

Report of: Economic Policy, Innovation and Sector Development Team

Report to: Inner North West Community Committee – Headingley, Hyde Park & Woodhouse, and Weetwood wards

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To Note

Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy

Purpose of report

1. This paper introduces the current consultation around the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy 2017 – 2023, which underpins the Council's work to develop a strong economy in a compassionate city.
2. The Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy – Consultation Draft Executive Summary is attached as appendix 1.
3. A workshop to discuss some of the key ideas in the strategy and how they relate to local priorities will follow.

Background information

1. The economy of Leeds continues to grow, with businesses creating more private sector jobs than any other UK city and unemployment at historically low levels. All forecasts indicate that this growth will continue, with key developments such as HS2 and the regeneration of the Southbank bringing new employment opportunities, particularly in the city centre.
2. Across the city, many businesses are starting and growing, with our start-up rate now ahead of regional and national trends. The availability of industrial premises in Leeds is at a 10 year low with the Council's small industrial unit portfolio largely full. Our business support initiatives – Ad:Venture, the Leeds Growth Hub, and the Business Growth Fund – are helping many Leeds businesses to develop and grow.
3. So growth is here, and more growth is coming. Without any intervention, the economy will produce many thousands of new jobs, predominantly for graduates and others with level 4 qualifications and above. But only one third of our residents have these qualifications, and the challenge of inclusive growth is thus to open up opportunity beyond those who have benefited to date.

4. The Council has formed a unique partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership to create the “More Jobs, Better Jobs” research programme, to identify the action needed to create more and better jobs that help lift people and places out of poverty. Work undertaken for this breakthrough project helps inform the Inclusive Growth Strategy
5. The emerging Community Led Local Development (CLLD) strategies, which aim to raise aspiration locally, and support strong and cohesive communities, also support Inclusive Growth. Three areas in Leeds have been identified as potentially suitable for CLLD: broadly representing the areas of Inner East, Inner South and Inner West. The applications are currently in appraisal and the outcome will be known later this year.

Main Issues

The 12 Big Ideas

6. The strategy presents 12 big ideas that act as an action plan to promote inclusive growth in the city. These are set out below:
 7. **Putting children at the heart of the growth strategy**
 - a) Strengthening the role of schools developing students to contribute to the economy to their full potential, including getting them ready for the world of work, raising educational attainment, improving careers advice and business engagement in schools
 - b) Extending Early Years provision, linking this to getting people into jobs / better jobs and more supporting more women to get into work
 8. **Employers and people at the centre of the education and skills system** - our ambition is to create a skills and education system focussed on good secure jobs that enable in-work progression. We will do this by:
 - a) Bringing employers and education providers together to develop and commission education and training to meet employers needs and economic priorities
 - b) Supporting our current and future workforce to be resilient to economic change
 - c) Tackling skills gap at all levels
 9. **Better jobs – tackling low pay and boosting productivity** – in low wage sectors up to increasing graduate retention, with a focus on:
 - a) Initiatives to support firms and people to improve their skills and progress into better jobs
 - b) Continued investment in small scale productivity gains in SMEs
 10. **Institutions embedded in and working for communities and the local economy** – asking business to support this strategy and the wider economic ambitions for Leeds:
 - a) Developing a strategic approach to corporate responsibility

- b) Securing better outcomes for the Leeds economy in terms of jobs, skills and supply chains from procurement by the public and private sectors, and through major develop and infrastructure projects
- c) Securing specific commitments from organisations within the city to support inclusive growth and promote the city

11. Supporting places and communities to respond to economic change – giving more support to communities throughout the city through:

- a) Targeting investment and intervention in priority neighbourhoods
- b) Improving housing and quality of place in priority neighbourhoods
- c) Building more homes
- d) Transforming the role of town centres as economic and service hubs
- e) Making assets work to support growth and communities

12. Doubling the size of the city centre – focussing on the physical regeneration and economic impact of the heart of the city region through:

- a) Delivering new jobs, homes, a new city park and a revitalised waterfront in the South Bank, as one of the most significant regeneration projects in Europe
- b) Creating an Innovation District around the universities and hospital
- c) Rebuilding Leeds Station, the busiest transport hub in the north, including HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail

13. Building a federal economy creating jobs close to communities – the city centre is the most important hub in the region, but other employment areas in the city need to be supported as these perform important commercial and community functions. Major growth locations include Thorpe Park, Thorp Arch, White Rose, Capitol Park, Kirkstall Forge and the Airport.

14. 21st century infrastructure – this is an increasingly important part of the modern economy and offers opportunities including transport, smart cities, low carbon energy - electricity, hydrogen and water networks, flood protection and green infrastructure.

15. Leeds as a digital city – responding to the increasing importance of tech in the economy, and adapting our workforce to this change by:

- a) Promoting and growing the digital sector
- b) Making every business a digital business
- c) Developing a workforce that can thrive and be resilient in the context of technological change
- d) Strengthening digital and data infrastructure (including 5G), promoting Leeds as a smart city and using data to help address challenges

16. Backing innovators and entrepreneurs in business and social enterprise – support could include new incubation space, cheap office accommodation, finding

employees with the right skills, building leadership capability, accessing new customers and markets, capital, finance and regulation in order to:

- a) Support start-ups and scale-ups
- b) Boost innovation throughout the economy, including commercialising knowledge from universities and government, and supporting firms of all sizes in all sectors to improve their products, processes and capabilities

17. Promoting Leeds and Yorkshire – telling our story better, getting our message across and promoting our successes will benefit:

- a) Inward investment, including strengthening links with London
- b) Tourism
- c) Attracting and retaining talented people

18. Maximising the economic benefits of culture - Leeds has a great story to tell we have already seen a significant increase in self-confidence in the cultural sector through the Capital of Culture bidding process, building on this means:

- a) Supporting the city's ambitions to become European Capital of Culture 2023
- b) Increasing visitors and enhancing the image of Leeds through major cultural and sporting events and attractions
- c) Growing the cultural and creative sector as well as boosting creativity across the wider economy, education system and communities

Next steps

19. The consultation period runs until October 19th. This will allow for adequate time to further bolster the actions in the strategy through firm commitments from business. It can be found at www.leedsgrowthstrategy.com.

Conclusion

This paper introduces the current consultation around the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy 2017 – 2023, which underpins the Council's work to develop a strong economy in a compassionate city. A consultation period is currently underway to gain feedback on the contents of the strategy and the report will form the basis of a discussion workshop with the community committee as part of this consultation.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report and make comment where appropriate.
2. Note the intention for the report to form the basis of a localised discussion workshop as part of the open consultation on the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy.