



## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

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Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on  
Thursday, 22nd February, 2024 at 10.30 am

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

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### MEMBERSHIP

Cllr J Akhtar	- Little London and Woodhouse
Cllr B Anderson	- Adel and Wharfedale
Cllr S Golton (Chair)	- Rothwell
Cllr P Grahame	- Cross Gates and Whinmoor
Cllr A Hannan	- Headingley and Hyde Park
Cllr N Harrington	- Wetherby
Cllr A Khan	- Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
Cllr A Maloney	- Beeston and Holbeck
Cllr A McCluskey	- Farnley and Wortley
Cllr A Rontree	- Kirkstall
Cllr S Seary	- Pudsey
Cllr P Stables	- Wetherby
Cllr J Tudor	- Killingbeck and Seacroft
Vacancy	
Vacancy	

**To Note:** Please do not attend the meeting in person if you have symptoms of Covid-19 and please follow current public health advice to avoid passing the virus onto other people.

**Note to observers of the meeting:** We strive to ensure our public committee meetings are inclusive and accessible for all. If you are intending to observe a public meeting in-person, please advise us in advance by email ([FacilitiesManagement@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:FacilitiesManagement@leeds.gov.uk)) of any specific access requirements, or if you have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) that we need to take into account. Please state the name, date and start time of the committee meeting you will be observing and include your full name and contact details'.

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.

[Scrutiny Board \(Environment, Housing & Communities\) - 22 February 2024](#)

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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 - 25 JANUARY 2024**

5 - 14

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024.

7

**HOUSING ACTIVITY UPDATE**

15 - 28

To receive an update from the Chief Officer for Housing on key areas of Housing Leeds activity during 2023/24.

8

**ENSURING THE RESILIENCE OF THE THIRD SECTOR IN LEEDS**

29 - 46

To receive an update on progress towards ensuring the future resilience of the third sector in Leeds.

9

**WORK SCHEDULE**

47 - 70

To consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2023/24 municipal year.

## **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next public meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) will take place on **21 March 2024** at **10.30am**. There will be a pre-meeting for all Scrutiny Board members at **10.00am**.

## **THIRD PARTY RECORDING**

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.

Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice

- a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.
- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 6

## SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Golton in the Chair

Councillors P Stables, B Anderson,  
J Akhtar, P Grahame, A Maloney, J Tudor,  
A Hannan, A Rontree, S Seary, A Khan,  
N Harrington and J Heselwood

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

There were no appeals.

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

There was no exempt information.

### **72 Late Items**

There were no late items.

### **73 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Apologies were received from Cllr A McCluskey.

Cllr J Heselwood attended as a substitute.

### **75 Minutes - 7 December 2023**

The minutes of 7 December 2023 were approved.

### **76 Budget Proposals**

The Chair noted that the Executive Board's budget proposals were referred to Scrutiny for consideration and comment on 13 December 2023.

Initial working groups took place in December 2023 to enable scrutiny members to discuss the budget proposals so far as they related to the remits of their respective boards.

There is further opportunity for members to consider the proposals at the January cycle of public Scrutiny Board meetings.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Thursday, 22nd February, 2024

The comments and conclusions of all the Scrutiny Boards will be summarised in a joint report that will be submitted to the Executive Board in February.

When the Executive Board refers the final budget proposals to Council, its members will need to report how they have taken account of any recommendations made by the Scrutiny Boards.

Those in attendance for this item were:

- **Cllr M Harland** (Executive Member, Communities)
- **Cllr M Rafique** (Executive Member, Energy, Environment & Green Spaces)
- **Cllr J Lennox** (Executive Member, Housing)
- **Cllr D Coupar** (Executive Member, Resources)
- **James Rogers** (Director, Communities, Housing & Environment)
- **Paul Money** (Chief Officer, Safer, Stronger Communities)
- **Lee Hemsworth** (Chief Officer, Community Hubs, Welfare & Business Support)
- **John Woolmer** (Chief Officer, Environmental Services)
- **John Mulcahy** (Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory)
- **David McNutt** (Senior Finance Business Partner)
- **Gerard Tinsdale** (Chief officer, Housing)
- **Adam Crampton** (Head of Property Management)

The Chair summarised the comments, conclusions and recommendations of members of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) at their working group in December 2023.

He noted that the following matters had been discussed and would therefore be reflected in the joint Scrutiny report:

- Expansion of district parking charges and the service review proposal relating to new charges at Middleton, Roundhay and Temple Newsam.
- The introduction of car parking charges at Golden Acre and Otley Chevin Parks (categorised as a 'business as usual' saving with further comment scheduled under the following item).
- Trade Union engagement with proposals to reduce staffing numbers.
- The distribution of Welcome Spaces for winter 2024.
- Continued publication of both Business as Usual and Service Review proposals.
- Assurances were sought regarding attracting new users to community centres to generate income, reductions in 3<sup>rd</sup> sector funding, opportunities

to improve insulation in community buildings and the likelihood of increased fly tipping due to bulky waste charges.

- Members requested that community committees receive information about costs for services carried out by the cleaner neighbourhoods' teams - to inform local decisions about future service prioritisation.
- Members recommended that officers explore opportunities to deliver savings by reducing the temperature of community buildings.
- Members requested that the Scrutiny Board is engaged in early consultation about a future waste strategy including plans for glass recycling.
- The Board recognised the decision in relation to HAP budgets was taken in the context of wider risk to the Housing Revenue Account. Members welcomed the retention of environmental works budgets held by local housing offices.

James Rogers provided a brief update on the consultations that are taking place in relation to various budget proposals. It was noted that these are at different stages and the responses will be analysed.

Cllr Coupar reassured members of the Scrutiny Board that Trade Union engagement with the budget proposals is being undertaken.

Further information was requested in relation to the consultation about library services.

Members sought reassurance about the potential impact on front line services of changes to operational arrangements at some community centres.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) Members noted the content of the report and its appendices.
- b) A summary of the deliberations of all five Scrutiny Boards during the period of consultation on the initial budget proposals will be submitted for consideration by Executive Board on 7 February 2024.

#### **77 Car Park Charges Golden Acre and Otley Chevin**

The Chair introduced this item, noting that concern had been raised at the Scrutiny Board's budget working group in December 2023 about the introduction of car parking charges at Golden Acre and Otley Chevin Forest Parks.

He reiterated that these charges are not part of a new service proposal but were instead categorised as a 'Business As Usual' saving in the budget papers submitted to Executive Board.

The Chair informed colleagues that he had received communication from two other Scrutiny Board Chairs on this issue. Concerns had been raised by members of the Adults, Health & Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board about the potential impact of introducing charges on support for active lifestyles. The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board had highlighted concern about the consultation process in their budget discussions.

The Chair highlighted that a report had been published on 2 January 2024 outlining a response to proposals to introduce charges at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park, following public consultation.

As a Board member, Cllr B Anderson requested that this was brought to the Scrutiny Board for further discussion ahead of comments on the budget proposals being submitted to the Executive Board.

Given the comments on this matter across three Scrutiny Boards, and the timeframes for submitting the joint scrutiny report on the budget to Executive Board, the Chair confirmed that he had agreed to the request to include the report on the agenda for the meeting.

Those in attendance for this item were:

- **Cllr M Rafique** (Executive Member, Energy, Environment & Green Space)
- **Cllr D Coupar** (Executive member, Resources)
- **James Rogers** (Director, Communities, Housing & Environment)
- **Polly Cook** (Chief Officer, Climate, Environment & Green Spaces)

The Chair invited Cllr B Anderson to outline his concerns about the proposals and asked the Director to clarify the distinction between 'Business As Usual' savings and Service Review proposals.

Cllr Anderson informed colleagues that, while he acknowledged the very challenging circumstances relating to the Council's budget, he had a several concerns about the proposal to introduce charges at these parks. Those concerns included:

- Facilities for making cash payments.
- The availability of an equality impact assessment to enable members to understand how such considerations had informed the proposals.
- The potential impact of new charges on the Council's wider ambitions relating to improving the health and well-being of residents.
- The volume of respondents to the consultation that oppose the charges and the extent to which consideration had been given to those responses.
- The times during which charges would apply.
- The nature of the questions posed within the consultation.
- Displacement of cars onto surrounding roads.



James Rogers provided clarification about the categorisation of savings as either Business As Usual or Service Reviews within the budget papers.

He reassured members that regardless of the categorisation of savings in the budget papers, the same procedures would be followed in relation to consultation and any associated statutory processes.

James informed the Scrutiny Board that it had been agreed in 2023 that the introduction of parking charges at these two sites would be progressed.

He reiterated that the report published on 2 January 2024 is not a key decision. Instead, it is a special operational decision that sets out support in principle for the introduction of charges based on the outcome of previous work. Should there be a further decision to implement charges that would require a key decision.

Provision has been made to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), should they be required to manage displaced parking on surrounding roads.

James noted that the Council faces a significant financial challenge and money raised through parking charges would provide a means through which improvements could be delivered in the car parks. Without charging there is unlikely to be funding available to improve these sites.

The Scrutiny Board was informed that other Core Cities already have charges in place at some parks.

It was noted that the consultation asked respondents what they might recommend as an alternative to the charging proposals. Respondents generally suggested costs should be met through efficiencies elsewhere or from existing Council budgets. Analysis has not yet been completed on the responses to the main budget consultation.

Some of the detail being sought by members about the operation of proposed charging schedules cannot yet be provided as further analysis needs to be completed.

Members sought reassurance about the accessibility of the consultation for current park users and were informed that a paper option had been available from the café at Golden Acre Park and local libraries, alongside the online consultation.

Concern was raised about a lack of contextualisation of the questions in the consultation. For example, it was suggested that to fully understand the potential impact on the accessibility and safety of parks, decision makers would need to understand why people use particular modes of transport to visit them.

The Scrutiny Board was assured that there would be an EDI assessment as part of final decision-making process. James highlighted that the approach to equalities in Leeds is highly regarded.

Polly Cook confirmed that the consultation did ask questions about requirements for disabled parking facilities. It was confirmed that 'Blue Badge' holders would be exempt from paying car park charges.

A board member raised concern about the standardisation of EDI information captured as part of Council consultations and whether that could sufficiently capture the 'lived experience' of those using the parks in question.

The extent to which consultation responses influence decision making was debated, with consideration given to public expectation regarding the impact of engagement with Council consultations.

It was agreed that Cllr Golton would raise general concerns about the approach to EDI within Council consultations with the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board.

The financial challenge facing the Council was reiterated and members highlighted national concerns about funding for local government.

Members were informed charges would be modest, and it was noted that all of those affected would already be running a car.

Members were assured that the consultation on the expansion of district car parking charges in Wetherby would consider the wider impact of that proposal on the town centre.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) Members noted the findings of the report published on 2 January 2024.
- b) Comments regarding the introduction of new parking charges will be captured in the joint Scrutiny report on the budget proposals.
- c) Concern about the approach to capturing EDI information within public consultations will be raised with the Chair of the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board.

#### **78 Performance Monitoring**

The Chair noted that the Scrutiny Board receives an update on performance against key performance indicators in June and January each year.

Those in attendance for this item were:

- **Cllr M Harland** (Executive Member, Communities)

- **Cllr M Rafique** (Executive Member, Energy, Environment & Green Spaces)
- **Cllr J Lennox** (Executive Member, Housing)
- **Cllr D Coupar** (Executive Member, Resources)
- **James Rogers** (Director, Communities, Housing & Environment)
- **Ian Strickland** (Business Development Manager)
- **Paul Money** (Chief Officer, Safer, Stronger Communities)
- **Lee Hemsworth** (Chief Officer, Community Hubs, Welfare & Business Support)
- **John Woolmer** (Chief Officer, Environmental Services)
- **John Mulcahy** (Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory)
- **Gerard Tinsdale** (Chief officer, Housing)
- **Adam Crampton** (Head of Property Management)

James Rogers introduced the performance update, setting out the strategic vision for the directorate and noting that the key performance indicators included in the report have been identified as relevant to achieving the ambition of that vision.

Ian Strickland outlined how performance reporting aligns to other reports received by the Board and noted that the indicators are organised according to their contribution to the three pillars of the Best City Ambition – health and well-being, zero carbon and inclusive growth. He highlighted the importance of maximising capacity within the directorate so as to deliver efficient services.

At the request of members in June 2023, the report included information about Tenant Satisfaction Measures and reflected on the experience of residents with disabilities, where applicable and/or appropriate.

It was noted that a substantial item on housing would be considered in February and as such board members agreed to consider issues relating to housing at that meeting.

Cllr Golton highlighted that several aspects of future performance will depend to some degree on digital transformation. However, he noted that the budget proposals include a reduction of FTEs within IDS. Within that context he sought reassurances that there would be capacity within IDS to support the projects the service has identified as priorities.

James Rogers reassured members that the service works closely with IDS and will continue to do so to take forward projects identified as priorities.

Lee Hemsworth added that all projects within the update are already ongoing and identified by IDS as 'priority 1' schemes.

The Scrutiny Board requested that updates on the transformation projects highlighted in the performance update should be incorporated into the work programme of the 2024/25 successor board.

The Scrutiny Board welcomed action to tackle littering and fly tipping. However, it was noted that there is a concern amongst some members that new bulky waste charges could inadvertently create more fly tipping.

John Woolmer reassured members that reducing fly tipping remains a priority for the Council. He welcomed the fact that recent activity has led to a reduction in fly tipping. Government statistics have shown a reduction of 15% in Leeds for fly tipping, compared to 1% nationally. Interventions have included the introduction of a serious environmental crime team for Leeds to focus on enforcement. This has resulted in several successful prosecutions and the crushing of a number of vehicles.

The Council has increased weekend access to Seacroft and Kirkstall waste sites for businesses and is seeking to introduce an accredited waste carrier scheme. That scheme would enable responsible waste carriers to gain accreditation from the Council to which customers will then be able to refer.

The Scrutiny Board requested a specific update on hate crime and its prevalence in the city at a future meeting. Paul Money noted that this would fit into wider development of a new hate crime strategy.

Members sought confirmation about whether universities would continue to fund DS1 – a dedicated noise nuisance service in areas with a high concentration of student residents. The work of the service has been welcomed by local residents.

It was noted that a new member visit to Newmarket House had been very informative.

Members sought clarification on the date for the implementation of new bin collection routes in the city. John Woolmer confirmed that it is anticipated that the new routes will be implemented in early March. Final routes are in the process of being signed off and communications prepared for all residents affected by a change in the date of their collections, in line with legal requirements. Once the service has a final implementation date members will be informed.

Further information about the new route review for members will include more detail about the anticipated timescales for the collection of missed bins in the weeks following the implementation of the new schedule.

Members considered the frequency of green bin collections in densely populated areas, advocating a move from monthly green bin collections to fortnightly. Recycling provision for high rise buildings was also explored.

John Woolmer confirmed that the service is working towards alternate weekly collection in more areas of the city. Members noted the challenges around this change – effectively losing a collection each month and the potential for the contamination of green bins if communities are not engaged with recycling.

As part of the route review thousands of properties are moving to alternate weekly collections.

Members welcomed the impact of existing PSPOs and queried whether additional PSPOs might be introduced. Members noted that in combination with TROs these orders have made a significant difference to residents by reducing repeat missed bin collections where access has historically been a problem.

It was agreed that PSPOs can be very effective. However, it was noted that the associated enforcement is also extremely resource intensive.

Consideration was given to whether extra bins can be removed to reduce obstructions on pavements for those with mobility issues. John Woolmer identified some of the logistical challenges in achieving this – such as identifying which properties have multiple bins inappropriately. However, he also informed members that this issue has been raised by bin crews as a concern.

John acknowledged the challenge of obstructed pavements for those with mobility issues. The service is exploring the development of a training video in partnership with a corporate access and equality group, which will be aimed at residents and staff to illustrate the impact of obstructing the pavement for those with mobility issues.

Members asked about the future of food and glass waste collections in light of further information having been provided about the proposed national approach to consistency of collections. Defra has provided more guidance around co-mingling. 2026 has been provided as the deadline for introducing kerbside collections for glass and food waste collections and it is anticipated that further information about revenue funding will be forthcoming shortly. This is in addition to capital funding for new equipment and infrastructure.

Options for glass remain an additional glass collection in a separate bin or co-mingling with other recycling. The second option would require further engagement with current providers.

A Board Member noted that the Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership has been very successful in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, with a noticeable improvement in licensing arrangements. Members asked that their thanks are passed to partners.

The Scrutiny Board reflected on the number of hectares of woodland created citywide. The Scrutiny Board requested a further briefing so members can understand woodland creation on a ward-by-ward basis. It was noted that inner-city areas often have significantly depleted tree cover and members were particularly keen to understand whether proactive tree planting is improving the situation in these areas.

Members requested information about how many trees have been planted in different wards and the difference in canopy cover that has been created through tree planting schemes in recent years.

Polly Cook confirmed that further information can be provided on a ward basis, with the exception of canopy cover, which would require external measurements and would therefore incur a cost.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) Members noted the contents of the report and the appendices.
- b) The Principal Scrutiny Officer will liaise with the relevant service leads to schedule updates on the transformation projects within the 2024/25 work programme.
- c) An update on hate crime will be scheduled for a future Scrutiny Board meeting.
- d) Further information was requested in relation to woodland creation, including a breakdown of the number of trees planted in each ward of the city.

#### **79 Work Schedule**

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor advised the Scrutiny Board that draft dates for 2024/25 had been circulated and that members should have received invitations to two remote working groups.

#### **RESOLVED –**

Members noted the contents of the draft 2023/24 work programme.

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

The next public meeting of the Scrutiny Board will take place on **22 February 2024 at 10.30am**. There will be a pre-meeting for all board members at **10.00am**.

## Housing Activity Update

Date: 22 February 2024

Report of: Chief Officer, Housing

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

### Brief summary

This report updates the Board on key areas of Housing Leeds activity during 2023/24, including:

- Council housing rent collection
- Council housing voids performance
- Council housing repairs and maintenance
- Damp, mould and condensation
- Asset management and investment
- Building Safety Act requirements
- Rehousing of residents from 11 large panel system high rise blocks
- Pressures on the Leeds Housing Register and homelessness
- Social housing regulation
- Complaints
- Housing digital improvement programme
- Housing Strategy

### Recommendations

- a) The Scrutiny Board Housing, Environment and Communities is asked to note and comment on the update in relation to housing activity during 2023/24.

**What is this report about?**

- 1 This report’s appendix contains detailed information about the activities and performance of Housing Leeds for 2023/24.

**What impact will this proposal have?**

- 2 The report gives the Board the opportunity to comment on, and provide scrutiny of, Housing’s performance.

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

Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

- 3 The performance of Housing Leeds has an impact on each of the Three Pillars, which is reflected in the city’s Housing Strategy.

Inclusive Growth – supporting communities in the communities to increase financial inclusion through investment in energy improvements to homes and support to maximise income, multi-agency work to provide enhanced support in priority neighbourhoods, maximising social value offered by contractors via procurement and contract management.

Health and Wellbeing – health and housing is a theme of the Leeds Housing Strategy, with priorities to raise awareness of health and housing issues and pathways across both sectors, strengthening hospital prevention/discharge housing pathways, particularly for people needing adaptations, with mental health issues or homeless/rough sleeping.

Climate Emergency – significant investment is underway in Council homes to increase the energy performance of homes in support of the reduction in climate emission targets through investment in insulation and efficient heating systems.

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

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

- 4 Customer engagement is a practice that is well embedded within the Housing Service. There are a number of mechanisms used to seek customer input into priorities and approaches including the digital engagement tool (Your Voice Leeds) and the Tenant Voice Panel (tenants who have volunteered to provide input / feedback on policy approaches, communication methods etc. Where consultation and engagement has taken place relating to recent housing activity it is referenced in appendix 1.
- 5 Customer satisfaction information is collected quarterly for the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, providing regular routine performance information which enables us to better understand positive and negative impacts on customer satisfaction, and respond with changes of approach accordingly.

**What are the resource implications?**

- 6 Resourcing pressures are identified within the relevant service area updates in appendix 1.



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

- 7 There are a number of risks that are impacting on the Housing Service, including:
- The financial pressures the Council is facing, and on the Housing Revenue Account, may impact on future service levels. Building inflation is a significant risk to repairs and investment programmes.
  - Financial pressures on customers, exacerbated by the current Cost of Living Crisis, could potentially impact on rent collection, tenancy sustainability and homelessness.
  - The risk of poor tenant satisfaction results where the above risks have impacted on service delivery and performance.
  - Two key legislative changes – 2022 Building Safety Act and Social Housing (Regulation) Act will place new responsibilities on Housing Leeds as landlord to meet new building safety and regulation requirements.
  - A risk register is in place which is overseen by the Housing Leeds SMT, with significant corporate risks reported into the directorate risk register. For each of these risks plans are in place to closely monitor impacts and agree actions to minimise service impacts

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

- 8 There are two key legislative changes which have impacted on the responsibilities of Housing Leeds in managing elements of its housing service. These are as follows:
- 2022 Building Safety Act – introduced new responsibilities for the management of high risk buildings to ensure that effective and proportionate measures are put in place to manage building safety. A summary of the government guidance is [here](#) and more detailed guidance is [here](#).
  - 2023 Social Housing (Regulation) Act – compliance with consumer standards, the introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and a more robust approach to regulatory monitoring. Details of the regulatory standards are [here](#).
- 9 Outlined within the appendix are updates on how Housing Leeds is making preparations for the introduction of changes in legislative responsibilities.

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

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

- 10 This is not a decision report and so consideration of other options was not needed.

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

- 11 As above.

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

- 12 As above.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Housing Activity Report – 2023/24.

## **Background papers**

- None.

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## **Housing Activity Update – February 2023/24**

### **1. Rent Collection**

- a. Rent collection performance has improved over the last 12 months, from 93.71% at the end of quarter 3 2022/23 to 94.68% at the end of quarter 3 2023/24. Over the same period, we saw a slight reduction in current rent arrears from 4.54% to 4.43%. Our arrears performance is very closely aligned to similar large urban authority landlords. Despite the improvement rent collection continues to be below target, with the cost of living crisis impacting on tenants' ability to pay their rent. We continue to undertake regular training with Housing Officers to ensure robust application of the arrears process.
- b. Housing Leeds has continued to communicate to tenants on its supportive stance on rent arrears, emphasising to tenants that they will not lose their council home because of financial hardship where they are positively engaging with us and making some payment against arrears. We continue to offer support via the Housing Officer (Income) team – up to the end of December we had supported 3675 households to generate additional income for tenants totalling £2.3m, an average of £629 per household.
- c. To support tenants to maximise their income and keep warm this winter our gas contractor, PH Jones, has partnered with British Gas as part of social value arrangements to offer £300k of free fuel vouchers, available to tenants on prepayment meters who are experiencing financial hardship to access gas and electricity.

### **2. Voids Performance**

- a) At the end of December 2023 the percentage of empty homes across Housing Leeds was 1.35% (700 homes). This represented a net reduction in empty homes of 240 over the period December 2022 – December 2023.
- b) Further reducing the number of empty homes remains a key strategic priority, with additional operational delivery capacity operating to support principal service delivery partners.
- c) Strong cross service collaboration continues to ensure opportunities to maximise outputs is maximised.

### **3. Repairs update**

- a) Demand for the repairs service continues to exceed that of previous years with demand running at circa 6% higher than last year, meaning an additional 12,500 repairs are projected for the full year, placing both operational and financial pressure on the service. This is a trend that other landlords are reporting nationally.
- b) Despite this, the level of work in progress (WIP) has now reduced from around 30,000 repairs at the start of the year to around 16,000 at the end of 2023. This level of WIP represents the target level for the repairs service.
- c) As a result, repairs performance and satisfaction is on a positive trajectory, with improvements in the number of repairs completed within target and satisfaction with the repairs service anticipated to continue into 2024.
- d) As part of our commitment to service improvement colleagues in Housing Leeds and LBS work collaboratively in all aspects of service delivery including performance, customer satisfaction and learning from feedback. Over recent months teams have commenced a

programme of process reviews. Following customer feedback repairs was identified as the priority area for review.

- e) A full end to end review of the repairs process has commenced, the scope of which covers all elements from first contact through to invoicing. The review aims to identify opportunities for efficiency and to improve the customer experience. This review is also being supplemented by a review of the customer complaints process. This review programme is including representatives from many different stakeholders, including Contact Centre, Housing Leeds, LBS, Finance, Audit and IDS. The review remains ongoing and proposals are being drafted for consultation with Tenant Voice Panel. Improvements identified will be applied across all areas of the city, including those not delivered by LBS, in order to ensure improvements are applied for the benefit of all tenants.

#### **4. Damp, Mould and Condensation**

- a) Over the last 12 months significant time and resource has been dedicated to the refining the processes, data management, communications and staff knowledge and skills associated with damp, mould and condensation.
- b) Actions have focused on compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Service's *self-assessment*, including the introduction of a Damp and Mould Policy and Damp and Mould Strategy, consistent with industry guidance and best practice.
- c) Training has now been delivered to the vast majority of front line staff within Housing Leeds. An e-learning package is also being developed to supplement this training.
- d) The dedicated Damp and Mould Team continues to triage all calls relating to damp, mould and condensation. Additional resource has been aligned to this team to ensure there is capacity to meet the demand for the service.
- e) Resident communications remains a high priority task, ensuring tenants are supported to know how best report issues of damp, mould and condensation and are frequently provided with practical advice on how best to minimise condensation in the home.
- f) Several improvements are being introduced following the recommendations made by Leeds Tenant Scrutiny Board after its recent review of the advice and support that the service provides residents around damp and mould. These improvements include providing access to a more engaging practical awareness video, developing the communication forward plan, and enhancing the current website content.
- g) The service is currently actively engaged in the consultation from Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing relating to proposals for Awaab's Law.

#### **5. Asset Management and Investment**

- a) The 2023/24 HRA Capital Programme is on track to deliver around £73m of investment works by the end of the year, including £29.2m of major decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects.
- b) The Investment Programme also remains on track to exceed the commitment to deliver in excess of £100m of decarbonisation works between 2020 and 2025, with over £62m of works already delivered and a further £40m currently on site.
- c) The 2024/25 programme is now well developed with further investment to be committed to decarbonisation works, as well as additional funding being allocation to programmes of work aimed at maintaining and improving the Decent Homes Standard, such as windows, doors, roofs, kitchens and bathrooms.

- d) The service continues to work closely with stakeholders to identify external funding opportunities to support the Asset Management Strategy and maximise outputs for tenants.

## 6. Building Safety Act Compliance

- a) All buildings within the scope of the Building Safety Act (BSA) were required to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) by end of October 2023, including the provision of Key Building Information. This deadline was met for all 119 LCC buildings in scope.
- b) From April 2024, these buildings require completion and submission of a Building Safety Case to be submitted to the BSR. Following investment and growth in the Building Safety Team and Fire Safety Team, progress to achieve this is on track.
- c) Additional requirements under BSA include improvements in resident access to building information, known as the Golden Thread and the development of a building specific communications strategy for in-scope blocks. In all cases, progress remains on track with strong assurance of compliance when the requirements go live.

## 7. Rehousing of Residents from 11 Large Panel System High Rise Blocks

- a) The Council's Executive Board approved the rehousing of residents and demolition of 5 blocks at the October 2022 meeting and 6 blocks at the October 2023 meeting. Work to rehouse residents of the 11 blocks is underway in readiness for their subsequent demolition. Residents are being supported to move to new homes that suit them in the longer-term by offering priority A and direct let status and payment of a homeloss and disturbance payment to support their move. Good progress is being made.
- b) These Large Panel System (Reema construction) high rise blocks and timescales for emptying the blocks is identified in the below table:

no.	High rise block name	ward	decision and date of rehousing start	estimated date empty
1 - 3	Alderton Heights (3 blocks)	Alwoodley	October 2022 Executive Board decision, rehousing started November 2022.	October 2025
4	Gipton Gate East	Gipton & Harehills		July 2025
5	Gipton Gate West	Armley	October 2023 Executive Board decision, rehousing started November 2023.	April 2026
6	Raynville Court			April 2026
7	Raynville Grange	Moortown		April 2027
8	Leafield Towers	Killingbeck & Seacroft		April 2027
9	Bailey Towers		April 2027	
10	Brookland Towers		April 2027	
11	Ramshead Heights			

- c) The demolition of two further blocks, The Highways (in Killingbeck and Seacroft ward), is underway and work due to be complete later this summer.
- d) Activity to plan for the demolition of other blocks has now started, with the aim of procuring one or more specialist contractors to carry out demolition of the blocks between 2025 and 2027.

## 8. Pressures on the Leeds Homes Register/Homelessness

- a) Leeds continues to open the third highest number of homelessness assessments in England. In quarter 3 of 2023/24 we completed 1403 homelessness assessments and 59% were owed a prevention duty meaning they were assessed during the prevention stage (compared to a national average of 39%). 78% of all cases assessed had a positive prevention during quarter 3 meaning that we were able to prevent the homelessness from occurring (compared to a national average of 53%).
- b) We are seeing an increase in the number of households who are unable to remain with family members (roughly a third of cases approaching Leeds Housing Options (LHO)). We believe this to be linked to the cost of living crisis and the increased financial strain accommodating friends or family can have.
- c) Over 15% of our customers have approached LHO due to their private rented tenancies being ended. Last year we saw a spike in section 21s being served and believed it was linked to increased mortgage interest rates for landlords, an increase of market rent (9% increase over 12 months reported in Leeds) and at the time, the Government's progression of the Renters Reform Bill.
- d) As a consequence of these pressures we have seen an increase in the number of households, particularly families, who are living in temporary accommodation. At the end of December there were 195 households in temporary accommodation (including 100 families and 95 single households). We continue to work proactively with households to support them to quickly access a permanent housing solution.
- e) Leeds City Council has made a series of successful bids for additional funding to support people affected by rough sleeping:
- **Supported Housing Accommodation Programme (SHAP)** will enable us to provide 44 additional supported accommodation places by the end of March 2025. 25 will be dispersed properties and 19 will be self-contained units within 'cores'. 5 x 1 bed for young people and 14 x 1 bed for adults.
  - **Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP)** - funding allocated for the purchase of 72 properties across 5 rounds to support people affected by rough sleeping, the last round of 8 properties is to be delivered by March 2024. Properties have been a very successful addition of accommodation and since the scheme started we have successfully moved on 13 people through the scheme.
  - **Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)** - allocated to support humanitarian schemes to deliver 41 properties for Ukraine and Afghanistan resettlement schemes which will be reintroduced as council stock. A total of 25 properties have been purchased, the scheme needs to be delivered by March 2024.
  - **Rough Sleeping Initiative Move On and Prevention Fund** - additional funding, extra bedspaces and increased outreach provision has been agreed for rough sleepers for use during the winter period as part of the City's response to winter planning.
  - **Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)** - aims to improve the quality of the accommodation and the support provided in short-term supported housing. As part of this work three officers within Leeds Housing Options are working on the support element of this work and officers in the Private Rented Sector looking at property standards.
- f) There is continued pressure on the Leeds Homes Register. The overall number of applicants on the register has remained steady for the last 3-4 years with 26300 on the register at the end of quarter 2 and over 5000 applicants with a priority A or A+ band. This has contributed towards average wait times for someone with band A status

increasing to 133 weeks, creating significant pressures to the system, with increasing numbers of households in temporary accommodation or supported accommodation who no longer require support and are urgently awaiting move on.

- g) The Council's Executive Board made a decision in December 2023 to begin consultation on proposed changes to the Council's Lettings Policy. Possible changes for consideration include:
- Allocating the majority of properties to applicants in housing need on a permanent basis.
  - Reviewing the criteria for joining the housing register.
  - Restrict adult household members who can be included on an application as a household member to be rehoused.
  - Increase the length of time that a priority is awarded for.
  - Create a new direct let category for rooflessness.
  - The proposed approach to a review of Local Lettings Policies, New Build Lettings Policies and Children at Height.
- h) Consultation began in early January and will conclude in early March, with an online survey available on Your Voice Leeds and attendance at multi agency forums to seek the views of partners. A workshop was held with Scrutiny Board Members on 31 January. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of working up the proposed Lettings Policy changes.

## 9. Social Housing Regulation

The 2023 Social Housing (Regulation) Act was enacted in July 2023, with a more robust regulatory framework of social landlords overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Key requirements of regulation include the following:

### Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- a) From April 2023 social landlords are required to report annual performance against 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), made up of 12 measures collected via tenant perception survey and 10 measures reported from management information. Housing Leeds has been undertaking quarterly tenant perception surveys since April 2022 to build up a baseline performance position ahead of the TSMs becoming a regulatory requirement. The annual performance is reported to tenants via the Annual Report to Tenants, and quarterly updates are provided via the tenant email and on social media. Performance reporting has also been amended so that performance reports into Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board, Tenant Scrutiny Board and Leeds Housing Board includes TSM performance.

### Review of the Consumer Standards

- a) As part of the previous and new regulatory frameworks, social landlords are required to demonstrate that they comply with each of the requirements of 4 Consumer Standards, The RSH undertook consultation on proposed changes to the Consumer Standards in summer 2023 and setting a stronger expectation that landlords can evidence that they comply with the standards. The proposed updated Consumer Standards are as follows:
- **Safety and Quality Standard** – requirement to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.

- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** – requirement to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold the landlord to account.
  - **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – requirement to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their home.
  - **Tenancy Standard** – requirement for the fair allocation and letting of homes and how tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.
- b) Self assessments against the proposed updated standards are currently underway in Leeds in order to evidence the extent of our compliance and inform improvement opportunities.

### **Resident Engagement Strategy**

- c) As part of the regulatory framework it is important that social landlords are able to evidence that they are providing opportunities for tenants to provide feedback, hearing the voice of a diverse range of tenants, using customer feedback to deliver service improvements and communicating effectively with tenants. Housing Leeds is currently reviewing its Tenant Engagement Strategy to strengthen its engagement on all aspects of service delivery. A number of formal mechanisms exist including the online forum, Your Voice Leeds, the Tenant Voice Panel (a panel of almost 200 tenants who have volunteered to support us with service improvements), Tenant Scrutiny Board and Housing Advisory Panels. As it is proposed that the Housing Advisory Panels stop meeting after the end of March proposals for the future engagement of local engagement with tenants will be developed shortly to ensure that there is local tenant influence into service delivery.

### **Governance Arrangements**

- d) In July 2023 the Leeds Housing Board (Operations) was established as a joint Board of tenants and Elected Members to oversee Housing Leeds' compliance with new regulatory requirements, receiving evidence of performance and compliance and offering challenge and suggested areas of improvement. A full record of agendas and papers is available [here](#). Since its establishment the Board has received TSM performance information, considered the TSM methodology, received updates on complaints including the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Self Assessment and our plans for undertaking self assessments against the Consumer Standards, including the self assessment of the Tenancy Standard.
- e) A programme resource has been identified to support our work to ensure robust compliance with the regulatory framework with monthly Board meetings of senior officers with the programme team.
- f) Leeds City Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework for all of its properties including where functions have been delegated to other organisations or services, e.g. Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO), Private Finance Initiative (PFI) areas. We are therefore reviewing our contractual and performance management arrangements to receive assurance that contracted organisations are complying with regulatory requirements for delegated functions.



- g) Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH) has indicated that professionalisation of the sector will become an important part of the regulatory framework, with a requirement for all senior managers to hold housing qualifications and for robust training to be delivered across the organisation. We are awaiting further details of the qualification and training requirements, although consultation is expected in early 2024.
- h) Also as part of the regulatory framework is the requirement for each landlord to have a designated person for health and safety. Again we are awaiting further details of this requirement from the regulator.
- i) A workshop has been arranged with the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board on Social Housing Regulation on 2 April, to outline the proposed changes to the regulatory framework and seek the Board's input into approaches adopted by Leeds to provide robust governance and performance management arrangements, current performance and areas of risk.

## **10. Complaints**

- a) As reported to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in January 2024 87% of stage 1 complaints and 88% of stage 2 complaints were responded to on time. Whilst this performance is not meeting target performance is improving from 2022/23 when only 74% of stage 1 complaints and 65% of stage 2 complaints were responded on time. The service saw an increase in complaints linked to repairs backlogs following COVID, impacting on our ability to respond on time. However, as the backlogs have reduced we have seen a similar reduction in the number of complaints and a greater proportion of complaints being responded to on time.
- b) The Housing Ombudsman Service has strengthened powers as part of social housing regulation and a [Complaints Handling Code](#) has been published which sets out the requirements for landlords to manage and learn from complaints. Housing Leeds completes an assessment against the code each year. A copy of the most recent self assessment was reported to the Leeds Housing Board in [January 2024](#). A detailed report on complaints, including the nature of complaints, ombudsman cases and complaints satisfaction monitoring was reported to the Leeds Housing Board in [November 2023](#). Tenant Board members are working with the service more closely as Complaints Champions, to support the service in further strengthening its compliance on the management of complaints.

## **11. Housing Delivering Digital Improvement Programme**

- a) The IDS / Housing Steering Group has been in place for over one year with representation from senior officers in Housing Leeds and IDS Lead Product Managers to oversee the delivery of a programme of digital improvements. A number of improvements have been delivered / are planned for the coming months:
- b) Upgrade to the Housing Management system (Cx) – took place in October 2023. The upgrade provided resolution to a number of system issues since go live, improved system performance (speed) and delivered enhanced functionality including relating to applying rent review and direct debit uplifts.
- c) Upgrade to the Tenant Portal – as part of the Cx upgrade improved functionality is available via the customer portal which will enable tenants to order some repairs and

book appointments online. We are currently reviewing our business processes aligned to the portal, along with the verification process ahead of a roll out during early 2024.

- d) Review of Arrears Policy in Cx – implemented in November 2023. The updated policy has strengthened the use of system intelligence to capture more scenarios and identify which accounts in arrears are triggered for particular actions, whilst taking into account payment cycles and payment arrangements, helping to ensure that there is more robust arrears management.
- e) Launch of the High Rise Hub – delivered in October 2023 as a digital platform for high rise residents to request and / or instantly access health and safety information relating to their block or their home, a requirement of the Building Safety Act.
- f) Launch of Any Day Advertising via Abris – system improvements were delivered in November 2023 to enable us to now advertise Council and Housing Association properties every day, instead of once a week. This is projected to help us increase rental income by approx. £100k each year. Plans are underway to deliver an upgrade to Abris during 2024 – consideration is currently being given to improved functionality that could be delivered via the upgrade.
- g) Mobile Technology – the service could achieve huge efficiencies from the delivery of comprehensive mobile working technology. As part of a first phase of delivering mobile technology the service is looking to roll out a mobile working solution for the completion of stage 2 fire checks and person-centred fire risk assessments – enabling information to be recorded digitally during the check and forwarding actions to relevant teams. The next phase of the mobile working project will consider mobile working options for the completion of Annual Tenancy Check Ins.

## **12. Housing strategy**

- a) The Leeds Housing Strategy 2022-2027 was approved by the Council’s Executive Board in June 2022. 6 monthly updates are provided to the Leeds Housing Board (Strategic) meetings, with the last update made to the meeting in September 2023. A full copy of the update is provided [here](#), but a summary update of each theme, is outlined below:

### **b) *Meeting Affordable Housing Need***

The Leeds Affordable Housing Growth Partnership Action Plan (2022-25) was finalised at the end of 2022, outlining plans to deliver a pipeline of circa 750 new affordable homes each year 2022-25. In 2022/23 633 new homes were delivered. We are currently consulting on proposed changes to the Council’s Lettings Policy in order to ensure that we are effectively meeting affordable housing need (as outlined separately in this paper). Leeds Housing Options continue to work with landlords in the private rented sector in order to maximise the number of households rehoused into the private rented sector and the Private Sector Team continue to seek to reduce the number of empty private homes in the city.

### **c) *Improving Housing Quality***

Housing Leeds continues to make good progress through its improvement programme to reduce carbon emissions and improve the quality of homes, alongside proactive option appraisals and asset management decisions of its most difficult to treat, as outlined in this report. Housing Leeds also continues to proactively enforce

improvements to housing conditions in the private rented sector and maximise the positive outcomes from the Selective Licencing Scheme.

**d) *Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping***

The 2023-28 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Executive Board in July 2023, outlining 4 ambitions of universal prevention, targeted prevention, intervention and recovery through strong city partnership working and a shared and integrated approach to building on our offer of housing options. Leeds continues to perform well in maximising homeless preventions and is making good progress in reducing the number of homeless young people. There is lots of positive work happening to support people affected by rough sleeping with a number of funding opportunities to provide specialist support and accommodation. A more detailed operational update is included earlier in this paper.

**e) *Thriving and Inclusive Communities***

Housing Leeds continues to work as part of strong partnership arrangements in the city, both at a strategic and operational level to ensure that robust arrangements are in place to respond to incidents of antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse, ensuring that staff are trained and confident in identifying and responding to community safety concerns. Alongside this we continue to work with housing association partners to maximise partnership working across the wider social rented sector.

**f) *Improving Health Through Housing***

One of the Best City Ambition's breakthrough projects is 'Better Homes for Health and Wellbeing'. A number of projects are underway to support this breakthrough project including a hospital discharge project which has created 2 Housing Officer posts to work within the Transfer of Care Team in the Leeds hospitals, Health and Housing training, and developing an escalation pathway into the housing sector for children with asthma. In June 2023 Leeds launched as a Marmot city and Housing Leeds is working closely with Public Health colleagues and the Institute of Health Equity to achieve partnership working which seeks to reduce health inequalities relating to housing via system change, focusing on priorities for the second year of the partnership.

**g) *Child and Age Friendly Housing***

Through the Thriving Strategy good progress has been made in strengthening relationships between housing teams and Children's social work teams to ensure a supportive and collaborative rehousing pathway for care leavers and proactive and collaborative support for families living in Council Housing. Through the Age Friendly Action Plan progress is being made in the development of 7 new extra care schemes via Home Group and Housing Leeds, with 2 Home Group schemes now opened and a further one scheme due early this year, and the Leeds City Council scheme at Gascoigne House in Middleton opening in October 2023.

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## Ensuring the Future Resilience of the Third Sector

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

Report of: Ensuring the Future Resilience of the Third Sector

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

- Leeds needs a thriving third sector, made up of charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups, delivering community based services, many of them essential in terms helping to improve people's wellbeing, whilst also contributing to the city's economic growth, supporting the council to deliver its Best City Ambitions.
- This report provides a summary of the challenges faced by the third sector due to the cost of living crisis as reported to Scrutiny in December 2022, and provides an update on the progress made against the identified actions.
- The latest *State of the Third Sector* report evidences the sectors resilience, however, also emphasises the stress it is under, specifically the reduced number of registered organisations, workforce, volunteers and the number of organisations reporting a zero income. The impact of sustained efficiency savings on third sector budgetary pressures is described.
- The report details the collaborative actions taken forward by the public and third sector to establish a *Leeds Third Sector Strategy 2023 - 2028*, in our collective response to ensuring the future resilience of the third sector. The identified ambitions for the first year (2024) focus on commissioning and funding, partnerships, and social value; with a more detailed action plan currently being developed by key stakeholders.
- The *Leeds Volunteer Strategy*, launched in October 2023, sets out a vision for Leeds to be the best city for volunteering, whereby all partners work together to support an innovative and diverse volunteering environment.
- The council's investment in third sector for 2021/22 and 2022/23 is outlined. The consistency of the council's payments to the third sector has been broadly maintained over recent years, despite the very significant and challenging public sector financial constraints associated with austerity. The council continue to invest in third sector-based infrastructure which provides a range of support to frontline third sector organisations.

- Dialogue has been taking place with the third sector around the council's budget pressures and the future direction of travel and investment. Third Sector Leeds and infrastructure organisations have affirmed these early insights and detail of the timeline are helpful to manage expectations and sector messaging.
- The financial constraints of both the council and health partners will continue to impact significantly on third sector organisations, further detail is provided on the opportunities and challenges presented.
- The report concludes with a summary of partnership and engagement relationships with the sector, including city-wide strategic bodies which facilitates strategic engagement with the sector, dialogue between the sector, council and a range of partnerships and forums. Thus, leading to a thriving third sector and strong civil society that can deliver for all of the people of Leeds.

### **Recommendations**

- a) For Scrutiny to note the findings of the report.

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

- 1 To outline the council’s and third sector’s efforts and collaboration in ensuring a resilient Third Sector for the city, taking into account the financial challenge faced by the council alongside increased demand and pressures.

**What impact will this proposal have?**

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

- 2 See appendix 1

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

- 3 Ongoing discussions have been taking place with the Third Sector through the Third Sector Partnership and Third Sector Leeds. Further detail on this is provided within appendix 1.

**What are the resource implications?**

- 4 See appendix 1

**What are the legal implications?**

- 5 Not applicable

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

- 6 The financial constraints of both the council and health partners will continue to impact significantly on third sector organisations, and further reduction in the number of organisations, staff and volunteers across the sector is anticipated. There are opportunities for thinking differently about which services can be provided by the third sector, making the most of the wealth of expertise and local knowledge the sector holds, as well as the value for money, particularly in comparison to some private businesses. Shifting from extremely high-cost private providers to greater use of local, third sector organisations provide opportunities not only to bring costs down, but to also maximise quality of service and positive outcomes, and provider better value for the Leeds pound.

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

- Inclusive Growth                       Health and Wellbeing                       Climate Emergency

7

**Options, timescales and measuring success**

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

- 8 Not applicable

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

- 9 See appendix 1

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

10 Not applicable

**Appendices**

11 Appendix 1: Ensuring the Future Resilience of the Third Sector

**Background papers**

12 Appendix 2: State of the Third Sector in Leeds 2022 (Infographic of Key Findings)

13 Appendix 3: Third Sector for Health & Care Cost Pressures, Survey Results - January 2024

14 Appendix 4: Leeds Third Sector Strategy (Executive Summary)

15 Appendix 5: Leeds Volunteering Strategy (One Page Summary)

16 Appendix 6: Leeds Third Sector Ambition Statement



## Appendix 1: Ensuring the Future Resilience of the Third Sector

### The Resilience of the Third Sector 2022

The report to Scrutiny in December 2022 provided a summary of the challenges faced by the third sector due to the cost of living crisis. Third Sector Leeds (TSL), the city's third sector strategic 'network of networks', had published a '*Response to the Cost of Living Crisis*' position paper in September 2022. This paper explored the resilience of the third sector to continue supporting communities and set out the significant pressures faced by the third sector in light of the cost of living crisis. From an organisational sustainability perspective, these pressures included funding which is increasingly short-term, non-recurrent, and insecure; recruitment and workforce issues with the sector experiencing a four-fold challenge with rising unmet wage costs, a depleted and exhausted workforce, organisations running with vacancies and constant recruitment and restructuring pressures; additional mental health impact on both staff and people seeking support; and rising demand, often from people with a combination of increasingly complex health and social needs requiring more complex and longer-term support.

This report led to a workshop discussion with the third sector, the council and health colleagues (Leeds ICB) in October 2022, where it was noted that financial pressures are likely to be enduring, at least in the medium term. During discussions, a number of shared principles were agreed and subsequently documented in the '*TSL Position Statement: Cost of Living and Third Sector Resilience*' which include:

- Working in a way that ultimately benefits people and communities living in Leeds.
- Investment in resilience.
- The importance of working together in partnership.
- A commitment to 'one workforce'.
- The third sector being an equal partner as part of both the WY Health and Care Partnership, 'Team Leeds' approach and WYCA.
- The importance of delivering preventative measures where possible.

As reported to Scrutiny in December 2022, these shared principles sought to provide a framework to move away from 'blanket' percentage financial reductions, toward a collaborative approach to achieve more effective ways of joint working. Furthermore, underpinned by the recognition that there are insufficient funds to resource everything, whilst facilitating scope for flexibility, creativity and partnership approaches which provide closer consideration of the longer-term impact on communities. The framework built on the approach taken during the Covid-19 pandemic of collective thinking and action to navigate the current crisis which protects and values the work of the third sector. There was strong recognition for the need of a continuation of strong partnership working, difficult conversations and bold creative thinking, moving away from statutory and non-statutory approaches and much more toward a collective way of thinking and working.

At the time, commissioning officers from Adults and Health, Childrens and Families, and Public Health considered the diversity of contracts including intervention and prevention, the volume of small contracts, and non-recurrent funding which often sits between the margins and the challenge of gaining a full insight into the latter. Commissioning officers considered these principles being helpful in facilitating conversations with grant and contract funded third sector providers and highlighted the need to engage with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and Chief Officers to agree the direction and approach.

As future financial pressures were likely to be enduring, at least in the medium term, workshop participants agreed on the principles set out above (with a recognition that implementing these principles could look different across diverse organisations/directorates) as well as some key

actions to be taken forward as part of securing the longer-term resilience of the sector within the city. The following actions articulated in the *TSL Position Statement: Cost of Living and Third Sector Resilience* were to be progressed via the partnership arrangements in the city including Third Sector Partnership chaired by the Executive Member for Communities:

- **Short-term:** quantify the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the third sector to develop a clear picture of spend, and to understand the broader value of the sector in order to understand the impact of potential cuts to the sector from a system perspective.
- **Short to medium term:** plan for the longer-term resilience of the sector through developing a city owned Third Sector Strategy, which sets out a path for more detailed / longer-term work around key areas such as social value and inward investment.
- **Medium-term:** where reductions need to be made next year, seek to collaboratively restructure in partnership with the third sector rather than ‘salami-slice’ cuts.

The above provides a summary of the key challenges and next steps as reported to Scrutiny in December 2022. The remainder of the report provides an update on the progress made against these forementioned identified actions.

## **The State of the Third Sector 2022**

Over the course of 2023, Forum Central, Voluntary Action Leeds and Nifty Sustainability CIC worked to produce an update State of the Sector report first commissioned by Forum Central in 2020. The 2023 *State of the Third Sector* report uses December 2022 data benchmarked with December 2020 data, to provide a clear and robust picture of the third sector in Leeds and contribute to the development of a shared narrative for the city. It provides evidence of the sector’s resilience, whilst also emphasising the stress it is under (appendix 2). Between 2020 and 2022 the third sector experienced a 10% reduction in the number of registered (charitable) organisations predominantly; a reduction in the number of small and medium sized organisations; a workforce decrease of 34%; a 25% decline in the number of volunteers; and the doubling of organisations reporting a zero income.

The third sector has sustained ten years of year-on-year budget efficiency savings. Furthermore, the sector does not receive the same uplifts routinely applied to other providers, therefore the majority of contracts have been at the same value for some time. Recent inflationary and cost of living pressures (including pay awards) have led to increased costs to deliver services, at a time when demands have increased, and as a result, the sector is under significant financial pressure. Forum Central has conducted regular cost pressures surveys since 2022 (appendix 3), and through this a number of third sector providers have advised they have been increasingly subsidising the council and NHS contracts in recent years from their other revenue streams and/or reserves. This is an unsustainable position for third sector providers to maintain, to such an extent that some providers closed, ended provision or considered handing back contracts due to the challenge of sustainability.

## **Ensuring the Future Resilience of the Third Sector**

A number of key actions progressed to secure the future resilience of the third sector.

In the short-term, Third Sector Leeds and others across the sector have been working closely with statutory partners to explore ways to mitigate impacts. For example:

- Third Sector Leeds has worked with the third sector and with commissioners to develop guidance on developing effective consortia which aims to support and enable creative responses to the challenging funding environment.
- Non-recurrent (2023/24) NHS Power of Communities funding through West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (managed in Leeds by Forum Central) will provide foundations to underpin sector resilience.
- Distribution of the Household Fund to ensure reach into households with greatest need.
- Voluntary Action Leeds and Forum Central are working with the council to develop a second Welcome Spaces programme, enabling neighbourhood-based organisations to play their part in bringing communities together and supporting individuals in recognition of the impact of the cost of living crisis during winter and beyond.

Crucially, the sector has responded to the need reported to Scrutiny in December 2022 to plan for the longer-term resilience of the sector through the development of a city owned Third Sector Strategy, in order to set out a path for more detailed and longer-term work around key areas such as social value and inward investment.

The ‘*Third Sector Strategy 2023 – 2028*’, developed by Third Sector Leeds (TSL) in partnership with key stakeholders, was launched in October 2023 (appendix 4). The strategy builds upon a decade of developing trust, understanding and teamworking approach within the broad framework of the Best City Ambition. This work recognises there are ongoing opportunities for the third sector to leverage inward investment from other areas, providing support and services within communities whilst lessening the pressure on statutory partners; however, this needs to be further understood and quantified. It brings together Leeds policy commitments such as the Compact for Leeds, Third Sector Ambition Statement and Characteristics of a Thriving Community and West Yorkshire partnership work led by Power of Communities to progress recommendations supporting the resilience of the sector. A series of ‘TSL Goes Local’ events across the city during the autumn of 2023 identified priority ambitions for the sector for the first year of the strategy (2024). These ambitions are:

- **Partnerships:** City anchors, businesses and the third sector work together in a fair and equitable partnership as a whole system to make Leeds the best city to live in. Partners are open and transparent, and leaders actively share their decision-making power.
- **Commissioning and funding:** All partners invest in who is best placed to co-produce and provide the service or support needed in the city. Commissioning relationships are centred around trust, values, flexibility and outcomes and are a partnership of equals.
- **Social value:** In Leeds, partners agree that social value activities should be delivered with and through the third sector. Leeds has a clear set of co-designed priorities for where social value activity will have most impact. There are clear routes for larger organisations to be matched with opportunities that create social value, and to see the impact this has. social value and partnerships.

A plan of action is currently being developed with key stakeholders to drive forward the agenda and key priorities.

Voluntary Action Leeds and the council published the ‘*Volunteering and COVID-19 in Leeds*’ report in October 2022, which brought together learning from the collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as previously reported to Scrutiny, and the ‘blueprint for future action’, included the development of ‘*Leeds Volunteer Strategy*’. This strategy (appendix 5), launched in October 2023, sets out a vision for Leeds to be the best city for volunteering, whereby all partners work together to support an innovative and diverse volunteering environment, and showcased ‘*Leeds Community Champions: evaluation and report*,’. It is recognised locally and nationally that the number of people volunteering has significantly reduced since the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as

funding meaning that volunteer managers are often amongst the first posts to be cut. The ambitions for change articulate a forward approach which celebrates volunteering in all its forms. The strategy sets out the steps partners can take to develop approaches to volunteering that will make it easy for people to find ways to get involved, build a more inclusive city and aid Leeds in adapting to future challenges.

## **Investment in the Third Sector**

The council makes a significant financial investment in the sector each year. An annual analysis of the council's investment in the third sector is produced and presented to the Third Sector Partnership, allowing council colleagues and partners to track trends, scrutinise and build an overview of where investment is made.

Provisional analysis shows the council's overall investment in the third sector to have been £136.1m in 2021/22 with 1,158 individual third sector organisations and £149.6m in 2022/23 with 1,174 individual third sector organisations; up by 10% from 2021/22. This is likely to reflect the additional Covid-19 grants provided to support local communities and organisations. However, discounting any pandemic related weighting, the scale and consistency of the council's payments to the third sector has been broadly maintained over recent years, despite the very significant and challenging public sector financial constraints associated with austerity.

In 2022/23, Members Improvement in the Community and Environmental (MICE) allocation totalling £193,269.98 was invested in third sector-led, community-based initiatives. The council, along with third sector partners, continues to review the analysis of the council's financial relationship with the sector in order to understand how the approach is supporting our shared ambitions for the sector and the city.

The council facilitates the cross-sector Funding Leeds Partnership, which has been leading on ambitions to maximise external investment into Leeds through the third sector by making funding information and support accessible. This includes a Funding Support Service delivered through third sector-based infrastructure Voluntary Action Leeds; and the Funding Leeds platform (available [here](#)), which compliments work delivered by Leeds Community Foundation. Funding Leeds provides a comprehensive database of funding opportunities which aids the third sector to find funds to achieve their vision. The platform includes information about local support that is available and free to access. The platform is a valuable contributor toward a thriving third sector and has recently been updated to enable improved access and usability. Since the launch of the Funding Leeds website in 2017, organisations and community groups have self-declared successfully obtaining funding to the value of £3,165,446.

## **Investment in Third Sector Infrastructure**

The council invests in third sector-based infrastructure which provides a range of support to frontline third sector organisations, including: communications, financial management, fundraising, training, legal, constitutional issues and governance, organisational development, volunteer management, brokerage, collaboration and the facilitation of specialist forums and networks. This investment has a particularly important role in ensuring that there is support for small and emerging groups and those groups from minority and marginalised communities and priority neighbourhoods.

In addition to Local Authority funding, additional investment has been secured from the Lottery to support the development of asset-based community infrastructure, building on the learning from COVID-19 community hubs. This network of organisations continues to work together and develop as Leeds Community Anchor Network, and have since helped develop support in the form of

Welcome Spaces throughout 2021/22 and 2022/23, and have allocated Household Support Fund through small and grassroots organisations to reach the most minoritised communities in Leeds.

## **Dialogue with the Third Sector around Budget Pressures, Future Direction of Travel and Investment in the Sector**

In light of the significant financial challenge currently faced by the council there has been ongoing dialogue with the third sector. The Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive Officer of the Council, the Director for Communities, Housing and Environment and the Director for Strategy and Resources met with Third Sector Leeds (TSL) Leadership Group and additional invitees in November 2023, to provide early insights into the council's financial proposals to be presented to the December Executive Board. Following this, during November the council's Deputy Chief Officer Financial Services provided Third Sector Partnership with a more detailed overview of the council's financial position outlining the proposed budget, projected gap and the key risks, issues and uncertainties. TSL and infrastructure organisations acknowledged there were limitations to the council's engagement until proposals were agreed at Executive Board, however affirmed these early insights and detail of the timeline are helpful to manage expectations and sector messaging. Further discussion is due to take place, including health third sector spending, alongside analysis from the National Lottery Community Fund and Leeds Community Foundation.

It is understood the Leeds Integrated Care Board (ICB) Health and Care Partnership need to make a £23 million financial saving for 2023/24 and recurrent savings of £30 million from 2024/25. A notice was issued in September 2023 to all NHS contract and grant funded providers, including the third sector of a potential 3% cut applied evenly across all contract and non-contract elements and a letter giving 6 months' notice from 1st April was issued to all contracts in late December. This is described as an equal approach across all providers, but the third sector contests whether this is the fairest or most equitable method as this will have a significantly detrimental impact on people facing the greatest health and social inequalities and those living in our priority neighbourhoods, as well as not being cost effective beyond enabling a short-term balanced Leeds NHS budget. The Leeds ICB is reviewing proposals for partners to collectively address the significant financial shortfall in 2024/25 through both reducing and reshaping spend, whilst engaging with the third sector in the evolving situation.

The diverse and wide-ranging nature of council funding means a similar method of a blanket reduction is not recommended. Instead, the approach should be driven through a process which considers savings and opportunities based upon the nature and importance of services, in terms of city priorities and best city ambitions and cost effectiveness. The council has been proactive in dialogue with third sector partners on any potential impact regarding contract and grant arrangements as well as working internally to ensure efficiencies are made with due consideration.

Inevitably, reductions in health will have a potential impact on planned the council's directorate commissioning arrangements where various contributions come together into a central pot. There is work taking place to understand the unintended impact of pooled budget reductions in terms of delivery outcomes and impact on the third sector.

## **Opportunities and Challenges Presented**

The financial constraints of both the council and health partners will continue to impact significantly on third sector organisations, and further reduction in the number of organisations, staff and volunteers across the sector is anticipated. Evidence suggests that a shrinking third sector will reduce social resources that help communities cope and respond to new and emerging threats, weakening community resilience. At a time of growing social and economic need and increased demand for statutory provision, this is highly concerning.

Although current circumstances present significant challenges, open and honest discussion between council and third sector colleagues has been a positive outcome of ongoing partnership working, and has highlighted some areas of opportunity to work differently together. As noted by the Leader of the council in communications with partners, these challenges present a need to be clear on the functions of the council and what it can no longer afford to deliver, whilst remaining committed to our Best City Ambition. We do however need to follow through our words and strategies with a clear press on actions.

There are opportunities for thinking differently about which services can be provided by the third sector, making the most of the wealth of expertise and local knowledge the sector holds, as well as the value for money, particularly in comparison to some private businesses. Shifting from extremely high-cost private providers to greater use of local, third sector organisations provide opportunities not only to bring costs down, but to also maximise quality of service and positive outcomes, and provide better value for the Leeds Pound.

There are clear constraints on the funding available to the council, and how this is used. Whilst the council has a unique and specific role in lobbying central government around these issues and how they affect communities in Leeds, Third Sector Leeds has demonstrated its willingness to work in partnership to utilise other lobbying routes to support the council in this messaging.

It is unclear whether the Household Support Fund, C£14m, will be extended for 2024/25, which has a significant impact on both the support capacity and funding supplied to households. Clarity is being sought at the highest levels by the council, and work is underway by the Cost of Living Silver Group on options should the funding not be extended.

## **Partnership and Engagement Relationships**

The council invests financial and staff resource in the development and maintenance of partnership and engagement relationships with the sector, including city-wide strategic bodies and a network of locality, service, thematic, community and equality-focused third sector forums. This facilitates strategic engagement with the sector, dialogue between the sector, council and a range of partnerships and forums. This enables the council to have better reach into communities through the third sector, resulting in more effective co-production and collaboration on key city and locality agendas. For example, the council provides executive support and plays a leading role in the Third Sector Partnership. This is a key part of the city infrastructure through which the third sector, council, NHS, universities and other public sector partners work together to ensure that collectively the conditions are created for a thriving third sector, so organisations can deliver better outcomes for the people of Leeds.

Third Sector Commissioning, Collaboration and Partnership Group builds on the strong history in Leeds of collaboration and partnership working, to maintain and further develop the strength of collaborative working between the third and the public sector, particularly as it relates to commissioning and joined up service delivery. This has been particularly important over the last few months, although it's accepted that the current financial pressures, timescales and approach of different directorates have made this challenging at times. As such the group has potential to provide a vehicle to ensure that investment, including in the third sector, is coherent and coordinated, and provides important discussion space for undertaking joint work and to address emerging priorities. Partners are reviewing the way that the commissioning group works with Third Sector Partnership Group, the NHS Integrated Commissioning Executive and TSL to bring about the ambitions outlined in the Third Sector Strategy.

## Ongoing Commitments and Developments

The council continues to drive and support a range of initiatives to ensure that Leeds has a thriving third sector and strong civil society that can deliver for all of the people of Leeds. For example:

- The Third Sector Partnership continue to build on the following policy commitments (all available to download [here](#), and underpinned by the Leeds Third Sector Strategy):
  - Compact for Leeds
  - Third Sector Ambition Statement
  - Characteristics of a Thriving Community
  - Leeds Pledge to Strengthen Civil Society
  - Leeds Commissioning Code of Practice
  - Leeds Code of Practice for Working Together
  - Social Value Charter

Council colleagues and third sector partners will continue to broker further discussions as necessary on budget, global, national, local and other emerging challenges that impact on Leeds, in order to drive new ways of working and contribute to the delivery of the city ambitions; specifically, to ensure that there is a diverse and thriving sector that continues to involve, engage and meet the needs and aspirations of all communities.



How many Third Sector organisations are there?



How many of these 1,373 registered charities contribute to health and care?



What is the number of organisations by size, and what is their typical income?



How many people work in the Third Sector?

**6,326** employees  
**7,960** trustees  
**31,134** volunteers



Changes between 2020 and 2022





## How is the Third Sector funded and resourced?



## What is the typical number of staff per organisation size?



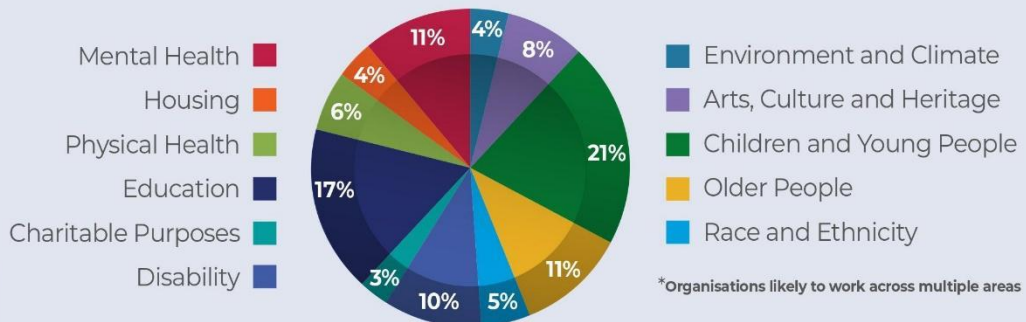
## Key areas of work

- Advocacy
- Climate action
- Community development
- Digital inclusion
- Education
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Improving population health
- Relief of poverty
- Social isolation and exclusion
- Tackling inequalities

**811,956** people live in **Leeds**  
**275,667** of them live in the **most deprived areas** of the city



## What is the estimated proportion of organisations in different areas of work?\*



[Click here to view the State of the Sector resources](#)

Based on 2022 data

Full paper: <https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/state-of-the-sector/>

## Appendix 3: Third Sector for Health & Care Cost Pressures, Survey Results January 2024

### Key Findings Summary:

- Third Sector providers are having to turn away people in need: almost 60% of respondents have had to operate a waiting list for their services. 48% of respondents have had to reduce or close a service/services since September 2022. 84% of respondents answered yes or maybe to being concerned their organisation is at risk of service reduction this winter.
- Cost pressures are coming from multiple directions: raising energy and staff costs are significant factors. A 300% energy bill increase was reported by one respondent. Financial challenges are resulting in organisations having to close: 12 organisations responded yes or maybe to them considering closing their organisation this winter - with more organisations indicating that they are considering it in the near future.
- Chronic lack of uplifts are creating unsustainable services: with some organisations using reserves to cover pay increases or subsidise contracts. Feedback in comments indicates a loss of staff to the public sector's better pay and conditions, and more reports of concerns for service viability in 2024/5.
- Workforce under continuous pressure: staff retention challenges; higher staff turnover; recruitment problems; and newly appointed staff not starting or leaving quickly (reasoning evidenced through comments). 80% of respondents were concerned (answering yes or maybe) that their organisation was at risk of losing staff this winter.
- Third Sector Organisation Boards are being asked to take high level risks: use of reserves, lowering pay scales, service reduction affecting service quality. Evidence gathered in feedback shows that third sector organisations are having to make decisions that they know will put business sustainability, staff levels and service user wellbeing at risk.
- Cost pressures, leading to service reductions, are contributing to risks to population groups: With 44 organisations (78% of respondents) indicating that they want to flag a risk with a population care board.

## Appendix 4: Leeds Third Sector Strategy - Executive Summary

# LEEDS THIRD SECTOR STRATEGY: OUR AMBITIONS

Leeds is a city where all partners work together to ensure that the third sector is more diverse and resilient, and therefore better able to continue supporting our communities.

### COMMISSIONING



- Partners invest in who is best placed to design and deliver services
- Commissioning is based on trust, values and flexibility

### WORKFORCE



- We have a thriving, valued and diverse workforce
- Third sector careers are attractive, sustainable and values driven.

### VOLUNTEERING



- Partners celebrate volunteering in all its forms
- We create an innovative and diverse volunteering environment

### DIGITAL



- Partners invest in training, systems and data-sharing to ensure the sector can support those that experience most inequality

### CLIMATE ACTION



- Partners create capacity and empower communities to take action and develop climate change awareness
- All communities are involved in a just and democratic transition

### SOCIAL VALUE



- Social value activity is directed toward the third sector
- There are clear routes and priorities for contractors to be matched with opportunities that create change in communities

### INWARD INVESTMENT



- All partners support the third sector to attract more external funding to the city
- There is a consistent approach and clear priorities for utilising investment

### EVIDENCE



- Quantitative data and community insight are valued and used to make decisions
- Data about the sector, funding and what works is gathered, analysed and made accessible
- Communities lead research and influence city agendas

### PARTNERSHIPS

City anchors, businesses and the third sector work together in a fair and equitable partnership as a whole system to make Leeds the best city to live in. Partners are open and transparent, and leaders actively share their decision-making power.

Full paper: <https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/leeds-third-sector-strategy/>



# Leeds Volunteering Strategy Making Leeds the best city for volunteering.

## Our vision

Leeds will be the best city for volunteering. A city that celebrates volunteering in all its forms, where it's easy for people to find ways to make a difference and get involved.

All partners work together to support an innovative and diverse volunteering environment.

## Our values

-  Enabling people to grow
-  Collaborative
-  Inclusive and accessible
-  Supportive
-  Innovative



We reach reach and meet people 'where they are' creating a more diverse volunteer base that brings new skills, insights and lived experience.

Our inclusive practice is of a high standard and well resourced.

We collaborate and share resources whilst working to ensure that volunteering is invested in so that we can create and support a strong volunteer base.

## Ambitions for change



1: Volunteers are at the centre of volunteering in Leeds, they shape and influence volunteering and are valued and recognised.



2: The Leeds volunteering offer is inclusive and creates equity. Our volunteer base is diverse and represents the communities we work with.



3: There are a greater number of volunteers who lead on innovative social action for the benefit of communities in partnership with organisations.



4: Volunteering is well resourced and resources are shared, resulting in strong and effective volunteer management.

The voices of volunteers are heard - we understand their needs and wishes.

Volunteers are valued - their contributions to meaningful social action are recognised.

Innovation in volunteering is welcomed.

We are open to learning new approaches, increasing volunteer mobility between organisations, reducing barriers to volunteering and enhancing the contributions of businesses.



## **Appendix 6: LEEDS THIRD SECTOR AMBITION STATEMENT TO SECURE A THRIVING THIRD SECTOR FOR LEEDS**

City partners acknowledge that Leeds needs a thriving third sector able to rise to current challenges and opportunities and work alongside all partners to deliver the Best City ambitions. To enable this to happen Leeds needs a culture that is creative and brave enough to embrace further new ways of doing business with the third sector. In order to achieve this new culture, a Third Sector Ambition Statement has been created to enable partners to understand what is meant by a 'thriving third sector'. The Statement:

- provides a general description of the type of third sector that Leeds needs and wants to invest in and nurture
- sets out ambitions in order to influence practice, and
- provides encouragement and clear expectations about doing business in new ways with the third sector.

### **Leeds Third Sector Ambition Statement**

**The success of Leeds and the wellbeing of all of its citizens is dependent on having thriving private, public and third sectors, each independently successful but working effectively in partnership.** The City's ambition is to have a sustainable, diverse third sector economy, with organisations from the smallest self-help group through to larger, local and national service providers. The ambition is to use the Leeds pound to invest in a local infrastructure that has a legacy beyond the life of any single funding programme.

#### **Leeds needs a third sector that is:**

- enterprising, responsive, sustainable, resilient, professional and civic minded
- diverse in its activities and the size, type and governance of its organisations
- inclusive, with extensive participation and broad reach into all neighbourhoods and communities
- confident in its strong and mutually beneficial relationships with the public and private sector
- driven by the needs and priorities of people and communities in Leeds
- able to champion and advocate for citizens, communities and causes
- led by local people
- able to evidence outcomes and be recognised for quality delivery and impact

#### **Leeds also needs:**

- a vibrant and active community and self-help sector operating at the grassroots level in local neighbourhoods and across communities of interest
- an effective third sector support and development infrastructure that can help to grow the third sector that Leeds requires
- the conditions that allow small, neighbourhood and community groups to emerge, develop and grow

#### **A thriving and sustainable third sector will include:**

- National and regional third sector organisations delivering in Leeds
- Leeds-based organisations able to compete for and win major contracts in Leeds and beyond
- Local voluntary organisations: evolving to meet local needs, sustainable and flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances, with the potential to grow
- Small Voluntary, Community and Self Help groups often volunteer-run with low running costs and high impact

**Leeds commits to create the conditions for a Thriving Third Sector that can play its role in the City**

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## Work Schedule

Date: 22 February 2024

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

### Brief summary

- 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 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

Members are requested to:

- a) Consider the draft work schedule for the 2023/24 municipal year.

## What is this report about?

1. A draft work schedule for the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) 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 specific member requests for individual work items.
2. The Executive Board minutes from the meetings held on 7 February 2024 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. Members may wish to note that the [Executive Board agenda](#) included the response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations relating to the accessibility and safety of parks and green spaces (original recommendations were included at [Appendix 1](#)). The agenda also included the joint Scrutiny Report, which responded to the initial budget proposals. This can be found at appendix 3 within the [full budget report](#) (page 123).

### Developing the work schedule

4. When considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
  - Avoid unnecessary duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring, a particular issue.
  - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.
  - Avoid pure "information items" except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
  - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
  - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
5. To deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits. Additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board may also be required.
6. Members are asked to note that a working group is scheduled for 1.30-2.30pm on 2 April 2024 to discuss the changing regulations relating to social landlords.

## What impact will this proposal have?

7. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

8. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the priorities set out in the Best City Ambition.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?



Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

9. To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to maintain 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?**

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should consider the criteria set out in paragraph 3.

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

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

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

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 7 February 2024.

### **Background papers**

- None.

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## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

June	July	August
<b>Agenda for 22 June 2023 at 10.30 am</b>	<b>Agenda for 20 July 2023 at 10.30 am</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting</b>
Annual reports: Co-opted Members (DB) Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference (DB) Potential Sources of Work (DB)  Performance Update (PM)	Waste: Draft Waste Strategy / Route Review / future of waste services  Proposed review of community committee infrastructure, following recommendations of LGA Peer Review  Referral to Scrutiny: Impact of radon gas on social housing tenants (Cllr Dixon)	
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
<b>Site Visits</b>		

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**Scrutiny Work Items Key:**

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

September	October	November
<b>Agenda for 14 September 2023 at 10.30 am</b>	<b>Agenda for 12 October 2023</b>	
<p>Safer, Stronger Communities – Leeds Plan Update (PSR)</p> <p>West Yorkshire Police &amp; Crime Plan 2021-2024 – Update (PSR)</p> <p><i>ASB Ombudsman report to be attached to agenda for information.</i></p>	<p>Parks – Development of ‘Plan on a Page’ for city parks, including safe access for women &amp; girls</p> <p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 update</p>	<i>Call In Meeting – 6 November</i>
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
21 September – Budget Briefing (remote) for all Scrutiny members		
<b>Site Visits</b>		

**Scrutiny Work Items Key:**

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

December	January	February
<b>Agenda for 7 December 2023</b>	<b>Agenda for 25 January 2024 at 10.30 am</b>	<b>Agenda for 22 February 2024 at 10.30 am</b>
Reducing poverty and improving financial inclusion (PSR)  Local Welfare Support Scheme Review Update (PSR)  Update on Community Committee Review	Performance report (PM)  Financial Health Monitoring (PSR)  2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS)	Ensuring the future resilience of the Third Sector (PSR)  Housing Activity Update (PSR)
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
2024/25 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) – 15 December 2023 9.30am -11am (remote)	31/1/24 1.30-2.30pm: Lettings Policy Briefing	
<b>Site Visits</b>		

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**Scrutiny Work Items Key:**

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring



## Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) Work Schedule for 2023/2024 Municipal Year

March	April	Notes
<b>Agenda for 21 March 2024 at 10.30 am</b>	<b>No Scrutiny Board meeting</b>	<b>To be scheduled</b>
Climate Emergency Update (PSR)  Green Spaces - annual update on progress towards ambitions set out in the Parks & Greenspaces Strategy  Community Committee Review Update (tbc)  End of year statement		Locality Working & Priority Neighbourhoods (PSR) <i>Deferred until June</i>
<b>Working Group Meetings</b>		
	2/4/24 1.30-2.30pm: Regulation of Social Landlords	
<b>Site Visits</b>		

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### Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 2024

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

Councillors S Arif, D Coupar, H Hayden,  
A Lamb, J Lennox, J Pryor, M Rafique and  
F Venner

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor M Harland

**88 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 B to the report entitled, 'Capital Receipts Programme Update', referred to in Minute No. 101 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 be considered in private. This is on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council. It is considered that the release of such information would, or would be likely to prejudice the Council's commercial interests in relation to property transactions. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from publication outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information at this point in time.

**89 Late Items**

Supplementary Information – Agenda Item 13A - 2024/2025 Revenue Budget and Council Tax

With the agreement of the Chair, supplementary information was circulated to Board Members and published ahead of the meeting for inclusion within agenda item 13A, '2024/2025 Revenue Budget and Council Tax' in the form of Annex 2 which provided a statement of 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets by service and also a revised Appendix 10 which presented budgeted movements in Earmarked Reserves 2024/25. The supplementary information was considered by the Board as part of agenda item 13A. (Minute No. 99 refers).

**90 Declaration of Interests**

Regarding agenda item 13 entitled, '2024/25 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Report including Reports on the Capital Programme and Treasury

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 13th March, 2024

Management Strategy’, Councillor Rafique drew the Board’s attention to the fact that he is a Trustee of Wade’s Charity in a personal capacity. As such, Councillor Rafique advised the Board that he would leave the meeting room for the duration of the Board’s consideration of that item (Minute No. 99 refers).

**91 Minutes - 13th December 2023 and 15th January 2024**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be respectively approved as correct records.

**ECONOMY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

**92 Ofsted Inspection: Employment and Skills Service, Adult Learning and Employer Provider Apprenticeships**

The Director of City Development submitted a report which presented to the Board the key judgements and full report of the recent full Ofsted inspection of the Employment and Skills Service, Adult Learning and Employer Provider Apprenticeship programmes.

By way of introduction to the report, the Executive Member advised the Board that the Council had been found to be ‘Outstanding’ in all areas, following the recent Ofsted inspection of the Employment and Skills Service, Adult Learning and Employer Provider Apprenticeship programmes. It was noted that Leeds was the first Local Authority to achieve this ‘Outstanding’ judgement since the new Inspection Framework commenced in September 2019.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated all involved in achieving this ‘Outstanding’ outcome, which it was highlighted was in such a key service area. The Board extended its thanks to all who had contributed to this achievement.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report be noted, with the fact that Leeds City Council is the first Local Authority to achieve the ‘Outstanding’ judgement since the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) commenced in September 2019, being celebrated;
- (b) That it be noted that the Employment and Skills Service has improved from its previous inspection and judgement of ‘Good’ to ‘Outstanding’;
- (c) That it be noted that there are no areas identified for improvement;
- (d) That Executive Board’s appreciation and congratulations be formally recorded and extended to all those involved in the inspection.

**93 Determination of School Admission Arrangements for 2025/26**

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which sought approval of the Leeds City Council admission arrangements (admission policy) for September 2025.



In introducing the report, the Executive Member specifically highlighted that these arrangements applied to all Leeds community and voluntary controlled maintained schools, and not to schools that are an academy, voluntary aided, foundation trust or free schools, as these schools must set their own arrangements annually. The Board's attention was also drawn to the proposals regarding reductions in the published admission numbers (PAN) for some specific schools as identified within the report, which had been incorporated into the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That in determining the school admissions arrangements for the academic year 2025/26, the admissions policies for the Leeds Community and Voluntary Controlled maintained Primary and Secondary schools (as detailed at Appendices A, B, and C to the submitted report), be approved;
- (b) That the resolutions within this minute be exempted from Call In for the reasons as set out within paragraphs 48 and 49 of the submitted report;
- (c) That any necessary authority be delegated to the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service, to enable that officer to take any actions should there be a need to revise these arrangements after they have been determined, where this revision is necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement of the School Admission Code 2021, admissions law, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator or any misprint in the admission arrangements, under regulation 19 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012;
- (d) That the following be noted:-
  - (i) The Coordinated scheme for admissions arrangements for entry in September 2025 (as detailed in Appendix D to the submitted report) has been set;
  - (ii) That the officer responsible for this work is the Lead for Admissions and Family Information Service;
  - (iii) That the statutory date for implementation (i.e. determination of the policies) is no later than 28 February 2024, with the arrangements published by 15 March 2024.

(The Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules state that a decision may be declared as being exempt from the Call In process by the decision taker if it is considered that the matter is urgent and any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's, or the public's interests. In line with this, the resolutions contained within this minute were exempted from the Call In process, as per resolution (b) above, and for the reasons as detailed above and as set out within sections 48 - 49 of the submitted report)

## **CLIMATE, ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE**

### **94 Parks and Green Spaces Overview**

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which presented an update on the progress being made by the Green Spaces Service and which provided a response to a statement of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) entitled, 'Plans for Community Parks' and its associated recommendations.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member drew the Board's attention to the key points within it and the actions for the service which were proposed to be undertaken in response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations. Details of proposed changes to the Leeds Quality Park Assessment process were also highlighted.

The Board welcomed Councillor Stewart Golton to the meeting, as Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities), who was in attendance to introduce the Scrutiny Board statement and its recommendations, as referenced at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

Members welcomed the report and extended their thanks to the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) for the work undertaken and the statement produced on this issue. Thanks was also extended to the team of Council officers delivering the Green Spaces service.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Statement of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities), as presented at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted, and that the response provided, as detailed in section 17 of the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) That approval be given to the reduction in frequency of the Leeds Quality Park Assessment to once every three years, which is more in line with how Green Flag assessments are undertaken;
- (c) That the Board's continued support for community food growing in areas of land managed by the Green Spaces Service, which builds upon the approach as set out in paragraph 14 of the submitted report, be confirmed;
- (d) That it be noted that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is responsible for the implementation of the resolutions above.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **95 A Habitat Banking Vehicle for Leeds City Council**

The Director of City Development and the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a joint report presenting details to the Board on how the Council could respond to new approaches to protecting and

enhancing biodiversity in Leeds which have been brought about by the Environment Act 2021. The report proposed the principle of establishing a Habitat Banking Vehicle (HBV) for the Council, which would enable direct investment in strategic nature recovery.

By way of introduction to the report, the Board received details of the relevant requirements arising from the Environment Act 2021 and how the proposals within the report responded to those requirements.

Responding to an enquiry raised, assurance was provided that in line with Government guidance and the Council's draft Local Plan Update the delivery of the biodiversity net-gain would be onsite wherever possible. Regarding sites where this was not possible and off-site biodiversity was delivered, it was noted that the Council's draft Local Plan Update emphasised that this should be within the locality where possible.

Emphasis was placed upon the importance of this issue and Members extended their thanks to officers for the proactive work which had been undertaken in developing such proposals.

In response to a further enquiry regarding the potential involvement of Parish and Town Councils, it was noted that there was the opportunity of working in partnership with other stakeholders so that their land could potentially be included within the HBV process.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the principle of establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (a Habitat Banking Vehicle (HBV)) be approved so that the sale of habitat units can be undertaken by the HBV in line with the Environment Act 2021;
- (b) That approval be given to delegate the necessary authority to the Director of City Development and the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment regarding the establishment and operation of the HBV, in consultation with the City Solicitor, Section 151 officer and the Executive Members for 'Sustainable Development & Infrastructure' and 'Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space';
- (c) That it be noted by Executive Board that an annual report will be provided which details the performance of the HBV for the previous financial year and which presents the future plans for the next financial year.

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

##### **96 Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic**

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which sought agreement to 'care experience' being recognised as a locally protected characteristic by Leeds City Council and which presented the reasons for this proposal. Further to this, the report also recommended a series of actions arising from that proposed designation.

By way of introduction to the report, the Executive Member highlighted the significance of the proposals, which followed the deputation presented to Full Council by care leavers on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. It was noted that the designation of care experience as a locally protected characteristic was part of a national campaign, and if adopted Leeds would be the 77<sup>th</sup> Local Authority to do so. It was also noted that the report recommended the establishment of an implementation group to develop and deliver this work, with an undertaking being given that care leavers would be invited to play a key role in that process.

Members welcomed the proposals within the report and reiterated their thanks to the care leavers who presented their deputation to Full Council.

Responding to an enquiry, it was confirmed that provision would be made to enable cross-party representation on the implementation group.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That it be recognised that care experienced people are a group likely to face discrimination;
- (b) That ‘care experience’ be enshrined as a locally protected characteristic, and that all other local organisations and partners be called upon to treat ‘care experience’ as a locally protected characteristic to be adopted with the Corporate Parenting Principles;
- (c) That it be agreed that the Council will amend its Equality and Diversity Policy to include ‘care experience’ as a Locally Protected Characteristic;
- (d) That it be agreed that the Council will amend its Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process and associated guidance, to include ‘care experience’ as an additional category to be considered for any changes or improvements to future services and policy;
- (e) That it be agreed that the Council will include ‘care experience’ in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and annual information relating to protected characteristics;
- (f) That agreement be given to delegate responsibility to the Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Executive Member for ‘Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships’, to set up a time limited implementation group which will develop an action plan, co-produced with care experienced individuals, to support Council services to embed the amended Equality and Diversity Policy and EIA guidance and establish a cross-Council approach to creating opportunities for care experienced people.

**97 Recommendation to increase levels of Fee and Maintenance payments to Leeds Foster Carers and agree ongoing process for annual review**

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which sought approval to recommendations for providing an uplift in the weekly fees and maintenance allowances paid to Leeds foster carers with the aim of ensuring that cost-of-living increases do not disadvantage and impact negatively on Leeds foster carers. The report also presented a proposal for a process to be established for future years regarding the approval of an annual uplift being delegated to the Director of Children and Families.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member highlighted the importance of the role undertaken by foster carers, and how this proposed uplift was something that the Council 'could not afford not to do', as it was vitally important to continue to recruit and retain foster carers. The significant demand for foster carers being experienced nationally was noted. It was highlighted that whilst foster carers provided the best outcomes for Looked After Children, foster care was also the most financially sustainable way of caring for those children.

Members welcomed the proposals and extended their thanks to foster carer community in Leeds for the vital role that they played.

Whilst supporting the proposals, a Member made enquiries regarding what further actions could be taken to provide greater support and incentives to foster carers, with an offer to work on a cross-party basis, as appropriate. In response, the Board received further detail on the actions being taken in this area, which included 'invest to save' initiatives such as the proposed establishment of an additional level of foster carer for adolescents. Members also noted that work continued to build upon Leeds' positive performance regarding in-house foster carer levels when compared to other Core Cities and statistical neighbours. Further detail was also given on the wider support and enrichment package being provided to foster carers in Leeds, and also the work being undertaken which aimed to enhance the provision for children's social care more generally.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That a 5% increase for the fee element paid to Leeds foster carers, to be implemented retrospectively from the 1st April 2023, be agreed;
- (b) That a 7% increase for the maintenance allowance element paid to Leeds foster carers, to be implemented retrospectively from the 1st April 2023, be agreed;
- (c) That given the need to annually review foster carer fees and allowances, it be agreed that the approval of changes in fee levels in subsequent years be delegated to the Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources and the Chief Officer, Financial Services.

## **LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

### **98 Best City Ambition - 2024 Update - Final Proposals**

Further to Minute No. 80, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report which presented the final proposals for the 2024 update of the Leeds Best City Ambition. The report sought the Board's endorsement of the Leeds Best City Ambition update and that the Board recommends to Full Council that the updated version is adopted.

Responding to a specific enquiry, the Board noted that the Council's Communications team would undertake the graphic design work referenced within the report, which would be consistent with the approach previously taken in relation to the Council's other strategy documents.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Best City Ambition update final proposals, as presented within Appendix 1 to the submitted report, together with the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board response, as detailed at Appendix 4, be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that graphic design work will continue to be developed prior to the publication of the updated Best City Ambition around 1st April 2024, which may include some amendments to wording;
- (c) That the Best City Ambition update, as presented in the submitted report, be endorsed, and that Full Council be recommended to adopt the updated Leeds Best City Ambition;
- (d) That it be noted that the Director of Strategy and Resources is responsible for the next steps, as outlined in paragraphs 10-14 of the submitted report, including bringing forward an update of the 'Being Our Best' organisational plan to Executive Board in March 2024.

(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)

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

### **99 2024/25 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Report including reports on the Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy**

Further to Minute No. 81, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the Chief Officer Financial Services submitted a suite of reports regarding: proposals for the City Council's Revenue Budget for 2024/25 and the Leeds element of the Council Tax to be levied during the same period; proposals regarding an updated

Capital Programme for 2024 – 2028 and also a proposed updated Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25.

With the agreement of the Chair, supplementary information was circulated to Board Members and published ahead of the meeting for Members' consideration as part of agenda item 13A (2024/25 Revenue Budget and Council Tax), in the form of Annex 2 which provided a statement of 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets by service and also a revised Appendix 10 which presented budgeted movements in Earmarked Reserves 2024/25.

The Board was advised that the budget proposals as detailed within the submitted report were based upon the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. However, it was noted that following the publication of the submitted agenda papers, the final Local Government Finance Settlement had been received, which was consistent with the initial Settlement in all but the following elements: it was confirmed that additional resources had been received from the Services Grant of £98k and Social Care Grant of £97k, with a reduction in the New Homes Bonus Grant of £6k, totalling an additional £189k for 2024/25. Executive Board was asked to note this updated position and that this additional funding was proposed to be allocated to the Council's reserves to deal with in year pressures within Social Care.

Responding to a specific enquiry, the Board received an update on the Government's recent announcement regarding additional funding for Local Authorities, the level of funding being received by Leeds and how this was being managed in terms of the budget proposals.

**(A) 2024/2025 Revenue Budget and Council Tax**

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That, subject to the inclusion of the updated position as referenced above, Council be recommended to note the recommendation of the Council's statutory Section 151 officer (the Chief Officer – Financial Services) that the Budget proposals for 2024/25 are robust and that the proposed level of reserves is adequate, as set out at Part 7 of Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
- (b) That, subject to the inclusion of the updated position as referenced above, Council be recommended to adopt the following:-
  - (i) That the revenue budget for 2024/25 totalling £622.0m be approved. This means that the Leeds element of Council Tax for 2024/25 will increase by 2.99% plus the Adult Social Care precept of 1.99% from 2023/24. This excludes the police and fire precepts which will be incorporated into the Council Tax report to be submitted to Council on 21st February 2024;
  - (ii) That approval be given to grants totalling £73.1k to be allocated to parishes, as shown at Appendix 5 to the submitted report;
  - (iii) That approval be given to the revised virement rules at Appendix 7 to the submitted report - Virement Decisions to Amend Approved Budgets, specifically that the de minimis level for

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virements below which any variations to net managed budgets will be deemed 'Other Budget Adjustments' is increased from £10k to £50k. Budget movements that are not between budget headings within the approved net managed budget will also be 'Other Budget Adjustments';

- (iv) That approval be given to the strategy at Appendix 9 to the submitted report in respect of the flexible use of capital receipts - specifically the additional planned use in 2023/24 of £6.7m and planned use in 2024/25 of £18.9m;
  - (v) That in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, the budget be approved with:
    - An increase of 7.7% in dwelling rents;
    - An increase of 7.7% in garage and travellers site rent;
    - An increase of 7% for the standing charges in district heating schemes and the district heating unit rate will remain at 10p per kwh;
    - A 7% increase in heat consumption charges in sheltered complexes;
    - An increase in service charges for low/medium rise flats to £5.17 per week and for multi-storey flats to £12.20 per week;
    - An increase in the charge for tenants who benefit from the sheltered support service to £9.22 per week;
    - An increase in the Retirement Life charge for the provision of additional community facilities to £12.20 per week for services within complexes and £5.17 per week where they are within a standalone community centre;
    - An increase in the service charges for Wharfedale extra care scheme to £50.73 per week;
    - An increase in the service charge for Gascoigne House extra care scheme to £64.04 per week;
    - The support charge at both extra care schemes being increased from £24.54 in 2023/24 to £28.77 in 2024/25;
  - (vi) That in respect of the Schools Budget, the High Needs Block budget for 2024/25, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Schools Budget Report at Appendix 8 to the submitted report (specifically the table at paragraph 3.4.6), be approved;
- (c) That Executive Board's thanks be conveyed to Scrutiny Boards and all those who took part in the public consultation for their comments and observations made in consideration of the Council's Proposed Budget.

## **(B) Capital Programme Update 2023 – 2028**

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That Executive Board recommends to Council:-
  - (i) the approval of the Capital Programme for 2024-2028 totalling £1,906.7m, including the revised projected position for 2023/24, as presented in Appendix A to the submitted report;



(ii) the approval of the MRP policy statements for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix C to the submitted report; and  
(iii) the approval of the Capital and Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix D to the submitted report; with it being noted that as part of the Capital and Investment Strategy, the Council is required to set prudential limits for the total value of its non-treasury investments and, specifically, limits for the total value of service investments and the total value of commercial investments that it holds; and as such, Council be recommended to approve, as detailed within Appendix D that:-

- the prudential limit for service investments be set at £80m;
- that a limit of £200m be set for the carrying value of assets which are classed as commercial investments, with it being noted that these limits represent no change between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

- (b) That Executive Board approval be given to the following net injections totalling £264.7m into the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A(iii) to the submitted report:-
- £31.7m to address Capital Programme Review budget pressures as detailed at Appendix A(iv) to the submitted report;
  - £72.6m of annual programme injections as detailed at Appendix A(v) to the submitted report;
  - £11.8m of ringfenced capital receipts for the District Heating Network Phase 4 scheme and the Future Ways of Working Programme;
  - £4.0m of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategic Fund monies; and
  - £144.7m of other injections, primarily relating to annual capital grant allocations, one off capital grant allocations funding schemes such as junction improvements at Dawsons Corner and the LUF3 Heart of Holbeck project, the roll forward of the HRA Programme, invest to save borrowing schemes and other secured external grant funding.
- (c) That it be noted that the above resolutions to inject funding of £264.7m will be implemented by the Chief Officer - Financial Services.

### **(C) Treasury Management Strategy 2024/2025**

#### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the treasury strategy for 2024/25, as set out in Section 8.5 of the submitted report, be approved by Executive Board, and that the review of the 2023/24 strategy and operations, as set out in Sections 8.3 and 8.4 of the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That full Council be recommended to approve that the borrowing limits for the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 be confirmed as set in February 2023 and that new limits for 2026/27 be approved at £3,200m for Borrowing and £490m for Other Long-term Liabilities for the Authorised Limit. For 2026/27 full Council be recommended to approve that the Operational Boundary be set at £3,000m for Borrowing and £470m for Other Long-term Liabilities, as detailed at Section 8.6 of the submitted report;

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- (c) That full Council be recommended to approve the treasury management indicator for the maturity structure of the Council's borrowing as detailed in Section 8.7 and Appendix A to the submitted report;
- (d) That full Council be recommended to set the investment limits for periods greater than 364 days for 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26 at £150m, and that a new limit for 2026/27 be set at £150m, as detailed in Section 8.8.9 of the submitted report.

(The matters referred to in Minute Nos. 99(A)(a) – 99(A)(b)(vi) (Revenue Budget and Council Tax); 99(B)(a)(i) – 99(B)(a)(iii) (Capital Programme) and 99(C)(b) – 99(C)(d) (Treasury Management Strategy), given that they were decisions being made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, were not eligible for Call In)

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

(Further to Minute No. 90 above, Councillor Rafique left the meeting room for the duration of the Board's consideration of this item).

## **RESOURCES**

### **100 Financial Reporting 2023/24 – Month 9 (December 2023)**

The Chief Officer Financial Services submitted a report which presented the Council's financial position as at the end of the first 9 months of the 2023/24 financial year. Specifically, the report reviewed the current position against the 2023/24 Budget, provided an update on the use of other funding resources and also updated the Board on the current position regarding the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund.

In presenting the report the Executive Member provided an overview of the key points which included the current forecasting of an overspend of £39.0m for the General Fund as at month 9 of the financial year. The measures being taken to manage this position were highlighted, but with it being noted that the use of the Council's reserves to achieve a balanced position for 2023/24 would be necessary, which would have an impact upon the resources available for 2024/25 and beyond.

Members further discussed the Council's current financial position and the financial outlook for the coming year, noted the range of actions being taken to manage that position and also considered the financial challenges being faced by Local Authorities nationally. The increasing pressures arising from key areas of demand such as children's social care were highlighted, with Members also referencing the national funding model for such areas.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That it be noted that at Month 9 of the financial year (December 2023), the Authority's General Fund revenue budget is forecasting an overspend of £39.0m for 2023/24 (6.8% of the approved net revenue budget) within a challenging national context, with it also being noted that a range of actions are being undertaken to address this position;
- (b) That it be noted that at Month 9 of the financial year (December 2023) the Authority's Housing Revenue Account is forecasting an overspend of £1.4m for 2023/24 (0.5% of the approved gross budget);
- (c) That it be noted that known inflationary increases, including demand and demographic pressures in Social Care, known impacts of the rising cost of living, including the NJC pay settlement of £1,925 and the JNC pay settlement of 3.5%, have been incorporated into this reported financial position, as submitted. That it also be noted that these pressures will continue to be reviewed during the year and reported to future Executive Board meetings as more information becomes available, and that proposals would need to be identified to absorb any additional pressures;
- (d) That it be noted that where an overspend is projected, directorates, including the Housing Revenue Account, are required to present action plans to mitigate their reported pressures and those of the Council's wider financial challenge where possible, in line with the Revenue Principles agreed by Executive Board in February 2023 through the annual Revenue Budget report;
- (e) That the Month 9 positions regarding the use of Invest to Save, Covid Backlog and Flexible Capital Receipt resources be noted, and that the additional planned use of £0.3m of Capital Receipts in 2023/24 also be noted, which is to support transformation projects and deliver savings in addition to the budgeted use approved by the Board to date.

### **101 Capital Receipts Programme Update**

Further to Minute No. 107, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the Director of City Development submitted a report presenting an update and overview of the Council's Capital Receipts Programme and which recommended to the Board a number of related approvals in relation to the programme.

The Board noted that further to the submitted report, 'Pudsey Bolton Royd Primary School - Caretaker's Property, Moorland Grove, Pudsey, LS28 8EP' was to be withdrawn from Table 2 (properties proposed for inclusion in the Capital Receipts Programme) due to further discussions to be undertaken with the school.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member provided an overview of the actions which were ongoing in relation to the Capital Receipts Programme, which given the financial challenge being faced by the Council was with the aim of having a smaller estate that was more fit for purpose. It was also noted

that further reports were expected to be submitted to Executive Board on such matters, as and when appropriate.

Following consideration of Appendix B 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, subject to the removal of ‘Pudsey Bolton Royd Primary School - Caretaker's Property’ from properties proposed for inclusion in the Capital Receipts Programme, the contents of the submitted report and its appendices be noted, together with the previous Key Decisions which have been taken in relation to the disposal of assets, as set out at paragraph 16 of the submitted report;
- (b) That the progress made and achieved since Executive Board considered the last report on 8 February 2023, be noted;
- (c) That, subject to the removal of ‘Pudsey Bolton Royd Primary School - Caretaker's Property’ from properties proposed for inclusion in the Capital Receipts Programme, those assets identified in Appendix A and exempt Appendix B of the submitted report as “Proposed for Inclusion” be declared surplus and that approval be given to their disposal. Also, agreement be given to their addition to the Council’s Capital Receipts Programme of surplus properties for disposal;
- (d) That, subject to the removal of ‘Pudsey Bolton Royd Primary School - Caretaker's Property’ from properties proposed for inclusion in the Capital Receipts Programme, the withdrawal of properties from the Capital Receipts Programme, as set out in Appendix A and exempt Appendix B to the submitted report, be approved, which will be implemented by the Director of City Development;
- (e) That the approach being taken in relation to the review of Locality buildings across the city, be supported, with support also being given to how this approach will be informed by the review of locality service delivery.

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

**102 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance and Assurance Report**

The Director of Strategy and Resources submitted a report which presented an update on the current position and provided assurance to the Board in respect of health, safety and wellbeing matters for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report summarised the Council’s performance and main achievements, as well as looking ahead at any challenges and identified priorities for the next two years.

By way of introduction to the report, the Executive Member provided an update on some of the key points arising.

Responding to a Member's specific enquiries, the Board was advised that health, safety and wellbeing performance data was shared with Scrutiny for consideration. In terms of the timeliness of the data presented, it was noted that whilst the submission of the report to Executive Board was slightly later than it would normally be, given the availability of the data, the period that it covered was as timely as possible.

Members also noted that Corporate Leadership Team considered such matters regularly, with specific reference being made to the issue of violence, abuse and aggression against staff, which was a specific area of focus.

Thanks was extended to all officers involved for their role in this important area and for the work that would continue with the aim of delivering further progress and improvement.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report and appendices, be noted;
- (b) That it be recognised that a robust, yet proportionate approach to health, safety and wellbeing risk management continues to be applied within the Council, in order to enable the Council do the best it can with the resources and information available.

(Councillor J Pryor left the meeting during the consideration of this item)

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** FRIDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY 2024

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00PM, FRIDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 2024

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