

Best City Ambition – initial proposals

Date: 15 December 2021

Report of: Director of Resources

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city and council ambitions

- This report asks Executive Board to endorse the initial proposals for the Leeds Best City Ambition and agree to release these for public consultation. The report also asks Executive Board to refer the proposals to Scrutiny, as required by the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- In October 2021 Executive Board agreed in principle to replace the Best Council Plan with a Best City Ambition, better reflecting the important role partnership working across Leeds has in achieving the city's shared goals – and harnessing the Team Leeds approach which has come to the fore even more strongly throughout the pandemic.
- The Ambition will set out the strategic intent shared between the council and its partners in a positive and distinctive way, clearly articulating the difference we are seeking to make to improve the lives of people in Leeds. The background to this decision including the detailed rationale for the change are outlined in the board paper [available here](#).
- This report outlines the structure of the initial Best City Ambition proposals, highlights the areas where further development work is required and how the public consultation will inform this work, and sets out the next steps. The draft proposals are attached in full as Appendix 1.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) Consider the Best City Ambition initial proposals and approve commencement of public consultation.
- b) Refer the Best City Ambition initial proposals to Scrutiny for their consideration.
- c) Note the Director of Resources will be responsible for production of the final Best City Ambition proposals, scheduled to be received by the Board in February 2022.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Best City Ambition initial proposals take forward Executive Board's resolution to adopt a more partnership focused approach to outlining Leeds's overarching strategic intent, being clearer about the role that all partners and local communities can play.
- 2 Executive Board has agreed the time is right for the city to move in this direction, recognising the unique context in which we are currently operating – emerging and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and associated economic downturn, embracing the strong joint work and coming together at both a city wide level between organisations and at a community level as people have built on strengths supporting one another, and responding to a changing public service landscape with West Yorkshire devolution and further NHS reform underway. From the engagement undertaken to date, partners have welcomed this intention and direction of travel.
- 3 The Best City Ambition aims to add value to the work the council and partners are doing in the city, being rooted in activity on the ground and helping to bring agendas together, maximise the impact of limited resources by aligning work between partners, and building momentum around a set of shared priorities. It will also provide a platform to better reflect the importance of place in the city's strategic ambitions, working with elected members and local communities to consider what broader city-wide goals mean for their area and how everyone can use this to shape and contribute to local priorities or investments in work that will continue over the coming months and years.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 4 The detailed arguments for adopting a Best City Ambition were outlined and agreed by Executive Board in October 2021 – the paper setting out those details is [available here](#).
- 5 The initial proposals attached at Appendix 1 are based around the three pillars of Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon. This framework, which has grown over recent years and enjoys strong support from city partners, has been developed further through these proposals and now sits at the heart of the overall Ambition, alongside Leeds's longstanding commitment to Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities which remains central.
- 6 The Best City Ambition, while accounting for what is important across all three pillars, is seeking primarily to target the 'sweet spot' where the three come together, recognising the strong inter-dependencies between them as a means for supporting joint and partnership working across city priorities. In this, it also highlights how working across the three pillars is 'everyone's business', moving beyond more traditional boundaries to fully embrace the concept of wider determinants and embed deeper connections between our key priorities.
- 7 The proposals also re-imagine the 'breakthrough' spirit the council has sought to galvanise previously, taking this distinctive Leeds approach and reshaping it for a new decade, giving sharp focus to the most pressing priority issues. The consultation draft is structured as follows:
 - **Best City Ambition:** providing a summary of the key components of the ambition for each of the three pillars for the period up to 2030. Each pillar has been expanded and developed to include a series of priority areas, explaining more clearly where partners' shared endeavours will focus.
 - **How we will work together:** setting out some key principles for joint working in developing, delivering and reviewing the Best City Ambition.

- **Team Leeds Accelerators:** building on the spirit of partnership shown throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the accelerators will bring together action-focused teams from across the city to quickly make tangible progress on key challenges and opportunities where responsibility is shared.
 - **The Big Challenges facing Leeds:** drawn from the early engagement and discussion, and from recent research and analysis including the 2021 Joint Strategic Assessment.
 - **Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth, Zero Carbon:** more detail against each pillar and focusing on the issues comment to all three, including the socio-economic and environmental context, how we intend to progress, what our goals are, and what we can achieve with the right support and joint work with Government.
 - **Team Leeds in Action:** highlighting the key partnerships crucial to delivering our ambition, the role of citizens, and our approach to tracking/monitoring/assessing progress.
- 8 As noted in the list above, the Best City Ambition will include a small number of propositions to Government, recognising that not all the levers required to fully realise our ambition are within the city's control. These elements are included partly as a response to several calls from Government and the Prime Minister for places to consider ideas themselves and make proposals to Government. As such, what is included will not simply be 'asks', but rather positive, practical proposals where Leeds and national Government could come together to test ideas or inform policy and statutory progress.
- 9 The consultation draft is an interim step towards production of the Best City Ambition, in recognition that for the final document to be genuinely city-focused, it needs to be shaped and owned by a wider group of people and organisations. As such, there remain gaps and areas for further development as next steps over the coming months. One key element of these next steps will be expanding on the role of and relationship with local communities as part of this Ambition. We will consider ways in which, working with elected members and community committees, the overall city-wide ambitions can be translated into more locally focused goals / priorities which reflect the unique character, strengths and challenges of different parts of Leeds.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 10 Extensive engagement has taken place to inform development of the Best City Ambition so far. A full list of those people, groups, organisations, fora and committees engaged to date is included as part of Appendix 2, along with a short account of the key messages emerging from that engagement which have informed the initial proposals and will also inform delivery. The dialogue with partners and the public from across the city will continue through the formal public consultation detailed below, and beyond – as set out in Appendix 1, this is the start of a conversation, not the end.
- 11 This paper asks Executive Board to release the consultation draft for public consultation as required by the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules as part of the council's constitution. Formal consultation will be delivered primarily online, although the wider programme of face-to-face engagement with partners, community forums and other stakeholders will continue alongside. Two slightly different online surveys will be promoted, one offering the opportunity to comment on all aspects of Appendix 1, and a shorter easy-read survey covering only the main parts of the Ambition which can be completed in 10-15 minutes. Both options will be open to everyone, but we anticipate the former will more suit organisational responses from partners, and the latter may be more suitable for most members of the public.
- 12 As outlined above, it is important the Best City Ambition remains rooted in activity on the ground and supports delivery of real progress in the city. For the council's part, that means alignment is required between the ambition and goals outlined and the financial and wider resources needed

to deliver. The Best City Ambition public consultation will be delivered in parallel to the 2022/23 budget consultation therefore, helping residents and respondents to consider these two important matters together. Efforts will be made to cross reference and signpost between the two consultations.

- 13 In addition to testing the direction of travel and current draft in general terms, the consultation also has some specific objectives to help move the Ambition forward. These include:
- To gather a stronger account of the contributions city partners and local communities are already making against the three pillars of the ambition.
 - To understand how partners and wider stakeholders feel they can contribute further, both in general terms and on any specific commitments they wish to make.
 - To listen to the public, who may not yet have had the opportunity to contribute to this work, and ensure the Best City Ambition is reflective of the wider public's aspirations for their city.
- 14 The October Executive Board report linked above noted the intention to use the 2021 State of the City meeting as a further opportunity to engage on the Best City Ambition. Unfortunately, the decision has been taken to cancel State of the City given the current Covid-19 context and particularly while we learn about the impact of the new Omicron variant. Planned attendees to that event will be invited to contribute further to the development of the ambition through other channels.

What are the resource implications?

- 15 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.
- 16 Resource allocation in support of the council's own efforts to pursue the priorities set out in the Best City Ambition, and other supporting strategies and plans, will be aligned through the medium term financial strategy and annual budget – with proposals for next year also appearing on the Executive Board agenda entitled "Proposed Budget for 2022/23 and Provisional Budgets for 2023/24 and 2024/25".

What are the legal implications?

- 17 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 the council has determined that the Best City Ambition, like the Best Council Plan previously, is of such significance that it should be included in the Budget and Policy Framework (B&PF) and be subject to adoption by Full Council. On 10 November 2021 Full Council resolved to approve the necessary constitutional amendments to enable this.
- 18 The Best City Ambition is therefore being prepared in accordance with the B&PF Procedure Rules, which includes referral of the draft Best City Ambition to Scrutiny. In light of the above this report is not eligible for Call In in line with Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2.
- 19 An Equality Impact Screening will be carried out for the Best City Ambition and will be reported with the final proposals in February 2022.

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

- 20 The adoption of the Best City Ambition will require a review of some key risk and performance information and processes which are currently aligned to the Best Council Plan and are reported using that as a framework. Suitable alternative reporting arrangements and frameworks will need to be established to ensure the continued smooth provision of management information and

performance reports. This work is already under consideration and will continue alongside production and adoption of the Best City Ambition.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 21 The Best City Ambition is focused around the council's three pillars, but goes further than before in explaining what contributes to them, how they are inter-related, and what the council's and city's priorities will be to realise progress against them. Once adopted it will provide both a more detailed and also a clearer framework through which the three pillars can be understood.
- 22 As a result of work to produce the Best City Ambition, some of the language around the three pillars may be revised to better reflect the city's direction of travel. Any changes will be contained within the final proposals, informed by further consultation and engagement.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 23 Executive Board has previously noted the alternative option being to maintain the current Best Council Plan but discounted that option for reasons outlined in the October board report linked above.

How will success be measured?

- 24 The Best City Ambition will contain a range of high level, aspirational and ambitious goals for Leeds, aligned to the three pillars of health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon, and all contributing to efforts to tackle poverty and reduce inequality. Measuring and monitoring progress is crucial in realising the ambition, and a range of delivery plans and performance indicators are in place in supporting strategies and plans, many of which are already rooted in partnership.
- 25 To strengthen how we assess progress against the Best City Ambition, the council has worked with the Social Progress Imperative to develop a Social Progress Index (SPI) for Leeds. The SPI is built around three themes – Basic Human Needs; Foundations of Wellbeing; and Opportunity – and is a “comprehensive measure of real quality of life, independent of economic indicators”. It can be used as a practical tool that will help us to identify and implement policies and programmes that will driver faster social progress and enable us to monitor the impact of our interventions in the future. The SPI will be a key part of our analysis in the future, enabling us to better understand the different strengths and challenges of the city's communities.
- 26 Through the public consultation outlined in paragraphs 8-10, further consideration will be given to any additional ways measuring accountability for and progress towards the goals set out in the Best City Ambition could be strengthened.

What is the timetable for implementation?

- 27 Should Executive Board agree the recommendations in this report, public consultation will commence in December 2021 and close in mid-January 2022. It is envisaged Scrutiny will consider the proposals at meetings scheduled in January 2022. The final proposals are scheduled to be received by Executive Board in February 2022, before being referred to Full Council later that same month.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Leeds 2030: Shaping our Best City Ambition – Consultation Draft

Appendix 2: Overview of consultation to date

Background papers

None.