

**SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)**

**WEDNESDAY, 11TH JANUARY, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors P Alderson, M Foster,  
J Garvani, S Hamilton, W Kidger, S Lay,  
J Lennox, M Shahzad, N Sharpe,  
P Wadsworth and I Wilson

**55 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no appeals.

**56 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There was no exempt information on the Agenda.

**57 Late Items**

There were no late items.

**58 Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations.

**59 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor N Buckley.  
Councillor P Wadsworth was in attendance as substitute.

**60 Minutes - 8 December 2022**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**61 Best City Ambition**

The report of the Chief Officer, Strategy and Improvement provided the Board with an update on work to implement the Best City Ambition since its adoption by Full Council in February 2022.

Mike Eakins, Policy and Intelligence Manager presented the report.

Issues highlighted included the following:

- Looking at the broader strategy framework and how other strategies contribute to the Best City Ambition.
- Performance reporting in relation to the Best City Ambition.
- Details of the breakthrough priorities were outlined in an appendix to the report.
- Partnership arrangements across the City.
- The Peer Review which would be reported to Executive Board next month.

In response to Members comments and questions, discussion included the following:

- Twenty minute neighbourhoods – There was concern that this was not achievable in some of the outer areas and there was a stronger focus on the inner areas. There was also concern regarding the lack of employment opportunities in the outer areas with more of a focus being placed on the city centre. It was suggested that this could be a subject for the Board to consider in further detail.
- Selective Licensing – this was being picked up by the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities).
- Concern that the potential withdrawal of bus services would have an impact on twenty minute neighbourhoods. There would be further opportunity for consultation on issues relating to twenty minute neighbourhoods during the update of the Local Plan.
- The scope of the Local Area Plans was at a very early stage and it was hoped that when the Best City Ambition was refreshed there would be more information available.

**RESOLVED** – That the report and discussion be noted.

## **62 Performance Monitoring**

The report of the Directors of City Development and Children and Families provided a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Board and in line with the Best City Ambition.

The report covered quarter 2 2022/23 performance information (or latest available where quarter 2 information was not available).

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member
- Martin Farrington, Director, City Development
- Phil Evans, Chief Officer, Operations and Active Leeds
- Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer, Culture and Economy
- Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer, Transportation and Highways
- Tim Rollett, Intelligence & Policy Manager
- Emma Kamillo-Price, Senior Intelligence & Policy Manager

The following was highlighted:

- Planning applications – there had been a large number of outstanding applications following the pandemic and performance in determining applications had improved over the last 12 months to meet pre-pandemic levels.
- Unemployment – there had been a drop from 5.0% to 4.2%. The average rate across core cities was 4.8%.
- Business start-ups – there had been 774 new starts ups in July and August 2022 which was an increase on the same period in the previous year.
- Business Scale Ups – There had been an increase.
- Business Survival Rate – There had been a drop of 3.2%.
- The target for the growth in new homes had been achieved.
- Affordable housing – There had been an increase and it was planned to increase this further. Figures included the provision of the council build programme.
- Accessible and Adaptable standard homes – there was a positive increase.
- KSI – there had been an increase following the pandemic and the return to increased road traffic levels.
- City Centre Footfall – this was down 10.4% compared to 2019. Weekdays had seen a higher reduction.

In response to Members comments and questions, discussion included the following:

- Future reports would only show information that was relevant to this Board. Any queries outside the remit of the Board would be referred to the respective Board
- Employment data – ongoing work was being undertaken by specialists to look at employment and the economy. There was concern about people being employed on zero hour contracts and fake self-employment schemes. Data could be provided on a ward basis.
- New business start-ups – Trends showed that there was a thriving digital sector and financial and professional service sectors were doing well. Some areas had been impacted by the pandemic including hospitality, retail and leisure. Schemes and sources of support for businesses were highlighted. There was also a focus on green jobs and businesses which had a program of support available.
- Housing growth – how to address sustainability and meeting climate change expectations. There was expected to be changes in the National Planning Policy Framework which could change the weight to be given to planning on greenbelt land and the updated local plan would have opportunity to consult on sustainability and climate issues,
- Delivery of affordable housing – there was a backlog on the provision of affordable housing and the Board would receive an update on this.

- Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions – One of the outcomes of the inquiry was that this should be also treated as a public health issue. Further to concerns raised about some speed limits being too high, it was reported that Department for Transport guidance had to be complied with along with police advice. There was a good record of reducing speed limits across the city especially with 20 MPH zones. There were challenges with the Vision Zero target and there was more of a need to influence driver behaviour. There would be major work promoting road safety over the next few months. There was also concern that there had been an increase as enforcement had reduced. There would be an application to the Department of Transport for the use of enforcement cameras.
- City centre footfall – this had been affected due to issues such as flexible working. Leeds was faring above the national average. People needed services and facilities that couldn't be accessed in their localities to attract them to the city centre and reference was made to the wider range of cultural and retail opportunities available. The Council had strong partnerships with the retail and hospitality sectors.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the performance information contained in the Appendices to the report be noted and the issues which have been highlighted and Members consider if they wish to undertake further scrutiny work to support improvement over the coming year in any of these areas.
- (2) That Members are asked to note that this is the first report presenting performance linked to the Three Pillars contained in the Best City Ambition. A new dashboard is being developed which will form the basis of future reports and the first iteration can be seen at Appendix 2. It is intended to present a version more tailored to this Board in due course. However, we would advise the Board that resources are currently directed towards the Energy Savings Taskforce and progression of the performance dashboards may be impacted by this. The Board will be updated as appropriate.

### **63 Financial Health Monitoring and Initial Budget Proposals**

The reports of the Head of Democratic Services asked Members to consider the latest financial health monitoring report in the context of the Board's wider discussion about the initial budget proposals and to consider and comment upon the proposals so far as they pertain to the remit of the Board. The Board's comments and recommendations would be reported to the Executive Board in February 2023 in line with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Helen Hayden, Executive Member
- Martin Farrington, Director, City Development
- Phil Evans, Chief Officer Operations & Active Leeds
- Michal Everitt, Head of Finance

The following was highlighted:

- The Summary Position for Financial Year 2022/23 Month 7 (October).
- The City Development Directorate was forecasting a balanced budget. The Directorate was reliant on income which was also related to the health of the economy.
- Pressures included the impact of the pay award and reduced income in the city centre.
- It was expected that the overall financial picture would show a minor improvement during the next reporting period.
- Appendices to the Budget Proposals report included information on service reviews which showed savings for the next financial year.

In response to comments and questions, discussion included the following:

- Engagement had started with Trade Unions regarding service reviews. There was a saving target of £822k which equated to 15 to 20 full time equivalent posts. This was considered a modest number from a Directorate with over 1400 posts and was hoped to be met by considering the deletion of vacant posts or voluntary measures including flexible and early retirement. There would be a DDN at some stage in the future and this could be shared with the Board for comment.
- There were no proposals for a further Early Leavers Initiative scheme within the Directorate.
- Concern regarding the potential for further loss of staff and safeguarding the welfare of remaining staff.
- There were areas where staff recruitment and retention was more difficult.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the reports and discussion be noted.

#### **64 Work Schedule**

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED –** That the report and work schedule be noted.

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

Wednesday, 1 March 2023 at 10.30 a.m. Pre-meeting for all Board Members  
at 10.15 a.m.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023