivery of the strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach towards migration in Leeds, together with

the work of the Council's Migration team which provides strategic and operational direction for the city;

- (d) That agreement be given for the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment to write to the Home Office requesting the establishment of improved communication structures between Government and the Local Authority in order to ensure that the effectiveness of the support provided is maximised and that Leeds' experience and expertise is fully utilised;
- (e) That approval be given for a further annual report on migration activity in Leeds to be submitted to the Board at the appropriate time.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE**

### **66 Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy and Action Plan**

Further to Minute No. 104, 16 December 2020, the Director of City Development submitted a report presenting the 'Connecting Leeds' Transport Strategy, Executive Summary and associated Action Plan for 2021-24 which set out the vision for Leeds' transport provision and infrastructure during that period. Specifically, the report sought the Board's approval for the adoption and publication of those documents following the extensive consultation and engagement exercise which had been undertaken during 2021.

In considering the report, Members discussed a range of issues, including:-

- The associated consultation process which had been undertaken, the range of actions within that and the level of response received;
- The ambitious nature of the strategy and its deliverability in the timeframes presented;
- The range of net zero carbon emission targets nationally, regionally and for Leeds, together with ongoing national transportation discussions, and the delivery of the strategy alongside such matters;
- The timing of the strategy and the need for action to be taken at the earliest opportunity;
- The need to ensure that the strategy reflected people's adapted ways of living and working as a result of the pandemic, and the importance for the strategy to understand and provide for the bespoke needs of each community across the city. Also, Members received further information on the intention for the Council to continue to engage with communities on such matters;
- Members paid tribute to the work of the Highways and Transportation services for the work they continued to undertake in challenging circumstances. Members also discussed the capacity of the relevant services within the Council to deliver the aims of the strategy and the actions being taken where possible to increase such capacity;
- The importance for all partners, businesses and members of the community to fully engage with the aims of the strategy, in order to ensure that the required 'step change' was made;
- The Board discussed the impact of road works, with further detail being provided on the logistical considerations given to such works, the range

of reasons why they were required, often in restricted timeframes, and the approach taken to co-ordinate such works and minimise impact wherever possible.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the adoption and publication of the 'Connecting Leeds' Transport Strategy and first Action Plan 2021-24, as appended to the submitted report, be agreed;
- (b) That an annual progress report on the Strategy and Action Plan be submitted to the Board at the appropriate time;
- (c) That agreement be given for the Director of City Development alongside the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) to lead on implementing the delivery of the 'Connecting Leeds' Transport Strategy and Action Plan;
- (d) That it be noted that the future Action Plans beyond 2024 will require greater levels of funding to achieve the targets as set out within the 'Connecting Leeds' Transport Strategy.

**67 Housing Estate Redevelopment at Sugar Hill Close & Wordsworth Drive, Oulton**

Further to Minute No. 36 of the meeting of full Council held on 14 September 2021, the Director of City Development and the Director of Communities, Environment and Housing submitted a joint report providing information on how the Council was responding to the issues arising from the proposed redevelopment of the privately owned housing estate at Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive, Oulton.

In considering the report, and in response to comments and concerns raised, the Board discussed / received further details on the following:-

- the actions taken to date, and which continued to be taken to support those on Assured Shorthold Tenancies and in receipt of 'no fault' evictions, and in the longer term, the proposals for further action as detailed within the submitted report, which aimed to secure new build affordable housing provision on the site;
- the length of time in which the matter had been ongoing;
- the role of the Council and that of the site owner / landlord;
- the number of 'no fault' evictions issued across the city in recent years.

In noting that a recommendation within the report proposed the submission of a further report to the Board in due course, responding to a Member's enquiry, it was undertaken that the future report would provide further details on the actions being taken to support affected residents.

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 Council's offer of support from Housing Leeds to tenants of the Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive estate to support them in securing alternative housing where they may be at risk of homelessness following no-fault evictions, be noted and supported;
- (b) That the Council's further engagement with the Housing Association as identified in exempt Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be supported, with a view to maximising the affordable housing that could be delivered at Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive through the application of pooled commuted sums or other resources as may be identified and agreed by the Directors in consultation with the Executive Member for 'Infrastructure and Climate' and the Executive Member for 'Resources';
- (c) That the options considered as detailed within the submitted report, be noted; and that the potential for the Council to directly acquire homes in the completed development as outlined in paragraph 47.3 of the submitted report and/or use commuted sums to secure the delivery of additional affordable housing alongside a local lettings policy for the benefit of tenants rehoused from the estate, as outlined in paragraphs 48.1 - 48.4, be supported;
- (d) That an update on the progress made in taking forward the preferred approach, as outlined in the submitted report, be provided, with a further report requiring any subsequent decisions on the use of resources to support the detailed proposals, be brought to Executive Board in due course, which also provides further details of the actions being taken to support affected residents.

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

**LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

**68 Leeds 2030: Shaping Our Best City Ambition**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which sought the Board's agreement in principle to the replacement of the Best Council Plan with a more externally facing and partnership focused City Ambition from February 2022. The report also provided the context for such proposals and set out the required approval pathway for that change.

In presenting the proposals within the report, the Leader highlighted how the Best City Ambition would aim to work more collaboratively with partner organisations across Leeds and build upon the positive learning and stronger relationships which had been developed in response to the pandemic.

The Board noted the comments made during the discussion, which included suggestions regarding the need for communities of Leeds, partner organisations and Members to be involved in the formation and delivery of the aims of the Best City Ambition, and that future reports on the Ambition consider how it would deliver those stronger relationships between the Council and its partners.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the principle of replacing the Best Council Plan with a City Ambition, be endorsed;
- (b) That it be noted that General Purposes Committee (GPC) will receive a report which recommends that GPC endorses the necessary amendments to the Budget and Policy Framework, and refers such matters to Full Council for approval;
- (c) That agreement be given for Executive Board to receive a report in December 2021 which presents initial proposals and a draft City Ambition.

**RESOURCES**

**69 Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Licensing Policy**

Further to Minute No. 55, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report on the three-yearly review of the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy. The report presented the proposed final policy for consideration, included the outcomes from the associated consultation exercises undertaken and recommended that the Policy be referred to Full Council for consideration and adoption.

Responding to a Member's specific enquiry about a licensed organisation's failure to effectively implement its anti-money laundering and safer gambling policies, and the Council, as the Licensing Authority not being informed of such matters, the Board was assured that liaison was taking place with the Gambling Commission and the organisation involved to ensure that an appropriate protocol was in place moving forward. In addition, responding to a request, it was undertaken that Members of the Licensing Committee would be briefed on such matters, and that the Executive Board Member in question would also be offered a separate briefing.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, together with the final draft of the Statement of Licensing Policy, as appended, which includes the outcomes from the statutory consultation exercise and any comments/recommendations from Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities), be noted;

- (b) That the final draft of the Statement of Licensing Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be referred to Full Council with a recommendation for its adoption.

(The matters referred to within this minute, given that they were decisions being made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, were not eligible for Call In, as Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2 states that the power to Call In decisions does not extend to those decisions being made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules)

**70 Financial Health Monitoring 2021/22 - August (Month 5)**

The Chief Officer, Financial Services, submitted a report which presented an update on the financial health of the Authority in respect of both the General Fund revenue budget and the Housing Revenue Account as at month 5 of the 2021/22 financial year.

Members discussed the projected overspend in respect of Waste Management services, as detailed within the report, with a specific request for a report to be submitted to a future Board meeting which addressed related financial and operational matters. In response, the request was noted and it was undertaken that information on such matters would be brought forward.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority, as at the end of Month 5 (August) of the 2021/22 financial year, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted, together with the projected impact of COVID-19 on that position;
- (b) That for 2021/22, it be noted that the Authority is forecasting an overspend of £1.087m, as at the end of August 2021;
- (c) That it be noted that the position as detailed within the submitted report does not reflect the potential effects of any further local or national lockdown arrangements on these financial projections, or any potential additional costs arising from the current 2021/22 pay negotiations.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:**

FRIDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2021

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:**

5.00 P.M., FRIDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

## Working Group Parks & Green Spaces Strategy: Summary Note

### Attendees:

<b>Committee Members In Attendance</b>	
Cllr Anderson	Cllr Brooks
Cllr Blackburn	Cllr Collins
Cllr Gabriel	Cllr Howley
Cllr Ritchie	Cllr Smith
<b>Executive Member</b>	
Cllr Arif	
<b>Officers</b>	
Emma Trickett (Senior Project Manager)	Sean Flesher (CO, Parks & Countryside)
Rebecca Atherton (Principal Scrutiny Advisor)	

Apologies: Cllrs Dobson, Finnigan, Midgley, Ragan, Charlwood, Akhtar, Grahame

### Notes:

1. Cllr Anderson set out an introduction to the working group, noting that the discussions followed on from the Board's earlier consultation in September 2019.
2. Sean Flesher and Emma Trickett introduced the updated Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, outlining the methodology used to produce the strategy, an overview of the consultation process (with Leeds residents and in conjunction with Leeds University) and developments in the national context for the strategy.
3. Emma went on to highlight changes that had been made to the draft strategy in light of feedback from the scrutiny board and other stakeholders engaged in the consultation process.
4. Emma set out ways in which scrutiny's comments had been incorporated into the strategy – for example, ensuring consistency of format with other Council strategies and providing opportunities for members of the public to engage in the consultation outside the main digital format.
5. Emma set out the aim of the strategy and the actions that will be taken over the next 10 years to achieve that vision. She reiterated the distinction between planning for new green spaces via the Core Strategy and the proposed vision for maintaining parks and green spaces.
6. Emma updated members on the findings of the public consultation, the conclusions of research from the University of Leeds in 2018 about how people use parks and green spaces and national research into public use of green spaces, including changes in attitudes following the pandemic.
7. Attendees reflected on the feedback from their 2019 working group, including a request from members that the draft strategy should place stronger emphasis on the importance of these spaces in tackling climate change. Emma set out how these comments had help inform changes to the original document.

8. Emma provided an overview of how the proposed strategy is consistent with other Council strategies including the Best Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan. Members were provided with an update of the plans that will be delivered or updated as a result of the implementation of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy - e.g. Leeds Playing Pitches Strategy.
9. An overview of the consultation process was provided. Emma noted the request from Scrutiny in 2019 that the consultation should enable participation from wide range of people including those who may not be digitally engaged. Emma confirmed that alongside the digital promotion of the consultation the team carried out a series of workshops and promoted the consultation onsite at attractions, parks and cafes. It was noted that an online questionnaire specifically aimed at children specifically was also conducted.
10. Members were given an example of how the vision will be presented including the use of a 'plan on a page' to be consistent with other strategies, which is reflective of comments from scrutiny in 2019.
11. Emma outlined the 8 priorities that are included in the strategy – this includes a 'child friendly' priority which was not included when the Board looked at the original draft in 2019.
12. In 2019 members asked the green flag award scheme continued and Emma confirmed that would be case along with Leeds Quality Park scheme.
13. In 2019 members asked that the value of volunteers was highlighted in terms of the time and income they bring in – that is now referred to in the section of the report looking at working with communities.
14. In 2019 members asked that the strategy referred explicitly to the budget constraints the services is working within – this is referred to in the financial sustainability section of the strategy.
15. Emma explained that a 'child friendly' priority was added as a result of feedback from the public consultation about health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in parks and green spaces, and the way in which the strategy can support the Leeds Commitment to Children's Play.
16. Attendees considered the Key Performance Indicators included in the strategy, which have been built into the document since the Board reviewed the original draft in 2019.
17. Members noted the need to ensure the final strategy reflects the updated Vision being captured in the City Ambition proposals.
18. It was suggested that some of the images in the final strategy document should reflect the change in direction for the management of some green spaces – for example, including pictures of wild flower meadows rather than formal flower beds.
19. Accessible play for children with disabilities was highlighted as a priority in the context of the contribution of the strategy to Leeds' Commitment to Children's Play.

20. Attendees discussed the need for a site management plan so that members can communicate with residents about the change in approach – i.e. to highlight that reduced mowing is an environmental choice rather than simply a reduction in service.
21. Sean noted that the ‘plan on a page’ is a high-level aspiration over a ten-year period but that individual plans are in place already for some specific sites and further plans would be developed.
22. Sean further explained that the service is looking to take advantage of ‘biodiversity net gain’ – this would involve carrying out an audit of the biodiversity of parks and green spaces and setting out a plan as to how to improve the biodiversity of those sites by a minimum of 25%. This would enable access to additional funding.
23. Attendees were updated about plans to improve communication around natural habitat creation and wildflower meadows in what were previously regularly cut areas – e.g. improving public messaging about relaxed mowing to encourage pollinators, developing signage and linking with local businesses to promote biodiversity.
24. Members asked for clarification about the inclusion of information about site maintenance so that members can use this to inform discussions with concerned residents. Particular concern was expressed about maintenance of playgrounds and public perceptions of ‘disrepair’.
25. Members asked for clarification around staffing resources and potential to link to a volunteer recruitment strategy, noting the need to target volunteers in particular areas. It was noted that the financial sustainability section of the vision refers to links with communities and funding that can be accessed for capital projects often linked to planning (CIL, S106, biodiversity net gain). However, Sean set out the significant challenges around revenue funding required to pay gardeners and fund maintenance.
26. The service is very successful for engaging volunteers – 2,000 volunteers equivalent to 109 FTEs are currently engaging with the service – and this is referenced in the strategy. Volunteers usually like to be involved in conservation or environmental work, and less so in regular maintenance. Volunteers help greatly but the city needs a baseline of permanent staff to maintain general standards in parks and green spaces.
27. The challenge of local authority funding was noted. The service is looking to promote civic enterprise to generate further revenue to fund its activities – currently the service brings in £27m in income which means the service is performing well in comparison to authorities. Such income also allows investment in areas where there is very little planning gain.
28. Concern was expressed about the potential for relaxed mowing practices to lead to an increase in the rat populations. Officers confirmed that habitat creation would involve engaging experts to advise on such issues. The type of green space that is created will create different benefits and consequences that the service will manage appropriately.

29. The service looks after around 4,000 hectares of land, managing 1,500 hectares proactively (including formal gardens) and, 2,500 hectares reactively. Volunteers are particularly important in those areas of reactive maintenance - through conservation, beat ups, clean ups etc. Sean also highlighted the ways in which In Bloom groups complement this activity, often in urban areas like Beeston, thereby transforming community spaces. Middleton Park was cited as another good example of volunteer engagement through the Friends of Middleton Park.
30. Members sought clarity about third sector engagement, tree maintenance and access to S106 monies. It was suggested that there is currently £4.2m in S106 monies in various pots – could that money be used to employ a project co-ordinator to develop schemes with ward members, which could complement the strategy and also be income generating? This could also incorporate further in links with the In Bloom groups given their good level of volunteer engagement.
31. Members discussed references to planning gain in the strategy – with officers noting that this general reference was chosen to be more easily understood by the public than the technical terms such as Section 106 or CIL.
32. Members sought clarity about the employment and deployment of permanent gardeners, and the links between their work and community-based funding.
33. Concern was expressed about the number of vacancies for gardeners across Leeds and the need to have a baseline number of skilled gardeners regardless of the level of volunteers in the city.
34. Sean agreed that resources are challenging and noted that the pandemic led to a recruitment freeze. Staff were also redeployed to support the front-line pandemic response. The service is now in a recovery phase now and 9 apprentices have been taken on recently.
35. The service is looking to fill vacancies where budget allows but officers also reiterated that filling vacancies is proving challenging because of the current employment market. It was agreed this would be picked up in the Scrutiny Board’s budget discussions to understand the general direction in employment in this area as the year end approaches.
36. It was suggested that some additional KPIs could be included to demonstrate what is being achieved by the service – e.g. KPIs around relaxed mowing (which would help with communicating what we are trying to achieve), bees/butterflies, the success of tree planting.
37. Members proposed including a KPI about reducing weed killers that use glyphosates.
38. In response Sean confirmed there is a reference in the action plan to reducing the use of pesticides – although that doesn’t refer to glyphosates specifically.
39. Officers confirmed there are 29 KPIs behind the two high level references in the member presentation – linked to the further detail included in the Leeds Quality Parks standard. It was suggested that the 26 standards within LQP scheme should be listed in a table in the strategy document.

40. Members suggested that rather than a tree planting KPI the aim should relate to the success of the trees planted.
41. Sean informed members that tree planting is carried out on a density that allows an appropriate canopy to develop even where a proportion of trees don't take (and under normal tree planting circumstances officers would expect a certain percentage to be lost). All woodlands are managed to a UK Woodland Assurance quality. LCC also re-plants trees where there is less than 75% take up, alongside new planting activity. Most recent sites have required low amounts of beat-up, so officers are pleased with that result.
42. Disabled parking at parks was discussed including options around enforcement. The conflict between promoting accessibility and preventing anti-social behaviour through quad bikes access was explored. Officers confirmed they are working with various stakeholder groups to assess options around accessibility – the rights of way manager (Rob Buckingham) is leading on that work at the moment.
43. The new strategy also commits to a review of disabled parking to ensure there is enough at each park. Accessible entry points are important – where there is money for new developments the service uses the most up to date access furniture.
44. All cemeteries, crematoria and parks are aiming to score a 7 on access criteria.
45. Members discussed the ongoing maintenance of playgrounds and ensuring equipment is replaced. It was noted that some swings were removed following government advice during the pandemic.
46. The limited funding available for playground maintenance was discussed. Members were informed that playgrounds have a shelf life of around 10 years and a lot of playgrounds therefore now need a refurbishment, which will require capital investment, rather than a repair.
47. It was noted that where there is S106 funding available playgrounds tend to be well looked after but where such funding isn't available those areas currently have limited options for maintenance.
48. As Executive Member Cllr Arif has asked officers to look at how to ensure inner city areas can still access funding for playground maintenance where planning gain isn't available – officers confirmed the reference to disproportionate levels of funding in the strategy document is linked to this. Cllr Arif highlighted the importance of this in the context of wider concerns about health inequalities and she noted that many inner-city houses do not have access to a garden. Members discussed the use of 'commuted sums' to help fund the maintenance of new playgrounds over a ten-year period.
49. Members highlighted the need for litter picking to complement relaxed mowing strategies and the importance of this in ensuring the public are supportive of the new approach.
50. Members requested the results of the recent beat-up audits be circulated.

51. Sean outlined the 'next steps' for progressing the plan.

52. Members welcomed the strategy and highlighted the high quality of the work produced so far.

**Resolved**

Members agreed they are happy to endorse the plan subject to consideration being given to the comments provided at the working group and detailed above.