

Leeds Best City Ambition

Date: 9 February 2022

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

- In December 2021 Executive Board considered and endorsed the initial proposals for the Leeds Best City Ambition. The Ambition is centred on the city's mission to tackle poverty and inequality, driven by a focus on our three pillars of health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon. This decision followed agreement in principle in October 2021 to replace the Best Council Plan to better reflect the importance of partnership working – our Team Leeds approach – in achieving the city's shared goals. The background to these decisions and to the content of this report is available [here \(Dec '21\)](#) and [here \(Oct '21\)](#) respectively.
- This report asks Executive Board to endorse the final proposals for the Best City Ambition and refer these to Council for consideration and adoption. The Ambition has been updated to reflect feedback received following public and stakeholder consultation and consideration by all five of the council's scrutiny boards, in addition to earlier engagement with all ten community committees. The report also highlights the next phase for this work, recognising that the agreement of the Ambition document is the first stage of a refreshed approach being taken which will continue to develop over the coming months, with ongoing input from partners, citizens and communities.
- The report focuses on highlighting the areas of change from the previous version of the Ambition which Executive Board considered, as well as outlining the next steps. A more detailed summary of the consultation responses is included as Appendix 2.

Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- a) Note the Best City Ambition proposals attached as Appendix 1 and give regard to the composite Scrutiny response attached as Appendix 4.
- b) Note that further development and graphic design work, which may include amendments to wording, will take place prior to publication of the Best City Ambition around 1 April 2022.
- c) Recommend that Council adopts the Best City Ambition.
- d) Note the Director of Resources will be responsible for the next steps outlined in paragraphs 10 to 18, and for the new organisational strategy outlined in paragraph 17 which will be received by Executive Board later this year.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The proposals contained in this report take forward Executive Board's resolution to develop a Best City Ambition rooted in partnership between the council, partner organisations and local communities. The Ambition aims to build upon the strengths that have come to the fore throughout Leeds' response to the covid-19 pandemic, capturing the spirit of genuine partnership between organisations to deliver for local people, and the vital contribution that everyone living or working here can make to our shared efforts to improve the lives of people from all areas of the city.
- 2 The Best City Ambition offers the opportunity to bring together in one place the key priorities we have for the city – articulated here as our three pillars of health and wellbeing, inclusive growth and zero carbon. It is geared towards our longstanding mission to tackle poverty and inequality. Each of these pillars is underpinned by a range of important work to make Leeds the best it can be, the best place to live, work and visit, the best city in the UK, and crucially to deliver meaningful improvements in quality of life so everyone in Leeds can thrive. In bringing the pillars together, the Ambition highlights how progress against each is equally dependent on the other two, with many of our greatest challenges and opportunities sitting at the intersection between the three.
- 3 The Best City Ambition will provide a platform to review the council's wider strategic framework and the city's partnership infrastructure, maximising opportunities to align activity, reduce duplication and strengthen our shared focus on a set of cross-cutting key priorities in a way that helps to ensure progress is being made. Importantly, the Ambition also outlines the limits of Leeds' ability to directly affect change, noting that while there is much in the city's control some of the most aspirational aspects of our city ambition will require us to influence greater support, resources and new approaches from Government and other stakeholders.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 4 Adopting the Best City Ambition will provide the council and city with a refreshed strategic intent shared amongst partners. It updates and refines some long-standing ambitions; brings into sharper focus the current priorities gathered through consultation and engagement, together with analysis from the 2021 Joint Strategic Assessment; and better connects priorities which are co-dependent to achieving the outcomes we want to see. The Ambition will provide a platform and context for more detailed plans, projects and programmes to be developed. It will also underpin influencing activity and bids for funding by offering a coherent narrative about the city's overall aims and direction. The Ambition offers a bold statement of what Leeds stands for and how we intend to work in partnership to make Leeds the best it can be.
- 5 The full draft Ambition is attached as Appendix 1. It paints a picture of where we want Leeds to be in the future and highlighting what people who live here have told us is important to them. Many of the things it includes are challenging to achieve and will take time, sustained effort and resources – but it is grounded in what is possible with some of the meaningful next steps outlined in the second half of the document. The Ambition will be kept up to date with 12 month 'light-touch' reviews to update on progress of current work and add any new or further work underway. A fuller review of the Ambition will be undertaken on a three-yearly rolling programme using the Joint Strategic Assessment as context – the next of which is due in 2024.
- 6 A joint strategic equality impact assessment (EIA) of the proposed Best City Ambition and Budget 2022/23 has been carried out and this is attached at Appendix 3. Additional EIAs relating to any work emerging as a result of the Ambition will be carried out as needed, including for supporting plans and strategies.

Updates following consultation feedback and Scrutiny considerations

- 7 As agreed by Executive Board in December 2021 the draft Best City Ambition was subject to public consultation between 16 December 2021 and 13 January 2022. The consultation was delivered through a series of short online surveys which broke the Ambition down in thematic sections and overall 285 survey responses were completed by 197 people. In addition, we received full written submissions via email from a small number of partner organisations. This consultation response is in addition to the wide range of face-to-face and online engagement undertaken to inform the initial proposals. More details including an analysis of the consultation responses is included as Appendix 2.
- 8 Throughout January all five council scrutiny boards have also considered the initial proposals and their composite response to Executive Board is attached as Appendix 4. The comments from Scrutiny have informed the drafting of the version of the Best City Ambition attached as Appendix 1. Scrutiny board members made a range of comments and contributions which have all been considered, but the composite response highlights found key areas:
 - a) **The importance of adopting 'plain English'** language where possible to improve the accessibility of the document. Effort has been made to address this point throughout the document.
 - b) **Embedding the social model of disability** within the Ambition. In response to Scrutiny a new section has been added, placed under the health and wellbeing pillar, to address this and wider issues of equality for disabled people.
 - c) **Reflecting the ambition to become a Marmot City**. This features strongly in the Team Leeds approach – highlighting the city's commitment to addressing health inequalities and putting the wider determinants of health at the centre of our interventions. Later in the document stronger attempts have been made to explain what being a Marmot City means, in response to wider consultation feedback that for many people this was a new term which was not well-understood.
 - d) The need for an **updated approach to performance monitoring** to reflect the Best City Ambition. As covered in paragraphs 31 to 34 below, this will be developed over the course of 2022.
- 9 Following the feedback noted above, the draft Best City Ambition has been updated and amended. The bullet points below briefly summarise the key changes made, albeit this list is not exhaustive, and many more small amendments have also been made:
 - **Adjusted language** – the need to make the language used more plain English and reduce jargon or assumed knowledge has been consistent feedback, especially from elected members through Scrutiny and in a small number of the public responses. Adjustments with this in mind have been made throughout the document, including in some prominent ways such as the renaming of 'Team Leeds Accelerators' to 'Breakthrough Priorities', while balancing with the need to make the document suitable for several different audiences.
 - **Team Leeds** – while many people understood the idea behind the prominence of Team Leeds within the Ambition, others were not clear what was meant. A clearer explanation of what Team Leeds is and the mindset it tries to convey is now included towards the front of the document.
 - **Embedding the Ambition locally** – a lot of feedback related in some way to this point about how the Ambition will be meaningful at a local level, how it will affect decisions that are taken or what is prioritised in different parts of the city. References to this have been strengthened in the document, and the next steps below provide more detail about how we will respond to these points.

- **Housing** – in terms of policy issues, Housing was the one most frequently raised as not being strong enough in the Ambition – both through the online surveys and face-to-face engagement. Issues around housing quality and links to health and wellbeing have been added or strengthened throughout, and Housing has been added as a breakthrough priority.
- **Crime and Community Safety** – recognition of the impacts of crime within communities and the partnership-based responses to safeguarding needed have been strengthened in the document, in particular in response to discussions held directly with children and young people who described the impact crime in their community is having, and the need to raise the profile of social care to promote parity of esteem with the health service.
- **Role of the citizen** – feedback has highlighted opportunities to be bolder about how citizens are at the foundation of this Ambition, and how greater mutual respect between citizens and public authorities should be an objective. Therefore, we have expanded on existing points around how we will work together, the importance of co-design and co-creation, and more broadly the importance of achieving a power shift to communities as we go forward.
- **'Friendly' agendas** – feedback was received about the importance of maintaining the profile of our ambition for Leeds to be a 'Child Friendly' and an 'Age Friendly' city within the three pillar approach. Stronger and clearer cross-referencing to those supporting strategies / ambition has therefore been added.
- **Structure** – we have sought to make the structure of the Ambition clearer by separating the front end – the headline ambitions and principles about how we will work – from the back end which is more flexible and covers our current focus which is likely to change or be added to more frequently. The 'How' section covering the Team Leeds principles has also move to the front to raise its profile as a crucial element in reaching these goals.

Next steps

- 10 Agreement of this version of the Best City Ambition document is the next significant step in progressing a series of actions to strengthen the shared partnership-based approach we want to take in Leeds. There are already a series of next steps which have been developed, in part informed by the discussions that have taken place during the engagement process to date.
- 11 The key next steps are outlined in brief below.

Team Leeds Breakthrough Priorities

- 12 The Ambition document provides an initial set of four breakthrough priorities which have emerged from the engagement. These each focus on a subject which presents either a longstanding and entrenched challenge or a major opportunity for Leeds. Teams drawn from across organisations and communities will be brought together, tapping into the collective skills, knowledge, and innovation to deliver progress against a clear objective or outcome, building on current progress being made.
- 13 Breakthrough teams will work in a different, more connected way which embraces the widest determinants of the outcomes we see, with permission to try new things, be bold, experimental and innovative. The projects will initially be supported from within existing resources. Next steps involve detailed refinement of the scope of the projects and building the teams who will contribute.

14 The four initial projects proposed are:

- **Green Jobs** – working with businesses and educators, focusing on pathways through education and training to employment in low carbon jobs.
- **Learning Outcomes** – working with early years providers, schools, colleges and universities to improve outcomes and closing the attainment gap particularly for disadvantaged children and young people.
- **Mental Health** – working with communities and health partners, especially in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.
- **Housing** – focusing not only on affordability and energy efficiency, but also the vital role housing plays in the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Strategy and Partnerships Reviews

15 Discussions have identified an opportunity afforded by the Ambition to consolidate existing city strategies and action plans, which are numerous and often overlapping, to provide a clearer overall framework built around the three pillars of the Ambition. It is proposed that a review is undertaken with the aim of establishing a more streamlined structure, underpinned by effective partnership arrangements, based on three groups of supporting strategies:

a) **Primary group** – mission-based strategies

These would be the Best City Ambition alongside strategies for each of the three pillars – inclusive growth, health and wellbeing and zero carbon.

b) **Second group** – thematic strategies detailing the priorities to achieve our missions

A mixture of key thematic and statutory strategies providing good coverage of work ongoing in Leeds. Specifics to be developed through the review, but likely to include for example the new Transport Strategy and statutory Safer Leeds Strategy, as well as Age Friendly and Child Friendly strategies.

c) **Third group** – action and delivery plans shaping day-to-day implementation activity

A broad set of practically focused action plans aligned to the strategies in a) and b), alongside those statutory strategies which are more targeted and specific in their nature.

16 The purpose of the review would be to streamline ‘the line of sight’ from the Best City Ambition, through prioritisation, to implementation, with the added benefit of reducing staffing resource and capacity costs of overseeing numerous strategies – enabling resources to be more focused on a smaller number making a bigger difference. It will also be important to engage with partners to consider their contribution to city strategies, and indeed their own organisational plans, where relevant in light of the Ambition

17 Alongside this review work will be undertaken to develop a new organisational plan covering people, finance, digital, estates etc. This will fill the space previously occupied by the ‘best council’ part of the Best Council Plan which is not reflected in the Best City Ambition – including the council’s drive to be an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation with a values-led approach. This will be a short and simple plan to avoid duplication or confusion but will help to guide the role of staff in meeting the Best City Ambition and the council’s own organisational objectives.

Local versions of the Best City Ambition

18 As part of ensuring the Best City Ambition is meaningful at a community level, a second phase of work will commence following adoption of the Ambition through which community committees will be supported to translate the city-wide ambitions into meaningful priorities for their area. Effort

will be made to ensure this is connected to the ongoing Working with Neighbourhoods and Communities Review and the ongoing Locality Working Review, including development of local area plans and connecting to the work being done by Local Care Partnerships.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 19 As outlined in paragraph 7 the Best City Ambition initial proposals have been subject to stakeholder and public consultation and an analysis of the responses is included as Appendix 2. Paragraph 9 highlights the most significant updates made to the Ambition as a result of the consultation undertaken. The online consultation ran over a relatively short period during December and January, on the same timetable as the budget consultation, given the aim to present the Ambition to council in February. While this element of the consultation ran for around four weeks, the Ambition attached at Appendix 1 has also been informed by more extensive, mainly face-to-face engagement with elected members, partners and citizens over autumn 2021. Details of these elements of the consultation and engagement were contained in the December 2021 Executive Board report.
- 20 Elected members have been engaged in this work throughout – including all 99 members through their community committee in autumn/winter 2021, and scrutiny board members in January 2021. Paragraph 8 highlights the key areas highlighted by Scrutiny and the boards' composite submission to Executive Board is attached as Appendix 4.
- 21 There will be further informal engagement – and co-production – with citizens and communities as part of the next steps and the development of local area plans as highlighted above. Partner engagement will continue on an ongoing basis through established partnership arrangements, and as part of more targeted work such as the ongoing Neighbourhoods and Communities Review.

What are the resource implications?

- 22 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. The further work outlined above will be undertaken within current resources.
- 23 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 "2022/23 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Report".

What are the legal implications?

- 24 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 facilitate this.
- 25 The Best City Ambition has therefore been prepared in accordance with the B&PF Procedure Rules, including referral of the initial proposals to Scrutiny, with those considerations being made in January 2022 and summarised in Appendix 4. 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.
- 26 As noted in paragraph 6 an EIA has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3.

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

- 27 There are no anticipated risk management implications arising from this report.

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

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 28 The Best City Ambition further develops the council's three key pillars as a framework – including developing revised 'mission statements' for each and highlighting key areas of focus for Team Leeds under each pillar. This work will be built upon further in the forthcoming refreshes of the Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth strategies. The connections between the three pillars are at the heart of the Ambition, as outlined earlier in this report.
- 29 As a result of the Ambition, the name of the third pillar will become "Zero Carbon" moving forward, highlighting the city's aspiration for this agenda, with the primary current goal remaining the council's 2030 net zero target. As highlighted in next steps above, the Ambition will underpin a wider review of council strategies and plans, putting the three pillars at the heart of a revised strategic framework.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 30 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?

- 31 The Best City Ambition and associated reviews outlined in next steps above provide an opportunity to refresh the council's approach to assessing progress against its goals. A refreshed performance framework will be developed to enable this, reviewing and amending the council's suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) to align with the Ambition. Given the more explicit city-focused nature of the Best City Ambition, a key part of the new broader framework will be the Social Progress Index (SPI).
- 32 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, enable us to monitor the impact of interventions made by the council and its partners, and help us to better understand the different strengths and challenges of Leeds' diverse communities.
- 33 Work to develop the new performance structure is at a very early scoping stage, but might have three elements:
- Strategic** – assessment of overall progress towards the Best City Ambition and how effectively the council is fulfilling its strategic leadership role.
 - Operational** – performance assessment(s) of the operational outputs and outcomes of council activity – direct and commissioned.
 - Organisational** – assessment against the council's organisational goals – i.e. finance, hr, estates, LCC carbon footprint etc.
- 34 Further detailed work is needed to develop the potential approach above, including reviewing appropriate frequency of reporting. This will all be subject to agreement with elected members.

What is the timetable for implementation?

- 35 If Executive Board agrees the recommendations in this report then the Best City Ambition will be considered by Council on 23 February.
- 36 Assuming Council approves adoption of the Ambition, the next steps outlined in paragraph 10 onwards will commence immediately and aim to conclude in the summer. It is proposed that 2022 will be a transitional year in which we shift from the existing performance and reporting frameworks and work to establish a revised approach.
- 37 More generally the Ambition will be an ongoing piece of work which will be regularly reviewed as mentioned in paragraph 5.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Leeds Best City Ambition

Appendix 2: Summary of consultation responses

Appendix 3: Equality impact assessment

Appendix 4: Summary of scrutiny board consultation

Background papers

None.