



SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

**Meeting to be held remotely on
Thursday 16 July 2020 at 10.30 am**

There will be a pre-meet for all Board Members at 10.15am.

MEMBERSHIP

N Buckley	- Alwoodley
L Cunningham	- Armley
N Dawson	- Morley South
K Dye	- Killingbeck & Seacroft
J Goddard	- Roundhay
R Grahame	- Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
C Hall	- Rothwell
K Maqsood	- Gipton and Harehills
M Shahzad	- Moortown
J Taylor	- Horsforth
P Truswell (Chair)	- Middleton Park
P Wadsworth	- Guiseley and Rawdon

Note to observers of the meeting:

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

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1112&MId=9995&Ver=4>

**Principal Scrutiny Adviser:
Rebecca Atherton
Tel: 37 88642**

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25 of the Access to Information Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:-</p>	
3			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	

4

**DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE
PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

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

5

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND
NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

6

MINUTES - 25 JUNE 2020

5 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020.

7

**UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CITY
DEVELOPMENT**

To receive a verbal update from the Director of City Development regarding decisions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic response and subsequent city recovery plan, which fall within the remit of the Board.

8

INCLUSIVE GROWTH UPDATE

11 -
36

To consider the report of the Director of City Development which sets out the approach to the Inclusive Growth Strategy within the context of the city's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

9

DIGITAL INCLUSION

37 -
58

To consider an update from the Chief Digital and Information Officer about the digital response of the Council and the city to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10

WORK SCHEDULE

59 -
78

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

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will take place at 10.30am on 23 September 2020. There will be a pre-meeting for Board members at 10.15am.

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

THURSDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, L Cunningham,
N Dawson, K Dye, J Goddard, M Shahzad,
J Taylor and P Wadsworth

1 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

3 Late Items

There were no late items.

4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

5 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Grahame, C Hall and K Maqsood.

6 Minutes - 19 February 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

7 Update from Director of City Development

The Board received a verbal update from the Director of City Development regarding the decision making during the emergency response to the Covid 19 pandemic and the initial stages of the subsequent City Recovery Plan, as such information related to the remit of the Board.

The Board also received a transport update from the Chief Officer (highways and Transportation).

The Executive Board report Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 16th July, 2020

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Member
- Councillor Jonathon Pryor, Executive Member
- Martin Farrington, Director of City Development
- Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)
- Sue Wynne, Chief Officer (Employment and Skills)
- Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer (Economic Development)

The following was highlighted:

- Establishment of the cross agency Silver Group to consider infrastructure and supplies across the City.
- Transport/Traffic – flow of traffic was down on average by 48% although there was now a consistent increase following the re-opening of parts of the economy. Road traffic accidents had decreased by 40% and those Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) had seen a reduction of 48%. Public transport was now back to around 80% of the normal timetable during the week but capacity was down to 20% of normal levels. The park and ride sites had been closed with Temple Green Park and Ride site used as an NHS testing facility. Active travel – work was ongoing with cycle network provision and school street trials.
- Economy – Over 11,000 business grants had been administered to a total of £142.2 million. Some businesses that did not meet the grants criteria were entitled for grants from a discretionary fund and it was anticipated there would be capacity for up to a thousand applications.
- City Centre – Footfall had fallen to 5% of normal during the initial lockdown. Following the opening up of non-essential retail and markets there had been a rise of up to 50% of normal footfall. There had been information displays and measures placed to encourage social distancing along with the provision of hand sanitisation facilities. There was now a focus on the re-opening of the hospitality sector which would see an increased demand for outdoor seating.
- Employment & Skills – There had been an increase in Universal Credit claimants from 34,000 in March to 63,000 in May. 88,200 people had been furloughed which was 21.3% of the economically active.
- Planning – Decisions had been taken under the Officers Delegation Scheme and remote meetings of Plans Panels had been held. There had been a decrease in the number of applications normally received.
- Further transport issues including enhancement of footways to enable social distancing; active travel measures with cycle route improvements; schools street trial scheme; continuation of work on major roadwork schemes.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- There had been contact with Leeds Bradford International Airport regarding the impact on their business. The airport had been active

predominantly with freight and very limited passenger travel. Long term plans were still unclear with regards to the recovery of the aviation sector.

- The situation with Park and Ride sites was being constantly reviewed. Elland Road would be the first to re-open. Work was to be continued on development of the park and ride site at Stourton. City Centre parking charges would be reintroduced in July and it was felt that park and ride still provided a suitable alternative for travel into the city.
- Wearing of masks on public transport was not being enforced by bus drivers.
- Retail trends – challenges were faced due to social distancing and loss of footfall from the commercial sector within the city.
- Local ward information on KSI figures was requested.
- There would be time lapse photography of the removal of Regent Street Bridge.
- District centres – there had been support via the administration of grants and the provision of a micro business support service.
- Some concern regarding an increase in KSI figures during week 23. It was thought that there could be various reasons behind this including increased cyclists and pedestrians combined with an increase in vehicular use.
- Concern that the Active Travel schemes focussed on the City Centre. Some places were not as feasible as others but consultation was ongoing for other sites.
- Planning notices – these weren't displayed locally in the immediate period following lockdown but the practice had now been re-instated. There had not been an apparent difference in engagement with the public but this would be investigated in more detail. The government had changed legislation so that there was no requirement for placement of notices. Members sought clarification about the way in which the delegated decision process had been used within the Planning service during the initial phase of the pandemic.
- Air quality – there was information available on the Leeds Data Mill and showed figures of nitrogen dioxide were more than 50% down from the corresponding time last year.
- It was recognised that there were some difficulties with re-introducing park and ride facilities due to social distancing requirements. There had been requests for park and cycle/pedestrian sites.
- Enforcement relating to the Schools Streets scheme.

RESOLVED – That the update and discussion be noted.

8 Sustainable Development - Recommendation Tracking

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the Inquiry into Sustainable Development.

The Chair informed Members that the CCG had been invited to attend the meeting for this item. He informed the Board of the response received from the CCG and it was agreed that the Chair writes on behalf of the Board regarding concerns over the response to the invite and non-attendance at the meeting.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Cllr Mulherin, Executive Member
- Nasreen Yunis, Principal Planner
- Kathryn Moran , Principal Business & Systems Support Officer
- Martin Dean, Area Leader
- Tom Knowland, Head of Sustainable Energy and Climate Change
- Martin Elliott, Head of Strategic Planning
- Steve Hume, Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy
- Dayle Lynch, Estates Programme Manager
- Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer, Economic Development

The following was discussed:

- Recommendation 1 – Work had been carried out to add climate emergency information on reports to Executive Board. Reference was made to the Council’s commitment to meet net zero carbon emissions by 2030. With regard to procurement work was ongoing to embed climate change in every part of the procurement process.

In response to comments and questions further discussion included reductions in carbon emissions from the different use of Council assets and impact of the current economic situation. Progress was still being made towards current targets.

It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 1 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.

- Recommendation 2 – Further reference was made to the guidance prepared for Officers and Members in the decision making process though there had been some delays. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 2 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 3 – There was now a fuller reflection in the Best Council Plan. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 3 be changed to Position Status 2 – Achieved.
- Recommendation 4 – Due to the impact of Covid-19 on the economy and the unknown future impacts this would need to be reviewed in the Inclusive Growth Strategy when more was known. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 4 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.

- Recommendation 5 - It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 5 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 6 - It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 6 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 7 - There had been a Health and Planning Workshop which gave an opportunity for each to gain a better understanding of each other's roles. There was a need to capture the views of Health colleagues in the planning process and changes to planning documents and reports would reflect this. Work had included embedding health needs at the pre-application stage of planning. There was an ongoing concern regarding the provision of primary care needs could be met where there were major or cumulative housing developments. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 7 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 8 – Training for Members had been held and quarterly drop in sessions for Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been made available. There was some concern that Members had not received consistent updates on Section 106 agreements. It was suggested that quarterly updates should be provided on a Ward basis. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 8 be changed to Position Status 5 – Progress made not acceptable. Scrutiny Board to determine appropriate action and continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 9 – There had been minor changes to CIL and further information was awaited on transitional arrangements. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 9 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 10 - It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 10 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 11 – There had been training for Community Committee staff and Parish and Town Councils. Updated guidance on CIL had been provided. It was proposed that the tracking status for Recommendation 11 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.
- Recommendation 12 – Community Committees had discussed relevant issues at a local level and given consideration to the use of funding for local infrastructure needs. The revised Parish Council Charter was ready for launch. It was proposed that the tracking status for

Recommendation 12 remains at Position Status 4 – Acceptable progress made. Continue monitoring.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report and discussion be noted.
- (2) That the proposed status of tracking recommendations be approved.

9 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented the Board's work schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

Minutes of the Board's recent working group meeting and Executive Board meeting of 19 May 2020 were appended to the report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 16 July at 10.30 a.m. (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.15 a.m.)

Report of the Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Date: 16th July 2020

Subject: Inclusive Growth and Framework for Recovery

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

Summary of main issues

1. This report for Scrutiny Board provides an update on the Council’s progress on delivering Inclusive Growth. It is the first report since the outbreak of coronavirus which has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, and created a health emergency across the globe.
2. Our existing strategies on Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and tackling the Climate Emergency have provided a framework for the Best Council Plan and can be used to identify measures surrounding recovery to enable a coherent response to the economic shock.
3. It is clear that the impact on the economy and to people’s health will raise inequalities in the city. Those on lower incomes are more likely to work in sectors most affected by the virus, such as hospitality; the young are suffering through missing out on education and difficulty finding employment that is inflicting long-term damage to young people’s prospects in life and creating a ‘COVID generation’; and mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas are more than double the least deprived areas.
4. Although we recognise just how difficult and challenging recovery will be for the city work has begun to support recovery, including accelerating existing projects. As well as outlining our approach for recovery into the future, this report highlights some of the work

already being undertaken as we enter a new phase in the crisis. These include the pivoting of services and business support; providing grants to businesses; engaging with the public on new transport measures; reopening the city centre safely; supporting our workforce through employment and skills support, including a need to look long-term to address the high number of vulnerable workers as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; sector-specific initiatives; working with our largest anchor institutions; and ensuring council services remain functioning and adaptable to support the citizens of Leeds.

5. The Social Progress Index and additional data gathered throughout the crisis will help us assess the damage to our economy and understand where we need to focus our interventions to deliver an inclusive recovery.

Recommendations

1. Members are asked to note the approach being taken to continue to deliver Inclusive Growth across the city within a framework for recovery from the coronavirus crisis and agree any specific Scrutiny actions that may be appropriate.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report for Scrutiny Board provides an update on the Council's commitment and progress on delivering Inclusive Growth. It sets out background information on the pandemic and the UK response, together with what is happening at a local level to continue to deliver Inclusive Growth.

2. Background information

Global context

- 2.1 The World Bank's President, David Malpass, has called the coronavirus pandemic a "devastating blow" for the world economy, warning that billions of people would have their livelihoods affected by it. The economic fallout could last for a decade and 60 million people could be pushed into "extreme poverty" by the effects of the coronavirus (the World Bank defines this as living on less than \$1.90 (£1.55) per person per day). There is potential for long-term damage to global trade and inclinations to bring supply chains closer to home. However, ultimately, the World Bank has said that the catastrophe could be overcome and that people were flexible and resilient. Targeted Government support and measures to shore-up the private sector are vital to rebuild economies, whilst investment and support could create jobs in areas like manufacturing to replace those in the worst affected sectors, such as tourism, which may have been permanently lost.
- 2.2 We have seen a huge impact on world economies. In the US, the number of Americans who have lost their jobs soared to more than 40 million at the end of May 2020. While the growth of unemployment claims has begun to reduce, millions have continued to file for unemployment each week, bringing the total number of unemployed to a rate not seen since the Great Depression.
- 2.3 Countries across the globe are in different stages of the epidemic. The Chinese economy is showing signs of recovery following the shrinking of the economy in the first three months of the year for the first time since 1976. In April 2020, industrial production surged more than twice as fast as most economists expected; however retail sales fell even more sharply than anticipated and orders for future exports have stalled and, adding to this, outbreaks of the virus continue in the country. With the world economy sluggish, continued difficulties are prompting warnings that China (and potentially other countries after it) may face a "W-shaped" pattern of economic activity, with a potential second dip in the economy before a more sustainable recovery.
- 2.4 Across Europe the impact of coronavirus has likewise been hard-hitting. France and Italy entered a recession in the first three months of this year, while Spain's GDP plunged sharply. France's economy contracted 20% in the second quarter from the previous three months and Germany fell into recession in mid-May 2020, following its sharpest economic slump since the 2008 financial crisis. The global coronavirus outbreak has thrust the EU into its deepest ever recession. In response, the European Commission (EC) has set out a plan to help the EU economy recover with a mix of grants, loans and guarantees exceeding €1 trillion, with the aim of helping countries and sectors worst hit by the pandemic to recover quickly and protect the EU single market from being splintered by divergent economic growth and wealth levels.
- 2.5 Whilst the world is beginning to plan for economic recovery and rebuilding, the coronavirus infection rate continues to grow as the epicentre shifts to South America, India and Africa. The threat of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic across the globe is also ever-present (as demonstrated in China and the US). Although we have

seen isolated clusters and regional spikes in some areas of the world following first major outbreaks in those countries, it is hard to predict how they will develop. With such spikes, it is inevitable that lockdown restrictions will have to be considered once again, thus having further implications for local (if not national) economies.

UK Economy

- 2.6 The Chancellor has warned that Britain is facing a “significant recession”, echoing the Bank of England’s forecast that the UK economy could shrink by 14% this year, which would be the biggest annual decline on record according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, which dates back to 1949. The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) is in broad agreement, forecasting that the economy could reduce by 13% in 2020.
- 2.7 Figures from the ONS showed GDP fell by 20.4% in April 2020, following a fall of 5.8% in March 2020. April’s fall is the biggest the UK has ever seen, almost 10 times larger than the steepest pre-COVID-19 fall. In April 2020 the economy was c. 25% smaller than in February 2020. Virtually all areas of the economy were hit, with pubs, Education, Health and car sales all giving the biggest contributions to this historic fall. Manufacturing and Construction also saw significant falls, with the manufacture of cars and housebuilding particularly badly affected. The UK’s trade with the rest of the world was also badly affected by the pandemic, with large falls in both the import and export of cars, fuels, works of art and clothing.
- 2.8 ONS figures published on 16th June 2020 showed that the number of workers on UK payrolls dived more than 600,000 between March 2020 and May 2020. However, economists say the full effect on employment of the lockdown measures will not be felt until wage support schemes end in October of this year, although the slowdown of the economy was beginning to hit the labour market, particularly in terms of hours worked, by mid-June 2020.
- 2.9 In mid-June 2020, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicted that Britain’s economy is likely to suffer the worst damage from the COVID-19 crisis of any country in the developed world. They predict a slump in the UK’s national income of 11.5% during 2020, outstripping falls in France (11.4% predicted), Italy (11.3%), Spain (11.1%) and Germany (6.6%). Highlighting the task awaiting the UK Government as it seeks to ease the lockdown, the OECD ruled out a V-shaped recovery for the global economy, saying the path back to previous levels of activity would be hampered by long-lasting effects of the crisis.
- 2.10 Most forecasters agree that the impact on the economy would be much more severe without Government intervention in the labour market and providing loans to businesses. Government figures showed that, as of midnight 21st June 2020, 9.2 million workers have been furloughed since the start of the coronavirus crisis, with 1.1 million employers furloughing and at total cost of £22.9bn. For the self-employed, 2.6 million claims have been made to the Government support scheme, at a total value of £7.6bn.
- 2.11 Meanwhile, Government figures published on 23rd June 2020 indicate that nearly 975,000 businesses have borrowed more than £40bn up to 21st June 2020 in Government-backed loans. The majority of these (over 921,000) were companies using the Bounce Back Loans, worth £28.09bn. More than £10.5bn has been lent to nearly 50,500 companies under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and £2.1bn has been lent to 315 companies through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

- 2.12 The Government has extended their furloughing scheme until the end of October 2020. Furloughed workers across the UK will continue to receive 80% of their current salary, up to £2,500 a month, and new flexibility will be introduced from August to get employees back to work.
- 2.13 Analysis by the Learning and Work Institute shows that the number of people claiming unemployment benefits increased by 1,561,600 between March and May 2020, a rise of 4.3 percentage points. This is the largest annual increase since records began in 1922. The claimant count is now 2.8 million the highest since the early 1990s.
- 2.14 Whilst the whole economy is suffering due to the coronavirus crisis, it is having a disproportionate effect on certain sectors and groups in society. Lower earners are three times as likely to have lost their job or been furloughed as high earners and are more than twice as likely to do jobs exposing them to health risks, according to the Resolution Foundation.
- 2.15 The London School of Economics' Centre for Economic Performance predicts that the unprecedented economic and educational shocks of the pandemic could inflict long-term damage to young people's prospects in life. The 'COVID generation' (those currently under the age of 25) face declining social mobility unless bold moves are made to create a fairer society, especially as even before the crisis younger generations were already facing falling real wages, fewer opportunities and stagnant or declining living standards.
- 2.16 The crisis has also changed the way people work and has accelerated trends towards digitisation, remote working and a shift in transport patterns and it has exposed other areas such as our reliance on global supply chains. These trends may have a significant impact on how city centres function, UK-based manufacturing and continued growth in new sectors and 'green' jobs.

Health impacts

- 2.17 Over recent weeks more data and analysis has been published, both on the direct health impacts of COVID-19, but also on the emerging social and economic consequences. On 2nd June 2020, Public Health England (PHE) published the findings of its review in to how different factors such as age, sex and ethnicity affect COVID-19 risks and outcomes. The report confirmed that the virus' impact mirrors existing health inequalities and, in some cases, has increased them further, identifying those groups seemingly at most risk, especially:
- The elderly - the largest disparity found was by age, of people diagnosed with COVID-19, those who were 80+ were seventy times more likely to die than those under 40;
 - Men – deaths of those diagnosed with COVID-19 are higher in males than females;
 - People from deprived areas - mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas were more than double the least deprived areas, for both males and females;
 - Those from black and ethnic minority communities - death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups;
 - People in low-paid or low-skilled occupations - security guards, taxi drivers, chefs, care workers and bus drivers are the occupations with the highest death rates involving coronavirus;
 - People with underlying health conditions - among deaths with COVID-19 mentioned on the death certificate, a higher percentage mentioned diabetes,

hypertensive diseases, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and dementia.

Local Impact

- 2.18 It is difficult to get reliable data at a local level as the crisis is still in its infancy, but some analysis is beginning to come through. ONS data at regional level for Yorkshire & Humber show people's biggest concern during the crisis was access to work, school or university, even more so than health impacts.
- 2.19 Since January 2020, the number of people starting a claim for Universal Credit in Leeds has increased by 31,209 to 62,884 in May 2020 – an increase of 98.5% overall and a 25% per cent increase on the previous month. The data released for the month of May is provisional and does not indicate the employment status of claimants. However, for April 2020 the figures have been broken down and these show the number of Leeds residents out-of-work claiming Universal Credit increased by 11,412 to a total of 32,538 during April 2020 – an increase of 54% over this period. The number of Leeds residents in work claiming Universal Credit also increased over the same period by 7,270 – a 69% increase.
- 2.20 Figures produced by HMRC on 11th June 2020 indicate that the amount of people in Leeds that were furloughed in April was 88,200, which equates to 21.3% of the total workforce. Leeds has the lowest percentage of workers on furlough across West Yorkshire, which aligns with analysis from Centre for Cities showing that workers living outside cities accounted for a larger portion of claims. Given the amount of people on furlough there is a real concern both in Leeds and across the UK that this will lead to a spike in unemployment once the scheme ends, with the Hospitality sector particularly vulnerable.
- 2.21 The figures produced by HMRC also outlined the number of people who had been furloughed under the scheme according to parliamentary constituency. In Leeds, the Leeds Central constituency saw the highest number of furloughed workers:

Elmet and Rothwell	11,400
Leeds Central	16,000
Leeds East	10,800
Leeds North East	8,500
Leeds North West	9,000
Leeds West	13,000
Morley and Outwood	12,400
Pudsey	10,900

- 2.22 Footfall figures across the city centre have helped demonstrate the impact on the economy and were approximately 90% below normal levels during the main phase of lockdown. Footfall began to increase at the beginning of June 2020 as restrictions slowly began to lift and there was a noticeable increase on 15th June 2020 when non-essential retail was allowed to reopen - on this day footfall was down just 49.9% on the same day in 2019, compared to 80.8% the previous Monday. This appears to have been a spike due to it being the first day shops had reopened and the average

footfall in the city centre is now down an average of 60.5% across the week (using figures from the end of June 2020).

- 2.23 Likewise traffic flow figures into and out of the city centre have helped show how the economy has been impacted upon during the coronavirus crisis. The Council has recorded traffic volumes along five permanent sites on approaches to the city centre and compared them to the same dates in 2019. The figures taken from between 24th February 2020 and the end of June 2020 indicate both a steep decline in traffic volumes following the Government advice on 16th March 2020 for everyone to avoid non-essential travel and then an increase again as lockdown restrictions were eased gradually from the end of April 2020, with the most significant increase from mid-May 2020 through June 2020.
- 2.24 Looking at the impact across different sectors, data available at national level for furloughed employees shows that Wholesale and Retail, together with Accommodation and Food Services had by far the highest number of workers furloughed, at 1.6m and 1.4m respectively, followed by Manufacturing, Construction and Business Administration and Support Services. This can be used as a proxy to show those areas most impacted by the crisis in Leeds. The impact of the cultural sector closures, whilst not of that scale in terms of direct jobs, also impacts disproportionately on the Visitor Economy, Accommodation and Retail sectors.
- 2.25 In Leeds City Region c.10% of employee jobs (140,000) are classed as being very vulnerable, with a further 19% (270,000) considered vulnerable. For example, more than 50,000 people in West Yorkshire are employed in activities within Food and Beverage services that are rated as either vulnerable or very vulnerable.
- 2.26 Markit/CIPS PMI surveys for the UK show record falls in activity across Construction, Manufacturing and the dominant Services sector, where 80% of firms reported falls in activity. Manufacturers reported survey-record contractions in output, new orders, employment and new export business.
- 2.27 On 8th April 2020 the Chancellor announced a £750m package of support for frontline charities across the UK, including hospices and those supporting domestic abuse victims. Locally, this scheme has been met with some scepticism, with the Leeds Community Foundation (LCF) stating that while funding will meet some of the immediate demand, charities will not be able to use it to adapt to the wider changes that are going to affect how they work and service their communities. In May 2020, a survey by Pro Bono economics found that one in 10 charities said it was likely that they would stop operating due to the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic. 3% of respondents considered it “very likely” that their charity will no longer be operating in six months’ time, while 7% rated it as “likely”. Smaller charities were more fearful of closure.

Good news stories

- 2.28 Despite the huge challenges and difficulties faced by the Leeds economy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been many positive outcomes coming from the crisis. These have included seeing businesses pivot what they do to as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Herida Healthcare and Perry Uniform, both based in Leeds, pulled resources to manufacture and supply specialist mattresses and mattress covers to new emergency hospitals around the country. Leeds-based SurfaceSkins, who had already developed a revolutionary self-sanitising door push and door handle for use in healthcare and other hygiene-critical environments, saw demand soar for their product as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

- 2.29 Digital Health businesses also thrived, for example Leeds-based tech firm TPP worked in conjunction with the NHS, University of Oxford, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and NHSX (the Government unit charged with developing the best use for NHS technology), resulting in new research, based on data used by thousands of GP practices using TPP's systems, being linked to hospital, intensive care and ONS datasets to create a national picture for COVID-19.
- 2.30 Other stories of innovation also emerged in response to the crisis, including Itecho Health developing a 'virtual clinic' digital platform, Ascelus, for the NHS. Horsforth-based UX Global also created Auto-Q, a bespoke digital signage solution which allows retailers to measure the number of customers inside their store and the ability to advertise key information to waiting customers. Furthermore, VetAI, who are based at Nexus, Leeds, has been included in this year's Startups 100 – the UK's longest-running index of disruptive new start-ups, which showcases new businesses that demonstrate innovation, solid financials, economic impact and the ability to scale. The R&D company develops solutions that support pets, vets and 'pet parents', providing the tools to access care more affordably and conveniently.
- 2.31 The Leeds Digital Festival celebrated a hugely successful two weeks between 20th April and 1st May with 134 virtual events taking place. Across the entire Festival, attendees joined from at least 46 countries and five continents around the world. The new digital format of the Festival enabled participating businesses to reach a larger and more geographically spread audience than ever before and which may not otherwise have been possible without the online format. The Festival's organisers are now planning the physical counterpart of the Festival, which is due to take place between 21st September and 2nd October.
- 2.32 Individuals and organisations in the cultural sector have benefitted from Arts Council England's recovery funds with, for instance, £331k of support for 190 individuals artists and freelancers in Leeds.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Given the 20% drop in GDP across the UK in April 2020 and the knock-on effects to businesses, jobs and peoples livelihoods, it is clear that this will result in a substantial hit on our ambitions around Inclusive Growth. We remain committed to all our strategies, on Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and tackling Climate Change, and these remain the right things to focus on, but given the continued uncertainty now is not the right time to undertake a comprehensive review of the Inclusive Growth Strategy as we do not yet understand the full implications of coronavirus.
- 3.2 We can use our strategies as a framework as we stabilise and begin recovery in the short- and medium-term and this report outlines some of the work already being undertaken as we enter a new phase in the crisis. The Social Progress Index and data on the crisis will help us assess the damage to our economy and understand where we need to focus our interventions to deliver an inclusive recovery.

Governance of the response

- 3.3 The Leeds Response and Recovery Plan, set up to respond to coronavirus and overseen by the Leeds Gold Strategic Recovery Group, has been continuously reviewed and updated throughout the crisis. It has a framework of six strands: Health and Social Care; Infrastructure and Supplies; Business and Economic Impact; Citizens and Communities; Organisational Impact; and Media and Communications. There are multi-agency silver groups for each of the main themes, with an additional

Gold group for Health and Social Care given the significance of those arrangements for the pandemic.

- 3.4 The Business and Economic Impact Silver Group prioritises effective business engagement, focusing on practicalities of transitional arrangements, most notably with Anchor institutions, major retailers and representative organisations. It has ensured grant payments are made quickly and effectively and that schemes are developed with partners where needed. It has also allowed for effective information sharing between business representative groups.
- 3.5 The Infrastructure and Supplies Group has focused on the practical challenges of social distancing in city and district centres, public transport use and commuter concerns, as well as working with employers regarding returning workers. Safe routes to schools are also a priority, alongside the provision of additional cycling and pedestrian routes.

West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan

- 3.6 The Leader of Council, Councillor Judith Blake, and Chief Executive of the Council, Tom Riordan, are members of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board. The Board, chaired by Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader of Bradford MDC and Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), had its first meeting on 30th April 2020. An officer group has also been established support the work of the Board. The West Yorkshire Recovery Board and West Yorkshire Recovery Plan focus on what is best delivered at a regional level, building on strong collaboration with local recovery plans, which are the key methods of activity for recovery. The initial West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan is due to be discussed at the WYCA Board meeting in July 2020.

LCC economic and business support in response to the COVID-19 crisis

- 3.7 As a Council we have been working hard to ensure that we play our part in providing as much support as we can to businesses that require help and advice.

Business support grants

- 3.8 The Council has administered the COVID-19 business support grant funds on behalf of the national Government to the amount of £146,470,000 and a total of 11,896 grants (figures from 29th June 2020). These include the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The Council has also administered the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, with 878 applications received and 134 approved, to the amount of £879,535 (figures from 26th June 2020).
- 3.9 The Council were one of the quickest Local Authorities in the country to administer the grants. Robert Jenrick MP (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) publically recognised the hard work councils around the country had done to pay-out business grants to support local businesses in their area, with Leeds City Council being named by him in the top five councils leading the way.

Discretionary Grant Scheme

- 3.10 The Discretionary Grant scheme for small businesses and charities launched on 1st June 2020 and closed on 28th June 2020. The Council awarded grants to businesses and charities across the city who had not already benefited from COVID-19 funding, capped at £10,000 per grant. A total of £7.795m was made available from the Government for the scheme, which equates to 5% of the original amount the Council was given for the initial business grant scheme. 10% of the funds available was

ringfenced for applications from local charities who occupy one property with a rateable value up to £15,000.

- 3.11 The Government's guidance for the scheme stated that grants should primarily and predominantly aimed at certain categories of business and charity (and that certain types of business/charity within those categories should be prioritised), but the Council did have some discretion to determine which businesses grants should be awarded to.
- 3.12 In recognition of the role that small, local charities have played (and continue to play) in supporting the response to COVID-19 and supporting our communities in Leeds, it was agreed that 10% of the total fund should be set aside for charity properties which are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.
- 3.13 Having due regard to the Government guidance, it was agreed that grants should only be awarded to businesses or charities who have ongoing fixed property-related costs of £4,000 or more for the period starting on 11th March 2020 and ending on 11th September 2020. This figure was established based on our knowledge of the property market across Leeds.
- 3.14 It was also agreed that grants should equate to no more than 50% of a businesses' ongoing fixed property costs for that period of time, with a minimum grant of £2,000 and a maximum of £10,000 available for businesses and charities to apply for, rather than the £25,000 allowed by the guidance. This would allow the scheme to reach more businesses across the city.
- 3.15 The scheme was a single-scheme design that allowed small and micro businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces to benefit, whilst also allowing businesses and charities who were not able to benefit from previous Government business grants. On balance, it was felt that this approach would create a level playing field for businesses to access the Discretionary Grant Fund given the limited funds available within it.
- 3.16 There was therefore an eligibility criteria to be met by applicants and a business or charity could apply for a grant if:
- It has not received any other coronavirus funding
 - It was trading on 11th March 2020
 - It has less than 50 employees
 - It occupies all or part of a non-domestic property
 - The property has a rateable value of less than £51,000, or annual rent or mortgage payments are less than £51,000
 - It has yearly fixed property costs of £8,000 or more
 - It is expecting to lose 25% or revenue between March 2020 and September 2020 due to coronavirus

Pivoting and providing additional Business Support

- 3.17 Local interventions have also been employed by the Council. These have included pivoting our business support services in response to the coronavirus crisis. An example of this is the partnership between Good Things Foundation and Leeds City Council to develop 100% Digital Leeds – a new digital inclusion movement for the city – has been successful in bringing together a wide range of organisations with a shared goal: to reach the most digitally excluded people in the city and help them to understand and benefit from digital. In response to the COVID-19 emergency, 100%

Digital Leeds administered a fund on behalf of the City Digital team, to support third sector organisations in their response to the pandemic through digital means. This has been either through providing equipment to organisations or funding them to buy their own equipment. From a £25k budget, 20 chrome books were purchased and gifted to organisation and 23 applications (ranging from £500 to £1,000) have been approved and funded. One additional benefit has been that groups previously not known to 100% Digital Leeds have come forward and conversations have been taking place between the DIS team at the Council and some applicants as to how they may be better able to meet their needs. The fund attracted over 150 applications and although further funding has been sourced there remains a shortfall. Because of this, work is continuing to establish further funds, one possibility is through the Council's Housing panels, as well as other channels including with private sector partners.

- 3.18 The Council has also launched a MicroBusiness Support Service which provides support to small businesses across the city via online resources and information, webinars and dedicated 121 telephone support sessions with local business advisors. Over 64 businesses have directly engaged with the service via 121s and online events and workshops, and the website has had over 4,000 page views. The team are also hosting a series of Retail Chat events to support stores with a safe reopening; holding discussions with stakeholders such as Leeds Indie Food with regards to a campaign to support independent businesses; and holding an informal 'Monday Motivation' online catch up every Monday at 2pm, bookable via the website.
- 3.19 The Council's Key Account Management team has, by creating stronger connections with large private sector firms in the city, been able to get much better feedback on their plans for recovery which has helped inform our policy decisions particularly in the recovery phase. These firms have also been willing partners in, for example, assistance to our vulnerable residents, such as through the supply of emergency food. A number have also offered to work alongside the Council in encouraging central government to ensure that we have the financial support needed to ensure the regional economy recovers well. An example of this was a recent video call, led by the Leader of LCC, Councillor Judith Blake, and the Chief Executive of the LCC, Tom Riordan, with over 80 attendees, discussing how both the Council and private sector organisations can work together to help the city come out of lockdown. Not only were businesses offering help and support for our work, the Council was also able to offer help and support in areas such as mental health and assurance around expanding cycle provision. In addition, businesses used the opportunity to offer support to each other through the call on areas of staff health and welfare.
- 3.20 The Council has also supported the development of the NextUp mentoring platform '500 mentors', which was launched on 25th March 2020 to help 500 entrepreneurs and leaders from any sector during the COVID-19 crisis. Individuals can sign up to be a mentor (such as senior people coming up to retirement, the recently retired or those still working with spare time), or they can sign up to be a mentee (any entrepreneur or business leader from the public or voluntary sector who needs someone to talk to and/or needs practical help during these challenging times, including having help looking at the longer-term and potential opportunities). The platform suggests a free virtual Zoom session once a week between a mentor and a mentee and in the first six weeks 177 people signed up, c. 80% of whom were mentors.
- 3.21 The support of the Council also enabled Leeds Indie Food to launch a magazine in May 2020, available digitally and in print, to promote Indies across the city during lockdown. More than 50 contributors came together, leading to the creation of a magazine that included recipes, features on comedy, football, music and tips for

making bread and brewing coffee, as well as alternative ways to support independent businesses.

- 3.22 The Digital Enterprise (DE) team, who operate across the Leeds City Region and help small- to medium-sized businesses in the region to scale-up and achieve digital transformation and change, felt it was important to engage with businesses to learn more about how their priorities have changed during the coronavirus crisis and how the DE team can ensure they provide the help that is needed. An online survey was carried out to obtain the digital requirements of business and the responses received are helping the DE team develop their programme so that it is suitable for both current and future needs – including a programme of webinars and the devising of new funding support.
- 3.23 During the lockdown period the DE team sought to speed up voucher payments to businesses and where applicable offer enhanced voucher terms to aid business cash flow and help remove any barriers to businesses implementing their digital technology projects. Furthermore, the Digital Knowledge Exchange Service is now being provided online (for example webinars, digital conferences and mentoring support) to ensure businesses are able to access the Exchange. Through this, they can learn and develop their digital offer and increase their resilience. A new Digital Resilience Voucher is also being developed to help businesses (owners and their staff/employees) invest in vital digital technologies to help them adapt. This could include essential IT equipment, upgrading broadband, and networking equipment to help facilitate home-working.
- 3.24 The Ad:Venture team, who also operate across the Leeds City Region and who work with businesses less than three years old and help with the scaling-up of businesses via advice, coaching, events and start-up growth grants, has also pivoted their support in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The programme has been adapted to be delivered online, including a series of events and webinars designed to support businesses and provide opportunities for virtual networking. Grant criteria has been reviewed to ensure that clients already registered with the programme find it easier to access grant support. During lockdown, the programme has been working with c.200 businesses across the Leeds City Region to enable them to invest in enhancing their online presence, adapting business models to deliver services, online products and allowing their staff to work from home or from multiple sites. The online programme of events and webinars have proved increasingly popular and popular topics have included sales and digital marketing, business resilience and finance.
- 3.25 As part of a recently approach third phase of funding for the Ad:Venture programme, additional funding has been secured that will allow Leeds Library Service to deliver enhanced support to start-up and young businesses. This will build on an already successful free service delivered by the Business and Intellectual Property Service. The funding will enable the delivery of more events and support to more businesses across a wider area of the city. This enhanced service will also be open to businesses with more modest growth aspirations and is expected to launch early next year.
- 3.26 The Leeds Libraries Business and Intellectual Property (BIPC) service has provided much free support for small businesses across Leeds during the lockdown period. This has included remote access to resources, a diverse range of webinars and one-to-one advice consultations on a variety of subjects, including helping to run a business from home; financial matters; marketing and branding; rebooting social media; and starting a social enterprise. Other areas of support have included advertising law, introducing 'quality' to a business and intellectual property advice, such as trademarks, copyright or designs. The BIPC team has also provided advice

and guidance to the business community via their access to a range of business resources, including market research, company information and business guides.

Sector-specific support

- 3.27 Visitor Economy - Recovery planning has involved engagement with Welcome to Yorkshire and Visit Britain, as well as through collaboration with the Core Cities Visitor Economy Group and other Destination Management organisations across the North of England. Planning has included a re-evaluation of strategies and priorities across Business, Leisure and Tourism sectors to ensure that recovery activity is relevant and timely to the local situation. Collaboration with stakeholders across the whole of the Visitor Economy portfolio will be critical in informing recovery planning and delivery.
- 3.28 Work is commencing on developing events which will encourage people to visit the city and work will continue in providing business support to all of our tourism stakeholders, including signposting to financial support, business advice and assistance, as well as supporting partners as they develop and adapt their business and products for a 'new look' Tourism sector that is anticipated when restrictions start to ease. Visit Leeds and Conference Leeds has delivered two campaigns designed to maintain audience engagement with the city. The 'Leeds at Home' campaign promotes ways people can enjoy online activities and events, from locally themed quizzes to recipes, from their homes. The Virtual Leeds campaign encourages conference and event organisers to discover the city's venues by taking tours using the digital assets many venues have available on their websites. The 'A-Z of Visiting Leeds' also went live on the Visit Leeds website last month, providing information and inspiration for those visiting the city as lockdown restrictions began (and continue) to lift. The page includes signpostings to shops that are open, where to park, information to keep people safe and blogs on where to get food on the go.
- 3.29 Creative Sector - Working with the other West Yorkshire authorities, the Council has undertaken an online survey of the creative sector with results informing priorities for further support, as well as being part of an evidence base for reporting the importance of culture and creative industries for WYCA/the LEP. The survey will further help to highlight sector challenges, including the limited sources of support for individuals, digital inequalities/capacity (i.e. creative businesses which lack resources to move activities online) and Leeds citizens who have limited access to online creativity at home. The LCC Culture Development Team has also established a Reference Group representing a cross-section of the Creative sector which will remain in place for 18 months and will contribute to shaping two more sector surveys and reviewing the Culture Strategy and Delivery Plan. The refreshed Culture Strategy will reframe Leeds2023 as a key measure for how well Leeds has emerged from the COVID-19 crisis. Although there is no sector-specific funding from the Council, some, existing grants have either been repurposed or extended.
- 3.30 Manufacturing – To help manufacturing businesses with cash flow and support investment plans, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) agreed to introduce interim payments for its Business Growth Programme (BGP) and to reduce the element of grants retained against job creation from 25% to 10%. Members of the Leeds Manufacturing Alliance (LMA) have also been able to access advice and support from Make UK, West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, Leeds City Council and the Manufacturing Growth Programme West, which are represented on the LMA steering group. The Leeds Manufacturing Festival, run by the LMA and supported by a group of sponsors and which aims to bring greater awareness to the depth of career opportunities within the sector that exist across the region, is looking at pivoting its offer to support a range of online activity and engagement to maintain continuity and

momentum in the second half of the year. This follows the success of the Festival last year, which saw a total of 83 events, 6,865 students engaged and 946 influencers engaged also.

- 3.31 Digital Sector – The Council is continuing to support the Digital Sector across the city to ensure it is well-placed to help drive recovery. It once again sponsored the Leeds Digital Festival earlier this year, which was a huge success despite being held as a virtual Festival during the lockdown restrictions, and the authority continues to provide backing to numerous other networks in Leeds. This has included supporting FinTech North and NorthInvest to enable them to pivot what they do so that they have been able to start using online delivery models. FinTech, who in turn help the innovation ecosystem for the Digital sector, has received backing from the Council through the provision of webinars and support on a range of issues, including tackling debt. NorthInvest, who support start-ups in the Leeds City Region, as a result of Council help, have been able to arrange virtual pitch events to help entrepreneurs through this challenging time, as well as allow access to investors. Both of these organisations are well-placed to help us with our plans around MIT REAP (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program) as we enter the recovery phase in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Safe reopening of city centre and district centres

- 3.32 The Council is currently considering how to make best use of the Reopening High Street Safely Fund. Amongst the ideas for consideration are: a marketing campaign to attract visitors back to the city centre and district centres; the purchase of a package of signage and materials designed to ensure a safe reopening; and the commissioning of a tech solution that is aimed at bridging online retail and the high street. These ideas are currently being consulted upon within the Council and with key partners. There has also been an offer from the larger cultural organisations in the city to support this work, including Opera North, Northern Ballet, Leeds Playhouse and Leeds Grand Theatre.
- 3.33 The implementation of the City Centre Recovery Action Plan, based on three themes and working with Safer Leeds, Leeds Watch and Parking Services colleagues, began in support of businesses reopening. The Plan covered:
- Curation: i.e. the recovery of the physical space/realm with a targeted and enhanced cleaning regime and sanitisation plan; management of vacated shop units, including visual presentation; addressing community safety and alternative uses; practical management of social distancing rules in the public arena; and other related public interventions, including parking and transport.
 - Place-making activities: i.e. recovery events, creating momentum to drive footfall, including a three-month key activity programme to include events aimed at supporting a return to the city centre; an appropriate signature event to mark the easing of restrictions to generate footfall and inspire confidence to return whilst respecting social distancing; and collaboration and leveraging of planned partner and organisational events and activities for a concentration of post-COVID-19 activity.
 - Communication: i.e. getting clear messages out, a directed and focused Communications Plan to key audiences on planned activities for recovery, including social media, websites, communication networks, lampposts banners, advertising screens, digital units, leaflets, and management of external media, press and delivery of proactive media engagement.

- 3.34 In relation to district centres, collaborative work was undertaken to update signage together with the widening of pavements where possible, as well as queue management measures and the provision of advice on communications to address public concerns. District centre resurgence from the private sector is spearheaded by the Town Teams, made up of local business leaders, with advice and guidance on actions provided by the Council. Lessons from the phased reopening of the city centre will be shared with Town Teams to inform their approaches. In the longer-term, the aspiration is to reflect on the welfare of district centres in terms of reducing carbon emissions, improving greenspace, maximising active travel and reducing waste, whilst sustaining their revitalisation as places to live, work and visit.
- 3.35 On 23rd June 2020 the Government announced the reopening of much of the Hospitality sector more broadly from 4th July 2020 if they can follow safety guidelines, including pubs, restaurants, museums, cinemas, hairdressers and outdoor spaces such as outdoor gyms and playgrounds. It also announced that from 4th July 2020 the two-metre social distancing rule will be replaced with a “one metre plus” guideline. Guidance has been published to assist businesses in reopening safely. However, it is clear that some businesses and venues will be under considerable strain for some time to come despite the relaxation of social distancing measures and that this may result in closures and job losses. Staff in the Council’s Museums and Galleries service are developing plans to reopen our nine museums sites in a phased schedule from July 2020 onwards once the safety of staff and visitors has been prioritised through new operating procedures.

Public transport

- 3.36 The Council has outlined ambitious plans to promote active travel. This involves providing more facilities for and encouraging more engagement with active modes of transport, such as cycling and walking. By embedding active travel as part of our recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, we could realise its potential for contributing to economic recovery, tackling widening health inequalities, improving people’s physical and mental wellbeing, reducing carbon omissions and building better-connected communities.
- 3.37 The Government announced £250m of funding to support councils country-wide to implement measures. We, alongside our partners at WYCA, are in communication with the Government with regards the release of this funding and we intend to supplement it with other transport funding opportunities to make our response the best it can be to meet the needs of the people of Leeds.
- 3.38 Measures that have been taken or are proposed include:
- Creating more pedestrian space in busy public places - such as shops and bus stops, for example by installing barriers at locations both in the city centre and in local and district centres.
 - Creating more pedestrian and cycle space on main roads – such as by widening footpaths and expanding the network of pedestrianised streets in the city centre. Walking spaces have been broadened where there are narrow footpaths with a high footfall and more roads and routes are being identified for trialling measures to expand our cycling network which will see the physical separation of space for cyclists and traffic.
 - Providing additional cycle parking facilities - both via increased capacity of 500 additional parking places and through extra locations, to support the anticipated increase in use.

- Maintaining quieter residential streets to support safe walking and cycling - giving people more confidence to walk and cycle around our city, towns and neighbourhoods. However, as Government restrictions are lifted traffic volumes are likely to increase again, so we will investigate phasing “low traffic neighbourhoods” or “modal filters” to remove through-traffic from residential areas. Consultation will be undertaken to gather the views of the public on such trial measures over the next few months.
- Creating more space for pedestrians and cyclists outside of schools – to enable children and their parents/carers to maintain social distancing and help to address air quality and promote active travel. School Streets schemes have been tested at six Leeds primary schools from 1st June 2020, restricting traffic movement during school drop-off and pick-up times to make walking, scooting and cycling to school safer and healthier. Other schools are being identified for future waves of the scheme, subject to funding.
- Public engagement – In May 2020, an interactive consultation page went live using the Commonplace platform to ask the public to share ideas of where the Council could improve social distancing and active travel measures on main roads, in local neighbourhoods and around schools. In the month that it was open, the consultation received over 20,000 contributions from 4,100 respondents. 71% of respondents supported reducing traffic speed or volume measures to keep those using active travel safe. 50% who own a private vehicle said they expect to use it less in the coming months. Other notable suggestions from the consultation including providing motorcycle parking and work into providing suitable locations for these to be installed is underway. Following the receipt of so many responses, an interactive map has been launched to collate further suggestions and to gain feedback on proposals.

3.39 The Council has also continued with existing programmes, including transforming major routes into the city using bus lanes, segregated cycle lanes and better crossing facilities for pedestrians.

Employment and Skills delivery

- 3.40 The Council’s Employment and Skills service supported 515 people into work, including 21 people into apprenticeships during April and May 2020, during a period where vacancies have reduced by around 60%. These include job roles across all sectors with the largest numbers in Health and Care, Food Retail, Logistics, Distribution and Transport. Alongside recruitment, the service is also supporting a number of companies that are restructuring or reducing staff numbers through redundancies. It is anticipated that as the support from Government to pay furloughed employees tapers, the need for this support to staff notified of redundancy will increase. The service will provide an account manager to support managers and staff to connect with employers recruiting to the same or similar skills sets where possible and access to training and employment support services.
- 3.41 Recently released data show that the number of apprenticeship starts at national level halved (51% fall) in the initial period of lockdown (23rd March 2020 to the end of April 2020) compared with the same period in 2019. Starts for people under-19 years were particularly hard hit, falling by 74% on the previous year, whereas starts for people aged 25 plus fell 42%. The fall reflects college closures with employers unable to start or continue apprenticeships as planned and may also reflect underreporting by training providers and employers. An increase in apprentice redundancies is

anticipated as the furlough scheme comes to an end, as well as the possibility of a continued and sustained fall in demand for apprentices from employers in many sectors. As well as removing an important route to access and progress in employment, this has implications for apprenticeship training providers. We have worked with our network of training providers to promote current vacancies to schools and college students through Career Leads in schools.

- 3.42 The Council's Levy-funded apprenticeship programme has continued, with providers moving lectures, seminars and tutorials online for 206 staff. Eight staff out the 34 on programme that commenced the Leadership and Management apprenticeship in January 2019 delivered by the Employment and Skills service in-house have now achieved the Chartered Management Institute Level 3 Diploma and the Level 3 Apprenticeship Certificate with distinctions or very high merits, with a number about to go through the End Point Assessment process.
- 3.43 We now have 70% of high schools using the Start in Leeds online careers guidance platform and we continue to engage with network of career leads in schools to promote local opportunities and inform and support students to access apprenticeships through on-line presentations and video. We continue to support young people with home learning activities focused on career choices and connecting businesses with schools, for example CEG is now working on careers activity with the Alternative Provision team at Leeds City College. Working with the Council's Children and Families directorate, we will make dedicated support available to young people that need further guidance and support to decide on their next steps when they receive their results.
- 3.44 The Employment and Skills service has led a successful bid with Bradford Council to secure a £2.91m ESIF funded programme to deliver employment support across Leeds and Bradford. It will focus on young people 15-24 years identified as NEET to improve their skills and significantly increase their prospects of moving into sustained employment. Support will be targeted to over 1,100 young people in Leeds with poor mental health, including those with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, to secure training and work over the next three years, commencing in July 2020.
- 3.45 Social distancing measures required the cessation of classroom based learning across 150 plus community settings delivered through the Leeds Adult Learning programme. Community-based social enterprises and Third Sector providers have continued to receive funding to undertake development work to move provision online. Work is continuing through the current term to enhance the capacity of providers to make use of our established Google Classroom facility, with over 200 adult learning tutors undertaking additional training. We now have 100 courses on offer, ranging from arts and crafts to digital skills training for work and CV support and preparing for online job interviews, and anticipate growing this offer further. This will enable a blended delivery of online and classroom-based provision as lockdown measures are eased. Providers have been invited to submit proposals for the new academic year starting in September 2020, with an increased focus on digital skills. Preparatory work is underway to respond to the proposed new arrangement for devolved funding for adult learning in 2021/22 should the Mayoral Combined Authority scheme be approved.
- 3.46 Through various networks, including the Local Government Association and Core Cities, we continue to lobby Government on data sharing on Universal Credit claimants to ensure that interventions and support can be effectively targeted, as well as the need for a locally designed and delivered Job Guarantee scheme at scale aligned to cohorts where need is greatest and impact has been most critical and

sectors where there are immediate growth opportunities, for example Digital, Low Carbon, Life Sciences, Health and Care, Building Retrofit and Construction. This will be particularly important for young people leaving education and especially those aged 18-19 years to provide guaranteed support to find work or a place in education or training.

- 3.47 To make best use of existing funded programmes, freedoms and flexibilities are requested to repurpose funds to meet the changing labour market needs. These include, for example, flexibility to engage a wider group of claimants than those currently specified in approved European Structural and Investment Funds programmes and changes to the operation of the Apprenticeship Levy, including an extended window to re-engage redundant apprentices; extending the shelf-life of funds so accumulated funding does not time-expire during lockdown; raising the 25% transfer cap so that additional funding can be made available to SMEs and supply chains that are able to continue employing and recruiting apprentices; support and set aside funding to incentivise employers to create apprenticeships (AGE Grant), especially in priority and growth-ready sectors and priority cohorts; and the opportunity to provide traineeships and T-level placements where employers cannot sustain apprenticeships in the short term.

How the Council has supported tenants as landlord

- 3.48 Support to business tenants in LCC-owned premises has continued throughout the COVID-19 crisis, with a suspension of rent enforcement as well as signposting to rate relief, Government and local grants and the provision of guidance. A letter is being drafted to be sent to the majority of tenants to better understand their particular situation in order that responses can be developed with individual businesses to reflect their specific circumstances and we can work together so that our tenants can manage their premises effectively.
- 3.49 In addition to the c. £1.9m of Government grants which have been secured by Indoor Market Traders at Kirkgate Market, the Council has waived all Open Market Fees across the city for the period April 2020 to June 2020. This has resulted in all Open Market traders' pitches being secured to enable a return to trading in June 2020. A further planned scheme of support, focussed on varying levels of rent and fee discount is being developed, seeking to assist traders for an additional period up to the end of September 2020.

How the Council has supported taxi drivers

- 3.50 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's Taxi Licensing team has provided support to taxi and private hire businesses across Leeds. This has included regular bulletins to licence holders sharing national and local guidance on essential travel, hand hygiene, social distancing and licensing, as well as engagement with taxi associations, operators and drivers groups. The Taxi Licensing team also liaised with Clinical Commissioning Groups and other health providers in the city regarding the use of taxi and private hire services to transport medicine to people who were shielding.
- 3.51 In relation to the next phase of recovery for businesses, the team has been working on a number of areas of help and advice. These have included extending driver, vehicle and operator licenses by one to three months at no cost to licence holders and also allowing vehicles requiring an inspection to use other methods for the Council to be satisfied that a vehicle is safe and suitable to be relicensed. Furthermore, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in taxi and private hire vehicles prompted the Council to review its approach to safety screens and although it has maintained its current policy

of encouraging permanent safety screens in vehicles, the Council now requires them to conform to an approved design, which will then mean owners qualify for a refund of 50% (up to £250) of the installation cost. The Council also indicated that temporary screens could be fitted at the owner's discretion but would not be inspected or approved and thus would not qualify for the fund. It has also fast-tacked the approval of new screen designs so it is easier for owners to get new screens fitted.

- 3.52 Preparing for recovery is an ongoing process and the Taxi Licensing team has liaised with colleagues, including those within the Council and within neighbouring authorities and other partners, to align the resumption of services with the increase in demand for journeys. Priorities for resuming services including the resumption of vehicle inspections and driver training and assessment and further liaison and engagement with businesses to ascertain how the crisis has affected them, as well as reviewing the impact of the pandemic on the Council's licensing fees position.

Planning

- 3.53 During the lockdown period, the Planning Service has continued to operate, albeit with restrictions in place. In consultation with the Plans Panel Chairs and the Executive Member, planning applications in the system were reviewed as a basis to identify which applications might be delegated for decision, deferred with agreement or for consideration at a future Plans Panel. In parallel with this, new planning applications, where they have been received electronically, have continued to be validated. With regard to the Plans Panels, a 'Remote Access' protocol was circulated to all members of Council on 15th April 2020, to provide a basis for Virtual Plans Panels. To date, there have been two meetings (21st May 2020 City Plans Panel and 4th June 2020 South and West Panel), with further meetings now scheduled. Due to the restrictions in place, the erection of Site Notices was suspended but are now being erected, neighbour notification letters are also being sent out and site visits undertaken, enabling applications to move through the process. The resumption of these activities has followed a stepped and precautionary approach, through the development of Safe Working Practices Notes. These have been developed within the context of Government and City Council requirements and engagement with staff, Trades Unions, Health and Safety and Human Resources colleagues. For plan making and implementation there has been a continued focus on delivering the Climate Emergency and Health and Wellbeing agenda through better place making and master planning. The importance of this has been heightened through the lockdown experience and the resilience of communities is a key theme of the forthcoming update of the Local Plan. This has a particular focus on matters such as green infrastructure and town and local centres.

How the Council has supported suppliers

- 3.54 LCC has recognised that as a result of the COVID-19 crisis many suppliers to public bodies will struggle to meet their contractual obligations and that this may put their financial viability, ability to retain staff and their supply chains at risk. Because of this, the Council produced guidance for commissioning officers within the authority that seeks to adopt a practical approach to the implementation of supplier support and relief measures, in close accordance with Government guidance in the form of the Supplier Relief Procurement Policy Note 02/20.
- 3.55 As an Anchor Institution in the city of Leeds, the Council's position has been to stress that support is available to suppliers, including very significant pre-existing measures prior to the COVID-19 emergency; however the Council has had to balance this with the avoidance of raising expectations across the entire supply chain. The intention

has been to take a sympathetic but proportionate approach and to direct suppliers that most need financial support to the relevant approach, whether that involves pre-existing support measures, alternative or reduced services, additional Council support measures for “at risk” suppliers, or a combination of these.

- 3.56 An example of this approach has been how the Council has worked with Showsec, whereby we have reengaged their services by arranging for their staff to work at all six LCC recycling centres to help to reopen them safely, as well as in managing the gates to the centres and checking of vehicles registrations.

Framework for recovery

- 3.57 The rate of recovery from the COVID-19 emergency will be constrained by the need to protect the health of the public. It could be many months before all restrictions are lifted and response and recovery will therefore sometimes overlap. The COVID-19 pandemic has served to speed up trends that were already evident in the economy, which means that we will need to be ready to accelerate, stop or change our work to recover.
- 3.58 Initial discussions have taken place with Elected Members and key officers to provide a framework to support recovery, as well as with the Inclusive Growth Ambassadors, and consideration is being given to key areas of focus which align to the areas outlined in the West Yorkshire Recovery Plan.
- 3.59 Across the council a more fundamental review of the suite of city strategies will be undertaken later in the year / early next year when we have a deeper understanding of the wider social and economic impacts of the virus. However, work is already underway to ensure the three pillars that underpin our city ambition: Inclusive Growth; health and wellbeing; and climate change, are centred on the overriding priority of tackling poverty and inequalities; and, are joined up as we focus on the complex and potentially long-lasting recovery period, which will require all potential capacity in the city, including the public and businesses, fully engaged and playing their role.
- 3.60 The potential for a green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is also apparent. Green jobs will be essential to the UK recovery and our strategy will need to fully reflect our carbon reduction ambition for the city, seizing the opportunities of more sustainable and healthy movement of people; new ways of working at home and at work; adopting digital technology; emphasising the value of green spaces; and continuing to promote energy efficiency. The International Monetary Fund has highlighted the importance of prioritising Government spending on green projects to create jobs and kickstart the economic recovery. Furthermore, the Institute for Public Policy Research has stated that investing in a green economic recovery could create as many as 1.6 million new jobs in Britain as the COVID-19 crisis subsides. This could include the creation of 700,000 roles in social care; 560,000 new roles by increasing funding for the energy efficiency of homes; 230,000 jobs by investing in sustainable public transport; and 46,000 by creating more funding for tree planting and peatland restoration. The Local Government Association (LGA) has also said that almost 700,000 direct jobs could be created in England’s low-carbon and renewable energy economy by 2030, stating that demand for green jobs in the North of England will accelerate massively to 420,000 as the nation moves towards a net-zero emissions economy in 30 years. The LGA data shows that Leeds will be amongst the strongest cities in the UK to create jobs to support green industries, with the LGA claiming that the Green Energy sector being able to help lead regions out of the COVID-19 crisis.
- 3.61 Given this, the Council will use its framework for economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis to accelerate our transition to net zero and strengthen our resilience

to the impacts of climate change, whilst driving new economic activity. This will include identifying further opportunities to confirm an acceleration towards net zero in economic recovery initiatives and projects. For example, currently the building sector is not well-placed for the transition to zero emissions and the uptake of low carbon heating systems is negligible. The mass retrofit of properties required will be labour intensive, thus potentially requiring more job roles, and the implementation of hydrogen heating systems presents opportunities for both potential reskilling of workers and the manufacture of new appliances.

3.62 Given the current circumstances an annual report on the Inclusive Growth Strategy has not been written. However, this report has set out a range of work currently underway to support recovery and accelerate existing projects. These fit into the three themes of the Strategy and examples of work being undertaken include:

- People:

a) The Leeds Inclusive Anchors programme is being accelerated to include private sector anchors. This will connect with and support the Inclusive Growth Strategy and help businesses and other organisations with great potential to support recovery to put that into practice. The core objectives are to:

- Engage with businesses and the Council to identify how businesses can shape, contribute to, and benefit from a post-COVID-19 economic recovery programme in Leeds, especially large anchor businesses, and other businesses with key skills, capacities or influence to bring to bear;
- Explore and recommend what business engagement and collaboration mechanisms are needed as part of this programme and related private sector anchors activity
- Support the launch, evaluation and ongoing improvement of a first phase or pilot of post-COVID-19 economic recovery programme; and
- Review, support and evolve the existing public sector Leeds Anchors network to maximise its effectiveness and recovery contribution, and to dovetail with private sector Anchors and the post-COVID-19 economic recovery programme.

b) The 100% Digital Leeds movement has been successful in bringing together a wide range of organisations with the shared goal of reaching the most digitally excluded people in the city and helping them to understand and benefit from digital. In response to the COVID-19 emergency, 100% Digital Leeds administered a fund on behalf of the City Digital team, to support third sector organisations in their response to the pandemic through digital means. This has been either through providing equipment to organisations or funding them to buy their own equipment.

- Place:

a) Work is being undertaken to bring forward Active Travel measures and developing regeneration sites. One example is the British Library North, which forms part of the Leeds devolution deal. In advance of the £25m funding being agreed, Leeds City Council has been collaborating with the British Library and the CEG Group, who own Temple Works, on exploring the feasibility of what is one of the country's most important listed buildings being home to the prospective new development.

b) Full Fibre Connectivity – The new partnership with BT (Openreach) will see BT build a new local full fibre network to connect hundreds of schools, NHS and other public sector sites across Leeds. A new fund will also be set up to support community broadband initiatives. This digital infrastructure will increase in importance in the context of the need for resilience in terms of working from home and ensuring all families can access good broadband speeds. Although the delivery of the new build full fibre network associated with this programme has been delayed by lockdown restrictions, BT have confirmed their commitment to delivery against the social value proposals outlined in their bid for the programme. The immediate focus is on investing to support the 100% Digital Leeds programme to make devices available for Third sector and community organisations to use to support work with their most vulnerable and isolated clients.

c) The Council has recently launched a 25-year initiative to create new woodlands across Leeds. The scheme will see 5.8 million trees planted across the city, thus forming part of Leeds' ambitious programme to make the city carbon-neutral by 2030. The first saplings will be planted this winter and 50 hectares of land will be brought forward each year for woodland creation, with over 100 hectares of publicly-owned land already being identified as potentially suitable. Trees planted as part of this project will also be counted towards the White Rose Forest, a joint local authority venture to double tree cover across the Leeds City Region by 2050.

- Productivity:

a) The Leeds Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programme (MIT REAP) team will be launching a new support programme to help individuals facing a change in circumstance, inspiring them to make the leap to entrepreneurship. The ambition is to create a vibrant, engaged and diverse community of potential entrepreneurs across the Leeds City Region. LEAP is an initiative aimed at budding entrepreneurs and will be delivered with a community first, content second ethos via a dedicated online platform in website and app formats. The platform will initially host applicants to the programme, delivery partners and associated mentoring organisations and will create a peer-to-peer network for applicants to learn and develop new skills, as well as facilitate mentoring relationships. Over time, the platform will provide a space to enable the ecosystem of support organisations, co-working spaces, events, business advisors, entrepreneurs and mentors across the city region to organically coalesce, creating a one-stop network for entrepreneurs and business owners to access support from advisors and peers. LEAP is planned to launch later this summer. Innovation is going to be essential in planning for recovery in a post-COVID-19 local economy. Fundamental to enabling and sustaining an innovation ecosystem is making sure there is a strong pipeline of people with great ideas. Mechanisms to find those people and empower them to explore whether their ideas are viable and help turn them into compelling businesses are vital to keeping that pipeline topped up. A key objective for the Leeds MIT REAP team is that this pipeline is diverse and reflective of our community. A pilot is currently being procured, to deliver a new programme supporting entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds across the Leeds City Region to turn their innovative, socially beneficial ideas into scalable businesses that investors want to back. Our ambitions are to

inspire and nurture ideas that are innovation-driven, address a significant unmet need and are 'socially useful', leveraging our innovation cluster in the Leeds City Region and expertise in areas including, but no means limited to, Health, Data, Environment and Mobility. We want our entrepreneurs to 'think big' and gain traction with rapidly scalable business models that have an ambition to scale cross-border and have the potential to attract external investment to grow. The pilot programme will launch in January 2021.

Measuring our progress

- 3.63 Measurement also remains important as part of this work. As a way to measure Inclusive Growth alongside traditional economic measures, we are proposing to adopt the Social Progress Index as a priority. More than ever we need to understand how our interventions are addressing inequality and we need more real-time information about the economy to inform our interventions. This will also assist us to be more agile in our response and able to pivot/change as evidence of impact and opportunity emerges.

Devolution

- 3.64 The agreement of the West Yorkshire Devolution in March 2020 was a landmark moment for Leeds and the wider region. The Deal offers the opportunity to bring a significant transfer of power and funding from central government to West Yorkshire to further boost our economy, help to transform infrastructure and tackle some of the most pressing challenges.
- 3.65 The Deal will unlock significant long-term funding and give the region greater freedom to decide how best to meet local needs and create new opportunity for the people who live and work here. This agreement is the first step in a process of further devolution. The Government has committed to continuing to work with West Yorkshire on important areas of public service reform and infrastructure investment, to support inclusive economic growth in towns, cities and rural areas, whilst tackling the Climate Emergency.
- 3.66 In terms of Devolution and economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, there are a number of things within the Deal currently which could be highlighted as allowing more resources and levers to support recovery in Leeds and the City Region.
- Funding – Devolution will provide the region with a significant amount of new funding, with flexibilities to meet regional priorities, and therefore the ability to invest into activities which will boost and support the economy. This includes £38m per year (for 30 years) into a West Yorkshire Investment Fund, with a 75%-25% revenue to capital basis; £317m from the Transforming Cities Fund; a share of a new £4.2bn Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) Infrastructure Fund; £101m for flood alleviation schemes; and £3.2m to develop out housing pipeline, with access to a £400m MCA Brownfield Fund.
 - Transport and Infrastructure – The Deal will provide the region with significant new powers and funding to improve transport and infrastructure to meet the needs of people and businesses in West Yorkshire. This includes bus franchising and coordination of a Key Route Network. Whilst practically much of this will have a longer lead-in time until improvements are in place on the ground, Devolution will offer the opportunity to considerably improve connectivity across the city and region to benefit the economy.

- Adult Education and Skills – The devolved Adult Education Budget will provide significant new flexibilities to tailor the c. £63m annual budget to address specific skills gaps in the local labour market. Consultation on the Adult Education Budget Strategy that will shape the commissioning plans for the 2021/22 academic year will close on 12th July 2020. The draft strategy identifies key priorities, including meeting the skills needs of key sectors and developing skills for the future; making learning more inclusive; supporting the unemployed to gain and sustain work; and career progression and adaptability, particularly for people on low pay and with insecure work. Proposals include testing new approaches and making provision to respond quickly to shocks and new opportunities in a changing economic landscape

Moving forwards

- 3.67 Over the coming months, work to identify priority areas to either accelerate, stop or change our work and to align the new strategic focuses with other Council strategies/priorities will be completed, whilst acknowledging the regional and national context, including Devolution. Work to populate the Social Progress Index will also be carried out.
- 3.68 The intention at this time is to provide an update on the progress of the Inclusive Growth Strategy / the city's response to the crisis in late 2020 / early 2021, with a view to providing a fuller update once more is known about the economic situation, Devolution, local and national finances and funding priorities.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Council continues to engage with partners from across the city through the Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership. The last event held in February had nearly 200 attendees and has continued to grow from event to event.
- 4.1.2 Since the coronavirus pandemic began the Council has been engaging extensively with Government, local partners, Elected Members and the public to provide support to businesses and the people of Leeds. The Council has endeavoured to keep people up-to-date with developments and information as much as possible, for example the Economic Development team has produced a weekly economic briefing for Elected Members and MPs since lockdown restrictions began and they have also facilitated weekly calls with businesses and business representative groups across the city.
- 4.1.3 An example of engagement with the public includes the huge Active Travel survey that was undertaken between May 2020 and June 2020 and saw 20,000 contributions from 4,100 respondents who gave their views and feedback on measures to improve social distancing and active travel on main roads, in local neighbourhoods and around schools.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 It is clear that the impact on the economy and to people's health will raise inequalities in the city as highlighted in this report. Those on lower incomes are more likely to work in sectors most affected by the virus, such as hospitality; the young are suffering through missing out on education and difficulty finding employment that is inflicting long-term damage to young people's prospects in life and creating a 'COVID

generation'; and mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas are more than double the least deprived areas.

- 4.2.2 Furthermore, over recent weeks more data and analysis has been published, both on the direct health impacts of COVID-19, but also on the emerging social and economic consequences. On 2nd June 2020, Public Health England (PHE) published the findings of its review in to how different factors such as age, sex and ethnicity affect COVID-19 risks and outcomes. The report confirmed that the virus' impact mirrors existing health inequalities and, in some cases, has increased them further, identifying those groups seemingly at most risk, including the elderly; men; people from deprived areas; those from black and ethnic minority communities; people in low-paid or low-skilled occupations; and people with underlying health conditions.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Inclusive Growth continues to be one of the three pillars that underwrite the Best Council Plan. As we move into a recession it will remain an important part of the Council's recovery plan.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 with the stated ambition of working to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 for the city. The delivery of the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy already incorporates consideration of Climate Emergency interventions, as highlighted in the One Year On report published in July 2019, as well as our planned framework for recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.
- 4.3.3 Green jobs will be essential to the UK recovery and our strategy will need to fully reflect our carbon reduction ambition for the city, seizing the opportunities of more sustainable and healthy movement of people; new ways of working at home and at work; adopting digital technology; emphasising the value of green spaces; and continuing to promote energy efficiency.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 Given the Council's current financial position and current (as at the end of June 2020) overspend of £201m for 2020/21, there is the possibility that our ability to drive and deliver Inclusive Growth will be reduced and adversely impacted upon if the situation is not resolved.

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

- 4.5.1 This is an information rather than decision-making report and therefore there are no legal implications arising from it.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There is a comprehensive risk management process in the Council to monitor and manage key risks. Risks associated with progressing the implementation of the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy are reviewed quarterly through the Directorate Leadership Team meeting and the corporate Inclusive Growth Delivery Officer Group.
- 4.6.2 The risks related to coronavirus will continue to be monitored through the Council's existing risk management processes. This includes corporate risks relating to the

Council's Budget and the Leeds economy, which have been updated to reflect the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. More specific risks are being managed through the Silver Command Groups, with the more significant ones being escalated onto the corporate coronavirus risk document.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report provides an update on the Council's progress on delivering Inclusive Growth. It is the first report since the outbreak of coronavirus which has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, and created a health emergency across the globe.
- 5.2 The Council's existing strategies on Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and addressing the Climate Emergency can be used to identify measures surrounding recovery to enable a coherent response to the economic shock.
- 5.3 It is clear that the impact on the economy and to people's health will raise inequalities in the city. Those on lower incomes are more likely to work in sectors most affected by the virus, such as hospitality; the young are suffering through missing out on education and difficulty finding employment that is inflicting long-term damage to young people's prospects in life and creating a 'COVID generation'; and mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas are more than double the least deprived areas.
- 5.4 Although we recognise just how difficult and challenging recovery will be for the city work has begun to support recovery, including accelerating existing projects. As well as outlining our approach for recovery into the future, this report highlights some of the work already being undertaken as we enter a new phases in the crisis. These include the pivoting of services and business support; providing grants to businesses; engaging with the public on new transport measures; reopening the city centre safely; supporting our workforce through employment and skills support, including a need to look long-term to address the high number of vulnerable workers as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; sector-specific initiatives; working with our largest anchor institutions; and ensuring council services remain functioning and adaptable to support the citizens of Leeds.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the approach being taken to continue to deliver Inclusive Growth across the city within a framework for recovery from the coronavirus crisis and agree any specific Scrutiny actions that may be appropriate.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no background documents.

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

Report of Chief Digital and Information Officer

Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Date: 16 July 2020

Subject: Digital response to COVID-19

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

Summary

1. Main issues

- Since 2015 the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board has led an inquiry into digital inclusion, highlighting the importance of digital inclusion across the city. The Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO) has provided strategic leadership for this work, overseeing the creation of 100% Digital Leeds as part of the Smart Cities programme and bringing annual update reports to the Board.
- This report examines the Council’s and the city’s digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Leeds. The CDIO directed and coordinated the work of the Digital and Information Service (DIS), with responsibility for NHS primary care and Council, notably through the City Digital Team and the 100% Digital Leeds Team working together with established community-based partnerships across Leeds. This close coordination and cooperation meant that the Leeds response was open and inclusive while working at pace and at scale across sectors.
- DIS used their convening power to bring people together, enabling through intermediaries to amplify reach and impact. The report features examples of this work, including observations and evidence from partners, stakeholders and people affected by the virus with additional observations on how the Leeds response compared with other places.
- With due regard to the current crisis, the report considers what has been learnt during the last three months and looks to the future with conclusions and recommendations that emphasise the importance of increasing digital inclusion and implementing effective digital solutions as an integral part of the DIS response to the City’s recovery plans and the sustainability of the City and its communities.
- Finally it should be noted that NHS England and NHSX see the importance of digital inclusion to improving health outcomes and are currently engaged with the City Team to

learn from Leeds's 'Whole System Approach'. They have tested a 'Place Based Maturity Model' informed by the Leeds digital work and are looking to prioritise external investment in digital literacy and digital inclusion based on evidence from Leeds. Despite the current crisis and the ongoing uncertainty, NHS Leeds CCG, Public Health, NHSX and other partners are committing additional funds to support and sustain the current DIS model and successful approach in particular the 100% Digital Leeds model.

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

- All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the Council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan, the Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth Strategies and the need to address the impact of the climate emergency on those living in poverty, in poor health and facing inequality.

3. Resource Implications

- COVID-19 has already had a huge impact on the Leeds economy and its legacy will be felt for years to come. Alongside the ongoing health implications of the COVID crisis there may be a serious economic downturn with a resultant impact on society and the most vulnerable. The effects of the pandemic will continue to hit services and support groups across the city at the same time that a huge backlog in health and care needs will place additional demand on services. Third Sector Leeds recently released the findings of a [survey of third sector resilience in Leeds](#) showing that 60% of third sector organisations who responded said they may remain financially sustainable for six months or less.
- To ensure that the most disadvantaged are not hardest-hit over the next few years, people and communities need to have the best chance to sustain themselves. Digital inclusion provides the opportunity for people to do that and gives the Council and NHS partners the ability to enable and facilitate better outcomes for people. This can be achieved by convening people and community based assets to coproduce solutions rather than been completely reliant on services traditionally provided by the Council that may be reduced.

4. Recommendations

- a) The current CDIO is leaving at the end of July to be replaced by a jointly appointed post with a continued focus on City outcomes, not just services. As part of the Council's ongoing digital response to the sustainability of the City post COVID it is recommended that the DIS continues to set priorities, direct the work and provide overall governance for Smart Leeds and 100% Digital Leeds, with the DIS also continuing to report progress to this Board.
- b) The central coordination, convening, connecting and enabling role, across public sector partners and the third sector, of DIS, with the 100% Digital Leeds Team as an integral part of that approach, has been essential during the crisis. The 100% Digital Leeds team currently sit on the Library Service structure, it is recommended that this integrated approach must be sustained and strengthened based on the return on public value and outcomes exemplified in this report and previous reports to this Board.
- c) If external funding comes to an end, which is unlikely for the next 18 months, it is recommended that this work and these teams are considered a priority as part of the budget setting process based on the returns on investment to the community, Council and NHS. Detailed evaluation and Return on Investment figures for 100% Digital Leeds featured in the previous report to this Board in February 2020. A summary is included at **Appendix 7** for ease of reference.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny Board on the Council's and the City's digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the approach of the joint NHS and LCC Digital and Information Service, notably through the Smart Leeds, City Digital and 100% Digital Leeds teams working together as one team with partners across Leeds.
- 1.2 The report highlights the following areas in the context of the digital response to COVID-19:
 - Supporting and developing the 100% Digital Leeds network ([Main Issue 3](#))
 - Working together to strengthen the digital health and wellbeing offer ([Main Issue 4](#))
 - Accelerating the digital robustness of the Third Sector ([Main Issue 5](#))
 - Increasing digital capacity and connectivity in communities ([Main Issue 6](#))
 - Enabling digital services across the council and partners ([Main Issue 7](#))

2. Background information

- 2.1 The most recent digital inclusion [report to Scrutiny Board in February 2020](#) made no mention of the COVID-19 pandemic and no questions were asked about it at the Board meeting. Just one month later the UK went into lockdown.
- 2.2 Although the speed and severity of the crisis were not anticipated in the report, the fundamental principles of the approach outlined in that report included:
 - Convening community based assets to ensure that no-one is 'hard to reach';
 - Working flexibly and responsively;
 - Moving to a whole system approach that enables people to independently look after themselves and improve their lives;
 - Connecting people to their communities and a wider circle of care and support;
 - Co-designing the right interventions with professionals and practitioners, staff and volunteers and people with lived experience.
- 2.3 Those principles proved to be vital in the DIS's digital response to the pandemic. As soon as lockdown was introduced, the DIS teams started working with partners to help people who were digitally excluded and in severe need.
- 2.4 As part of the DIS response to COVID-19 the 100% Digital Leeds and the City Digital teams were directed to extend work and established relationships with third sector, community and voluntary organisations to empower them and their service users to become more digitally included. Support included the provision of data, equipment and devices, grant funding, technical support, Digital Champions training, plus advice on how to tackle digital inclusion issues particular to their own organisation. Organisations were brought together based on common interests or barriers so that they could share their experiences and learn from each other.
- 2.5 First and foremost, COVID-19 is a health crisis and the digital response strengthened the 100% Digital Leeds team's relationships with the City Digital team and partners in health and care settings. The teams worked alongside communities to enable more people and organisations to get online. Evidence is included throughout this report of the impact of the work over the last three months. This coordinated approach across the DIS, including the 100% Digital Leeds team, must continue as a lasting legacy of the work that has made such a difference during the pandemic.

3. Main Issues – Supporting and developing the 100% Digital Leeds network

- 3.1 During the course of a normal year Leeds would welcome approximately 56,000 people to use their public access computers over 430,000 times across Community Hub and Library sites. The closure of libraries during the lockdown period has had a serious impact on these users, not to mention other people who may have wanted to access the PCs for job searches and making applications as the effect on their employment unfolded. With closed doors libraries, like many other services, have sought to address the gap in their service provision by the increase or improvement in their digital offer.

- 3.2 As the library service closed its doors to the public the online library emerged. The Library Service is using digital resources and activities to engage and help bring communities together by developing and expanding their online library offer and looking at introducing new activities to help people develop their digital skills to access services, information, entertainment and to stay connected without the need to visit.
- 3.3 The Library Service introduced an enhanced on-line joining process, re-organised their online presence making it easier to find support for learning, digital skills and business support, introduced PressReader for the provision of online newspapers readable on most digital devices, bought more e-Books and e-Audio books and invested in a new initiative called Niche Academy which hosts online basic tutorials to help those new to these digital services to easily navigate their function and the download process.
- 3.4 To help as many people as possible take advantage of these services the Library Service also introduced new customer support initiatives during April and May:
- #AskALibrarian promotes the role of libraries as a source of non-biased information.
 - Virtual Digi Drop in supports both children and adults to embrace technology and develop their skills.
 - Digital Support Sessions offer customers flexible one-to-one telephone support in using their device to access services and resources and become more connected.
- 3.5 Over 50 Digital Support Sessions have been delivered, supporting customers in accessing e-Books, e-newspapers and other online resources. Over 80 enquiries were met through #AskALibrarian and Virtual Digi Drop in. These new initiatives are supported by librarian teams across the service, who have been enabled by the DIS to work effectively from home.
- 3.6 A fourth initiative, Keeping in Touch, saw the Library Service make almost 6,000 calls to customers aged 70 and over to help reduce loneliness and social isolation. As well as chatting about anything of interest to their customers the telephone calls have been an opportunity to signpost customers to the online services already mentioned, or other support that the Council has been offering which some customers may not have been aware of.
- 3.7 **Quotes from library customers:** *“This is great, we’ve got lots of new reading material now and since we are isolating it’s good that we can get the daily newspaper again. You were brilliant, friendly, clearly knew your stuff and were very patient. So chuffed to have BorrowBox set up and ready to go.”* More information about these library service initiatives is at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.8 Other organisations supporting the most vulnerable, isolated and excluded in Leeds have almost universally made digital inclusion a priority since lockdown. For many organisations and those who staff them, Digital Champions training from the 100% Digital Leeds team has been the start of their digital inclusion journey, raising awareness of the barriers their client groups are likely to face as well as simple practical steps they can take to help people overcome these barriers. During this period, Digital Champions training has been delivered via video conferencing, with the content adapted to reflect changing needs.
- 3.9 The adapted Digital Champions training was framed as an introduction to digital inclusion for a client group that is particularly likely to be digital excluded. A series of webinars focused on:
- People improving their mental health and wellbeing;
 - People with learning disabilities;
 - Speakers of other languages;
 - Older people.
- Further sessions are planned after the team were approached by organisations supporting other groups and target audiences:
- [People with sensory impairments](#), in partnership with Forum Central, Healthwatch Leeds, BID Services and Deaf Blind UK;

- ESOL learners, in partnership with Leeds City Council's ESOL Strategy Team, Migrant English Support Hub and the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults.
- 3.10 Each webinar advocates the same approach but the digital exclusion picture, case studies and recommended tools and resources are tailored to resonate with the audience and best support the digital inclusion of the audience's client base. Sessions are delivered in partnership with an organisation experienced in supporting the digital inclusion of the target client base and include a case study from an organisation in that field who are further along on their digital inclusion journey. This coproduction fosters local digital inclusion communities and encourages the sharing of skills and best practice.
 - 3.11 Webinars were hosted via Zoom in partnership with mHabitat/CoSpace>North, delivering high-quality content to a professional standard. Each session was [recorded and uploaded to the Digital Inclusion Leeds website](#) for use by those who could not attend or would like to cascade the training, further extending the reach and impact of the work.
 - 3.12 Almost 400 delegates attended the sessions. Alongside people from organisations across Leeds, there were delegates from over 40 cities and towns around the UK. These included representatives from Councils, colleges, Adult Education providers, universities, library services, NHS Trusts, CCGs, charities and third sector organisations. This is an indicator of the national interest in Leeds's digital response to COVID.
 - 3.13 **Quote from Roz Davies MBA FRSA, Managing Director, mHabitat:** *"We have had the privilege of hosting six sell-out training and information digital inclusion webinars with the 100% Digital Leeds team over the last three months. The team itself is highly competent and knowledgeable in the context and the issues, what that means for Leeds and solutions. It is well respected and has built a strong network of community and other partners across the city and beyond. The interest and reach has been outstanding for a small locally based team. We have had delegates from Scotland to Brighton in local and national policy roles including NHSX. The 100% Digital Leeds work is certainly a national exemplar in terms of local approaches to tackling digital inclusion and judging by the wider discussions on digital inclusion prompted by lockdown, I expect a lot of other areas to follow their lead in the coming years. Leeds is fortunate in that it is a long way ahead in tackling a very complex and important inequalities issue. I very much look forward to working in partnership with the team in the future."*
 - 3.14 At an organisational level, the impact of the Digital Champions training and the coordinated DIS approach is illustrated by Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service. They started their digital inclusion journey by borrowing iPads from the tablet lending scheme to support their most vulnerable clients to maintain access to services through lockdown. Digital Champions training put their staff and volunteers in the best position to support the digital inclusion of their clients and helped the service to better understand the wider issues around digital inclusion. The combination of this wider awareness training and the ability to try different approaches to digital inclusion at no cost thanks to the tablet lending scheme has resulted in the development of a digital inclusion strand of Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service's Health Inequalities Action Plan, cementing digital inclusion as an essential element of the service.
 - 3.15 **Quote from Sarah Fox, Coproduction Coordinator, Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service:** *"For me, the Digital Champions training and also just general contact with 100% Digital Leeds has given me an understanding, and therefore confidence, about digital inclusion and the picture in Leeds specifically. Otherwise I don't think I would have offered to lead on digital inclusion for the health inequalities workstream. I think also that the fact I've done the digital champions training, plus your ongoing help and support, means that we'll take a more methodical and systematic approach to digital inclusion because I now understand the different reasons for exclusion. Sometimes I think people too often think it's purely a case of people not having the kit and we could waste a lot of time and money getting equipment when the real issue might be trust."*
 - 3.16 As well as building on established relationships with partner organisations, the increasing importance of digital inclusion over the last three months has seen the development of new

partnerships and work programmes. Gypsy and Traveller communities experience some of the highest levels of inequality in the city and the average life expectancy is just 50 years of age. DIS teams are working with Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) to support an existing programme where Leeds GATE have identified Health Champions within their communities. The Health Champions will also be trained to become Digital Champions, each Champion will receive a laptop to support their role and DIS are lending ten Mi-Fi units to provide additional data. The Full Fibre programme is being examined for opportunities to offer more permanent connectivity to Gypsy and Traveller sites around the city. Working with Leeds GATE and with Gypsies and Travellers will result in a better shared understanding of the barriers to digital inclusion. Coproducing solutions to these barriers will lead to improved outcomes and the methodology and impact will be shared through the development and delivery of a Digital Champions webinar for other organisations working with these communities.

3.17 Detailed case studies illustrating the impact of the work on organisations and individuals are on the Digital Inclusion Leeds website: <https://digitalinclusionleeds.com/>

4. Main issues – Working together to strengthen the digital health and wellbeing offer

4.1 The COVID-19 crisis in care homes highlighted their vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable in society. There are 157 care homes in Leeds, run by approximately 96 organisations and providing approximately 5,500 beds to the population of Leeds. The Council currently runs and owns eight homes. NHS England has already started some work to better understand the digital maturity of care homes. Initial observations and anecdotal evidence in Leeds suggests a broad range, with very few that could be classed as digitally mature.

4.2 NHS England, NHSX and others are interested in the DIS's whole system, whole care home, one team approach to increasing the digital maturity, resilience and digital inclusion of staff and residents of care homes. There is an increased appetite from homes regarding connectivity and digital capacity. What that actually means differs by organisation, so a detailed piece of work is necessary to understand what is needed (and by whom). A digitally enabled care home in its widest sense is a better run and more financially stable business, better connected and supported by the community, better informed and therefore delivering better outcomes for residents.

4.3 In response to the Enhanced Health in Care Homes Framework, Leeds set up the Leeds Care Home System Delivery Group (pre COVID-19) which is co-chaired by Health and Social Care and has representation from both sectors. Under discussion in the group was the best way to encourage and then support homes to a better level of digital maturity when services were commissioned.

4.4 Although no decisions have been made, the convening role of the DIS could be crucial in bringing together the key local and national stakeholders, enabling a joined-up response across Clinical Commissioning Group, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds City Council, Leeds Community Healthcare, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Public Health and the third sector, thus avoiding different projects and initiatives running separately. This makes it more likely Leeds will be able to access funds and support to develop programmes of work with the care home sector in Leeds, coordinated by DIS.

4.5 COVID-19 further highlighted the digital divide through the implementation of video appointments, online consultations and the greater need for patients in the shielded cohort to self-manage health conditions. During the pandemic, DIS teams worked closely with NHS partners, Leeds Community Healthcare and the third sector to embed digital inclusion within health and care settings. Working together has increased the delivery of digital health champion training, utilised the equipment lending scheme and shared tools and resources to enable health professionals and staff in these settings to embed digital inclusion in their approach. Work has been targeted in priority wards and areas with the highest health inequalities.

4.6 Examples of closer working include:

- Digital Champions training in GP practices to overcome barriers to digital inclusion amongst patients. In a situation where face to face appointments for non-urgent routine checks cannot take place, this has provided a remote option to maintain the continuity of NHS services.
- e-Learning tools developed for the NHS app and remote consultation methods for GP practices to enable greater access to healthcare in the current situation. Working with Woodhouse Medical practice to embed digital inclusion support into patient calls. This aligns with the NHS Long Term Plan and links with Local Care Partnership priorities.
- Embedded Digital Champions training into existing team training sessions with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, enabling patients to be discharged with digital skills developed while in hospital.
- Implemented the myCOPD self-management app through Primary Care in areas of high prevalence. Delivered virtual e-training for GP practice staff, with 21 Practices trained with embedded Digital Health Champions to support digital inclusion.
- Supported Digital Champions in [Leeds Breathe Easy groups](#) to set up virtual exercise sessions to enable peer-support to continue through the pandemic. Over 40 members across the groups have taken their first steps online to access the virtual sessions and stay connected whilst in isolation. This has boosted self-management, mental wellbeing and enabled them to continue to access Pulmonary Rehab within a peer-support setting.
- Worked with Forum Central and the Healthwatch Digital Inclusion People's Voices Group to embed digital inclusion throughout their work to enable video appointments and online consultations to become accessible to patients who are digitally excluded.

4.7 During lockdown DIS teams delivered three webinars for Commissioners from Adults and Health, Children's Services and CCG. Over 50 attendees heard how the DIS supports partner organisations in developing and delivering the transformative digital elements of the Leeds Plan. This ranges across the spectrum of digital activity from infrastructure work, through digital inclusion, to the design and delivery of person facing apps. Looking ahead to the situation facing Leeds City Council and the wider City, it will be even more important that digital solutions are commissioned and developed effectively and include the most appropriate digital inclusion interventions. The DIS is helping to address these priorities and has already started the conversations with Commissioners.

4.8 The positive impact of this work during the COVID-19 crisis has raised the profile and importance of a whole system, one team approach to digital health and wellbeing. Colleagues in the CCG and Adults and Health are developing Business Cases to increase investment into 100% Digital Leeds. An increasing focus on digital inclusion to improve health outcomes for specific patient cohorts emphasises the importance of the DIS continuing to lead and direct the priorities of the digital inclusion programme as part of one cohesive team effort.

4.9 Detailed information on other strands of work that have strengthened the digital health and wellbeing offer, including the Dementia Pathfinder project, the Digital Health Hub model and Digital Health Champions, are at **Appendices 2 – 4**.

5. Main Issues – Accelerating the digital robustness of the Third Sector

5.1 With many peer support groups, Neighbourhood Network schemes and other community organisations suspending their face-to-face activities, lockdown put digitally excluded people at further risk of social isolation as neither the organisations nor their service users were equipped for the sudden shift in operating model. The Third Sector Leeds Resilience Survey noted that **77%** of third sector organisations said digital exclusion has been an issue for the audiences they work with during this time.

5.2 To support the third sector health and wellbeing response to COVID-19, the DIS launched a grants fund administered and distributed by the 100% Digital Leeds and City Digital teams. Using its convening powers to bring together funders from different sectors, the DIS secured commitments from the Better Care Fund, regional funding from Forum Central, national COVID resilience funding from Leeds Community Foundation and social value

funding from BT as part of their Full Fibre contract in Leeds. Together, these financial contributions created a grant fund of circa £100,000 and was only achieved due to the close cooperation and trusted relationships between the Council, third sector and private sector.

- 5.3 DIS made provisions to speed up the payment process in order to urgently get the funds to small groups without any available reserves. Grants were awarded on a first come, first served basis and some organisations received funding within two days of the fund being launched.
- 5.4 The premise behind the grants fund was to enable organisations to use digital solutions to work more effectively in lockdown or to directly support their service users by providing data packages or equipment. The fund was aimed at organisations supporting health needs with a particular focus on Communities of Interest identified as being most at risk during the pandemic. In a further example of the DIS using its role to support the third sector, some organisations applied for funding to buy laptops for their staff to work from home, Instead, the DIS bought 50 laptops at a more competitive rate and gifted them to the organisations, making the fund more cost-effective and enabling more organisations to benefit.
- 5.5 In addition to supporting the City's efforts in relation to the response to the pandemic, this work meets one of the City Digital Partnerships Team's key strategic priorities for 2020-21, which is to increase the digital robustness of third sector partners in the health and care system.
- 5.6 Around 100 organisations, and the people they support, will benefit from this grant fund. Evidence of the impact of this funding is outlined in a case study from Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network and quotes from some of the other organisations at **Appendix 5** as well as in the example below from Touchstone, who provide mental health and wellbeing services to over 2,000 people a year, whilst also working across communities to grow their confidence and capacity.
- 5.7 **Quote from Touchstone:** *"The mobile phone purchased for a client literally transformed my client's world overnight. I'd been working with a vulnerable, young woman with her small baby. This client speaks no English, has no friends, no TV, no Internet, no books, no possessions and severe mental health problems. Since lockdown, the client had been staring at four blank walls and was spiralling deeper into depression. Much of what we encourage people to do to get better is to connect with the outside world. Unfortunately this was something my client was unable to do for safety reasons. Purchasing the phone with internet service therefore was critical in making those outside connections. Since this point the lives of both her and her baby have been enriched, and although there is a very long way to go, there has been a significant and positive mood increase since the phone arrived. Being able to offer this gift not only assisted their lives, but made the therapeutic process much easier and more successful, enabling the client to stay engaged within the therapy. Hopefully this feedback demonstrates the significance and importance of such a grant and shows what a little money can do to better an individual's life."*
- 5.8 Once again, the speed and collaborative nature of the City's response in coming together to find digital solutions to these issues sets Leeds apart from other places. DIS was asked to contribute examples of their work to a webinar on "Combating digital health inequality in the time of coronavirus". The webinar was delivered by Bob Gann, an independent consultant specialising in digital inclusion and combating digital health inequalities.
- 5.9 **Quote from Bob Gann, Digital Health & Inclusion Specialist:** *"We often hear that COVID-19 is a great leveller: 'We're all in this together'. But there is clear evidence that people experiencing social deprivation are hit hardest by the pandemic, and that includes people who are digitally excluded. The social isolation measures that we need to control the virus impact on every area of our lives: working, studying, shopping, keeping in touch with loved ones, accessing healthcare. Those who can have turned to digital as the means to live their lives. But during lockdown if you're not online you're effectively excluded from society. We may all be hit by the same storm but we're not all in the same boat. Because Covid-19 impacts on every area of our lives we need system-wide, multi-agency responses. Some of the best responses we're seeing to combating digital exclusion in the time of*

coronavirus are joined-up approaches across localities, including in Wales, Sheffield, Birmingham and London. The best example of an ambitious citywide programme is 100% Digital Leeds. 100% Digital Leeds involves council services, local agencies, health and social care and the voluntary sector. And it delivers the range of responses we need, from community grants to device loans, and from online digital champion training to promoting access to digital health tools. It's an example which other cities would do well to follow."

6. Main Issues – Increasing digital capacity and connectivity in communities

- 6.1 During the pandemic DIS teams have worked hard to improve the connectivity of the City's most vulnerable and isolated residents. Since lockdown the tablet lending scheme has been used as a means of meeting the essential connectivity needs of individuals, as identified by third sector partners. In the first few weeks of lockdown the scheme supported 42 organisations to connect their most at-risk clients, directly supporting 179 people with 4G enabled iPads. This is in addition to the 20 organisations who had iPads pre-lockdown and they have used them to support 117 individuals to get connected. Between them the organisations have a city-wide reach and they work with a wide range of client groups including older people, vulnerable women, carers, people with autism, people with long-term physical and mental health conditions people with learning disabilities and migrant groups.
- 6.2 Alongside the existing tablet lending scheme, funding from the Better Care Fund was used to purchase another 50 iPads and 100 Amazon Echo Shows (Alexas with a screen). This equipment is supporting the Council's Care Delivery Service and is on loan to a range of settings including care homes, Transitional Housing Units, Recovery Hubs, hospital wards, Extra Care Housing units, peer support groups, Carers Leeds and Neighbourhood Network Schemes across the City. This has enabled staff to support residents, patients and isolated older people to stay connected with friends and family with video calling during lockdown. Staff have used the Alexas to gain accurate NHS information and updates, to access music and a variety of activities to engage and interact with residents. Resources and 'How to...' guides support staff across these sites to develop their own digital skills and confidence, enabling them to effectively use the digital technology with their service users.
- 6.3 15 Neighbourhood Networks were supported to develop a virtual offer and upskill their staff and volunteers to help them reach their digitally excluded members. Devices have been given to their most isolated members, many with no family, and Digital Champions are now offering 1-1 calls with members to support them to use the devices. The need for many of their service users has been to learn how to order their prescriptions on the NHS app which the staff have supported with, increasing self-management and promoting independence. Alexas have been lent to members to support mental wellbeing and self-management for medication reminders, mood boosting and for video calls with other members and their families. For some, the interaction with Alexa has been the only social interactions they have had throughout the day so they are having a huge impact.
- 6.4 A survey of organisations across the 100% Digital Leeds network asked them to estimate how many people they had supported digitally during the lockdown period. Extrapolating the results of this sample across the whole network suggests that over 4,000 of the most vulnerable citizens are more digitally included thanks to the work of these community organisations over the last three months. DIS teams brought people together, strengthened existing networks, built new relationships and took collective action during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, thousands more people have been able to participate in society via enhanced digital access and skills at a time of pronounced isolation and social exclusion.
- 6.5 An indicator of the national interest in the DIS approach and response to COVID saw Smart Leeds, City Digital and 100% Digital Leeds teams invited to deliver webinars as part of the Digital Leaders Virtual event in June. Webinars on the DIS approach to Smart Cities and Digital Inclusion gained a live audience of over 600 delegates. The 100% Digital Leeds work is one of the finalists in the ['Digital Skills or Inclusion' category of the Digital Leaders Awards](#). This is the only city programme to make the final list of ten, with the other nine finalists operating at a regional, national or international scale.

7. Main issues – Enabling digital services across the council and partners

- 7.1 DIS worked across the City as a whole to lead and coordinate the necessary Digital and Information solutions to underpin the one city approach. Work included:
- Enabling 8,000 colleagues to work from home within two days of lockdown and delivering critical infrastructure upgrades across six weekends up to mid-July to provide additional capacity on the Council network to support increased demand.
 - Continuing arrangements to enable a high proportion of staff to work from home with IT systems running at increased capacity (Skype for Business handling 12,800 concurrent calls at peak times).
 - Supporting teams to increase productivity through further digital transformation.
 - Accelerating the roll out of Office 365 and Microsoft Teams to mitigate some of the issues above.
 - Re-prioritising the portfolio of IT work with COVID recovery and efficiency savings as the prime factors.
 - Establishing the support arrangements and infrastructure for GPs and other primary care staff to work from home, provide online consultations and share resources across practices to support the demand.
- 7.2 DIS also used its convening power to directly support the third sector during the crisis:
- Supported partners without the necessary skills to upgrade their systems.
 - Enabled Voluntary Action Leeds to run a payroll for over 170 third sector organisations in the City with a massive increase in ‘employees’ and ensuring key workers got paid.
 - Rapidly developed new web, service and social media solutions to enable new services.
 - Providing the collaboration technology and tools to enable the third sector to coordinate efforts and enable thousands of new volunteers.
- 7.3 Similarly businesses were significantly impacted by COVID and as well as rapidly developing solutions to enable them to apply and get paid business grants, in days to keep them sustained, the team has been working with Economic Development to provide joined up support to enable businesses to transact and keep in touch with their customers online.
- 7.4 There has been an increased focus on how digital exclusion has impacted on children’s education during the pandemic. DIS worked with the Children and Families directorate and Social Work teams to support the Department for Education (DfE) scheme to distribute devices and connectivity to disadvantaged families, children and young people who do not currently have access to them through another source. Equipment could be requested for care leavers, children and young people aged 0 to 19 with a social worker and disadvantaged year 10 pupils.
- 7.5 Leeds requested 2,181 HP laptop devices and 303 Wi-Fi routers (enabled with 8GB of data per month for six months from activation) to distribute to young people identified for the scheme. DIS worked closely with colleagues in Children and Families, the DfE and Computacenter (the DfE’s delivery partner) to coordinate the delivery and distribution of devices through the child’s allocated social worker.
- 7.6 Mobile data management is currently being provided by the DfE through locally configured security settings and Microsoft Intune. Initially support ran until October 2020, however following meetings with the DfE directly raising DIS’s concerns with this support offer, the DfE have agreed to continue support until March 2021 on all devices.
- 7.7 Discussions are continuing with the DfE to further extend their offer, however this looks unlikely beyond what has been agreed and announced to date. Discussions are underway with Children and Families SLT to consider next steps. Options being considered are:
- ‘Gift’ the device from April to the young people or family;
 - Hand over the devices in April to Leeds schools to be managed as part of their education estate;
 - Work with DIS and the DfE to find a suitable supplier to continue support and maintenance for a further year from April 2021.

7.8 Before the DfE scheme was announced, a community response to the issue was already coming together in the form of Digital Access West Yorkshire. Their aim is to work with community groups and teachers to match donated laptops or tablet computers with those individuals who need them, making sure that more people can connect with others during this difficult time. A detailed case study on their work is at **Appendix 6**.

8. Corporate considerations

8.1 Consultation and engagement

8.1.1 As outlined throughout this report, consultation and engagement with partner organisations and their service users is a constant activity of the work and one of the fundamental principles of the DIS approach.

8.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

8.2.1 The report focuses on actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of poverty, exclusion and inequalities. By working with community partners this work will strengthen cohesion and integration in Leeds.

8.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

8.3.1 All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan and the Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth Strategies.

Climate Emergency

8.3.2 Improving digital inclusion across all communities has the potential to make a major contribution towards overall efforts to tackle climate change. Significant focus across government and the public sector in particular has been given to transforming the way citizens interact with services, moving information and applications online while delivering services in fewer physical locations. For those who are digitally excluded this has created difficult practical challenges and they are also excluded from securing the environmental benefits of these changes. For example, if someone is not able to complete a form online they may have to travel to a physical location, with the nearest one now being a greater distance away than it was previously and requiring a longer, more polluting, journey.

8.3.3 At its core, work to provide people with more digital skills and access equips them with greater choice and flexibility about how they live their lives. As well as having the ability to present more opportunities in social and economic terms, it can also inform and enable people to make more environmentally positive choices in a realistic and practical way.

8.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

8.4.1 Alongside the ongoing health implications of the COVID crisis there may be a serious economic downturn with a resultant impact on society and the most vulnerable. The effects of the pandemic will continue to hit services and support groups across the city at the same time that a huge backlog in health and care needs will place additional demand on services. Third Sector Leeds recently released the findings from a survey of third sector resilience in Leeds showing that 60% of third sector organisations who responded said they may remain financially sustainable for six months or less.

8.4.2 To ensure that the most disadvantaged are not hardest-hit over the next few years, people and communities need to have the best chance to sustain themselves. Digital inclusion provides the opportunity for people to do that and gives the Council and NHS partners the ability to enable and facilitate better outcomes for people. In the current climate the recommended approach to do this is through the Council convening people and community based assets to coproduce and delivery solutions rather than rely on traditional service delivery methods alone.

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

8.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

8.6 Risk management

8.6.1 While there are no specific risks directly associated with any proposals in this report, it is important to note the risk of failing to deliver the programme and not achieving the ambition of 100% Digital Leeds. This could have a significant impact on partners across the city and on the combined efforts to tackle poverty, improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. The impact of this could be felt by a significant number of the poorest people and families in Leeds.

8.6.2 Risks are managed, and programme governance is in place, by regular reporting to Smart Leeds Portfolio Board and annual reports to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth).

9. Conclusions

9.1 The COVID-19 crisis continues to put huge pressure on the Council and partners in the third sector and in health and care settings. The emergency digital response outlined in this report has had a positive impact on the City's most vulnerable residents. Looking to the future and planning for the city's recovery phase with partners, there will be severe budget challenges across all sectors. To continue to deliver an effective digital response, it is even more crucial that the Council uses its convening power to maximum effect. It is essential to work beyond silos and bring people together from across sectors to coproduce solutions from the bottom-up. This approach is well established across DIS and is exemplified by the work of the City Digital team and the 100% Digital Leeds team outlined in this report.

9.2 The Scrutiny Board meeting in February 2020 may not have discussed the COVID-19 crisis but it was prescient in one respect. The digital update report presented at that Board included a summary of the DIS approach and rationale. It is repeated here for emphasis:

9.3 *"The Council cannot meet the demands of the future without change. We want to move to a whole system approach across places that enables people to independently look after themselves and improve their lives, to connect them to their communities and a wider circle of care and support. We can use some of the latest technologies to make this happen, but if we do not tackle digital exclusion then tens of thousands of our most vulnerable residents will be left behind as other areas of the city move on without them. We are working with and within those communities to ensure that everyone benefits from a truly 100% Digital Leeds."*

9.4 This is the ambition moving forwards and should be a foundation of the Council's and the City's recovery plans.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The current CDIO is leaving at the end of July to be replaced by a jointly appointed post with a focus on City outcomes, not just services. As part of the Council's ongoing digital response to COVID it is recommended that the DIS and the new CDIO continues to set priorities, direct the work and provide overall governance for 100% Digital Leeds, with the DIS also continuing to report progress to this Board.

10.2 The central coordination, convening, connecting and enabling role of the DIS, with the 100% Digital Leeds Team as an integral part of that approach, has been essential during the current crisis. Although the 100% Digital Leeds team currently sit on the Library Service structure, it is recommended that this integrated approach is sustained and strengthened based on the return on Public Value and Outcomes exemplified in this report and previous reports to this Board.

10.3 If external funding comes to an end, which is unlikely for the next 18 months, it is recommended that this work and these teams are considered a priority as part of the budget setting process based on the returns on investment to the community, Council and NHS. Detailed evaluation and Return on Investment figures for 100% Digital Leeds featured in the previous report to this Board in February 2020. A summary is included at **Appendix 7** for ease of reference.

11. Background documents¹

11.1 None.

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

Appendix 1: Library Service initiatives

Keeping in touch (KIT) project

Background

All Leeds Library buildings closed on March 23 2020 due to the coronavirus crisis. The Keeping in Touch project was developed to support some of our more vulnerable residents and was targeted at customers over the age of 70 in the first instance. Specifically calls were made to:

- To help reduce loneliness and isolation
- To update customers on what was happening with the library service (e.g. to reassure customers not to worry about any outstanding library books)
- To Initiate a digital conversation and support customers access online services
- Make referrals to other agencies as necessary.

A draft script was developed to support conversations and a number of staff members were assigned to the project, working in teams and supported by a team leader.

Outcomes

This was an immensely positive experience for both staff and customers. Just under 6,000 calls made and all 6,000 calls included a digital conversation. Many of the queries were about libraries reopening but we were also able to support with a range of other queries ranging from accessing the At Home Library Service, to information about when services such as waste recycling centres would reopen. Staff making the calls were also able to provide information about the Covid helpline and one referral was made to Adult Social Care.

Digital support

Library staff were able to help customers access library online services e.g. e-Books, e-Audio e-Magazine and e-Newspapers. For more in-depth digital support, they were able to refer customers to a 1-1 digital support session with a librarian. They were also able to signpost to Niche Academy, a resource recently purchased by the Library Service which provides access to a range of tutorials to support with digital skills development, e.g. accessing social media, how to set up zoom meetings and how to use Microsoft applications.

Feedback

"My mum was delighted to receive a keep-in-touch call yesterday from her local library. She's already looking forward to the call next week as she finds the long days in isolation can get lonely. Thank you @leedslibraries – this simple thing made an enormous difference" (Isobel Hunter CEO Libraries Connected on Twitter, 29 May)

Appendix 2: Dementia Pathfinder

Before the COVID-19 crisis, DIS teams worked in partnership with Adults & Health, Carers Leeds, Good Things Foundation and NHS Digital to deliver the NHS Dementia Pathfinder.

The programme trialled how digital technology, and increasing digital inclusion more generally, could help people with dementia and their families/carers to manage their conditions. Supporting people with dementia is a key priority within the Older People's Mental Health programme of the Leeds Health and Care Plan. Harnessing digital tools to empower people with long term conditions to take control of their health is a key enabler of the Proactive Care and Self-Management programme within the Leeds Plan.

The legacy and success of the NHS Dementia Pathfinder has been reflected during the pandemic. Many organisations, dementia cafes and carer support groups are now equipped with digital champions, they have equipment to support their service users and have established online support groups to enable support to continue through lockdown. Carers have been able to access closed Facebook groups set up through the project to keep in touch, stay connected and most importantly provide support and advice to each other and communicate with Carers Leeds.

Dementia Cafes borrowed devices from the lending scheme to distribute amongst their most socially and digitally excluded members. Digital champions provided 1-1 support to help them to overcome barriers of confidence and fear in using the technology. Apps have enabled carers to manage their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown and promoted independence and wider self-management for their long-term conditions. Alexas have been lent to members who are isolated and either live alone or with their carers. These are benefiting the dementia carers through increased social interactions. Carers have been using the NHS symptom checker with Alexa, listening to music for reminiscence and using the devices to relieve agitation and anxiety.

Full report available at:

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/leedsdementia-report2020.pdf>

'How to...' guide available at:

https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/how_to_use_digital_to_help_those_with_dementia.pdf

Appendix 3: Digital Health Hub

The 100% Digital Leeds team partnered with Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours Scheme to launch the first Digital Health Hub in Leeds last year after a successful funding application to Good Things Foundation. This enabled Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours Scheme to embed digital support and resources into their already successful programme of activities. Their 1,200 members received support on topics such as ordering repeat prescriptions online, making a GP appointment online or using the NHS app to self-manage their long-term health conditions.

The Digital Health Hub model works in partnership with NHS, creating strong links with local GP practices and Social Prescribing teams. There is now an established referral pathway for health professionals and staff to refer patients to the Digital Health Hub for support in accessing online NHS services, and this has continued throughout COVID-19.

Patients can now make GP appointments and order online prescriptions, which has been vital at this time and created a change in lifestyle for patients with the way they engage with health services. This reduced pressures on front-line NHS services and increased uptake of video appointments. Digital Champions are continuing to work with patients and carers to understand and meet their digital health needs, which is a real demonstration of co-production.

In the face of COVID-19 this Digital Health Hub model has shown the key benefits to the framework in providing digital health support throughout the pandemic. The centre is delivering their service by communicating to their members fully through welfare calls and virtual sessions, but established partnerships and collaborative working with local healthcare providers has continued.

The main factors which contributed to this success are:

- The 100% Digital Leeds team working closely with Primary Care by delivering Digital Champion training to local GP Practice staff and volunteers to increase access to NHS services online and self-management apps such as the MyCOPD app. This has strengthened the links between the community provision at the Digital Health Hub and primary care networks, enabling continued referrals for digital support and improving health outcomes for their members/patients.
- Increased communication around NHS communications and Coronavirus updates to members throughout the pandemic. Encouraging members to still access Primary Care when necessary and increasing awareness of access to cancer screenings and other key services.
- An established cohort of staff and volunteers within Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours Scheme who have continued to provide digital support and training with members via telephone calls.
- Key stakeholders across Third Sector, NHS, Leeds Community Healthcare and Voluntary Action Leeds.

Following the success of this first Digital Health Hub in Leeds, this framework will be shared further so that the model can be extended to other Neighbourhood Networks and Third Sector organisations across the city. The council wants to improve health outcomes for all and enable more people to self-manage their health conditions. This model will provide digital support for people by harnessing the tools and resources amongst community organisations, enabling service users to access health information online, online consultations and NHS services. The wider benefits of increasing digital skills include: Increasing social connections, combatting loneliness and promoting independence amongst service users, enabling them to shop and bank online as well as accessing online groups and virtual sessions to support their mental wellbeing.

<https://digitalinclusionleeds.com/2020/03/24/digital-health-hub-cross-gates-and-district-good-neighbours-covid-19/>

https://crossgatesgns.org.uk/news_events/virtual-coffee-mornings/

Appendix 4: Digital Health Champions

346 Digital Champions trained across Health and Care.

One of the main barriers to digital inclusion for digital health is skills and confidence. 100% Digital Leeds deliver Digital Health Champions training with clinical staff and health professionals to support a positive attitude towards technology and innovation. Training is supporting the digital ready workforce programme.

Supporting GP practices across Leeds and working with health champions in practices and across Patient Participation Groups has increased the awareness of the digital tools and resources available. Staff are promoting the benefits of being online when having telephone conversations and appointments with patients, increasing the uptake of video appointments and online consultations.

During the pandemic Digital Health Champions training was delivered virtually with Social Prescribing teams, supporting patients to overcome barriers to digital inclusion. Many of the services and activities the social prescribing teams signpost patients to are now online. Digital champion training has increased access for patients to online resources to support their health and mental wellbeing, such as Active Leeds exercise videos as well as resources through the British Lung Foundation and Heart Foundation websites. Teams have developed virtual sessions for patients to promote positive mental wellbeing and social connections such as Virtual Coffee Mornings.

Digital Health Champions Training has also been delivered to third sector organisations who are supporting their service users with long-term conditions, such as Leeds Involving People and a wide range of Neighbourhood Networks. Where motivation is the most challenging barrier to overcome for digital inclusion, this training has enabled a positive shift for many older people and people living with long-term conditions in embracing digital technology and supporting them to live well whilst in isolation. Active Leeds staff have also received the training which is increasing the use of their online resources to support people to stay active, healthy and living well in isolation, and enabling staff to address digital inclusion barriers within the implementation of these resources.

Promoting non-traditional approaches for healthcare professionals and patients with digital health has been key. It has aligned with the priorities of Shared Decision making, Better Conversations and Collaborative Care and Support Planning, ensuring the offer and patient plan is person-centred. Digital support for health professionals is helping with early interventions, having positive digital inclusion conversations at appointments, diagnosis of long-term conditions and annual reviews to determine the barriers patients may face to digital and how to overcome these at this early stage. This may include recommending a patient start their digital journey using a game app (linked to their hobbies and interests) which then enables them to develop their digital literacy skills and confidence to eventually self-manage their conditions via digital tools, saving time using online NHS services and taking control of their own health and wellbeing.

Expanding the Digital Health Champion training offer across the staff training platforms within Leeds Community Healthcare, Primary Care and with the wider Social Prescribing teams, Community Link Workers and Community Builders is a priority. Embedding this training within Health and Care for the health workforce has increased opportunities for patients to overcome barriers to digital inclusion and increased uptake and access to online NHS resources. Teams are also building wider networks of digital support around ordering prescriptions and making appointments online, increasing support for self-managing health and wellbeing amongst patients.

Appendix 5: Feedback on grant funding from Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network and other organisations

“Asylum seekers living in Home Office accommodation do not have access to Wi-Fi. The Home Office allocates asylum seekers £3 a week for communications – a device and a pay-as-you-go sim card with calls and data. Usually this would be supplemented by utilising free community Wi-Fi in council buildings, shopping centres, and fast food outlets – but access has been limited during lockdown.

Government support for asylum seekers comes via Migrant Help, an online platform and telephone call centre, making help and advice inaccessible for those without a device and credit for calls and connectivity. Many asylum seekers do not even have televisions. Before the pandemic asylum seekers in this position would have been able to access support locally through migrant third sector organisations like LASSN, PAFRAS, RETAS, but lockdown has caused all of these organisations to close their doors.

All of these circumstances mean people have not been able to access reliable essential information about, among other things, how to stay safe during the pandemic. This is particularly worrying given that we now know that people who are black or other ethnic minority backgrounds are more at risk of dying from COVID-19. On top of this, refugees and asylum seekers are more likely to be living with long term physical and mental health conditions, making them further at risk of adverse effects from COVID-19.

LASSN have addressed this essential need for connectivity by providing refugees and asylum seekers with phone credit. First £5/month and more recently £10/month, from LASSN's own resource and to the organisation's direct service users. Taking a collaborative approach has made it possible for LASSN to extend this offer to all asylum seekers in the city:

- £1,000 from a successful application to the 100% Digital Leeds grants fund and £3,500 repurposed funds from West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner was used to purchase MiFi dongles.*
- DIS wiped and donated 80 reconditioned smartphones which allowed devices to be gifted to those who do not own a device with the capacity to access the internet.*
- Solidaritech have donated laptops and other devices to support households with children.*
- Each sim/MiFi dongle provides people with three months of data and all equipment is gifted to the beneficiaries.*
- The city's migrant third sector has worked to identify families without connectivity and refer them to LASSN.*

With this approach LASSN have provided over 100 households with internet access. Households are encouraged to share their connectivity within the household and externally where possible, making sure that the maximum number of people benefit from the scheme.

Digital skills support has also been an issue, and engaging with new ways of organisational delivery such as Zoom has been a challenge for all involved, including organisational staff and volunteers. The sector has come together to overcome this barrier too, with organisations creating and sharing support materials in different languages, working together to improve digital literacy for all.

Leeds has an excellent Wi-Fi network but only some people can access it, making those who can afford it more able to access the information and services we all need to keep ourselves and our families safe. Can internet access be made more inclusive? Can we work with corporate partners to try and make things fairer? Can we help LASSN to be able to spend their time and resources on supporting people to claim asylum rather than supporting them to access essential services like Wi-Fi?”

– Jon Beech, Director, LASSN (This case study adapted from a longer [video contribution](#).)

Organisation	Feedback
Shantona Women's Centre	<p>We are based in Harehills (LS8 postcode area). Majority of service users have had some support around digital inclusion. Additionally, staff have had internal training, self-taught and attended zoom information sessions to improve their digital inclusion. We estimate that around 100 service users have been supported to be more digitally included and that about 10 staff have become more digitally included</p> <p>Chrome books have enabled workers to continue delivering support and recording outcomes whilst working from home. Having multi-lingual staff has removed the language barrier so that services users understand how to access and navigate these platforms.</p>
The Joanna Project	<p>We work with women across the whole of Leeds who struggle with addictions and can be of no fixed abode.</p> <p>Chromebook has been used for socially distanced visits to complete new online benefits claims, accessing bank accounts, uploading a sick not and a skype meeting to celebrate a child's birthday who is in foster care.</p> <p>The long battery life, swift launch and neatness, compared to a laptop, has been hugely appreciated. The women we support are often in crisis and very anxious, so these features have meant the difference between a successful intervention, or a failure to help someone in real need.</p>
Leeds Bereavement Service	<p>Operate across the whole of the city. Laptop given to Development Worker, front facing camera made a massive difference. Provided online training sessions and also online support to individuals. Since April 2020 they have helped 69 people.</p>
Leeds Mind	<p>Laptop used by Job Retention Specialists to carry on supporting 20 of our clients across Leeds by transferring the weekly support on Zoom. The Job Retention Specialist helps clients retain their employment if it is at risk whilst they are recovering from their mental health difficulties.</p>
URP Leeds Limited	<p>The laptop you have provided to our company is life-saving. Used to support clients across the city to fill in application forms etc. Since April we have supported 91 clients and among them 18 of them were advised on how to use Zoom and how to use bite size website, and among the participants 6 of them were provided with a Tablet loan. We were also able to give out 4 used laptops which were matched through donation.</p>
Special Autism Services	<p>Specialist Autism Services covers Leeds as a whole (our service users can access from any part of Leeds). We have estimated that we have supported 45 individuals to be more digitally included.</p>
West Yorkshire Family Mediation Service	<p>We provide family mediation services to divorced and separated couples in order to help them with outstanding issues concerning their property, finances and especially their children. Laptops used by mediators to remotely engage with clients and their children via the internet. Since April, we have directly supported in the region of 100 people plus their families.</p>
Trinity Network (Social Opportunities for Older People)	<p>Are encouraging members to use zoom to contact friends and family. Clients, staff and volunteers in the 60+ group are definitely more interested and have been accessing online services and using zoom to engage in quizzes and meetings. I would estimate since April approximately 20 people would have been benefited.</p>
Age UK	<p>I can tell you that we support older people across Leeds – anywhere with an LS postcode. Have supported approximately 2700 older people since the pandemic started. We have worked closely with approx. 20-30 older people to help them learn digital skills to connect with family e.g. Skype, Zoom, on line shopping etc.</p>

Health for All Leeds Ltd	We work across the city as an organisation. Laptops used for our young people and families staff to connect with vulnerable young people and families. Since April have supported over 500 people digitally via zoom calls, telephone chats, online groups, online courses, virtual weekly peer groups. We also support young people and families from Morley and Rothwell. Also used the laptops to support Teenspirit groups, positive destinations group, young parents group, care leavers group and dads group.
Leeds Autism Services	We currently operate across the whole of Leeds. Since April, we've supported around 10 – 12 people to be more digital. However, we envisage that this figure will rise to around 30 – 40 by the end of July.
Dial Leeds	Support people Leeds wide, but been a major focus on Moortown Foodbank due to travel limitations etc recently. Helped 25-30 people pretty regularly with weekly contacts and using digital means to progress such things as food parcel deliveries, energy related issues and issues around mental and physical wellbeing. Laptops have meant that volunteers carry on contacting clients and to keep in touch with the office.
Complete Woman CIC	Laptop used to run daily coffee mornings to catch up on everyone at home to help reduce loneliness for those still isolating. From April 2020 we have been able to support all of our members (60+) to become more confident digitally and to use Zoom and shopping online etc. Have also supported 4 families are being supported with monthly internet vouchers.
Crossgates and District Good Neighbours	We cover the Crossgates area our customers are 65 +. Have trained 45 people to use Zoom and lent 11 people tablets with WiFi. Half of these has never used WiFi before, but are now connecting to church services. Also done 1-2-1 help with phone queries with 15 people who were concerned scams or help with pc. Also run on line IT lessons covering Facebook, Learn my way, WhatsApp, Google photos and backing up photos. The online IT classes have 8 members.

Appendix 6: Digital Access West Yorkshire

[Digital Access West Yorkshire](#) (DAWY) are a group of interested local people who are concerned with the lack of technology provision for young people and the widening of the digital divide. They believe digital access is the ability to fully participate in society. This includes access to tools and technologies that allow for full participation, including laptops, computers, tablets and access to the internet. DAWY are an open, democratic voluntary organisation helping to address the increased needs and greater demands for connectivity during the COVID-19 crisis. Their aim is to match donated laptops or tablet computers with those individuals who need them, making sure that more people can connect with others during this difficult time.

DAWY believe that access to technology and digital skills are not just important in themselves, they are increasingly important for navigating the modern world. The effect of home-schooling has been overwhelming on children and young people during the lockdown. Social connectivity can help them to maintain friendships and belonging throughout this time of isolation. DAWY aim to increase access to technology as much as possible.

There is currently a core group of ten volunteers helping DAWY with everything from technician time, social media support, liaison, logistics and the provision of physical space. They have managed to gift machines to schools, individuals and organisations to support people in specific need. Over the course of the last eight weeks they have seen the pace of donations pick up significantly and have increased volunteer hours and parts purchases in response.

This summer, Leeds Community Foundation will be funding and coordinating another Healthy Holidays programme for schoolchildren in Leeds. The programme enables vulnerable children to have access to food, fun activities, learning and support during the school holidays. This year, many of the activities will be online and many of the children will struggle to take part if they have no devices or connectivity. To help those families, Leeds Libraries and Community Hubs are buying iPads to add to the tablet lending scheme and DAWY are working with Leeds Community Foundation to support the scheme with donated devices.

DAWY is another example of the burgeoning partnerships between the Council and private, public, third and cultural sectors that have developed during the COVID-19 crisis. These partnerships are characterised by the caring and coherent nature of their response to the pandemic. There is also a shared realisation that the response asks as many questions as it answers and, as time goes on, the effects of inequality become both broader and deeper.

Appendix 7: 100% Digital Leeds evaluation and Return on Investment

100% Digital Leeds has an evaluation framework that enables them to measure improved outcomes across a range of indicators. The framework also gives a methodology that can be used to report the return on investment that digital inclusion brings to residents, the Council and the city as a whole.

The evaluation framework includes:

- **Ongoing User Progression Survey** – collects demographic data to measure trends and to build a profile of end users (e.g. age, employment status, if they have a disability/long term health condition, language needs, whether they're a Housing Leeds tenant). The survey also includes attitudinal and behavioural change, and calculation of channel shift savings. This will be rolled out to all of the 100% Digital Leeds partners who offer digital access and support to users.
- **Monthly Activity Survey for organisations participating in the tablet lending scheme**
- **Monthly Activity Survey for organisations benefiting from Digital Inclusion Funding**
Both of these are designed to collect data to provide quantitative evidence of impact delivered by partners in communities and among target audiences, so that we can state, for example, "*x number of organisations in the movement are helping people find employment and saw y amount of people this quarter.*" The digital inclusion team will also contact each organisation quarterly to collect qualitative evidence in the form of user case studies and organisational case studies, featuring quotes and images. These will be organised in categories relevant to specific agendas e.g. health, employment and skills, financial resilience, community integration, reduced isolation or loneliness and greater independence.
- **Ongoing Digital Champions progression survey** – as well as continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of Digital Champions training, the impact of the practical application of training and the engagement of end users by Digital Champions will also be measured and reported.

The report to this Board in February 2020 included data from progression surveys showing annualised savings as a result of behaviour changes and channel shift due to the 100% Digital Leeds programme:

Service	Savings
A&E	£310,426
GP	£230,427
Leeds City Council	£98,686
Other government offices	£72,703
Jobcentre Plus	£69,370
Total:	£781,612

The digital inclusion team will continue to survey partner organisations and end users. The robustness of the data and the values for Return on Investment will increase exponentially as the team continues to expand the digital inclusion network and more responses are collected from beneficiaries.

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Date: 16 July 2020

Subject: Work Schedule

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

1. Purpose of this report

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

2. Background information

2.1 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. In doing so, the work schedule should not be considered a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.

3. Main issues

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

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

Developing the work schedule

- 3.3 When considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
- Avoid unnecessary duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue.
 - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.
 - Avoid pure “information items” except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
 - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
 - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
- 3.4 In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where necessary and appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

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

4. Consultation and engagement

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

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include ‘ to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council’s Equality and Diversity Scheme’.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

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

Climate Emergency

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

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 Experience has shown that the Scrutiny process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.
- 4.4.2 The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.

Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:

- Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
- Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
- Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

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

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

5. Conclusions

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

6. Recommendations

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

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None.

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



Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

June	July	August
Meeting Agenda for 25 June at 10.30 am.	Meeting Agenda for 16 July at 10.30 am.	No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.
<p>*REMOTE SESSION*</p> <p>Update on decision making during the emergency pandemic response and recovery plan as it pertains to the remit of the Board – verbal update from the Director of City Development.</p> <p>Transport Update from Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)</p> <p>Sustainable Development – Recommendation Tracking</p>	<p>*REMOTE SESSION*</p> <p>Inclusive Growth Update</p> <p>Digital Inclusion Update</p>	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Page 63

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

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

Inclusive Growth Strategy

PEOPLE, **PLACE** and **PRODUCTIVITY** - Relevant **BIG** Ideas **3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**



Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

September	October	November
Meeting Agenda for 23 September at 10.30 am.	Meeting Agenda for 14 October at 10.30 am.	Meeting Agenda for 18 November at 10am
Leeds Public transport Investment Programme - Update Financial Health Out-Turn report – TBC Performance report - TBC	Advancing Bus Service Provision	Number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads – focused on those campaigning for improvements in road safety.
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Page 64

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

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

Inclusive Growth Strategy

PEOPLE, **PLACE** and **PRODUCTIVITY** - Relevant **BIG** Ideas **3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**



Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

December	January	February
No meetings Scheduled	Meeting Agenda for 20 January at 10.30 am.	Meeting Agenda 17 February at 10am
	Best Council Plan Performance Best Council Plan Update Financial Health Monitoring Initial Budget Proposals	Inclusive Growth update Housing Mix Update
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Page 65

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

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

Inclusive Growth Strategy

PEOPLE, PLACE and **PRODUCTIVITY** - Relevant **BIG** Ideas **3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**



Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Work Schedule for 2020/2021 Municipal Year

March	April	Notes
No meetings scheduled	Meeting Agenda for 7 April at 10.30am	
	Smart Cities Update	Lawnswood Roundabout Powered 2 wheeler access to with flow bus lanes
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Page 66

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

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

Inclusive Growth Strategy

PEOPLE, **PLACE** and **PRODUCTIVITY** - Relevant **BIG** Ideas **3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**

REMOTE MEETING OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 24TH JUNE, 2020

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor D Coupar

1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the remote meeting of the Executive Board, which was being held as a result of the ongoing social distancing measures established in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair extended her thanks and appreciation to Council employees, together with all partner organisations and sectors across the city and the wider region for the extraordinary co-ordinated efforts which continued to be taken to safeguard and serve communities during these unprecedented times.

The Chair also highlighted that as the national measures in place began to change over the coming weeks, key messages around the ongoing importance of caution and safety, in line with the Government's guidance, would continue to be communicated.

2 Late Items

Agenda Item 15 (Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan)

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

Given the scale and significance of this issue, it was deemed appropriate that a further update report be submitted to this remote meeting of the Board. However, due to the fast paced nature of developments on this issue, and in order to ensure that Board Members received the most up to date information as possible the report was not included within the agenda as originally published on 16th June 2020. (Minute No. 14 refers).

3 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared at the meeting.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19th May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 20th July, 2020

RESOURCES

5 Financial Performance - Outturn Financial Year Ended 31st March 2020

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report presenting the financial outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year in terms of both revenue and capital elements, with it also including details regarding the Housing Revenue Account and expenditure on schools. In addition, the report also highlighted the position in respect of other key financial health indicators including: Council Tax and Business Rates collection statistics; sundry income; reserves and the prompt payment of creditors.

The Executive Member for Resources extended his thanks to Council officers for the work undertaken to achieve the Council's outturn position for 2019/20, as detailed within the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Council's financial outturn position for 2019/20, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the creation of earmarked reserves, as detailed within paragraph 6.3 of the submitted report, be agreed, with agreement also being given to delegate the release of such reserves to the Chief Officer (Financial Services);
- (c) That it be noted that the Chief Officer (Financial Services) will be responsible for the implementation of these resolutions following the conclusion of the 'Call In' period.

6 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2019/20

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report providing the financial outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year in terms of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and operations.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was provided with an update on the Council's current approach towards borrowing, with it being noted that during this current financially uncertain period, the Council was monitoring the markets with the aim of ensuring that future borrowing achieved best value for the Council.

RESOLVED – That the Treasury Management outturn position for 2019/20, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted, with it also being noted that treasury activity has remained within the Treasury Management Strategy and policy framework.

7 Financial Health Monitoring 2020/21 – Month 1

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report which presented the projected financial health position of the Authority for 2020/21, as at month 1 of the financial year.

With regard to a Member's comments regarding the appended action plan which looked to address the pressures upon the 'Children Looked After' budget for 2020/21 and the approach being taken to deal with any increased demand for related services which could potentially arise as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Board was advised that a detailed set of actions were in place to address such matters and that such information could be shared with Board Members, as required. Also, it was noted that there was a focus upon the transfer of children and young people currently in external placements to foster care wherever possible and appropriate, which was alongside the actions being taken aimed at increasing the recruitment levels of foster carers in Leeds.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority, as at Month 1 of the 2020/21 financial year be noted, and that the projected impact of COVID-19 on that position also be noted;
- (b) That the savings plan, as provided by the Director of Children and Families which identifies initial proposals to address pressures in 'Children Looked After' budgets and the reduction in grant funding as announced after the 2020/21 budget had been set, be noted;
- (c) That in line with principles laid out by Government, it be noted that the Council has continued to charge schools as normal for Council services disrupted by COVID-19, for which they have a regular financial commitment.

8 Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) upon Leeds City Council's 2020/21 Financial Position and Update on the Forecast Budget Position for 2021/22

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report which provided an update regarding the Council's financial position in respect of 2020/21 and 2021/22, taking into consideration the current position regarding the financial impact upon the Authority arising from Coronavirus pandemic.

In introducing the report the Executive Member for Resources highlighted the scale of the budget shortfall which was currently forecast, with it being noted that the Council continued to be in dialogue with the Government on such matters, including the need for further support.

In considering the submitted report, the Board discussed a number of key issues, including:-

- Whilst recognising the support which had been provided by the Government to date, emphasis was placed upon the unprecedented scale of the financial situation being faced by Local Authorities and the need for further support to be provided, with it being noted that a co-ordinated approach was being taken by Local Authorities and the Local Government Association in communicating such concerns to Government;
- In acknowledging the possibility that a budgetary shortfall may still remain even with the provision of further support from Government, Members

discussed the need for further discussion to take place with Government around the possibility of being able to address the Council's financial position over a longer term and with greater flexibility;

- Members discussed matters relating to the current level of reserves held by the Council when compared to other Local Authorities; the longstanding budgetary approach which has been taken in Leeds; the Council's track record in consistently delivering balanced budgets; the nature and size of the economy in the city as a whole and the role which the Council continued to play within that;
- The key role which has been played by Local Authorities throughout the pandemic was highlighted, and the need for that key role to continue and be appropriately supported by Government, with emphasis also being placed upon the importance of the Council being agile enough to adapt and respond to the evolving needs of local communities and the economy as we progressed through the different stages of the pandemic.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the position, as outlined in the submitted report by the Chief Officer (Financial Services) concerning Leeds City Council's financial position as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the Government has been written to asking for further financial assistance;
- (c) That it be noted that if further assistance from the Government is not forthcoming or is insufficient to address the scale of the financial overspend as detailed within the submitted report, then an Emergency Budget would be considered by Full Council in the Summer;
- (d) That if the actions that the Council can take on this issue are in the professional opinion of the Chief Officer (Financial Services) insufficient to reduce the Council's cost base to enable there to be sufficient resources to fund services, then it be noted that a Section 114 report would be issued;
- (e) That the revised estimated budget gap for 2021/22 and the actions being taken to address this position, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (f) That it be noted that an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy is to be brought to Executive Board in September 2020 which will provide an update on the Council's financial position covering the period 2021/22 – 2025/26.

9 Annual Corporate Risk Management Report

The Director of Resources and Housing submitted a report that provided an update on the Council's most significant corporate risks, how they were currently being managed and presenting details on the further activity planned to address such risks during 2020/21.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member for Resources emphasised the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic upon the range of risks which were currently being faced by the Council, as reflected within the submitted report.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further information on the stress test work undertaken regarding the resilience of the Council to maintain its financial position and deliver services under certain circumstances, with it being undertaken that the details of such work could be provided to Board Members as required.

In addition, further to the discussions in the preceding item, the need for continued dialogue with Government around the possibility of being able to address the Council's financial position over a longer term and with greater flexibility was reiterated.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the annual risk management report, as submitted, together with the assurances given on the most significant corporate risks, in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy and the Board's overarching responsibility for their management, be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the submitted report will provide a key source of evidence on the Authority's risk management arrangements contributing towards the Annual Governance Statement to be considered later this year by the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

10 Learning Places Design & Cost Report School Places Delivery September 2020

The Director of Children and Families and the Director of City Development submitted a report providing information on the need for additional secondary school places across the city for delivery by September 2020, and which sought approval regarding authority to spend and to incur a total expenditure of £7,595,000 to deliver projects at both Cockburn Academy and Leeds City Academy for September 2020 to address specific demographic growth pressures in those respective areas.

A Member raised concerns relating to the proposals within the submitted report regarding Cockburn Academy, with specific reference to the £6,835,000 capital expenditure proposed for that one school, indicated the potential for the matter to be 'Called In' which would require consideration by Scrutiny, and made an enquiry regarding any previous funding which had been provided to the Cockburn Multi Academy Trust. Responding to the concerns raised, the Board discussed and received further information regarding:-

- The delayed delivery of the Laurence Calvert Free School and the impact of this upon school places in the area, with Members receiving an update on the current position regarding the continued dialogue

taking place with Government in relation to the delivery of this Free School;

- Further detail was provided on how the proposed expenditure would be used, which included addressing the historical capacity issues at the school and the required adaptation of the current on site infrastructure, whilst also ensuring the delivery of appropriate facilities – with an offer that further detail could be provided to the Member in question, if required;
- In terms of timescales, it was confirmed that the 60 additional places proposed to be created at Cockburn Academy to address that bulge cohort would remain at the school until those 60 pupils had completed Year 11;
- Members also discussed the broader issue of appropriate resource being provided to the Local Authority for the delivery of further school places across the city to enable levels of demand to be met, with it being highlighted that further consideration and discussion of such matters would be welcomed.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the additional secondary places which are required in order to reduce the amount of children being allocated a school place out of area, be noted;
- (b) That the necessary authority to spend be approved, together with approval also being given to incur expenditure of £6,835,000 from Capital Scheme number 33176/BGE/CBN to deliver the works associated with a 60 place ‘bulge’ at Cockburn Academy for September 2020;
- (c) That the proposal for the freehold transfer of the land identified within the submitted report, which forms part of the former South Leeds Golf Course to Cockburn Multi Academy Trust be approved, to allow the delivery of the sports field provision required as part of the proposals as detailed within paragraph 3.1.4 of the submitted report;
- (d) That the necessary authority to spend be approved, together with approval also being given to incur expenditure of £760,000 from Capital Scheme number 33176/BGE/LCA to deliver the works associated with a 60 place ‘bulge’ at Leeds City Academy which are being delivered by the Local Education Partnership (LEP) for September 2020;
- (e) That the programme dates, as detailed in the submitted report, in relation to the implementation of these resolutions, which represent the critical path for project success and must be adhered to where possible, be noted;
- (f) That it be noted that the officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Service Learning Systems in the Children’s and Families directorate.

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

11 Outcome of statutory notice on a proposal to permanently increase learning places at Allerton Grange School from September 2021

Further to Minute No. 147, 12th February 2020, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report which presented details of a proposal brought forward to meet the Local Authority's duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places. Specifically, this report described the outcome of a Statutory Notice published under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and in accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 in regard to a proposal to expand secondary school provision at Allerton Grange School and which sought a final decision in respect of this proposal.

Responding to an enquiry, officers undertook to provide Executive Members with information on the timeframe by which Ofsted inspections would resume and also with information regarding the outcomes from inspections which took place immediately prior to the Coronavirus outbreak.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the proposal to permanently expand secondary provision at Allerton Grange School from a capacity of 1200 pupils to 1500 pupils in years 7 to 11, with an increase in the admission number from 240 to 300 and with effect from September 2021, be approved;
- (b) That the recommendation to exempt the decision from the Call In process for the reasons as set out within paragraph 4.5.2 of the submitted report, be approved;
- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Learning Systems.

(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 within sections 4.5.2 of the submitted report)

12 Outcome of consultation and request to approve funding to permanently increase learning places at Leeds West Academy from September 2022

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report which presented details of a proposal brought forward to meet the Local Authority's duty to ensure a sufficiency of school places. Specifically, this report described the outcome of a consultation exercise which had been undertaken regarding a proposal to expand secondary school provision at Leeds West Academy and

which sought a decision to fund the delivery of a scheme to create the additional learning places required.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the outcome of the consultation process undertaken on the proposal to permanently expand Leeds West Academy from a capacity of 1200 to 1500 students by increasing the admission number in year 7 from 240 to 300, with effect from September 2022, be noted;
- (b) That provisional approval for the authority to spend (ATS) £5.269m to deliver the proposed permanent expansion at Leeds West Academy be granted, with it being noted that early feasibility indicates the final cost is likely to be lower than this amount;
- (c) That it be noted that the implementation of this proposal is subject to funding being agreed based upon the outcome of further detailed design work and planning applications, as indicated at section 4.4 of the submitted report, with it also being noted that this proposal has been brought forward in time for places to be delivered for 2022;
- (d) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of the Capital budget is the Head of Learning Systems;
- (e) That it be noted that the White Rose Academies Trustees intend to self-deliver the build scheme.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

13 Update on 'Thriving': The Child Poverty Strategy for Leeds

Further to Minute No. 105, 25 November 2019, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report which provided an update on the work being undertaken towards the outputs and outcomes of each Impact Workstream under the 'Thriving' Strategy, provided details of the work being undertaken in response to the effects of COVID-19 in this area, whilst the report also provided details of the associated monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the work streams within the Strategy.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member for Children and Families highlighted how the report had been adapted to incorporate the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic when considering child poverty, together with a summary of current national issues linked to this agenda.

In considering such matters, a Member emphasised the need for all children and young people across the city who were affected by the effects of poverty to be supported, especially given the likely exacerbation of the issue as a result of the pandemic. Linked to this, the importance of continuing to monitor the extent of the impact of the pandemic in respect of child poverty was emphasised, so that appropriate responses to the needs of children and young people could be delivered.

Responding to comments, it was highlighted that all initiatives included within the strategy aimed to ameliorate the impact of poverty for children and young people and following this, Members received updates on, and discussed the approaches taken towards both the Period Poverty initiative and also the Healthy Holidays programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the strategic framework in place to mitigate the impact of child poverty, together with the work being undertaken by the Council and its partners in the key areas of activity, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the data overview, the current work being undertaken and the reporting updates, as outlined within the submitted report, be noted;
- (c) That it be noted that the officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health, by December 2022;
- (d) That it be noted that Executive Board has an understanding of the potential impact of COVID-19 on child poverty, with the calls for a national approach towards mitigating the impact of child poverty also being noted.

(During the consideration of this item, under the provisions of Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 3.2.5, in the temporary absence of Councillor Blake, Councillor Lewis assumed the Chair of the meeting. In returning to the meeting, Councillor Blake resumed her position as Chair)

INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND CULTURE

14 Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic - Response and Recovery Plan

Further to Minute No. 170, 19th May 2020, the Chief Executive submitted a report which provided an update on the continued coronavirus (COVID-19) related work across the city being driven by the response and recovery plan, which aimed to mitigate the effects of the outbreak on those in the city, especially the most vulnerable, and prepare for the longer term planning of stages of recovery including local outbreak planning. The report highlighted how the city's multi-agency command and control arrangements continued to be used, which had been updated to reflect local outbreak management arrangements for Leeds, and also provided information on the organisational issues which were being faced by the Council arising from the pandemic.

With the agreement of the Chair, the submitted report had been circulated to Board Members as a late item of business prior to the meeting for the reasons as set out in section 10.1 of the submitted report, and as detailed in Minute No. 2.

In introducing the submitted report and providing an update on the current position, the Leader, on behalf of the Board, extended her thanks to all of those involved in the continued delivery of statutory services across the city and also the delivery of those actions which were in response to the pandemic. Linked to this, the key role being played by Local Authorities throughout the pandemic, as highlighted earlier in the meeting was reiterated.

In addition, Members paid tribute to the work being undertaken at a national level by the Chief Executive, Tom Riordan, as part of the Government's ongoing test and trace programme.

The Board received an update from the Chief Executive on the key aspects of the work which continued to be undertaken in respect of planning for the control and management of any Coronavirus outbreaks, how such work was being co-ordinated at a local and regional level and how this fed into the national strategy, with details also being provided on how the newly established Leeds Outbreak Control Board fitted within existing governance arrangements.

Responding to an enquiry, the Board received further information and assurance on the close liaison which continued to take place with neighbouring Authorities regarding the control and management of localised outbreaks, to facilitate a more regionalised approach, where appropriate.

A Member highlighted the need, moving forward, to build upon the partnership working which had been developed throughout the pandemic, and the importance of looking to harness the effectiveness of local communities working together which had been a key part of the local response. Linked to this, Members highlighted how an effective communications strategy from a national to a local level continued to be fundamental to the successful management of outbreaks as restrictions began to be relaxed, with the role of Ward Councillors in helping to deliver such communications within communities being highlighted.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the updated context, the progress being made and the issues being faced as the Council moves through the phases of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, be noted;
- (b) That the submitted report and the comments made in respect of it during the discussion be noted in context with the more detailed report on the financial implications of Coronavirus for the Council, as presented within Minute No. 8;
- (c) That the establishment of the Leeds Outbreak Board and Outbreak Plan to ensure that effective local arrangements are in place and which are linked to national testing and tracing approach, be noted;
- (d) That the continued focus of the collective response on health and wellbeing which recognises the direct health impacts of COVID-19,

together with focus upon the emerging social and economic consequences, be noted.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 26TH JUNE 2020

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00 P.M. ON FRIDAY, 3RD JULY 2020

This page is intentionally left blank