

**Report of the Director of Resources and Housing**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 7 January 2020**

**Subject: Best Council Plan Refresh 2020/21 to 2024/25**

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 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? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- The Best Council Plan is the council's strategic plan, setting out the authority's ambitions and priorities for both the city (working in partnership) and the organisation, underpinned by the values that encompass what we do and how we work. The current 2019/20 to 2020/21 Best Council Plan was adopted by Council in February 2019.
- This paper sets out an approach to refresh the Best Council Plan for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 based on ongoing organisational development and improvement activity, review of past performance and the wider socio-economic context and drivers.
- It is proposed that the broad strategic direction of the current Best Council Plan is retained: including the overarching goal of tackling poverty and inequalities and our ambition for Leeds to be the best city in the UK. The Best Council ambition and organisational Values are also retained, though with a renewed focus.
- Proposed changes are to:
  - a. Update the Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive, articulating the council's ambitions, role and future direction;
  - b. Build on the revisions made in last year's Plan to strengthen the sustainability agenda by focusing this further around the Climate Emergency: with Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and the Climate Emergency

becoming the three 'pillars' that underpin the Best City ambition and supporting priorities (please also refer to the 'Climate Emergency Update' paper on today's agenda);

- c. Renew the emphasis on the Best Council ambition, focusing on the council's key resources (its people, finances, digital infrastructure and buildings) and the interlinked strategies for each; and
- d. Review the Plan's outcomes and update supporting key performance indicators to further promote linkages across policy areas where required.

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

- This report sets out proposals for refreshing the Best Council Plan.

## **3. Resource Implications**

- The proposals set out here underpin the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (approved by Executive Board in July 2019) and the Initial Budget Proposals for 2020/21 on today's agenda.
- The updated Best Council section of the Plan will focus on the council's key resources.

## **Recommendations**

Executive Board is asked to approve:

- a) Engagement with Scrutiny on the emerging Best Council Plan in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- b) The approach set out in the report to refresh the Best Council Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25.
- c) That the Director of Resources and Housing will be responsible for developing the Best Council Plan for its consideration by this Board and Full Council in February 2020 alongside the supporting 2020/21 Budget.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This paper sets out proposals to refresh the Best Council Plan for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25. Subject to Executive Board's approval, the proposals will then be considered in consultation with Scrutiny Boards alongside the 2020/21 Initial Budget Proposals. Following this, a final draft of the updated Best Council Plan will be brought to February's Executive Board with the final Budget proposals, recommending its adoption by Full Council later that month.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 In February 2019, Council adopted the Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 (available [here](#)). The Best Council Plan is Leeds City Council's strategic plan, bringing together the headline aspirations from a range of supporting council and partnership plans to set out the authority's overall ambitions, policy direction and priorities for both city and organisation, underpinned by the authority's values. It

informs the council's budget-setting and financial strategies, helps our staff understand how the work they do makes a real difference to the people of Leeds and shows our partners how we contribute to city-wide issues.

- 2.2 The Best Council Plan is a rolling multi-year document that is reviewed and refined annually as needed. This paper sets out proposals to update the Best Council Plan for the five-year period 2020/21 to 2024/25, this revised timescale bringing it into line with the latest Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Executive Board in July 2019 and the emerging enabling framework to support the delivery of the Best City/Best Council goals.

### 3. Main issues

- 3.1 Ongoing socio-economic insight, intelligence and analysis – including the [Joint Strategic Assessment 2018](#) and [Annual Best Council Plan Performance Report](#) looking back on 2018/19 – combined with the recently updated [Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 \(IMD 2019\)](#) validate the overall strategic direction and approach set out in the current Best Council Plan: an ongoing focus on tackling poverty and inequalities, with the most disadvantaged communities in Leeds at its heart, through a dual approach of strengthening the economy but doing this in a compassionate way. Key headlines include:

- Leeds has a diverse, robust and growing economy and is increasingly the key driver of region/city region, bucking some recent negative national trends, with continued growth in key sectors including finance/business services, advanced manufacturing, health, creative and digital industries.
- However, the IMD 2019 highlights the continuing intensification of inequalities, confirming the very dynamic and multifaceted challenges often found in our most deprived communities and the requirement for us and our partners to respond more collaboratively – particularly at either end of the age-spectrum.
- Like most cities Leeds faces deep-rooted issues around housing, transport, educational attainment and demography.
- The assets we have in communities and our growing city centre reflect a confident and ambitious city. Indeed, many of our most deprived communities are also our most dynamic, with real energy and potential hotbeds for innovation.

- 3.2 Due to the continuation of these key themes and challenges, we propose a relatively light-touch update to the 'Best City' elements of the Best Council Plan, with a greater focus this time on the 'Best Council' components. Specific proposals are:

- To update the **Foreword** from the council's Leader and Chief Executive, articulating the vital leadership, influence and convening role and positive ambition of the council based on an approach of civic enterprise and valuing public services.
- To retain the **Best City 'Strong Economy, Compassionate City' ambition** with Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth remaining at the head of the hierarchy of supporting and inter-related strategies.
- To establish the **Climate Change Emergency** as the third pillar of the Best City ambition, alongside **Inclusive Growth** and **Health and Wellbeing** with the aim

to further embed sustainability considerations into all aspects of the authority's decision-making, building on last year's Best Council Plan update.

- To review the eight **Best City population outcomes** against the three supporting pillars to ensure they still reflect our Best City ambitions. These currently are:
  - Be safe and feel safe
  - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
  - Live in good quality, affordable homes in clean and well cared for places
  - Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
  - Enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts
  - Earn enough to support themselves and their families
  - Move around a well-planned city easily
  - Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible
- To retain the eight **Best City priorities** below, but update the narrative behind each that explains the strategic and policy direction in the coming years:
  - Inclusive Growth
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Sustainable Infrastructure
  - Child-Friendly City
  - Age-Friendly Leeds
  - Culture
  - Housing
  - Safe, Strong Communities
- To review and update the **key performance indicators** to further promote linkages across policy areas where required.
- To retain the **Best Council ambition** to be an Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation.
- To retain the five **Values** that underpin what we do and how we work.
  - Being open, honest and trusted
  - Treating people fairly
  - Spending money wisely
  - Working as a team for Leeds
  - Working with people and engaging all communities
- To update the **Best Council** section of the Plan, with a particular focus on establishing a **new enabling framework** to support the delivery of the Best City / Best Council goals. The framework will bring together the council's key resources and the interlinked strategies and principles behind these to ensure a more unified and coordinated approach: notably, our people, finances, digital infrastructure, buildings/estate and intelligence and communications. This will include a new People Strategy for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25, setting out the key areas of focus over the next 5 years to help all staff be their best, within an organisation that supports them and provides the tools and opportunities to do so. It will also include a new draft Asset Management Strategy which, at the time of writing, is anticipated to be brought in full to the same February 2020 Executive Board.

3.3 Should these proposals be agreed, a final draft updated Best Council Plan will be presented to Executive Board and Full Council in February 2020 for approval,

following which a graphically-designed version will be developed ready to launch for the start of the new financial year.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The Best Council Plan 2019/20 to 2020/21 was developed through engagement with a range of stakeholders, notably with the Executive Board, all Scrutiny Boards, the Corporate Leadership Team and other senior officers. It also draws on priorities set out in existing council and partnership plans and strategies which have themselves been subject to extensive consultation and engagement.
- 4.1.2 The proposed update to the Best Council Plan will also be developed in consultation with members and staff and will draw on insights from the council's 2019 staff survey and public consultation on the Budget.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 A strategic equality impact assessment (EIA) is currently being carried out and will be presented to Executive Board in February with the final Best Council Plan and Budget proposals – as in previous years, this will be joint EIA covering both the corporate plan and Budget. Additional EIAs have been carried out on key supporting plans and strategies.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 This report presents initial proposals for refreshing the Best Council Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25, continuing to provide a framework for the council's approach to responding to the inequality challenges in Leeds through growing the economy while being a compassionate city.
- 4.3.2 The emerging Best Council Plan will be discussed with Scrutiny Boards in the coming weeks, prior to the final Best Council Plan and Budget proposals being presented to Executive Board and Full Council in February. This process is in accordance with the council's Budget and Policy Framework (Article 4 of the council's Constitution) and the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Part 4 Rules of Procedure).
- 4.3.3 Detailed delivery plans and key performance indicators are in place for the range of supporting plans and strategies that sit beneath the Best Council Plan. Accountability for monitoring and managing these falls within existing governance arrangements – for example, with partnership boards and project boards and additional scrutiny via Scrutiny Boards – with escalation processes as required to members and the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 4.3.4 Annual assurance reports on the robustness of the authority's performance management arrangements are considered by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, providing one of the sources of evidence for the organisation's Annual Governance Statement. The most recent assurance report was received by the Committee on 22 November 2019 (available [here](#)) with no issues identified.

[Climate Emergency](#)

4.3.5 As noted above, in conjunction with inclusive growth and health and wellbeing, it is proposed that the climate change emergency becomes the third 'pillar' underpinning the council's Best City ambition to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.4.1 The refreshed Best Council Plan will set out the council's priorities aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and annual Budget. Developing and then implementing the Best Council Plan will continue to inform, and be informed by, the council's funding envelope and other resources.

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

4.5.1 There are no significant legal issues relating to this report and all information within the report is publicly available.

4.5.2 This report has been produced in compliance with the council's Budget and Policy Framework. In accordance with this framework, the initial Best Council Plan refresh proposals, once approved by the Board, will be submitted to Scrutiny for their review and consideration. The outcome of their review will be reported to the February 2020 meeting of this Board at which proposals for the 2020/21 to 2024/25 Best Council Plan will be considered prior to submission to Full Council on 26 February 2020. As such, this report is not eligible for call-in in line with Executive & Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2 which states that, 'the power to Call In decisions does not extend to decisions made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules'.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 The council's corporate and directorate risk registers will continue to be reviewed in light of any amendments to the Best Council Plan to ensure that the key risks that could impact upon new and evolving strategic objectives and priorities are appropriately identified, assessed and managed.

4.6.2 A full risk assessment will also be undertaken of the council's financial plans – which support the delivery of the Best Council Plan – as part of the normal budget process with some of the most significant potential risks to the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy outlined in today's 'Initial Budget Proposals' paper. These arrangements comply with the council's Risk Management Policy.

### **5. Conclusions**

5.1 Executive Board has received a range of reports in recent years on the progress being made towards the Best City vision and ambition of Leeds having a strong economy and being a compassionate city, but also the ongoing challenges of persistent and significant inequalities. Most recently, the Best Council Plan Annual Performance Report and the government's updated Indices of Multiple Deprivation confirm this mixed picture. As the council's strategic plan that brings together a range of supporting council and partnership plans and strategies, it is therefore proposed that the refreshed Best Council Plan maintains its focus on addressing these challenges, the council's approach underpinned by three 'pillars': inclusive growth, health and wellbeing and the climate emergency.

- 5.2 It is also important that the council continues to play its part through ongoing improvement and prioritisation, using its resources to support the Best City vision and enabling its people right across the organisation to be their best. It is therefore further proposed that the refreshed Plan retains the 'Best Council' ambition with an updated narrative that focuses on the authority's resources and their interconnected strategies to ensure a more unified and coordinated approach: notably, across our people, finances, digital infrastructure, buildings and intelligence and communications.
- 5.3 This approach provides the framework for the Initial Budget Proposals for 2020/21 being considered today. Alongside the emerging Budget, the refresh of the Best Council Plan will be developed further in the coming weeks through consultation with members and officers with final detailed proposals coming back to Executive Board in February recommending its adoption by Council.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to approve:
- a) Engagement with Scrutiny on the emerging Best Council Plan in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
  - b) The approach set out in the report to refresh the Best Council Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25.
  - c) That the Director of Resources and Housing will be responsible for developing the Best Council Plan for its consideration by this Board and Full Council in February 2020 alongside the supporting 2020/21 Budget.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 There are no background documents.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.