

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

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 12 February 2020**

**Subject: Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025**

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**

- This report seeks the approval of the Executive Board in recommending to Council the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025. It has been prepared in the context of the initial proposals considered by this Board in January 2020, taking into account engagement with Scrutiny Boards, ongoing organisational development and improvement activity, review of past performance and the wider socio-economic context and drivers.
- The updated Best Council Plan maintains much of the current Plan (which was adopted by Council in February 2019), notably the overarching Vision, *‘Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities’* and the Best City ambition, outcomes and priorities. However, along with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy, the Climate Emergency has been added as the third key driver to delivering the Best City ambition, *‘A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City’*. The Best Council ambition, *‘An Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation’*, remains the same with a renewed emphasis on the council’s key resources (its people, money, digital capabilities, land and buildings, evidence and insights, and communications). The foreword has been updated and is followed by a new introduction. The Best Council Plan key performance indicators have also been updated.

**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 proposed Budget 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:

1. Recommend the adoption of the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 to Council at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February.
2. Thank Scrutiny Boards and others for their comments throughout the development and consultation processes that have informed the proposed Plan.
3. Note that further development and graphic design work will take place prior to publication and launch of the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 around 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

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

- 1.1 This reports presents the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 for Executive Board's consideration and approval that it be recommended for adoption by Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020. It provides the strategic framework for the authority's 2020/21 Revenue Budget and Council Tax proposals, the financial expression of the council's priorities.

#### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 On 7 January 2020 the Executive Board agreed an approach for refreshing the Best Council Plan, Leeds City Council's strategic plan. It brings together and both informs, and is informed by, the aspirations from a range of supporting council and partnership plans to set out the authority's overall ambitions, policy direction and priorities for city and organisation. At its heart are the council's five values.
- 2.2 The Best Council Plan underpins 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. Whilst the Best Council Plan is written as a rolling multi-year, long-term strategic document, as with the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it is reviewed and refined annually as needed.
- 2.3 The proposed Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 has been prepared in the context of the initial proposals considered by the Executive Board in January 2020, ongoing organisational development and improvement activity and a range of socio-economic intelligence and insight.

#### **3. Main issues**

##### ***Best Council Plan 2020 to 25: Summary of Changes***

- 3.1 Annexe 1 sets out the draft Best Council Plan 2020 to 25 which is intended to provide a long-term strategic direction, rather than being a detailed delivery or

action plan. A summary of the changes from the current Best Council Plan is described below.

- The **Foreword** from the council's Leader and Chief Executive has been updated, articulating the vital leadership, influence and convening role and positive ambition of the council based on an approach of civic enterprise and valuing services.
- A new **Introduction** has been written that explains the rest of the Plan.
- Our socio-economic 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 \(IMD 2019\)](#) confirms that the overall **Vision**, *'Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities'* and **Best City Ambition**, *'Leeds... A Strong Economy and Compassionate City'* remain highly relevant. It also confirms the rationale for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy to remain the primary strategies in achieving the Best City ambition, therefore this headline strategic framework is retained.
- There is no change to the council's five **Values**.
- With Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth as the two key drivers or 'pillars' of the Best City ambition, the revised Plan now establishes the **Climate Emergency** as the third with the aim of further embedding sustainability considerations into all aspects of the authority's decision-making. Though last year's update to the Best Council Plan maps well to the UN's seventeen Sustainable Development goals (available [here](#)), it was written and approved prior to the council's climate emergency declaration and subsequent 'Big Leeds Climate Conversation'. The updated Plan for 2020 to 2025 is therefore far more explicit, the narrative throughout now reflecting the authority's progress on its climate change work and future ambitions and challenges, as considered by this Board last month (please refer to the *'Climate Emergency Update'* report from the Executive Board meeting 7 January 2020, available [here](#) at Item 134.)
- In line with this change, the Best City **population outcome** that previously read, 'Move around a well-planned city easily' has been updated to 'Move easily around a well-planned, sustainable city that's working towards being carbon neutral'. The other seven outcomes remain the same.
- Though there is no change to the headline eight interconnected **Best City Priorities**, the narrative behind each of them has been updated to explain the strategic and policy direction in the coming years.
- The **Best Council Ambition**, *'Leeds City Council... An Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation'* also remains the same. However, where before there was a detailed Best Council narrative section at the back of the Plan, this has been replaced through the Introduction and a set of annexes. The Introduction describes a new **Best Council enabling framework** to support the delivery of the Best City / Best Council ambitions that is built on our core strengths and co-ordinating our key resources. The strengths are: strong place leadership; effective partnership working and commissioning; a clear focus on delivering high quality public services; asset-based approaches, supporting the people and places most in need; ongoing engagement with communities and individuals; and making the best use of our resources (our people; our money; our digital capabilities; our land and buildings; our evidence and insights; our communications). The annexes then articulate through a set of 'plans on a

page' the strategies and principles behind each of these key resources. (Please note, the annexes are currently in development and will be added at a later date. They are at various stages and so whilst it is anticipated some will be ready to be included in the updated Best Council Plan when it is launched for the start of the new financial year, others may follow shortly afterwards.)

- The **Plan on a Page** has been updated to reflect the above.
- The Best City and Best Council **key performance indicators** (KPIs) have been reviewed with a small number of amendments made or currently being considered (in most cases, to identify whether the data is available – this will be finalised prior to publication of the updated Best Council Plan). These amendments and review areas are summarised below. The full set of Best City KPIs is included at the Annexe within each of the relevant Best City priorities; the full set of Best Council KPIs is included in the table below.

<b>BCP KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – summary of proposed changes</b>	
<b>Ambition / Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>BEST CITY KPIs</b>	
<b>Inclusive Growth</b>	
<b>AMEND:</b> Private sector employment in Leeds	This KPI will be replaced with a wider one on 'Employment in Leeds' which is then broken down into private and public sector employment in performance reports. (This is the approach already taken at Scrutiny and in the BCP Annual Performance Report.)
<b>NEW:</b> Unemployment in Leeds	Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth to include. (This is also already included in the BCP Annual Performance Report.)
GVA per filled workforce job (current prices)	Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth as to whether more meaningful KPIs can be added. As discussed at Scrutiny, note current work underway to develop KPIs to measure Inclusive Growth Strategy, through which a small number may later be added to the BCP.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	
N/A	No changes proposed pending the review of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy KPIs, through which the KPIs reported on in the Best Council Plan may change. Ongoing discussions on a meaningful mental health KPI; data not available.
<b>Sustainable Infrastructure</b>	
Air quality	Further development needed. KPI(s) will be added at a later date.
<b>Child-Friendly City</b>	
<b>NEW:</b> Average Attainment 8 score for pupils with SEND but no statement	Part of the suite of KPIs in the new 3As Strategy (attendance, attainment and achievement), these KPIs help monitor progress towards the overarching BCP vision to tackle inequalities.
<b>NEW:</b> Fixed term exclusions in all schools	
<b>Age-Friendly City</b>	
<b>NEW:</b> Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) as a percentage compared to Core Cities	The Age-Friendly City priority was a new priority for the Best Council Plan update in 2019/20. At the time, the council's new Age-Friendly Strategy and supporting framework to measure its impact were in development and so no KPIs were available. A suite
<b>NEW:</b> Percentage of new developments	

<b>BCP KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – summary of proposed changes</b>	
<b>Ambition / Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
built to accessible and adaptable standards	has recently been agreed, with the four shown here proposed for the Best Council Plan.
<b>NEW:</b> Healthy life expectancy (years) by gender	
<b>NEW:</b> Disability-free life expectancy (years)	
<b>Housing</b>	
<b>NEW:</b> Housing mix in the city	Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth as to whether a KPI on the mix (e.g. houses of different sizes, types of ownership etc.) was possible. The service is currently reviewing this.
<b>DELETE:</b> Number of new units of extra care housing	Remove as a KPI in its own right and include in the breakdown for the overarching KPI 'Growth in new homes'
<b>DELETE:</b> Percentage of council housing repairs completed within target	This is more a service operational measure than one directly linked to the council's strategic Housing priority.
<b>Safe, Strong Communities</b>	
N/A	No changes proposed.
<b>Culture</b>	
<b>NEW:</b> Leeds' Cultural Vibrancy, Creative Economy and Enabling Environment (as per European Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor)	For the first time in 2019, Leeds was included in this Monitor which shows how 190 cities in 30 European countries perform on a range of measures which, together, describe the Cultural Vibrancy, Creative Economy and Enabling Environment. The council will use these biennial reports as an indicator of progress, (whilst continuing also to measure its current 2 Culture KPIs).
Number of visitors at a range of venues and events	Scrutiny Board Strategy & Resources requested if Eventbrite (the events and ticketing website) numbers could be included in this KPI. Following discussion with the service, this is possible and so will be included in future performance reporting within the breakdown.
<b>BEST COUNCIL KPIS</b>	
<b>AMEND DESCRIPTION:</b> <i>Current:</i> Workforce more representative of our communities. <i>Amendment:</i> Council workforce representation compared to the city (Census 2011)	The current KPI is measured against the Census already but the revised wording makes this more explicit. Future reporting will show both the year-on-year change for different characteristics (e.g. gender, disability etc.) and also back to the Census 2011 baseline.
<b>DELETE:</b> Increase in collaboration between the council and Health and Care providers across the city around Mental Health First Aid	This KPI was introduced as a new measure for the 2019/20 BCP update but the data is not available. Consideration will be given as to whether a different KPI can be developed.
<b>AMEND DESCRIPTION:</b> <i>Current:</i> Percentage of orders placed with local suppliers and with small and medium-sized enterprises. <i>Amendment:</i> Expenditure with (a) local suppliers and (b) small and medium-sized enterprises as a percentage of the council's overall spend	The amended wording is in line with the council's recently updated Procurement Strategy which looks at the value of spend rather than just the percentage of orders.
<b>NEW:</b> Bin collection rate	This is already an operational KPI that is reported to Scrutiny Board Environment, Housing and Communities and of high public interest. Proposal therefore to bring back into the BCP.

## BCP KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – summary of proposed changes

### Ambition / Priority

### Notes

#### Other Best Council KPIs – *no changes proposed*

- Number and percentage of apprentices employed by the council
- Score out of ten given by staff for working for Leeds City Council (based on staff survey results)
- Reduction in workplace accident and incident reports
- Percentage of staff appraisals and mid-year reviews completed
- Gender pay gap across council staff
- Level of projected over / underspend for this financial year
- Income collection rates: council tax, business rates, council housing rental
- Prompt payment of invoices against target
- Percentage of ICT service desk calls fixed at the first point of contact
- Level of customer complaints
- Proportion of people using self-service when getting in touch with the council
- Percentage of information requests received responded to within statutory timescales (Freedom of Information, Subject Access Requests and Environmental Information Regulations)

3.2 The Board is asked to note that the draft Best Council Plan at Annexe 1 is currently in text-only version. The final published version will be more visual, incorporating a strong graphical element with a range of related facts and statistics to break up the text, and will be widely communicated using both online and offline channels. A web-accessible version will also be made available. A number of hard copies will be printed and circulated to elected members and senior officers and disseminated to council buildings across the city.

### ***Best Council Plan Performance Reporting***

3.3 The Best Council Plan sits at the top of a range of supporting plans and strategies, each with their own KPIs and performance arrangements, including the role of Scrutiny Boards and partnership boards. As a more strategic, cross-cutting document, the Best Council Plan draws on these arrangements and incorporates those KPIs most relevant to the Best Council Plan outcomes and priorities.

3.4 The Best Council Plan KPIs are reviewed quarterly with performance scorecards published. This is supplemented by an annual performance report that looks back on progress in delivering the Best Council Plan over the previous year. Both the scorecard and annual reports are publicly available on the leeds.gov website (accessible [here](#)) and, for staff and elected members, on the council's intranet site. Operational performance management arrangements are in place at service levels.

3.5 Following approval of the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025, the 2019/20 Plan will be closed down with an annual performance report later this year provided to the Executive Board looking back on progress on its delivery.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 The outcomes, priorities and many of the KPIs within the Best Council Plan are drawn from existing and emerging plans and strategies, themselves subject to extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement, including the 2020/21 Budget which has undergone a consultation process with the public, elected members and council officers. It also draws on insights from the council's 2019 staff survey.

- 4.1.2 The proposed Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 has been subject to consultation with the Executive Board, all Scrutiny Boards, the Corporate Leadership Team and other senior officers. Following Council approval, staff and member engagement channels will be used to share the Best Council Plan more widely.

### ***Scrutiny Board Consultation***

- 4.1.3 The observations and recommendations from Scrutiny Board discussions during January 2020 can be read in full at Annexe 2. The Boards made 2 key recommendations which are presented below with our responses:

- Recommendation 1: That Executive Board considers the opportunity for the Best Council Plan to reflect on how Leeds' approach in developing and performance monitoring its own Best Council Plan objectives compares with that of other core cities.

*Our response: through regular dialogue with performance colleagues in the other Core City local authorities over many years, the Leeds' approach in both developing the corporate plan and in monitoring performance against its objectives is known to be very similar. However, we have not formally reviewed this recently and so will undertake such a review during 2020/21.*

- Recommendation 2: That Executive Board is requested to consider an in-year review and refinement of the Key Performance indicators relating to the following issues which will in turn support work being undertaken to address the Climate Emergency:

- Refinement of Inclusive Growth indicators
- Development of Housing Mix indicators

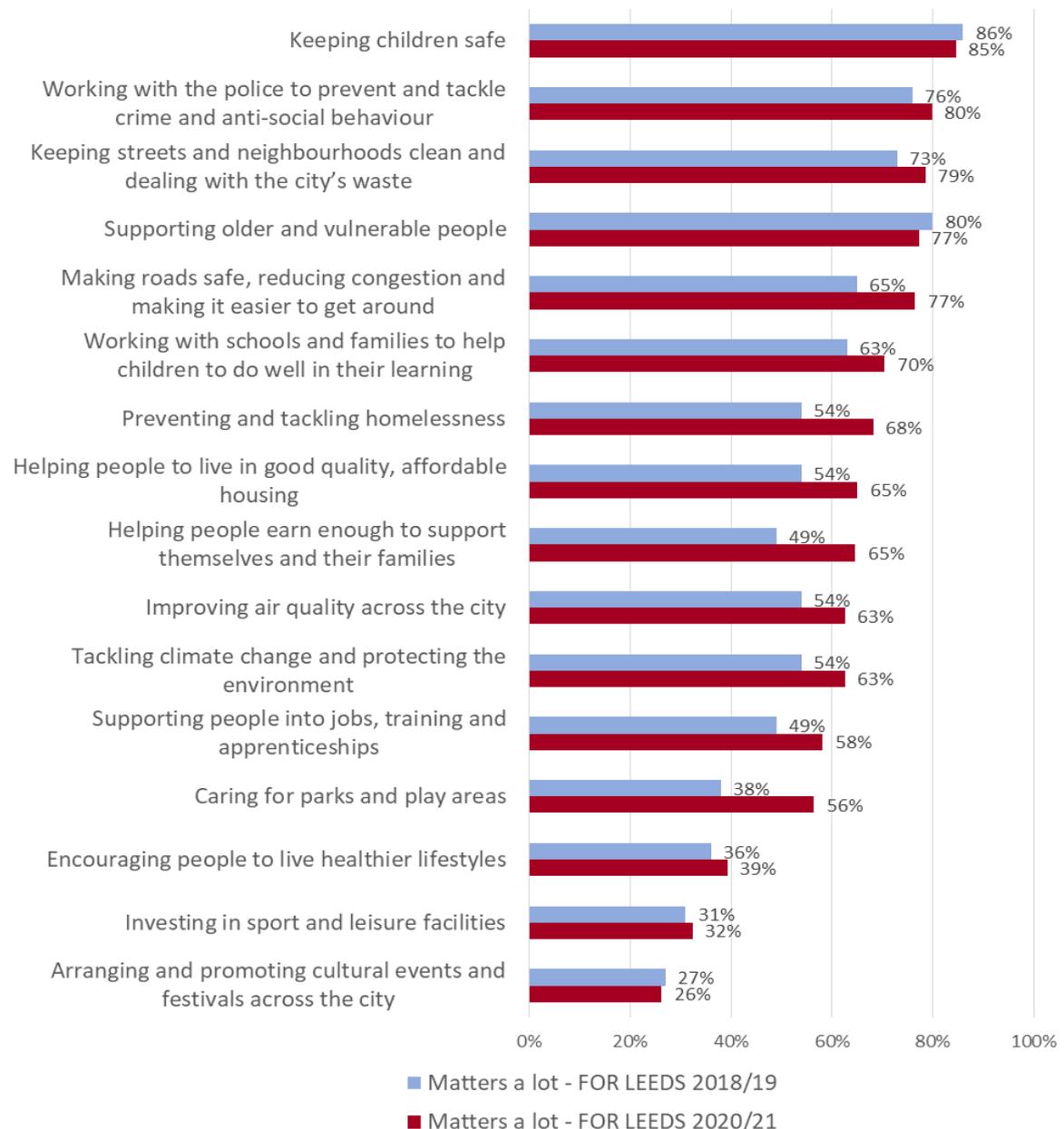
*Our response: As per the KPI table at section 3.1 above, the two key performance areas identified by the Scrutiny Boards are currently being reviewed with the intention that meaningful KPIs will be added to the Best Council Plan in-year.*

### ***Budget Consultation***

- 4.1.4 The public consultation on the council's Initial Budget Proposals for 2020/21 began immediately after the proposals were approved by the Executive Board at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January and closed on 28<sup>th</sup> January. Though focused on the Budget, the survey presented findings from the previous year's consultation exercise and explored whether the public's views and perceptions of the council's priorities had changed in that time. As such, the results of that consultation exercise are relevant to the proposals to update the Best Council Plan. In summary:

- The consultation was carried out through an online survey, advertised on social media, the council's leeds.gov.uk website, the council's internal 'InSite' website, and directly to Citizens' Panel members, third sector and business partners. With a shorter timescale available than usual to carry out the consultation and analyse the results (due to the snap General Election in December 2019), paper versions were not available. However, in the past two years where paper surveys have been offered as an option, only 15% of responses have been received via this method and these overwhelmingly from groups of people already over-represented in the total number of respondents.

- A total of 1,537 responses were received (up on the total 1,241 last year) from a range of people from different demographic groups, broadly representative of the population of Leeds residents as compared with the 2011 Census.
- The majority (96%) of respondents said that they live in Leeds and over half (55%) work in Leeds. Around 1 in 7 (15%) said they work for Leeds City Council and a smaller group (3%) that they study in Leeds. Only 11 respondents (1%) said that they solely visit the city and neither live nor work here.
- We asked people to rate a range of our service priorities by how much they matter - 'a lot' or 'a little' - to them personally, and also by how much they think they matter to the city of Leeds and the people who live, work and visit here.
  - The top 5 priorities for people personally were:
    1. Keeping streets and neighbourhoods clean and dealing with waste (77%)
    2. Working with police to prevent and tackle crime (71%)
    3. Keeping children safe (70%)
    4. Making roads safe, reducing congestion and making it easier to get around (68%)
    5. Supporting older and vulnerable people (61%)
    5. Tackling climate change and protecting the environment (61%)
  - The top 5 priorities for the city of Leeds were:
    1. Keeping children safe (85%)
    2. Working with police to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (80%)
    3. Keeping streets and neighbourhoods clean and dealing with waste (79%)
    4. Supporting older and vulnerable people (77%)
    5. Making roads safe, reducing congestion and making it easier to get around (77%)
- The chart overleaf compares the percentages and rankings between the 2018/19 and 2020/21 budget consultations for which services have been rated as 'matters a lot for Leeds'. It shows that:
  - In general, respondents this year are more likely to say that things matter a lot to the city.
  - Respondents' service priorities for the city remain similar to two years ago with the top five priorities (which all scored closely) remaining the same.
  - However, supporting older and vulnerable people is now ranked lower (4<sup>th</sup> compared to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2018/19).
  - Preventing and tackling homelessness is now ranked higher (7<sup>th</sup> compared to 10<sup>th</sup> in 2018/19).
  - Helping people earn enough to support themselves and their families is now ranked lower (9<sup>th</sup> compared to 7<sup>th</sup> in 2018/19).
  - Despite increased awareness and media coverage, the environment and air quality remain ranked in the lower mid-table.



- Participants were also given the opportunity through a free text field to say if there were any other issues they thought should be a priority for the council. 659 responses were received which are currently being analysed, ready to present key findings in the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and Budget 2020/21 reports to Full Council later this month.
- Respondents were informed of the challenges that Leeds City Council has faced through reduced funding and increasing demand, and that the council has had to change to the way that services are delivered in the last 12 months, including increasing the price of some services, in order to achieve the savings needed to meet the budget. They were asked how much these changes had affected them personally:
  - Over half of respondents said that changes in services in the last 12 months have affected them to some degree (54%), with 1 in 7 reporting that they have been greatly affected (14%).

- Where respondents said they had been affected they were asked how they had been affected. A total of 670 comments were made by 538 people, which were coded and grouped into dominant themes:
  - Over 1 in 3 (91) gave a comment relating to Environmental Services and Waste Management, with over half of these about new charging for charges for waste collection/disposal and a perceived increase in fly tipping.
  - The second highest number, around 1 in 3 (171) commented on how they have been affected financially, in particular through increased Council Tax.
  - Further comments related to road maintenance (46), Social Care (37), staff workloads (23), and increased anti-social behaviour (12).
- In response to the challenges that Leeds City Council faces, people were asked which option they agreed with most in response to the statement: 'Reduced funding from the government will impact on our ability to deliver the services we (the council) currently provide, unless we find other ways of raising money'.
  - Over three quarters (76%) agreed we should raise money through increasing council tax and charges, with over a third (35%) saying we should raise enough to avoid having to cut services. 2 in 5 (41%) of all respondents said that this should be balanced with cuts and a reduction of services.
  - Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) agreed with the statement that we should not raise council tax or charges, even if this has a large impact on the services we can provide.
  - When compared to 2018/19, the proportion of respondents who agree that we should not raise tax or charges even if this has a large impact on services, has stayed much the same (+1%) at around a quarter (24%). However, a higher proportion (+5%) said this year that we should raise enough through tax and service charges to avoid having to cut services (35%).
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with our proposal to increase the core council tax in Leeds by 1.99%, plus an additional 2% to support adult social care services:
  - In total 3 in 5 respondents agreed with our approach (60%).
  - Around 1 in 5 (21%) strongly disagreed with the proposal to increase council tax.
  - Comparison with the same question for 2019/20 showed no significant difference.
- Those who disagreed with our approach to increase council tax were asked why. In total, there were 682 comments made from 554 respondents, which were coded and grouped into dominant themes:
  - 1 in 3 comments (227) disagreed with the principle of increasing council tax, with many of these saying that the increase is too high.
  - A further third of comments (223) related to the financial impact of raising council tax.
  - In total 1 in 4 (169) said that we should use other means, such as cutting services or making further savings, instead.
- Participants were presented with a summary of how we plan to spend our revenue budget, and asked how much they agree or disagree with this

proposal. 7 out of 10 (70%) respondents said they agree with our proposed revenue budget.

- Participants were then invited to make any comments around our overall approach to how we spend our revenue budget. In total there were 936 comments made from 739 respondents, which were coded and grouped into dominant themes:
  - Almost 1 in 4 (223) commented about City Development issues, most saying this should be prioritised or commenting on the need for improved public transport.
  - Around 1 in 6 (161) comments related to Communities and Environment, almost all of which said these areas should be prioritised, including climate change and clean air.
  - Around 1 in 8 (119) comments related to Housing, most of which said this should be prioritised, including to build more affordable, social and other housing.
  - Other areas of comments included Adults and Health (64), Children and Families (64), efficiencies (58) and vulnerable people (58).
- A further question asked participants if they had any comments or suggestions on how we can deliver services differently to make the best use of the resources we have available. A total of 729 valid comments were made, which were coded and grouped into dominant themes:
  - Around 1 in 6 (125) made suggestions for efficiency savings, including to reduce wastage, and make better use of technology.
  - A similar amount (113) suggested changes to roads, transport and city development.
  - Around 1 in 7 (99) comments related to working smarter, including partnership working, using less contractors and income generation.
  - Further areas of comments related to investing in the environment (69), staff resources and wages (68), consultation and engagement (64), and further charges/fees (40).

4.1.5 Full results from the public Budget consultation are provided as an appendix to the Budget 2020/21 report on today's agenda.

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

4.2.1 A joint strategic equality impact assessment (EIA) of the proposed Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and Budget 2020/21 has been carried out and this is attached at Annexe 3. Additional EIAs have been carried out on the key supporting plans and strategies.

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

4.3.1 This report proposes the Best Council Plan for 2020 to 2025, 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 It has been developed in consultation 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, the climate change emergency becomes the third 'pillar' in this Best Council Plan update, 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 sets 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. As such, it 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 strategies – which support the delivery of the Best Council Plan – as part of the normal budget process. The most significant potential risks are outlined in today's Budget 2020/21 paper. These arrangements comply with the council's Risk Management Policy.

4.6.3 An assurance report on the authority's strategic risk management arrangements will be presented to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee this summer to inform the council's Annual Governance Statement.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The proposed Best Council Plan for 2020 to 2025 continues the council's aim of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities through a sustained 'Best City' focus on working with partners, organisations, communities and individuals to both grow the economy and doing this in a way that is compassionate and caring. It articulates this Best City ambition through a set of eight interconnected priorities with the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Climate Emergency as the three key drivers or 'pillars'.
- 5.2 It is also important the council continues to play its part through ongoing improvement and prioritisation, using its resources to support the Best City ambition and priorities and enabling its people across the organisation to be their best. A new Best Council enabling framework, built on a set of core strengths and co-ordination of the authority's key resources, will help to drive this. With the council's five values continuing to underpin everything the council does and how it works, this framework supports the Best Council ambition to become a more efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to:
1. Recommend the adoption of the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 to Council at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February.
  2. Thank Scrutiny Boards and others for their comments throughout the development and consultation processes that have informed the proposed Plan.
  3. Note that further development and graphic design work will take place prior to publication and launch of the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 around 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

## **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.

# FOREWORD

## **Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities**

Our ambition is for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: compassionate and caring with a strong economy; which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities; working towards being a net zero carbon city by 2030. We want Leeds to be a city that is distinctive, sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all, with a council that its residents can be proud of as the best council in the country.

### **About Leeds City Council**

The council has a central role in the life of the city. We provide a wide range of vital public services, work with partners across all sectors to strengthen our economy and communities, and have an increasingly important responsibility to represent the city nationally and on the world stage – attracting business, investment and promoting what Leeds has to offer. We are often at the centre of complex networks of stakeholders, working locally and city-wide to convene people and focus collaborative efforts to help improve lives.

Our council workforce is around 15,000 strong (in headcount; 13,000 full-time equivalents) and embedded into every part of the city. Council staff and our 99 elected members work each day to make the city a great place to live and work: keeping children safe; supporting older and vulnerable people; preventing and tackling homelessness; helping people live in good quality, affordable housing; working with the police to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; encouraging our residents to live healthier, more active lifestyles; providing sport and leisure facilities and green spaces; supporting people into jobs, training and apprenticeships and helping them earn enough to support themselves and their families; cleaning streets and dealing with the city's waste; making roads safe and reducing congestion; improving air quality; securing investment in the city and promoting cultural and community events all across Leeds. All of this, and more, is ultimately about how we can improve the lives of Leeds residents. Over recent years we have done this while working with reduced budgets, delivering better value for money each year for the Leeds public.

This Best Council Plan provides a framework through which council staff and the people and businesses of Leeds can better understand the role of our organisation, and the difference we make in particular to those who need it most.

### **About Leeds**

Leeds is a growing city with a population estimated at 789,000 (ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2018), an increase of nearly 40,000 since the last Census in 2011. The shift in the make-up of our population at local levels is striking with rapid changes particularly in some of our inner-city communities, many of which are the fastest growing and have the youngest age profile.

Leeds continues to be the main driver of economic growth for the city-region, and has key strengths in financial and business services, advanced manufacturing, health and creative and digital industries, with a strong knowledge-rich employment base. These strengths, linked to the city's universities and teaching hospitals, are major innovation assets for Leeds. Leeds also performs well in terms of business start-ups, with strong growth in digital and medical technologies, telecoms and creative industries.

Almost 470,000 people work in the city (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2018) with three quarters in the private sector, putting Leeds in the top five nationally for private sector employment. Leeds is experiencing record levels of development and continues to be popular with

Foreign Direct Investment. Strong private sector growth since 2010 has maintained the city's employment rate above average for the region.

While Leeds continues to enjoy economic success, we recognise that not everyone is benefitting from the opportunities this presents. More than 70,000 adults are facing in-work poverty. The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019) tell us that around 186,000 people in the city live in areas that are ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally, many of whom are aged under 15 or over 65. This is an increase of more than 20,000 people since the previous indices in 2015. This level of disadvantage and inequality has seen the worsening of some social challenges too, with crime in Leeds rising by more than 10% between 2017/18 and 2018/19, and a 21% rise in the number of people accessing foodbanks which supported almost 34,000 people in Leeds in 2018/19.

*[Insert Map of Leeds – Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019. Below: Please visit the Leeds Observatory online [here](#) for key data about the Leeds population and Leeds economy, including for more information and analysis on the IMD 2019.]*

The council has recognised the sharp challenges that too many citizens in Leeds face as they try to overcome poverty, especially in many of the lower income communities which encircle the wealth of the city centre. Breakdowns in the city's transport network and a lack of effective connectivity between communities are a barrier to economic inclusion which we must reduce. This includes looking beyond the city's boundaries and working with neighbouring authorities to find a solution for the whole region. We are actively participating in the work of the city region and pressing for a devolution deal to unlock the potential of Leeds and Yorkshire. We also convene the national core cities network (the largest cities outside London).

The whole city, along with places globally, is confronted with the generational challenge of climate change which has the potential to drastically affect our quality of life. Leeds declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and the council has already taken decisive action in response: acquiring the largest local government electric vehicle fleet in the UK; committing to purchase 100% of our electricity from renewable sources; improving energy efficiency in council housing; establishing an extensive tree planting scheme; ceasing plans to invest in a link road to the airport; and pushing for an ambitious national aviation strategy that integrates aviation into the national carbon roadmap.

As a Child-Friendly City, Leeds continues to invest in the future of our young people which has led to improvements in health and educational outcomes. However there is much more to do to ensure everyone is equipped with the education and skills they need to succeed in life, and the council is working with families, schools and others to secure a brighter future for every child in Leeds.

While the UK is embarking upon a new relationship with European neighbours, Leeds remains an open, welcoming, outward-looking city ready to build new partnerships with places around the world in order to improve the lives of people and communities closer to home.

The Best City and Best Council ambitions and priorities set out here would not be achievable without close partnership working, effective community engagement and the dedication of councillors and staff: the elected members who serve the city, our partners and everyone who works for the council play a vital role in delivering the Best Council Plan. We thank you all.

Cllr Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council  
Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council

February 2020

# Introduction

## Our Strengths

Leeds is a thriving, diverse and dynamic city with five unique strengths:

- **Leeds is the epi-centre of the UK** and the heart of the northern and national economies with strong international links. Leeds is the gateway the 14m people in the east of the country and the only Northern city from which all the other major Northern cities can easily be reached; an economic powerhouse predicted to grow by 50% over the next 20 years, outperforming the national economy.
- **Leeds is young and getting younger.** Our region is one of the youngest in the UK providing a talent pool that is digitally skilled and enterprising. The city's dynamic start-up culture and vibrant, youthful environment give Leeds that crucial competitive edge. Nearly a quarter of the city is aged between 18-29 years old. Our working age population is increasing at a higher rate than both the EU as a whole and key cities such as Berlin, Madrid and Milan. Our citywide talent and skills plan brings together employers and educators to collectively identify and provide new skills for the economy.
- **Leeds is a diverse city.** We put people first, and have a proud record of working together to deliver for everyone: Leeds is a compassionate city, with a tradition of social enterprise and with a social model that harnesses the energy of our communities and a strong charity sector. Leeds understands that tackling poverty and inequality drives economic and social growth.
- **People enjoy the best of both worlds in Leeds.** All the advantages of a compact, cultural, green city with Yorkshire on its doorstep. Leeds has all the advantages of a big city too, with a thriving job market and access to culture, sport, food, and retail at the heart of a clean and walkable city centre. Our city has fantastic green spaces including one of the largest city parks in Europe. Leeds has a competitive cost of living and of doing business too, with housing, offices and workspaces in development to meet growing demand.
- **Leeds is distinctively ambitious, powered by innovators, entrepreneurs and social priorities.** Leeds is built on a rich tradition of social innovation, and today our pioneering work on healthcare and technology is helping more people worldwide live healthier, more productive, active and creative lives. We are FinTech and HealthTec leaders, home to some of the world's biggest datasets including NHS Digital and world leading research and development through our five universities.

## Our Best City Ambition

The Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 maintains our long-term 'Best City' strategic focus on tackling poverty and inequalities through a combination of strengthening the economy and doing this in a way that is compassionate and caring, allowing us to support the people who need it most.

Building on the key council and partnership strategies in place and in development, this Best Council Plan sets out a number of interconnected priority areas of work that flow in particular from our two long-standing main strategies, Inclusive Growth and Health and Wellbeing, as well as third, new for 2020, strategic key pillar for the organisation, Climate Emergency. This addition recognises the scale of the challenge facing the city – and indeed the country - to make the changes needed to combat climate change effectively. Consideration of the impact of our actions on the planet will need to thread through every aspect of daily life in the future, and that approach to sustainability is reflected throughout this Best Council Plan.

Taken together, a focus on eight 'Best City' priorities will deliver improved outcomes for everyone in Leeds:

- Inclusive Growth
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Child-Friendly City
- Age-Friendly Leeds
- Housing
- Safe, Strong Communities
- Culture

The following pages briefly explain the priorities and set out the key performance indicators we use to track progress. We have also signposted the most significant ‘Best City’ strategies and action plans to read for more detail on both the issues and the collaborative and innovative work that we and our partners are doing in response – and in which the whole city is invited to play its part.

## Our Best Council Ambition

The Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 also maintains our long-established ‘Best Council’ strategic focus on being an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation. This reflects our wider positive outlook for the role of local government in working with our communities in shaping and strengthening the prospects of the city and its residents. Underpinning everything we do and how we work to achieve our ambitions are our Values:

- Being open, honest and trusted
- Treating people fairly
- Spending money wisely
- Working as a team for Leeds
- Working with all communities

Despite growing demand and an unprecedented long period of budget reductions for local government, the council has continued to deliver high quality, improved public services and value for money for the Leeds public. We use our resources, influence and convening capacity to drive inclusive economic growth and promote health and wellbeing, tackling deprivation and other deep-rooted challenges to improve the quality of life for our residents. We have re-designed many of our services to focus on needs-led, asset-based early intervention and prevention, and have given citizens more control over decisions that directly affect them. This way of working has seen the council consistently receive national recognition for outcomes in adults and children’s social work in particular. Our locality working and partnership approach continues to develop and become further embedded into communities, especially the priority neighbourhoods (small areas ranked as some of the most disadvantaged places in the country where the council is targeting resources). With the adoption of the Climate Emergency as the third pillar – alongside inclusive growth and health and wellbeing – of our Best City ambition, we will seek to further embed sustainability considerations into all aspects of the authority’s decision-making.

However, if we are to maintain momentum and protect vital services, we must renew our efforts against the Best Council ambition. For the 2020 to 2025 planning period, we are establishing a Best Council framework that draws on our core strengths:

- Strong leadership of place: enabling, convening, facilitating and stimulating
- Effective partnership working and commissioning to make the most of the collective ‘Leeds pound’ and improve outcomes
- Maintaining a clear focus on delivering high quality, locally integrated public services
- Using needs-led, asset-based approaches based on early intervention and prevention, supporting the people and places most in need
- Ongoing engagement with communities and individuals
- Making the best use of our resources:
  - Our people
  - Our money
  - Our digital capabilities
  - Our land and buildings
  - Our evidence and insights
  - Our communications

A set of annexes to this Best Council Plan explain these resources in more detail [*Please note: the annexes are currently in development and will be added to the published Best Council Plan in the first half of the financial year 2020/21*]:

- Our **People Strategy** sets out how we are strengthening our approach to recruitment, retention and progression to ensure we continue to attract and keep a talented, motivated and engaged workforce that reflects the communities we serve.
- Our **Financial Strategy** is helping us become more financially sustainable and resilient, safeguarding public funds while achieving value for money to ensure we are well placed to respond to the significant funding uncertainties and pressures we face and to target our money to where it can make the most difference.
- Our **digital capabilities** have a central role in ensuring we maximise the use of tools and technology to improve and transform the way the council works, provides services and engages with citizens.
- Our **Estate Management Strategy** explains our vision and approach to managing the council's land and buildings across the city, helping us deliver a modern, efficient, sustainable estate and workplaces.
- Our **evidence and insights**, drawn from listening to our citizens and effective use of data, help us identify and understand the challenges and opportunities we face, assess progress in delivering our Best City and Best Council ambitions and drive improvement.
- Our **communications** enable us to clearly explain the challenges and opportunities to our citizens, partners and other key stakeholders, further strengthening these vital relationships and collaborative working.

*The final design version will include a small range of stats and facts relevant to the council's role in the city with accompanying infographics (e.g. number of parks we maintain, length of highway etc.)*

DRAFT Plan on a Page *with changes highlighted*

## Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025

### Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities

With the city's Inclusive Growth Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy *and Climate Emergency declaration* as key drivers

#### Leeds Best Council Ambition

An Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation

#### *Delivering our ambition through:*

- *Strong place leadership*
- *Effective partnership working and commissioning*
- *Clear focus on delivering high quality, locally integrated public services*
- *Asset-based approaches, supporting the people and places most in need*
- *Ongoing engagement with communities and individuals*
- *Making the best use of our resources:*
  - *Our people*
  - *Our money*
  - *Our digital capabilities*
  - *Our land and buildings*
  - *Our evidence and insights*
  - *Our communications*

#### BEST CITY PRIORITIES

What we and our partners are focusing on to improve outcomes

Inclusive Growth  
Health & Wellbeing  
Sustainable Infrastructure  
Child-Friendly City  
Age-Friendly Leeds  
Housing  
Safe, Strong Communities  
Culture

*(Also on the Plan on a Page will be the 3-4 bullets under each priority that explains the key areas. No changes proposed from the current BCP on a Page)*

#### Leeds Best City Ambition

A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City

#### Best City Outcomes

For everyone in Leeds to...

- 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 easily around a well-planned, *sustainable* city *that's working towards being carbon neutral*
- Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

#### Our Values

Underpinning everything 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 all communities

## Inclusive Growth

Our ambition is for a strong economy within a compassionate city. We will deliver this through inclusive growth which seeks to ensure that the benefits of prosperity reach all our communities and citizens. This means tackling inequalities across the city, raising skill levels, creating more high quality jobs, improving health and wellbeing, focussing on our communities, embracing the digital revolution, supporting innovators and entrepreneurs and harnessing the economic benefits of all sectors. Looking at the economic aspect of our climate change ambitions, it is estimated that Leeds could save £277m a year if it exploited cost-effective opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon development.

The Leeds economy is performing well with key strengths in financial and business services, advanced manufacturing, health, and creative and digital industries. Leeds has a strong knowledge-rich employment base linked to the city's universities and teaching hospitals which are major innovation assets. Leeds also performs well in terms of business start-ups, is experiencing record levels of development and continues attract Foreign Direct Investment. Strong private sector growth since 2010 has maintained the city's employment rate above average for the region.

But issues still remain throughout the economy: people living in our disadvantaged areas continue to have poorer health outcomes, education attainment remains a challenge, and the hollowing out of the labour market drives down productivity. This year will see even more change to the city as we leave the European Union. The overall impact of Brexit very much depends on the government's future economic policy but we are working closely with partners across the region to plan responsibly to mitigate impacts and harness any opportunities.

Our Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy focusses around three themes to address inequalities and deliver growth: **People, Place and Productivity**

Investing in **people** means investing in their health and wellbeing, improving education and skills, putting children at the heart of the growth strategy, and employers at the centre of the skills system. It means tackling low pay and securing better social and economic outcomes from the role and impact of the city's 'Anchor Institutions' (the organisations with the biggest stake and the most influence and impact in Leeds).

A focus on **place** will mean developing and regenerating places, supporting neighbourhoods, communities and centres to respond to economic change, growing the city centre as an economic powerhouse not just for Leeds but also for the north, and growing major economic hubs to the north, east, south and west of the city. An increase in new homes, improvements to existing housing and investment in modern infrastructure will support the city's growth.

Improving **productivity** is also necessary. By backing innovators and entrepreneurs we can build on our strong start-up and scale-up performance. Embracing technological change will create opportunities for Leeds, but we must continue to promote and invest in digital inclusion and skills. Promoting a modern, dynamic, diverse and outward-looking image of Leeds – including maximising the economic benefits of culture - can drive greater inward investment, exports and tourism.

As part of our Inclusive Growth Strategy, many businesses across all sectors have pledged to offer support for our city, setting out what they will do more of or do differently to promote inclusive growth. Added to this we now have 12 Inclusive Growth Ambassadors in post to help us deliver our strategy and a wider delivery partnership working with communities, business and stakeholders.

**KPIs** – How we will measure progress and achievements

- **AMEND:** Private sector employment in Leeds – *This KPI will be replaced with a wider one on ‘Employment in Leeds’ which is then broken down into private and public sector employment in performance reports. (This is the approach already taken at Scrutiny and in the BCP Annual Performance Report.)*
- **NEW:** Unemployment in Leeds - *Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth to include. (This is also already included in the BCP Annual Performance Report.)*
- **SEE NOTE:** GVA (Gross Value Added) per filled workforce job (current prices) – *Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth as to whether more meaningful KPIs can be added. As discussed at Scrutiny, note current work underway to develop KPIs to measure Inclusive Growth Strategy, through which a small number may later be added to the BCP.*
- Number of new business start-ups and scale-ups
- Business survival rate (after 5 years)
- Change in business rates payable since 2017 revaluation
- Visitor economic impact for Leeds
- Percentage of working-age Leeds residents with at least a Level 4 qualification
- Number of people supported to improve their skills
- Percentage of Leeds residents and Leeds workers earning below the Real Living Wage
- Number of people supported into work
- Number of adults of working age affected by in-work poverty

#### **Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Leeds Talent and Skills Plan
- Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Inclusive Growth with accompanying infographics.*

## Health & Wellbeing

There remains enduring inequality in the city. Some of us experience worse physical and/or mental health wellbeing because of where we live, how much we earn, the air we breathe or the pressures we face every day. The cost is too great to our people, our economy and our city.

With so many factors contributing to health and wellbeing, our challenge is to develop a broad approach reflecting the importance of housing, employment, community and the environment whilst being specific about the areas we need to focus on to make the biggest difference. In Leeds we believe that our greatest strength and our most important asset is our people. Health and wellbeing start with people: our connections with family, friends and colleagues; the behaviour, care and compassion we show one another; and the environment we create to live in together.

Our ambition is for Leeds to be the best city for health and wellbeing, underpinned by a strong commitment to partnership working across health and care service to the shared vision in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.

We believe we are well placed to respond. We are working with communities and partners, delivering asset-based community development approaches, to improve local support for people with care and support needs. In addition, the network of national health leadership, health-tech and research organisations in the city, along with our city's strong economy and exceptional universities, create a unique health and care infrastructure.

Leeds is a pioneer in the use of information and technology. We have a thriving third sector and inspiring community assets. We have established strong relationships with health and care partners to continue to pursue improvement and integration aimed at making care services more person-centred, joined-up and preventative, whilst also responding to the financial challenges across the whole system.

During 2020 we will be working to align even more closely the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Inclusive Growth Strategy, reflecting the importance of the health sector to the Leeds economy and the importance of developing our workforce in health and social care.

The Leeds Health and Care Plan is key in taking this forward: with its focus on protecting the vulnerable and reducing inequalities, improving quality and consistency, and building a sustainable system against the backdrop of reducing resources.

### **KPIs – How we will measure progress and achievements**

- Infant mortality rate
- Percentage / proportion of children maintaining a healthy weight at age 11
- Percentage of physically active adults
- Percentage of adults who smoke
- Avoidable years of life lost
- Suicide rate
- Percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Percentage of CQC-registered care services in Leeds rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'.
- Number of permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes: (a) for people aged 18-64 including 12-week disregards; (b) for people aged 65+ including 12-week disregards
- Proportion of people who use social care services who have control over their daily life

**Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan
- Leeds Better Lives Strategy
- Leeds Health and Care Plan
- West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System 5 Year Plan
- Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Leeds Mental Health Strategy

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Health & Wellbeing with accompanying infographics.*

## Sustainable Infrastructure

Like other growing cities, Leeds faces a number of challenges, including adapting to climate change, linking people to services and employment, enabling people to better manage their wellbeing and increasing the number of people choosing active travel and public transport.

Sustainable and joined up modern infrastructure has a vital role to play in responding to these challenges. A resource-efficient and connected city will be a better, healthier place to live as well as more competitive and better placed to ride out future economic and climactic shocks. This means further integration in planning, funding and delivering both essential maintenance and improvements to Leeds' infrastructure to help support growth and improve connectivity. This will bring new markets within reach for business, new jobs within reach for people and a wider workforce within reach for employers.

Our approach needs to go beyond a narrow pursuit of growth, ensuring Leeds is liveable as well as prosperous. A step change in the level of public transport use is needed, one that reflects not just vital regional links but a greater level of local connectivity and choice. But transport initiatives cannot be developed in isolation; they need to be connected with the wider infrastructure across the city, including our streets, businesses, health provision and schools. Employment and housing growth areas in the city need to be advanced and problems such as poor air quality need to be tackled.

Our sustainable infrastructure priority is set within the context of the council's declaration of a climate emergency in March 2019 and our stated ambition of working towards being a net zero carbon city by 2030, accepting that urgent action is needed. Following the declaration, we carried out a Big Leeds Climate Conversation to raise awareness, understand the level of action individuals were willing to take and explore what residents thought about a number of bold ideas to cut emissions. The more than 8,000 responses received and the recommendations of the Leeds Climate Change Commission and Citizens' Jury are informing the council's strategy: the practical steps we can make now and where further work is required.

Our ongoing work to reduce the risk of flooding is helping to offset the longer-term effects of climate change whilst also protecting homes and businesses, increasing employment and making tourist attractions more accessible. Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme has been completed and Phase 2 is now in development. Alongside the Environment Agency, we are working with partners and landowners up and down the River Aire to deliver a range of natural flood measures which can slow the flow of water upstream so that the landscape can hold more water in times of flood. Combined with more traditional engineering solutions, we are creating new woodland, managing land to reduce the flow of water during heavy rain and restoring river and flood plains.

We want Leeds to be a healthy city in which to live, work and visit. Working with partners to reduce carbon emissions will bring about health and wellbeing benefits. We are introducing a Clean Air Zone that will charge buses, HGVs, taxis and private hire vehicles that fail to meet the latest emissions standards for entering a defined area within the city centre. We are providing assistance and advice to help local organisations prepare and building a platform for taking forward measures to encourage future zero carbon transport.

The renewed commitment to HS2, the Northern Powerhouse agenda, the potential of further devolution deals and the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy create the appropriate context to set a fresh strategic approach for the city's transport. The £270m Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme is marking a new era in public transport investment across the city. The programme has

informed proposals to the Transforming Cities Fund, which aims to improve productivity and spread prosperity through investment in public and sustainable transport in some of the largest English city regions. The council is also leading on major schemes within the £1bn West Yorkshire Transport Fund to promote housing and employment growth. Initiatives include:

- Investment in a new Leeds High Frequency Bus Network, aiming for more than 90% of core bus services running every 10 minutes, 7am – 8pm.
- Reduced bus delays through signal technology innovation to enhance bus priority, provide better pedestrian facilities, reduce waiting times, improve stop facilities and deliver better road use information.
- New buses that meet Euro 6 vehicle emission standards and offer a better passenger experience by 2020 and support for a roadmap towards the electrification of the bus fleet.
- Support for a West Yorkshire connectivity review and the development of future mass transit solutions for the city.

A joined up approach to digital technology, data, infrastructure, digital literacy and skills across the whole city is vital to our future success. This is managed through the Smart Leeds programme. An example of this is the accelerated delivery of full fibre across the city, helping to directly increase Leeds' economic output as well as providing the infrastructure for more sustainable new models of care and other public service models. The Smart Leeds approach also derives value from our partners' ecosystems, building on assets such as the Open Data Institute, Data Mill North and Leeds Institute for Data Analytics (LIDA) to further establish Leeds as a leader in the application of data.

#### **KPIs – How we will measure progress and achievements**

- Carbon emissions across the city
- Level of CO2 emissions from council buildings and operations
- **SEE NOTE:** Air quality – *Further development needed. KPI(s) will be added at a later date*
- Satisfaction with a range of transport services
- Number of passengers boarding buses in the Leeds district
- Increase in travel to the city centre by sustainable transport (bus, train, cycling, walking)
- Percentage of waste recycled
- Number of residential and commercial properties moved to a lower level of flood risk
- Increase in tenants' digital skills/confidence, access to equipment and motivation

#### **Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Transport Strategy
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Leeds Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
- Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy
- West Yorkshire Transport Strategy
- Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Sustainable Infrastructure with accompanying infographics.*

## Child-Friendly City

Our child-friendly city aspiration is visible throughout this Best Council Plan in the work we are doing to make Leeds the best city in the UK for children and young people to grow up in; to improve the homes and places in which children live and play; and to increase their overall health and wellbeing. We want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people who live in Leeds, to have a positive impact on improving outcomes for all children, while recognising the need for outcomes to improve faster for children from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds.

Realising this aspiration will require progress across all the Best Council Plan priorities, with renewed action to integrate policy initiatives, for example:

- Through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we will promote healthy, physically active lifestyles for our young people.
- Our pursuit of safe, strong communities will endeavour to keep young people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable.
- Our approach to transport will aim to address the specific requirements of young people.
- Improving the skills and education of our young people as they enter the world of work is central to our approach to inclusive growth.
- We will continue to engage with children and young people to help respond to the climate emergency, recognising their valuable roles as agents of change in their families, schools and communities.

The introduction of the 3As Strategy in 2019 (attendance, attainment and achievement) is driven by our ambition to support all children and young people to reach their full potential. The strategy aims to close the gaps between more and less advantaged children and young people through collaborating with internal and external partners. Children and young people will be supported to engage positively with education and will be offered opportunities that lead to positive, lifelong pathways. Through this, we will give all children and young people in Leeds, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, an empowering start in life and enable them to thrive in a vibrant and compassionate city.

Our approach places the child at the heart of everything we do: we give children a voice, we give them influence, and we work with children, young people and their families to develop quality connections and relationships. This means that together, we can make Leeds a safer and better place in which to live, learn, and grow up in.

The Leeds Children and Young People's Plan explains our child-friendly approach. The Plan sets out eleven priority areas of work:

1. Help children and parents to live in safe, supportive and loving families
2. Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected
3. Support families to give children the best start in life
4. Increase the number of children and young people participating and engaging in learning
5. Improve achievement and attainment for all
6. Improve at a faster rate educational progress for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
7. Improve social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
8. Encourage physical activity and healthy eating
9. Support young people to make good choices and minimise risk-taking behaviours
10. Help young people into adulthood, to develop life skills, and be ready for work

## 11. Improve access to affordable, safe, and reliable connected transport for young people

### **KPIs - How we will measure progress and achievements**

- Number of children who need to be looked after
- Number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan
- Attendance at primary and secondary schools
- Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 (end of year 6)
- Progress 8 score for Leeds at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of year 11)
- Percentage and number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or whose status is 'not known'
- **NEW:** Average Attainment 8 score for pupils with SEND but no statement
- **NEW:** Fixed term exclusions in all schools

### **Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan
- The 3As Strategy (attendance, attainment and achievement)

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Child-Friendly City with accompanying infographics.*

## Age-Friendly Leeds

Leeds wants to be a place where people age well: where older people are valued, feel respected and appreciated, and are seen as the assets they are.

The opportunities and challenges presented by an ageing population are well-rehearsed. Older people contribute in countless ways to Leeds' rich and vibrant communities – through the skills and knowledge that they bring to their local communities, high levels of volunteering, acting formally and informally as community connectors, intergenerational interactions, unpaid caring roles, and through the skills and experience they bring to their workplaces. However, we also know that many older people are also more likely to have multiple long-term health conditions, with inequalities disproportionately affecting the poorest in our city. Inequalities in older age are cumulative and have a significant impact on a person's health, wellbeing and independence. Pension Credit is available to supplement the UK State pension and help to lift people out of poverty; but not everyone who is entitled to pension credit is claiming it.<sup>1</sup>

Our approach to making Leeds the best city to grow old is one of citizenship and applies to the whole population. The approach: ensures there is a strong focus on social networks within neighbourhoods and the city; promotes social capital and participation; age-proofs and develops universal services; tackles inequalities and reduces social exclusion; aims to change social structures and tackle ageist attitudes; and facilitates age-friendly practices in local communities.

A lot of good work already takes place in Leeds – and indeed, within the council itself, we are looking at our age-friendly employment practices, based on guidelines from the Centre for Ageing Better - but we recognise there is an opportunity for this to have a clearer strategic context. We have therefore developed an Age-Friendly Strategy and action plan which cuts across all our Best Council Plan priorities. This focuses our work around six areas adapted for Leeds from the World Health Organisation's Age-Friendly City domains:

- Housing
- Public and civic spaces
- Travel and road safety
- Active, included and respected
- Healthy, independent ageing
- Employment and learning

Cross-cutting themes are:

- Engagement with older people – involving and consulting with older people on the development, delivery, management and evaluation of those services and projects which affect them.
- Effective communications – promoting ageing positively and providing information about services and activities in a format that older people can easily access and which suits their needs.
- Access to digital technology – help and support for people who want to use digital technology to make their lives better.
- Reducing inequalities – recognising the barriers faced by older people who are, or are at risk of, being vulnerable or disadvantaged, and putting interventions in place to remove or reduce these barriers.

Partnership working underpins our age-friendly approach:

- The Age-Friendly Board (Making Leeds the Best City to Grow Old In) provides strategic leadership and oversight, supported by a broader Age-Friendly Leeds Partnership, co-led by

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<sup>1</sup> According to a report from Independent Age analysing DWP data there is about £30 million unclaimed pension credit across Leeds. [Source: 'Credit where it's due: Ending the £3.5 billion Pension Credit scandal', 26 Jun 2019 available [here](#). Local data is provided in the supporting annexe available [here](#).]

the council and Leeds Older People's Forum. The partnership brings together statutory, voluntary and private sectors to address the priorities identified by older people themselves to help make Leeds a more age-friendly city.

- The five-year partnership between the Centre for Ageing Better, the council and Leeds Older People's Forum is piloting innovative approaches and generating new evidence of 'what works' for ageing well which is being shared in the UK and beyond. The partnership is working on the agreed three initial priorities:
  1. Addressing older people's **housing information and advice needs**: following independent research in the city during 2018 to understand the type of housing advice and information people want and mapping where support was available, the Me and My Home Group in Leeds are taking forward the recommendations made.<sup>2</sup>
  2. Developing innovative **community transport solutions**: transport providers are looking at new ways of working together.
  3. The motivations, barrier and enablers that older people face in **contributing to their communities**: based on local research commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better in Leeds, Bristol, Scarborough and Settle<sup>3</sup> an evaluation into the Leeds Neighbourhood Networks has now been commissioned.
- At national and international levels, Leeds is a member of: the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities – a group of communities from across the UK collaborating to bring about change in the way we respond to population ageing; the Eurocities Urban Ageing Forum, a forum dedicated to raising awareness and improving strategies for age-friendly environments in cities; and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities, which was established to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide.

In November 2019, Leeds City Council became the first local authority to join over 60 leading public and voluntary sector organisations to commit to a shared vision for healthy ageing. The vision is set out in a landmark consensus statement (available [here](#)) created by the Centre for Ageing Better and Public Health England with the aim of setting out the contributing organisations' shared commitments and leadership on healthy ageing in preparation for entering the World Health Organisation's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030. The commitments are based around five principles for healthy ageing: prioritising prevention; creating opportunities for people to contribute to society as they age; narrowing inequalities; fostering inclusive homes, workplaces and communities; and challenging ageist attitudes.

**KPIs** – How we will measure progress and achievements.

- **NEW**: Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) as a percentage compared to Core Cities
- **NEW**: Percentage of new developments built to accessible and adaptable standards
- **NEW**: Healthy life expectancy (years) by gender
- **NEW**: Disability-free life expectancy (years)

### Key supporting strategies

- Age-Friendly Leeds Strategy

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Age-Friendly Leeds with accompanying infographics.*

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<sup>2</sup> The Centre for Ageing Better's 'Home Truths' report was published in July 2019 (available [here](#)). It makes recommendations for what national government and local areas can do to help people better access housing information and advice.

<sup>3</sup> The Leeds report, published in October 2018, is available [here](#).

## Housing

One of the biggest challenges Leeds faces is to provide enough quality and accessible homes to meet the city's growing population, whilst protecting the quality of the environment and respecting community identity. The need for affordable housing and affordable warmth are key issues in meeting this challenge.

The Leeds Housing Strategy sets out our ambitions for effectively meeting housing need to make Leeds the best place to live. We continue to deliver six priorities:

- Affordable housing growth
- Improving housing quality
- Promoting independent living
- Creating sustainable communities
- Improving health through housing
- Meeting the needs of older residents

Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in March 2019, we can add to this set of priorities with another:

- Improving housing energy performance

In practice, we are co-ordinating activity to meet housing needs, improve existing housing and regenerate neighbourhoods, and to secure housing growth of the right scale, type (including a good mix of housing size and tenure) and quality.

In recent years there has been a growth in the private rented sector. The council supports landlords via the Leeds Rental Standard, self-regulation for the sector, and forums. Poor landlords are targeted by proactively addressing standards via regulation and initiatives such as the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach, selective licensing and the Rogue Landlord Unit.

Working with developers and housing associations, we maximise opportunities to build new homes – including affordable homes – and bring empty homes back into use. The council has committed to a significant council housing new build programme, including specialist Extra Care housing schemes, which are being built to the Leeds Standard: better urban design, meeting space standards and using sustainable construction. We work closely with health agencies to ensure that homes meet the health needs of residents, carrying out adaptations and rehousing support to enable disabled people to live independently and prevent admission to hospital or residential care.

Investment in the energy efficiency of homes is more important than ever before, helping us in our work to both respond to the climate emergency and tackle fuel poverty. Following extensive investment over the last fifteen years in insulation and efficient heating systems, council housing is at 'C' for energy efficiency (as at 2019) compared to 'D' for housing as a whole. The authority has now secured funding to install external wall insulation on much of its own back-to-back stock and to roll out domestic solar, with the ability to store energy. We are building new council homes to near Passivhaus<sup>1</sup> standards and investing heavily in retrofit programmes to bring all existing homes to this standard. The costs of this retrofit are high, in excess of £1bn, so the council is lobbying for enhanced national funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Passivhaus is a voluntary building performance standard that anyone setting out to build a low-energy home might be interested in. It's gaining lots of attention in the UK and is based around the principle of reducing heating demand to a very low level rather than relying on renewables.

More significant challenges lie in the owner occupied and private rented sector where local authorities have less influence. However, Leeds will continue to support charities such as LATCH and Canopy who bring older properties back into use after extensive energy efficiency works and call for measures at a national level to improve the energy efficiency of privately rented and owned homes.

All of this work is done through the lens of the council's climate emergency declaration through which we are committed to making Leeds carbon neutral by 2030. This will require all homes to be well insulated, with low or zero carbon heating and many with integrated renewables by this time.

We continue to be successful at minimising homelessness through prevention initiatives, ensuring that no person needs to sleep rough in Leeds. Vulnerable young people, adults and families are helped further through our Housing Related Support Programme. Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the five themes that provide the framework for our work in this area:

- Minimise rough sleeping
- Maximise homeless prevention
- Future role of housing related support in Leeds
- Youth homelessness
- A focus on priority groups

**KPIs** – How we will measure progress and achievements

- Growth in new homes in Leeds City Council
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- **NEW:** Housing mix in the city - *Request from Scrutiny Board Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth as to whether a KPI on the mix (e.g. houses of different sizes, types of ownership etc.) was possible. The service is currently reviewing this.*
- **DELETE:** Number of new units of extra care housing - *Propose removal as a KPI in its own right and include in the breakdown for the overarching KPI 'Growth in new homes'*
- Percentage of housing adaptations completed within target timescale
- Improved energy and thermal efficiency performance of houses
- Number of households in fuel poverty
- Number of homeless preventions
- Number of rough sleepers in Leeds
- **DELETE:** Percentage of council housing repairs completed within target - *This is more a service operational measure than one directly linked to the council's strategic Housing priority.*

**Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Housing Strategy
- Leeds Core Strategy
- Leeds Site Allocations Plan
- Leeds Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Health & Wellbeing with accompanying infographics.*

## Safe, Strong Communities

Leeds is a growing and richly diverse city, with people of different ages and from many different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs living and working alongside each other. As a City of Sanctuary, we celebrate this diversity and want Leeds to be a welcoming city for all, where people get on with each other and feel they are part of their local neighbourhood. To achieve this, we need strong local leadership, to increase community conversations to resolve problems and conflict locally, raise aspirations, create better links to social and economic opportunities, and improve the city's resilience to extremist narratives. Increasing community engagement and participation will reduce dependency on public services, building thriving, more resilient communities across the city that make the best use of their strengths and assets to overcome challenges.

Central to our ambition continues to be a place-based, integrated approach to service delivery and leadership, combined with a renewed focus on tackling poverty and reducing inequality in some of our poorest neighbourhoods. We are working seamlessly with partners from all sectors to meet the needs and demands of communities, regardless of responsibility for resources.

We are bringing people together to make a difference and help them to do more for themselves and others so that their communities can thrive, making sure that:

- Local councillors are at the forefront of our approach to community leadership and that their knowledge of the communities they represent is used effectively to plan local services;
- Residents, communities, businesses and organisations are equal partners;
- Local people are engaged to achieve things that we cannot achieve alone and we add value to their activities;
- The city's strategic priorities are aligned to local communities to deliver joint action; and
- Tools and support are provided so local people can take action and we share information, skills and resources.

This approach expands on the work of Community Committees by outlining a more joined-up service offer in a number of priority wards in the inner areas and priority social housing estates in the outer areas, and importantly those neighbourhoods which fall into the 1% most deprived nationally. The work of Community Committees is promoted through @\_YourCommunity.

Recognising that our communities are now more diverse than ever, our strategic approach to migration is inclusive. We engage with established and new communities to improve the way that we communicate how our city works. This is complex work, involving multiple partners, through which a wide range of support is provided to improve access to advice and services to those who are new to the city, including some of our most vulnerable residents. More information can be found @\_CohesionLeeds.

Underpinning all our work is our ambition for Leeds to be inclusive, where all citizens are treated fairly. Our approach to equality is far reaching and comprehensive, helping us meet both our statutory obligations as a local authority but also our wider city aspirations. This includes the work we carry out to engage with and support Leeds' under-represented groups, ensuring their voice is heard and that they feel included in key decisions. More information about the city's work to address equality can be found @\_InclusiveLeeds.

We will continue to work to make all our communities safe for everyone: tackling and working to prevent risks, threats and harms, whether from anti-social behaviour, hate crime, domestic violence or theft and burglary. This includes a continued commitment to meeting the statutory Prevent Duty: ensuring the city's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose in order to protect and support

those most vulnerable from being drawn into extremism and terrorist-related activities. We will also take a wide approach to inclusive growth, working to make the connections between tackling low pay and promoting skills and career progression, with the challenges of welfare reform and financial hardship.

**KPIs – How we will measure progress and achievements**

- Percentage of people with a concluded safeguarding enquiry for whom their desired outcomes were fully or partially met
- Self-reporting of domestic violence and abuse incidents
- Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions
- Council tenant satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live
- Percentage of Leeds residents who say they feel safe in their local area
- Number of reported anti-social behaviour / nuisance incidents
- Number of reported hate incidents

**Key supporting strategies / documents**

- Safer Leeds Plan
- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan
- Citizens@Leeds – Supporting communities and tackling poverty
- Leeds City Council's Equality Improvement Priorities
- Community Committees Annual Report

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Safe, Strong Communities with accompanying infographics.*

## Culture

“Culture is what we do and who we are, encompassing a broad range of actions and activities which have the capacity to transform, challenge, reassure and inspire, giving a place and its people a unique and distinctive identity.”

(Our definition of culture as set out in the Leeds Culture Strategy)

Leeds backs culture. We believe it has a vital role to play in realising our Best City ambition, recognising the contribution it can make to individuals’ physical and mental health, educational and employment options and quality of life. We also recognise the contribution it can make to the city’s confidence, profile and economy. Our culture both defines our rich differences, and brings us closer together. Sharing the diverse cultures of our city helps people to get to know and respect their neighbours and it can help build wider community cohesion. Most of all, culture can be fun and life-affirming. Thousands of arts, cultural and community organisations, and everyone in the city, make Leeds’ culture what it is and their exceptional contributions will continue to be valued.

Our approach is set out in the Leeds Culture Strategy which has seven objectives:

- For the city to value and prioritise cultural activity, using it as a means of improving the quality of life of every person and every community in Leeds.
- For culture to build respect, cohesion and coexistence between and within communities and individuals.
- For people, whatever their background, to be supported to be creative through school, informal learning, training, volunteering and employment, ensuring that culture can be created and experienced by everyone.
- For Leeds to be nationally and internationally recognised as a liveable city, and a thriving, internationally connected cultural hub open to collaboration.
- For Leeds to be at the forefront of cultural innovation, making the most of new and emerging technologies.
- For the culture sector to grow and increase its contribution to Leeds’ economy, by placing culture at the heart of the city’s narrative.
- For established cultural organisations to be resilient, and to create an environment where new cultural organisations can flourish.

In the last few years we have seen Leeds’ cultural profile increase significantly. This has been a major factor in boosting the economy, attracting new businesses and jobs to the city, with a major highlight being Channel 4’s decision to move its national headquarters to City Square. We will continue to support creative SMEs and entrepreneurs and the spaces they need to develop their ideas and businesses. We will also encourage creative and cultural education and participation among our children and young people, understanding the role this can play in giving them the skills they need to thrive in 21<sup>st</sup>-century jobs: employers tell us that with the advance of robotics and artificial intelligence, key skills required will increasingly include empathy, communications, flexibility and creativity.

In 2018 Leeds was selected to be part of the prestigious Pilot Cities Programme. The only English city participating, the objective of the programme is to work with diverse cities across the world to benchmark key elements of our Culture Strategy and to learn from each other, finding examples of best practice and sharing knowledge and ideas. Our approach is rooted in our communities and takes a wide definition of culture, aiming to embed it across areas such as urban regeneration, education and health and wellbeing.

Since the city's bid to be European Capital of Culture came to an end, Leeds has forged ahead with its plans to host an alternative year-long celebration of culture in 2023. Although no longer a European event, the Leeds 2023 festival of culture will have a strong international focus and will celebrate the diverse cultures from across the globe to be found here. Please visit the Leeds 2023 website [here](#) for more information, including how to get involved.

**KPIs – How we will measure progress and achievements**

- **NEW:** Leeds' Cultural Vibrancy, Creative Economy and Enabling Environment (as measured through the annual European Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor). *For the first time in 2019, Leeds was included in this Monitor which shows how 190 cities in 30 European countries perform on a range of measures which, together, describe the Cultural Vibrancy, Creative Economy and Enabling Environment. The council will use these biennial reports as an indicator of progress, (whilst continuing also to measure the current 2 Culture KPIs below).*
- Number of visitors at a range of venues and events
- Number of employees in the creative industries in Leeds

**Key supporting strategies**

- Leeds Culture Strategy

*The final design version will include a range of stats and facts relevant to Culture with accompanying infographics.*



# **Best Council Plan Refresh 2020/21 – 2024/25**

## **Summary of Scrutiny Board comments.**



Report of the Scrutiny Boards  
Statement for Executive Board – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
**Best Council Plan Refresh**  
**2020/21 – 2024/25**

## Introduction

1. At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Executive Board considered a report by the Director of Resources and Housing setting out initial proposals to refresh the Best Council Plan for the period 2020/21 – 2024/25, taking into account progress in delivering the Plan's priorities. Further engagement was then sought with Scrutiny Boards on the emerging refresh of the Best Council Plan.
2. This engagement process took place over a series of meetings in January 2020 as follows:
  - Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020
  - Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020
  - Environment, Housing and Communities – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020
  - Strategy and Resources – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020
  - Children and Families – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020
3. Each of the Scrutiny Boards received a copy of the Executive Board's report and considered the initial proposals in the context of **Quarter 2 Performance** data presented at the same meeting. This included specific Best Council Plan indicators relevant to the remit of each Scrutiny Board.
4. Scrutiny Board consideration of the initial Best Council Plan proposals benefited from the input of Executive Board Members, Directors and other Senior Council Officers.
5. This summary note sets out the key observations made by individual Scrutiny Boards, as well as detailing any concluding recommendations put forward

by Scrutiny for consideration by the Executive Board at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

6. The Executive Board is particularly asked to note the general support of Scrutiny towards the new focus on the Climate Emergency within the refreshed Best Council Plan.

## Key observations by individual Scrutiny Boards

7. In considering the initial proposals for refreshing the Best Council Plan for the period 2020/21 – 2024/25, the following key observations were made by the Scrutiny Boards:

### Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles (07/01/2020)

8. The Board welcomed the inclusion of the Climate Emergency upfront and central to the Best Council Plan and highlighted this could be further strengthened by including the City's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Board noted the intention for this issue to be raised at the forthcoming State of the City meeting.
9. The Board also considered any potential risks, should the city achieve or not achieve its Best City ambitions within the timeframe of the Plan and noted that financial risks remained a significant challenge. Presentation of the Budget to Executive Board, Scrutiny Boards and Council; and the regular review of financial monitoring information by each Scrutiny Board along with the six monthly presentation of the Medium Term Financial Plan provided timely opportunities to assess and monitor the



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Councils financial position and provide Members with assurance over the Council's financial robustness. The Board felt these arrangements could be further strengthened by providing more detailed information around progress, implications, risks and challenges within the reports presented to Executive Board and Scrutiny Boards. The Board also acknowledged that risks can often be balanced with potential opportunities, such as greater use of digital technology, particularly to support the health agenda. The Board supported the presentation of potential opportunities alongside the risks and challenges faced by the Council.

10. Embedding sustainability into the Council's decision making process was seen as key to supporting the ambition to address the Climate Emergency. As an example, the Board was alert to the contradictions and tensions that may exist between the health and wellbeing agenda and promoting inclusive growth in the city – where development of additional housing may bring additional pressures to health and education infrastructure; and where addressing the climate emergency may bring pressure on transport infrastructure but brings improvements to the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Leeds.
11. The Board welcomed the reported review of the Council's decision making process which will provide clarity to the Climate Emergency ambitions for decision makers and provide a consistency of approach to the issues affecting the health and wellbeing of Leeds citizens.

Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth (08/01/2020)

12. The Board noted that the focus of the Best Council Plan remained tackling poverty & inequality and inclusive growth and welcomed the inclusion of the Climate Emergency as central to all the objectives within the Best Council Plan.
13. The Board highlighted the role of the 2018 Sustainable Development Inquiry in influencing the inclusion of sustainability into the Inclusive Growth Strategy. Members reiterated that more needs to be done to achieve sustainable growth, whilst recognising the tension between addressing the Climate Emergency and growth; housing; and health and wellbeing.
14. The Board acknowledged that the balance between social and economic growth and the environment presented a challenge. Two of the biggest sources of carbon emissions in the city were identified as energy consumption and transport. The Board noted the ongoing work through retro-fitting homes and maximising use of the planning process to tackle and reduce carbon impact on the city.
15. The Board noted that environmental considerations should be at the heart of the Inclusive Growth Strategy which included a large range of sustainable development measures.
16. The Board further considered the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the Best Council Plan; suggesting the refinement of inclusive growth indicators and development of housing mix indicators.



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Environment, Housing and Communities  
(09/01/2020)

17. The Board noted that the broad strategic direction of the Best Council Plan was retained; including the overarching goal of tackling poverty and inequalities and the ambition for Leeds to be the best city in the UK. The Best Council ambition and organisational Values were also retained, with a renewed focus to strengthen the sustainability agenda; with Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and the Climate Emergency becoming the three 'pillars' that underpin the Best City ambition and supporting priorities.
18. The Board also acknowledged the renewed 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

Strategy and Resources (20/01/2020)

19. The Board noted that the proposals to refresh the Best Council Plan retained the key priorities for the city, whilst including new focus on the Climate Emergency as one of the three pillars of the Plan and its objectives along with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
20. The Board particularly acknowledged the role of the Corporate Risk Register in providing assurance that any risks associated with not meeting the objectives of the Best Council Plan were constantly being monitored. Linked to this, it was noted that the three key areas of risk are associated with safeguarding; major incidents within the city and financial risk. The Board also acknowledged that the regular

presentation of the financial health report to the Executive Board and Scrutiny, as well as the six monthly performance reporting to Scrutiny, facilitated regular monitoring throughout the year.

21. The Board also felt it would be helpful to research and reflect how Leeds' approach in developing and performance monitoring its own Best Council Plan objectives compares with that of other core cities.

Children and Families (22/01/2020)

22. In considering the Plan, the Board noted the reported growth in the level of deprivation in Leeds and growth in the more deprived areas, leading to parenting under increased pressure.
23. Whilst acknowledging the inclusion of the Climate Emergency alongside tackling poverty and inequality, health and wellbeing and inclusive growth, the Board considered what effect the inclusion of the Climate Emergency would have on achieving Best Council and Best City ambitions.
24. The Board discussed the impact of the Climate Emergency on children and young people in terms of their engagement and knowledge of the related issues and noted the proposals to develop a package of practical things which children and young people could undertake to support work to address the Climate Emergency which would not adversely impact their learning. The Board also noted that the Leeds Youth Voice Summit this year is being focused around working together to tackle climate change.
25. The Board noted how consideration of the Climate Emergency influences other work



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being undertaken within the Directorate; including planning for school transport and travel to school; improving building efficiency; the use of more efficient/battery powered vehicles and the use of solar power; all of which will have a positive impact on improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

26. The Board continued to emphasise the importance of active lifestyles, particularly for young people and their family groups and the benefits this can bring in terms of general health and wellbeing, mental health and improving outcomes for young people. With its strong links to the Climate Emergency, the Board recognised that the existing “My Health My School” survey could provide a good opportunity to gather the direct views of young people on such matters as well as being another way to promote greater awareness.
27. In discussing the city wide impact of the Climate Emergency, the Board also recognised the opportunity for the Best Council Plan to reflect on the broader desire of Leeds citizens to become involved in action to address the Climate Emergency.

## **Concluding recommendations made by Scrutiny**

28. The following recommendations have been made by Scrutiny for the consideration of the Executive Board:

### **Recommendation 1.**

That Executive Board considers the opportunity for the Best Council Plan to reflect on how Leeds’ approach in developing and performance monitoring its own Best Council Plan objectives compares with that of other core cities.

### **Recommendation 2.**

That Executive Board is requested to consider an in-year review and refinement of the Key Performance indicators relating to the following issues which will in turn support work being undertaken to address the Climate Emergency:

- Refinement of Inclusive Growth indicators
- Development of Housing Mix indicators

**Scrutiny Boards  
Joint Statement for the Executive Board  
Best Council Plan Refresh 2020/21 – 2024/2025  
February 2020**

**[scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk)**

## Equality Impact Assessment: Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and Budget 2020/21

### Introduction

This paper outlines the equality analysis and strategic equality assessment of the proposed Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2020/21 (as detailed in the accompanying reports to the Executive Board meeting 12th February 2020 recommending proposals to Full Council at its meeting 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020). The lead person for this equality impact assessment was Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing. Members of the assessment team were:

Coral Main	Head of Business Planning & Risk
Richard Ellis	Head of Finance
Lelir Yeung	Head of Equality
Graham Sephton	Head of HR
Tim Rollett	Intelligence and Policy Manager
Pauline Ellis	Senior Policy and Performance Officer
Pat Fairfax	Policy and Performance Manager
Joanna Rowlands	Financial Inclusion Manager
Ruth Addison	Senior Intelligence Officer

### Overview

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. It is a rolling multi-year document that is reviewed and refined annually as needed. The Best Council Plan proposed update covers the five-year period from 2020 to 2025.

The Best Council Plan 202 to 2025 and the Budget 2020/21 have been developed in the context of the approach agreed by the Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 through the Best Council Plan update proposals and the Initial Budget Proposals. In accordance with the council's budget and policy framework and as agreed by Executive Board in January, these proposals were subsequently submitted to all Scrutiny Boards for review and consideration, and have also been used as the basis for wider public consultation.

It is proposed that the broad strategic direction of the current Best Council Plan; 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. The new proposals 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 collectively becoming the three 'pillars' that underpin the Best City ambition and supporting priorities.

The Budget proposals are set within the context of the 2020/21-2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy which was approved by the Executive Board on the 24th July 2019,

the Council's Initial Budget Proposals which were agreed by the Executive Board in January 2020 and the 2020/21 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Government has indicated that the Final Settlement will be published before Parliamentary Recess on 13th February 2020.

The financial climate for local government continues to present significant risks to the council's priorities and ambitions. The council continues to make every effort possible to protect frontline service delivery, and whilst we have been able to balance the budget each year since 2010, have continued to deliver a broad range of services despite declining income, and have avoided large scale compulsory redundancies, it is clear that the position continues to be difficult to manage. Resource implications will impact on all communities but those who have been identified at being at the greatest potential risk of negative impact include:

- Disabled people – including all impairment groups;
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities;
- People from new and emerging communities;
- Women;
- Older and younger people; and
- Low socio-economic groups (within this group, there is over-representation by disabled people and BME communities).

## **Scope**

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to give 'due regard' to equality. The council is committed to ending unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advancing equal opportunities and fostering good relations.

In order to achieve this we need to ensure that equality and diversity are given proper consideration when we develop policies and make decisions. The council has an agreed process in place to do this through the use of equality impact assessments.

### *Best Council Plan*

The Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 is intended to provide long-term strategic direction rather than being a detailed delivery or action plan. It includes:

- An updated Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive, articulating the council's ambitions, role and future direction;
- An Introduction to the Plan explaining the Best City and Best Council ambitions.
- A 'Plan on a Page' setting out our vision, ambitions, desired outcomes, eight 'Best City' priorities (Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing, Child-Friendly City, Age-Friendly Leeds, Safe, Strong Communities, Housing, Sustainable Infrastructure, Culture), an overview of the key means of delivering the Best Council ambition (e.g. leadership, partnership working, use of resources etc.) and the five council values underpinning everything we do and how we work.
- A 'Best City' section that provides an introduction to each of the priorities and signposts the reader to the key supporting strategies for further information.
- A set of 'Best City' and 'Best Council' key performance indicators.
- A set of Best Council annexes that explain the strategies for the council's key resources: e.g. our people, our money, our land and buildings. *Please note:*

*these annexes are in development at the time of writing and will be added to the published Best Council Plan in the first half of the financial year 2020/21.*

## *Budget*

The council has so far responded successfully to the funding challenges since 2010 by reducing a number of areas of expenditure, most significantly on employees and through better procurement and demand management, and by increasing income as outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Also, through targeting resources into preventative services the council has ensured that the implications of demand and demographic pressures, which have resulted in significant cost pressures in other local authorities, have been contained within Leeds. The council is committed to responding to the challenges of inequality in Leeds within the pressures of the financial context in which we are now operating and ongoing uncertainty with regard to the Government's future spending plans.

After taking into account the impact of the anticipated changes in funding and cost pressures, it is forecast that the council will need to generate savings, efficiencies and additional income to the order of £28.4 million in 2020/21 to balance to the anticipated level of resources available. The council remains committed to protecting front line services as far as possible, especially those that provide support to the most vulnerable, and is planning to meet the challenge of the estimated budget gap for 2020/21 through a combination of efficiencies, changes to service and increased income (generated through fees, charges and traded services). Details of these proposals can be found in the directorate reports appended to the Budget 2020/21 report to February's Executive Board.

### *Impact of budget proposals on employees*

Following government's 2015 Spending Review, it became clear that the council's funding position would give rise to the need for further reductions in staff. At that time it was estimated that the council would need to downsize by between 1,000 and 2,000 full time equivalent (FTE) posts by the end of March 2020. Accordingly the council re-issued a Section 188 notice (notice to collectively consult to avoid redundancies issued under S188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992). Given the scale of this challenge, it was the council's view that this level of reduction could not easily be achieved without compulsory redundancies.

Since May 2016, the council has held extensive discussions with Trade Unions. This engagement has been both positive and constructive and has collectively explored opportunities to manage staff reductions down in a way that avoids compulsory redundancies.

As a result, through a combination of normal turnover, voluntary retirement and severance, and through greater staff flexibility, the required savings have been achieved. Whilst it still may be necessary in some circumstances, the council will continue to strive to avoid compulsory redundancies.

The council has operated a voluntary retirement and severance scheme since 2010/11 which has already contributed significantly to the reduction in the workforce of around 2,300 FTEs or 3,045 headcount to March 2019.

The Budget Proposals for 2020/21 provide for an estimated net increase of 380 FTEs by 31st March 2021. Of the gross additional 478 FTEs, 399 are funded through capital or external grant, income generation or other means including staffing reductions such that an increase of 79 FTEs will impact on the revenue budget. In the context of future

staffing reductions that will be required to meet the estimated revised budget gap of £128.3m for 2021/22 to 2024/25, it is the council's intention to issue an updated S188 notice in February 2020.

## **Fact finding – what we already know**

### ***Demographics: A Changing Population***

- The population of Leeds was estimated to be 789,200 people in 2018 (ONS MYE<sup>1</sup>) - an increase of 0.6% (4,300 people) in the year since the previous 2017 mid-year estimate and of almost 40,000 compared to the 2011 Census.
- Based on the ONS 2018 MYE, there are estimated to be:
  - 152,400 children and young people aged 0-15
  - 514,400 people of working age (16-64)
  - 122,400 older people aged 65 and over
  - 50.9% (402,100) are female and 49.1% (387,100) are male
  - One in ten people (10.0%) are in the 20-24 age band reflecting the large student population.
- Between 2008 and 2018 it is estimated that<sup>2</sup>:
  - The Leeds population increased by 6.4% (47,500 people).
  - The working age population had a smaller percentage increase (3.0%) than both the population of children and young people (13.7%) and the population aged 65 and over (13.1%).
  - The population of older people aged 65 and above increased by 14,200 people. Although the 65 and above age group still has more women than men, there has been a bigger increase in the number of men, with 8,400 more men aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2018 than in 2008 (compared to 5,800 more women).
  - There was a very significant increase in the number of primary school age children in Leeds, with an increase of 18,900 (20.7%) in the 0-10 age group.
- Over the next 10 years (2018 to 2028), the peak of those primary age increases will start feeding into secondary school, with a large increase in the number of teenagers in Leeds. There are projected to be 12,500 more young people aged between 11 and 17 by 2028 (21.5%)<sup>3</sup>.
- In the next 10 years, the increase in the older population is projected to be even bigger, with 20,000 more people aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2028 than in 2018<sup>3</sup>.
- The Leeds population overall is predicted to continue to grow, reaching 830,500 by 2028; a 41,300 (5.2%) increase from 2018. The working age population will

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2018 Mid-Year Estimates. Figures rounded to the nearest 100.

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-Year Estimates 2008 to 2018. Figures rounded to nearest 100.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016-based projections. Figures rounded to the nearest 100.

have a smaller percentage increase (2.6%) than both the population of 0 to 15 year olds (6%) and those aged 65 and over (15.3%)<sup>3</sup>.

- Leeds continues to become more ethnically diverse. The national 2011 Census showed that 18.9% of Leeds population was from a BME<sup>4</sup> background.
- According to the most recent 2019 School Census<sup>5</sup>:
  - The proportion of the school population from BME backgrounds has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from 17.9% in 2005 to 34.6% in 2019.
  - The greatest ethnic diversity is in younger age groups, with 36.1% BME pupils in primary schools and 32.1% BME pupils in secondary and post-16 settings.
  - In 2019, 20.3% of Leeds school pupils speak English as an additional language, with the top 5 main languages being Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Panjabi and Arabic.
- According to the national 2011 Census:
  - The population aged 65 and older is less ethnically diverse than younger age groups, but the proportion from BME backgrounds will increase as people who settled in Leeds as young adults grow older.
  - There is no direct count of disability for the whole population, but the Census 2011 collected information about 'long term health problems or disability'. In Leeds 83.3% of people said that their day-to-day activities are not limited by long term health problems or disability, 7.9% said they are limited a lot and 8.9% said that they are limited a little.
  - The religious profile of the city is changing. In the 10 years between the 2001 Census and 2011 Census, the proportion of people who said they are Christian decreased from 68.9% to 55.9%. The proportion with no religion increased from 16.8% to 28.2%. Compared to England and Wales, Leeds had higher than average proportions of people stating their religion as Jewish (0.9% compared to 0.5%), as Muslim (5.4% compared to 4.8%) and as Sikh (1.2% compared to 0.8%). The Muslim community had the youngest age profile.
  - The 2011 Census collected information on civil partnerships for the first time, reflecting the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which came into effect in the UK in December 2005. In Leeds, 41.5% of adults were married, which is lower than the England and Wales rate of 46.6%; 0.2% of adults were in a registered same-sex civil partnership, which is the same as the England and Wales rate; 40.8% of adults were single (never married or never registered in a same-sex civil partnership), which is much higher than the England and Wales rate of 34.6%; 17.5% of adults were separated, divorced or widowed, which is slightly lower than the England and Wales rate of 18.6%.

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<sup>4</sup> BME covers all ethnicities apart from White British

<sup>5</sup> January School Census 2019

## **Poverty and Inequality**

The key message in the Best Council Plan is that for Leeds to be the Best Council in the Best City, we need to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities. The council's approach to equality improvement recognises poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. The approach recognises that a number of protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those people living in poverty.

Our latest socio-economic analysis (notably the 2018 Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment, analysis based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation and the 2019 update of the council's Poverty Fact Book) show that a range of inequalities persist across the city and, linked with deprivation levels, are particularly concentrated in specific localities with long-term related challenges such as access to employment, housing, language and literacy, skills, health and care responsibilities. The slow economic recovery alongside reductions in public spending has significantly impacted the poorest members of society.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 show the geographic concentration of deprivation in the communities of Inner East and Inner South Leeds, confirming the wider analysis of poverty and deprivation undertaken in the Joint Strategic Assessment 2018. Based on the IMD 2019:

- Leeds has 114 neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% nationally. This is 24% of Leeds neighbourhoods. Leeds is ranked at 33 out of 317 local authorities on the proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10%. All the other Core Cities, apart from Bristol, have a higher proportion in the most deprived 10% (e.g. Liverpool has 49% and Manchester has 43%).
- However, if we look at the number of people experiencing deprivation, Leeds is ranked as 3rd or 4th most deprived out of 317 local authorities. There are two measures which identify local authority districts with large numbers of people experiencing deprivation. These are the income scale and the employment scale:
  - Income scale – this counts the number of individuals (adults and children) experiencing income deprivation in the local authority area. Leeds had the 4th highest number (Birmingham had the highest number, Manchester the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest and Liverpool the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number).
  - Employment scale - this counts the number of individuals experiencing employment deprivation in the local authority area. Leeds had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number (Birmingham had the highest number and Liverpool the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest).
- For further information on the IMD 2019 and the Joint Strategic Assessment 2018, please visit the Leeds Observatory [here](#).

In 2017/18 almost a fifth of the Leeds population – over 170,000 people across the city - were classified as being in 'relative poverty'. (Relative Poverty measures individuals who have household incomes 60% below the median average.) [Source: [DWP households below average income](#), published March 2019].

- In 2017/18 there was an increase in the number of people in employment living in poverty. For the same period nationally, 5.4 million people were living in households where at least one member of the household is in work, yet they live in poverty. This is symptomatic of a labour market which is characterised by low pay, temporary, part-time and zero hour contracts.

- During 2017/18, in-work poverty was estimated to affect over 70,000 Leeds adults<sup>6</sup>. Almost 30,000 Leeds residents in full-time work earn less than the Real Living Wage of 2019<sup>7</sup> and over 10,000 Leeds workers are on zero hour contracts<sup>8</sup>.
- In 2017, 11% of Leeds households were in fuel poverty (almost 37,000 households). [Source: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2017 results published in June 2019. Details are available online [here](#)].
- Over 33,000 (20%) Leeds children below the age of 20 were estimated to be living in poverty in 2016<sup>9</sup>.

### *Financial Hardship*

Poverty is an issue that impacts on equality, and financial exclusion is a barrier to an equal society. We know that poverty and financial exclusion disproportionately affect people within specific equality groups, particularly single parents, and people with mental health problems. Through research commissioned by Leeds City Council into Financial Exclusion and Poverty in Leeds, it was found that families with children were much less likely to save and therefore less resilient to any changes in their finances. Survey results of 600 deprived area households found that 47% of lone parent households in deprived areas said they never save, compared to 38% of all households surveyed. [Source: [Research into financial inclusion in Leeds](#), University of Salford, 2018].

The Debt Charity StepChange publishes an annual Yearbook with statistics on personal debt in the UK. 36% of StepChange's new clients advised in 2018 that they had an additional vulnerability, including mental health or physical health problems, learning difficulties, visual or hearing impairments. 57% of vulnerable clients were in arrears on their household bills when they contacted StepChange for advice, compared to 39% of all clients. Amongst the calls to StepChange's helpline, 68% were for advice on Credit Card debt, 47% on Overdrafts and 18% on Payday loans. In terms of being behind on priority bills, 30% of clients reported being in arrears with their Council Tax, 23% were behind on their Water bill, 16% were behind on Electricity and 12% behind on Gas.

Below we have provided statistics to show the scale of financial hardship across Leeds:

- In 2018/19 the council saw over 4,000 awards to people accessing its Local Welfare Support Scheme for both emergency (food and fuel) and basic needs provision (household goods), totalling almost £537,000 in direct awards.
- Using the latest data from September 2019, welfare reform, including the under-occupancy charges affects over 4,200 Leeds households. The Benefit Cap is set

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<sup>6</sup> The DWP's estimates for Absolute and Relative Poverty are only available at a national level. An estimate for Leeds is therefore calculated using nationally informed assumptions against the Leeds population figure for the same year. As the latest DWP data refers to 2017/18, the ONS mid-year population estimates for Leeds at 2017 of 781,846 have been used in the estimates above. For example it is reported by the DWP that there are 14 million people living in relative poverty in the UK, after housing costs. This was 22% of the UK population in 2017. Therefore, because Leeds is statistically considered to mirror the UK trend in terms of demographic profile, it can be assumed that 22% of the Leeds population in 2017 was living in relative poverty. This equates to 172,666 people in Leeds.

<sup>7</sup> The 30k estimate was made using the ASHE survey sample of job counts. The ONS state that these are intended to provide a broad idea of the numbers of employee jobs but they should not be considered accurate estimates and caution should be applied when using these numbers. Job count data is based on survey data within a standard variance level of +/-5%. Therefore the same caution should be applied when referencing the estimates for Leeds. See: [Leeds Observatory: People in Leeds earning below the Living Wage Foundation's Real Living Wage](#)

<sup>8</sup> Leeds figures are estimated using the national percentage rates on Employment figures from the APS, April 2019. See [table 3.9](#): Estimates of people on Zero Hours Contracts.

<sup>9</sup> Children in Low Income Families Local Measure (Source: HMRC data published Dec 2018, representing Child Poverty in Leeds 2016)

to £20,000 per annum and affected over 550 households during September 2019. Almost 13,000 households in Leeds have to pay 25% of their Council Tax due to changes to Council Tax Support. (Please refer to the Leeds Observatory section on 'Welfare and Benefits' [here](#) for further data and information.)

- Leeds moved to the full service digital platform of Universal Credit (UC) in October 2018. Full service means that all new claims to benefits that UC is replacing, known as legacy benefits (Job Seekers Allowance, Employment support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit), are now claimed to UC instead.
- Latest data on legacy benefits revealed over 50,000 people were claiming out-of-work benefits (February 2019) and 32,000 were claiming in-work tax credits (April 2019).
- Over 28,000 people were claiming UC in Leeds in October 2019: 53% were female, 47% male. The age breakdown reveals 20% of claimants were aged 16 to 24, 63% were aged 25 to 49 and 17% were aged 50+.
- Latest household data for UC is for August 2019 and revealed 22,325 households were claiming UC in Leeds. Of these, 30% were lone parent households.
- Mirroring national trends, the city has also seen the emergence and significant growth of foodbanks, supported by the establishment of the Leeds Food Aid Network to coordinate emergency food provision across the district. Almost 34,000 people in Leeds have needed assistance with food via a foodbank in 2018/19. This is up 21% on 2017/18.
- The Leeds Suicide Audit (September 2019) reported that financial difficulty was observed in 35% of suicides, which equated to 72 individuals. Over half of these cases were experiencing debt.
- Citizens Advice Leeds (CAL) works across Leeds at over 35 outreach locations including GP surgeries, One Stop Centres and mental health services. In 2018/19 CAL provided advice to 33,605 people with almost 70,000 advice enquiries. Of the 33,605 clients: 26% reported experiencing mental health issues; 38% had incomes of less than £600 per month. Of the 70,000 enquiries: 27% were related to Benefits and Tax Credits; 3% for Universal Credit; 18% were for Debt advice.

### ***Third sector***

The council recognises and values the critical and significant role that the third sector plays in the life of the city and the importance of a diverse sector as articulated in the Leeds Third Sector Ambition Statement. The council has a long tradition of working in collaboration with the third sector in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people of Leeds.

The council demonstrates its commitment to the sector in many ways:

**Partnership and engagement relationships:** The council invests financial and staff resource in the development and maintenance of partnership and engagement relationships with the sector, including city-wide strategic bodies and a network of locality, service, thematic, community and equality-focused third sector forums. This facilitates strategic engagement with the sector, dialogue between the sector, council and a range of partnerships and forums and enables the council to have better reach into communities through the third sector, resulting in more effective co-production and

collaboration on key city and locality agendas. For example, the council provides executive support and plays a leading role in the Third Sector Partnership. This is a key part of the city infrastructure through which the third sector, council, NHS, universities and other public sector partners work together to ensure that collectively the conditions are created for a thriving third sector, so organisations can deliver better outcomes for the people of Leeds. The Partnership is chaired by the Executive Member for Communities, Cllr Debra Coupar, and is attended by representatives from all council directorates.

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

**Investment in the wider sector:** The council makes a significant financial investment in the sector each year.

An Annual Analysis of the council's investment in the Third Sector is produced and presented to the Third Sector Partnership. This allows council colleagues and partners to track trends, scrutinise and build an overview of where investment is made.

In 2018/19 £127.2m was invested in the sector through transactions with 1,309 individual third sector organisations. Of these:

- 665 organisations received payments of less than £1,000 (predominantly small, local, community and sports organisations).
- 204 organisations received payments of between £1,000 and £5,000 (again these were predominantly payments to support smaller, local, and community-based activities).
- 25 organisations / consortiums received £81.7m between them (principally agencies focusing on health, social care and the children's agendas; is also included some organisations acting as lead bodies for consortiums).
- 154 faith organisations received £19.4m for their secular work in communities. (15.2% of total third sector investment)
- Members Improvement in the Community and Environmental (MICE) allocation totalling £96,605 was invested in third sector-led, community-based initiatives.

The total investment in the sector by the council has been broadly maintained despite the significant funding reduction experienced by the council since 2010. This is a positive picture but the council, along with third sector partners, continues to review the analysis of the council's financial relationship with the sector in order to understand whether the approach is supporting our shared ambitions for the sector and the city.

At Third Sector Partnership in November 2019, the council's Analysis of Investment in the Third Sector in Leeds was complemented by presentations from NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group, National Lottery Communities Fund and Leeds Community Foundation. This enriches and strengthens the understanding of the strength and impact of the sector in Leeds.

**Dialogue with the third sector around the budget pressures, the future direction of travel and investment in the sector:** There is ongoing dialogue with the third sector regarding the budget challenges and future plans, for example:

- Leeds Third Sector Partnership receives updates on the council's financial position. In November 2019, the council's Chief Officer, Financial Services provided an overview of the financial position and the predicted challenges that will need to be addressed in the council budgets 2020 to 2024.
- Council directorates have well-established ongoing arrangements and dialogue with their third sector partners and other interested third sector stakeholders. This shapes and informs their approach to the budget challenges and their priorities. The Compact for Leeds sets out well understood expectations that they are in regular detailed discussions with organisations that will be impacted by any budget reductions or changes.

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

- In January 2019 the Third Sector Partnership approved the Leeds Pledge to Strengthen Civil Society, which aims to mobilise the financial and in-kind commitment of partners across the public, private and third sector to play their part for Leeds. In November 2019 the council's Executive Board endorsed and committed to implement the ambitions in the Pledge.
- The Leeds Commissioning Code of Practice sets out a transparent framework which informs commissioning practice and ensures that the interests of all stakeholder communities are integral to the drafting of specifications for tenders and the focus of grants. The process is subject to a public and third sector co-produced annual review.
- The annual Lord Mayor's Small Groups and Charities Event is co-produced annually with Voluntary Action Leeds. This celebrates the work of small groups, volunteers and active citizens, but also provides them with an opportunity to link into a range of organisational and funding support and advice.
- The council facilitates the cross sector Funding Leeds Partnership, which has been leading on ambitions to maximise external investment into Leeds through the third sector by making funding information and support accessible. This includes:
  - The development and promotion of a programme of training, funding fairs and workshops to enable front line third sector organisations to access information about funding opportunities and to develop skills and access support to maximise their success in bidding for funding.
  - The council funds the Funding Leeds platform: a comprehensive database of funding opportunities with information about local support that is available online and free to access.
- The council is further developing its employer-supported funding support programme which encourages council staff to volunteer to use their transferable skills and experience to help smaller community organisations to produce better funding bids, with a specific focus on support to minority and marginalised communities.

- The People’s Commissioning arrangements in the council provide a vehicle to ensure that investment, including in the third sector, is coherent and coordinated.

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

### ***The council’s workforce profile***

In recent years in response to the financial challenges, the council has significantly reduced its workforce. Working closely with the trade unions and with the take-up of our voluntary leaver scheme we have managed to reduce staffing with relatively few compulsory redundancies. Reducing agency staff costs, overtime, sickness and introducing working from different locations has also brought costs down significantly. Reskilling and redeploying people whose roles are at risk is creating a more flexible and responsive workforce and avoiding the need for as many redundancies as initially estimated.

In-work poverty and low pay remain issues of national concern. In Leeds, work continues to tackle this, reflecting the commitments in the Low Pay Charter adopted by Council in April 2015.

- In April 2019 the council introduced the new National Joint Council (NJC) pay spine which had a minimum rate of £9.00 for new starter. All existing staff who transferred to the new pay spine received £9.18 or more which exceeds the Living Wage Foundation minimum.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the council’s minimum hour rate will increase to £9.30 which will mirror the Living Wage Foundation’s recommended minimum rate of pay. The changes will have a positive impact on in-work poverty, particularly for women, those under 25 and part-time workers. The council remains committed to annually reviewing pay in the overall context of the budget strategy. Increases are considered in terms of affordability, impact on pay structures and national pay settlements.

As at November 2019 there were 15,049 people employed in the council (excluding schools and casual staff). The workforce profile of all employees is shown below.

<b>Profile area</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% of overall headcount</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male (including Trans)	5,914	39%
Female (including Trans)	9,135	61%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Age / years</b>		
16 – 25	1,076	7%
26 – 40	4350	29%
41 – 54	5652	37%
55 – 64	3588	24%
Over 65	383	3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>

Profile area	Headcount	% of overall headcount
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
BAME	2,242	15%
Non BAME	11,282	75%
Prefer not to say	25	<1%
Not declared	1,500	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Disability</b>		
Disabled	917	6%
Not disabled	12,508	83%
Prefer not to say	83	1%
Not declared	1,541	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Carer</b>		
Carer	1,455	10%
Not a carer	7,785	52%
Prefer not to say	108	<1%
Not declared	5,701	38%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
Heterosexual	8,672	58%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual +	460	3%
Prefer not to say	136	1%
Not declared	5,781	38%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Religion or belief</b>		
Religion stated	9,942	66%
Prefer not to say	118	1%
Not declared	4,989	33%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Additional gender details</b>		
Same as assigned at birth	2,475	16%
Not same as assigned at birth	45	<1%
Not declared	12,529	83%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,049</i>	<i>100%</i>

To date the number of people leaving through turnover and the voluntary early retirement and severance scheme is not adversely affecting the workforce equality profile. We are working hard to encourage staff that have not specified/prefer not to

say to update their equality information so we have a more accurate picture of our workforce; though long-term in nature, this work is deemed high priority.

The council promotes equality and diversity and is committed to creating a representative organisation with an inclusive culture. A refreshed People Strategy 2020-25, a key addition to the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025, keeps inclusion and wellbeing at the centre of our plans and we continue to use our annual staff survey to gain valuable feedback that helps us improve the overall experience at work for our employees.

The council has accreditation and recognition in the following areas:

- We achieved the Government's [Disability Confident Leader Status](#) in 2019
- We are a [Stonewall Top 100 Employer](#).
- We have held Mindful Employer Status since 2011.

Due regard to equality continues to be given to all key and major decisions which may impact on the workforce.

### *Apprentices*

In order to develop the current and future workforce, the apprenticeship levy is being utilised to develop a wide range of staff. We have seen a significant increase in apprenticeship numbers since the levy was first introduced.

As at November 2019 figures now stand at 661 apprentices (a 301% increase over 3 years). These are a mix of new recruits and conversions of current employees onto apprenticeship training. We now have apprentices training in over 70 different standards across all Levels 2 to 7.

We continue to engage communities and underrepresented groups within areas of deprivation and diversity across the city in order to widen participation and encourage inclusiveness and accessibility for all.

For example, we work with 6 target high schools across the city to encourage and build awareness to school age students and their parents, with a specific focus on public sector and council apprenticeships. Work includes a selection of workshops that cover employment skills and awareness raising.

In addition to this, work has been carried out within community hubs to raise awareness with hub staff of apprenticeships and particularly council opportunities, to assist in their advisory capacity to communities.

Recent analysis of diversity data indicates the number of BAME apprentices is at 16% for the council, which compares favourably to BAME apprenticeship starts across the city as a whole (11.7%).

48% of new Leeds City Council apprentices are from the top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

The Apprenticeship team have recently joined the National Apprenticeship Ambassador network, and as such can draw on best practice from across public, private sector, large employers and SMEs. The team is also looking into joining the National Apprenticeship Diversity Champions network in 2020.

## **Equality Impacts and Improvement Work**

The council has developed and agreed the Equality Improvement Priorities 2018–2022. These ensure that the authority meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and they complement the ‘Best City’ ambition set out in the Best Council Plan for Leeds to have a Strong Economy and to be a Compassionate City.

Equality analysis continues to be used to set the council equality improvement priorities and has also been used to inform, and is an integral part of, the Best Council Plan and Budget proposals. The Equality Improvement Priorities recognise that there are currently different outcomes and experiences for different groups and communities, highlighting the challenges the city will have to address in order to tackle inequalities and help people out of poverty. They are based on evidence of disproportionate outcomes, which we are seeking to challenge and change.

The council’s Equality Improvement Priorities still take into account the protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010. We continue to recognise poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. We have, therefore, included priorities that specifically address poverty as we recognise that a number of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.

There is not an equality priority for every protected characteristic but all characteristics are taken into account. We are committed to equality for all our citizens and believe that improving a service for one community will have a positive impact for all communities. We will continue our work across all the protected characteristics, whether or not there are specific equality improvement priorities which are explicitly focussing on them. We will consider all communities when we give due regard to equality at both strategic and operational activities.

Progress against the equality improvement priorities is reported annually. Full details of this improvement work can be found in the Annual Equality Progress Report 2018 - 2019, which can be accessed [here](#).

Current priorities include for example:

- Ensure people in Leeds can lead safer, healthier and happier lives and are free from the risks, threats and harms associated with domestic violence and abuse;
- Prevent and reduce levels of hate incidents by ensuring victims, witnesses and third parties of hate incidents are supported and offenders are brought to justice;
- Improve inclusion and diversity across Active Leeds Services;
- Increase digital inclusion, particularly for those in poverty to provide greater access to jobs, skills and learning;
- Reduce the gaps in learning outcomes for vulnerable learners;
- Improve equality outcomes across the six priority neighbourhoods with a focus on addressing inequality and poverty;
- Improve access to social care services for LGBT+ people, through training, quality assurance and redesign of policies and processes;
- Improving the walkability and accessibility of Leeds City Centre by developing and expanding a user friendly wayfinding system.
- Ensuring fair and equal access to taxi and private hire services for disabled people;
- Help people out of financial hardship; tackling the financial challenges of poverty, deprivation and inequality; and

- Develop a skilled and diverse council workforce.

The 2019-2020 Annual Equality Progress Report will be available during the summer of 2020.

## **Consultation and engagement**

The financial strategy and budget proposals have been driven by the Best Council Plan ambitions and priorities. These have been shaped through past and ongoing consultations and stakeholder engagement, including significant consultations on Climate.

The Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and Budget 2020/21 proposals have been developed through consultation with a range of stakeholders, notably with the Executive Board, all Scrutiny Boards, the council's Corporate Leadership Team and other senior officers. They also draw on insights from the council's 2019 staff survey and priorities set out in existing council and partnership plans and strategies which have themselves been subject to extensive consultation and engagement. Summaries of discussions with all Scrutiny Boards are provided as appendices to the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025 and Budget 2020/21 reports for consideration by the council's Executive Board and Full Council in February 2020.

Public consultation on the council's Initial Budget Proposals for 2020/21 took place between 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Though focused on the Budget, the survey presented findings from the previous year's consultation exercise and explored whether the public's views and perceptions of the council's priorities had changed in that time. As such, the results of that consultation exercise are relevant to the proposals to update the Best Council Plan.

The consultation was carried out through an online survey that was advertised on the council's website and social media sites, via email to partner organisations, Equality Hub members and the Citizens' Panel, and promoted to staff. Postal-only Citizens' Panel members received a letter explaining that paper versions of the survey had been withdrawn due to timings linked to the general election in December and were advised how to complete the survey online.

A total of 1,537 surveys were completed, making the results statistically robust, by respondents from a range of different demographic groups, broadly representative of the Leeds population. A summary of the public consultation results is included as part of the covering reports for the Best Council Plan 2020-2025 and Budget 2020/21 to February's Executive Board and Full Council, with the results in full appended to the Budget paper.

## **Summary and Next Steps**

This is a high-level strategic analysis and equality impact assessment of the proposed Best Council Plan, Budget and Council Tax. It has not identified any specific gaps in the equality and diversity information used to carry it out.

The proposed Best Council Plan 2020-2025 and Budget 2020/21 recognise the challenges that the city and the council are facing: reduced funding, increased demands on public services and inequalities impacting upon people's educational attainment, health and employment. Having a clear, strategic vision centred firmly on tackling poverty and inequalities with a budget and wider financial strategy that supports this will help tackle these challenges.

The Best Council Plan and supporting Budget are aimed at tackling inequalities through a range of activity and interventions. This requires an understanding of the potential negative impacts on communities and protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 and action identified to mitigate against these. The revenue budget will impact on all communities and, as previously stated, those groups identified as being at the greatest potential risk of negative impact include:

- Disabled people – including all impairment groups;
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities;
- People from new and emerging communities;
- Women;
- Older and younger people; and
- Low socio-economic groups (within this group, there is over-representation by disabled people and BME communities).

Other considerations also consider a range of factors including:

- Stakeholder status - for example, whether one is a service user, employee or elected member; and
- Potential barriers - for example, the built environment, location, stereotypes and assumptions, timing etc.

Equality impact assessments will continue to be carried out on specific proposals in relation to implementing the Best Council Plan and Budget during 2020/21 and beyond through the council's decision-making processes.