



# **Best City Ambition Proposals**

## **Summary of Scrutiny Board consultation**

## Scrutiny Board Membership (2021/22):

61 of the 99 city councillors are members of a Scrutiny Board. The membership of the individual Scrutiny Boards can be viewed via the following links:

### [Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board](#)

Chair: Cllr Abigail Marshall-Katung

### [Children and Families Scrutiny Board](#)

Chair: Cllr Alan Lamb

### [Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board](#)

Chair: Cllr Barry Anderson

### [Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board](#)

Chair: Cllr Paul Truswell

### [Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board](#)

Chair: Cllr Andrew Scopes

## ***Vision for Scrutiny***

***“To promote democratic engagement through the provision of an influential scrutiny function, which is held in high regard by its many stakeholders, and which achieves measurable service improvements, adding value for the people of Leeds through a member led process of examination and review.”***

Further information about the work of the committees can be found here:

[Committee Structure: Scrutiny Board](#)

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For queries please contact:

**Angela Brogden**

 [Angela.Brogden@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Angela.Brogden@leeds.gov.uk)

 0113 37 8661

**Rebecca Atherton**

 [Becky.Atherton@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Becky.Atherton@leeds.gov.uk)

 0113 37 88642

**Robert Clayton**

 [Robert.Clayton@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Clayton@leeds.gov.uk)

 0113 37 88790

# Consultation Summary

## Key Findings & Recommendations

1	It is recommended that the strategy document adopts 'plain English' where possible to increase the accessibility of, and engagement with, the strategy.
2	It is recommended that the social model of disability is embedded within the strategy.
3	It is recommended that the document reflects the ambition to become a Marmot City.
4	Ensure that future performance monitoring by Scrutiny Boards is based upon a revised set of criteria that reflect the Best City Ambition.

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## Context

### Best City Ambition

- 1.1 In [October 2021 the Executive Board](#) agreed in principle to replace the Best Council Plan with an externally facing and partnership focused Best City Ambition.
- 1.2 Like the Best Council Plan, the Best City Ambition will be included in the Budget and Policy Framework in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.
- 1.3 Members resolved at the Council meeting on [10 November 2021](#) to approve the necessary constitutional amendments to enable adoption of the Best City Ambition and requested that final proposals be presented in February 2022.
- 1.4 In line with that timetable, initial proposals were considered by the Executive Board on [15 December 2021](#). At that meeting the Executive Board agreed to approve a period of public consultation and referred the proposals for consideration by Scrutiny in line with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework.
- 1.5 The comments and recommendations from the five Scrutiny Boards are summarised below for consideration by Executive Board.

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## 2. Scrutiny Consultation Process

- 2.1 All five scrutiny boards considered the Best City Ambition during their January cycle of meetings – links to the agendas, webcasts and minutes of those meetings are included in the chart below. The comments from Scrutiny Board members during those meetings are summarised below.



- 2.2 It is noted that the development of the Best City Ambition is an ongoing process that will feed into other key Council strategies as they are refreshed and reviewed. The Boards look forward to further opportunities to provide representations as the next steps are taken and the various work streams develop.

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## 3. Scrutiny Board Comments



### Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles

- 3.1 The Board acknowledged that the Best City Ambition will further develop the existing Leeds Three Pillars – Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon - and set out, at a high level, how the Council will work with partners to address the city’s key challenges.
- 3.2 It was also noted that once the Ambition has been agreed, future strategies and plans should reflect this direction and develop the detailed actions to be taken as a city to get there. The Ambition is to provide the framework to support those actions being better connected and joined up across organisations and within communities.
- 3.2 The timeliness of the Board’s consideration of the Best City Ambition had coincided with the Board’s consideration and consultation feedback on the draft constitution of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board linked to its ongoing work surrounding the development of the new Integrated Care System. It had also coincided with its consideration and support of the proposal for Leeds to become a Marmot City with regard to taking action to reduce health inequalities by focusing on the social determinants of health as set out in the most recent Marmot report, “Build Back Fairer” and for Leeds to initially focus on taking a Marmot approach to giving children the best start in life which would have lifelong and intergenerational benefits. Statistics show that a quarter of Leeds residents live in the most deprived 10% of areas in England. The Board had learned that improvements made in health inequalities in the city have stalled and that nationally, working aged people living in the 10% most deprived areas were four times more likely to die from Covid.
- 3.3 Linked to this, it was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Pillar of the Ambition does make reference to the need to respond to governance changes to the regional Integrated Care System, as well as being more closely align with the Marmot approach, with a view to becoming a Marmot city. However, in view of the timeframe for approving the Ambition, Members sought further assurance that the Ambition will be in close alignment with the strategic aims of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership, as well as reflecting the Marmot framework in reducing health inequalities. Another significant area that the Board has recently been consulted on includes the development of a vision for stroke services for the next five years, which will also align with the National Stroke Strategy and clinical service strategies produced as part of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care System. There was therefore a recognised need to ensure that there is a coherent direction of travel moving forward and in terms of achieving this,

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Members were advised that the Ambition will have an annual “light touch review” with a full review every three years, following on from and informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

- 3.4 The Board also acknowledged the key role for Leeds’ Health and Wellbeing Board in setting the health and wellbeing aims for the city and retaining an overview of the implementation of the Marmot framework in terms of becoming a Marmot City. There was also recognition of the role that Local Care Partnerships will play too.

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## Children and Families

- 3.5 The Board noted that the Best City Ambition is not intended to be another strategy or detailed delivery plan which duplicates what is in place elsewhere. Instead, it aims to provide a clear direction of travel and 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.
- 3.6 The Board was advised that the three pillars will be underpinned by existing priorities and commitments linked to the Child Friendly Leeds Ambition and the Children and Young People's Plan in terms of ensuring children in all areas of the city have the best start in life and enjoy a healthy, happy and friendly childhood. These will be further supported and delivered through existing strategies and plans, such as the refreshed 3 As Strategy and Leeds Child Poverty Strategy, both of which were recently considered and supported by the Scrutiny Board.
- 3.7 Reference was made to the Health and Wellbeing Pillar of the Ambition reflecting the proposal for Leeds to become a Marmot City, with a particular focus on taking a Marmot approach to giving children the best start in life. While acknowledging that the proposal had recently been considered by the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board, a commitment was given to also engage with the Children and Families Scrutiny Board on the proposal.
- 3.8 Members acknowledged that young people are now being educated more about the implications of climate change, with many feeling anxious and voicing their concern about the future of the environment. As such, the Board felt that the narrative surrounding the particular ambition around Zero Carbon should be strengthened and given more prominence in terms of reflecting the urgency of tackling climate change and Leeds working towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.9 Members also recommended that the Ambition references how, as a city, the issue of sexual harassment is being addressed, particularly with young people. Linked to this, the Board was pleased to note that the final version of the Ambition will include a greater focus around domestic violence and also broader community safety matters surrounding young people as this was also highlighted as a priority during the wider consultation process.
- 3.10 Members raised the issue of performance monitoring and welcomed the commitment to work with the Scrutiny Board around the development of a revised set of key performance indicators relevant to the Board's remit which will better reflect the strategic

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direction set out within the new Ambition.

- 3.11 Reflecting on its earlier Scrutiny inquiry around the Child Friendly Leeds Ambition, the Board acknowledged the importance of children and young people being able to express their views, feel heard and be actively involved in decisions that affect their lives. Members therefore sought assurance that the voice of young people will be captured as the Ambition continues to be developed, as well as part of the ongoing development of other key strategies and plans that underpin the Best City Ambition.
- 3.12 As with the Child Friendly City Ambition, Members also felt very strongly about ensuring there is cross-directorate and partnership working and ownership of the new Best City Ambition, as well as making further strides from being an ambition to be a child friendly city to making it a reality.

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## Environment, Housing & Communities

- 3.13 Members advocated the use of 'plain English' in presenting public documents and it was suggested that some aspects of the Best City Ambition report are not easily accessible for the general reader. Members noted that further explanation of some technical terms would be helpful, potentially within an appended glossary. The Board specifically requested clarity over what might constitute an "accelerator."
- 3.14 The Board discussed the level of consultation responses on the Best City Ambition and agreed that increased engagement with the public would add value to the proposal.
- 3.15 Reflecting on earlier comments members reiterated that the language in the document may be a barrier to engagement for some people.
- 3.16 The Board explored the evolution of the 'Best City' aspiration and considered how the delivery of that ambition would be measured.
- 3.17 The Board recommended that Scrutiny be engaged in ongoing performance monitoring in the next municipal year and are engaged in the process of identifying a set of revised key performance indicators that reflect the new strategic direction of the Council.
- 3.18 It was proposed that community committees may welcome similar performance data at a local level that allows them to understand progress against the aspirations of the Best City Ambition in their respective areas.
- 3.19 Members recommended that the document be revised to embed the social model of disability with explicit reference to accessibility and health outcomes for people with disabilities.
- 3.20 Members suggested it would be beneficial to also reflect the ambition to be a Marmot City in the final iteration of the document.
- 3.21 The Board considered how Leeds could learn more from the achievements and expertise of other cities in specific policy areas.
- 3.22 The Board recommended working directly with local people to better understand what being 'the best' city means to those living in Leeds.

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## Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth

- 3.23 Members acknowledged that the issues raised in the Best City Ambition are “very important and the challenges massive.” However, concerns were raised about the accessibility of the language in some sections of the report with members suggesting that terms such as “Team Leeds accelerators” were not always easy to understand.
- 3.24 The Board recommended that ‘plain English’ should be used wherever possible to encourage greater public engagement with the consultation.
- 3.25 While reflecting upon the ambitions set out in the document, members highlighted the way in which the Covid-19 pandemic exposed the impact of housing inequality on outcomes for different communities. Access to green space, areas for children to play and to learn, and space for individuals to work during lockdowns were all identified as factors that affected health, well-being, and educational outcomes. The Board highlighted the links to their ongoing work about how the planning process can help deliver the right sort of housing in the right areas to support strong communities.
- 3.26 The Board recommended that housing should be a priority within the programme of work linked to the Best City Ambition and it was agreed that community committees should be engaged in that work.
- 3.27 The Board discussed the challenge of ensuring measures designed to deliver certain ambitions do not inadvertently impact negatively on other aspects of the Best City Ambition. The Board noted that there are often tensions in establishing how best to prioritise and reconcile social, economic and environmental inequalities. It was agreed as important to have a balance and that equal status should be afforded as far as possible to each of these elements, rather than one of them - such as economic development - driving the process.
- 3.28 Members sought clarity about the practical ways in which ‘Team Accelerators’ would be established and the resource implications of those arrangements.
- 3.29 It was noted that ambitions for improved health outcomes would be directly affected by the capacity of the health service to deliver key services as the city emerges from the pandemic, including tackling a backlog of ‘non-covid’ related procedures. It was suggested, however, that examining this area of the report in detail would fall outside the Board’s remit.
- 3.30 It was recommended that the report be revised to embed the Council’s commitment to the social model of disability with explicit reference to accessibility and health outcomes

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for people with disabilities.

- 3.31 Members explored the definition of inclusive growth reflected in the document, noting the importance of co-ordinating targeted measures in priority neighbourhood alongside city-wide interventions and initiatives. Members queried the likelihood of government support being made available to support the delivery of some initiatives.
- 3.32 Members questioned whether the adoption of the Best City Ambition would be accompanied by a review of existing key performance indicators, so that future performance would be monitored in the context of the proposed new approach.

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## Strategy & Resources

- 3.33 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, like the other boards, acknowledged the importance of the Best City Ambition work and the importance of developing a strategy that can greatly contribute to the city achieving its ambitions in the medium-term.
- 3.34 The Board explored the response rate to the recently completed public consultation on the Best City Ambition. 280 response to the consultation were made and whilst members noted that the responses were generally supportive of the strategy and ambitions set out, they were keen to enhance the volume of responses and to look to increase responses for future consultations. Members noted the possibility of making the document more accessible linked to plain English and encouraged the use of other networks such as parish councils and other community networks, where they are in operation, as a means to enhance response rates and ensure that all areas of the city participate in the dialogue.
- 3.35 Accessibility of the consultation material was a key challenge along with which mechanisms are used to ensure people are aware of the consultation and want to respond. Key issues raised for consideration by decision makers were ease of completing the survey as often they can be too long and lead to residents starting but not completing consultations and consideration of using other mediums to share consultation details and increase accessibility, utilising platforms such as Facebook and also hard copy to coincide with other major mailouts that the Council issues such as information about waste collection.
- 3.36 Board members noted that the Council is not in control of all the levers that can deliver change and assist the city in delivering against three strategic pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health and Well Being and the Climate Emergency, most notably around funding. Therefore, members believed there was also an ask of Government in terms of funding to deliver transformational change in Leeds. Board members were keen to see the 'asks' of Government set out in either the Best City Ambition or in the other supporting plans and strategies that the Best City ambition will influence.
- 3.37 Members noted, and welcomed, the consultation with Community Committees in developing the Best City Ambition but were also keen for that local focus to continue with further discussion with community committees to establish the relationship between local neighbourhood and community ambitions and the Best City Ambition. A good example noted by the Board was the ongoing Locality Review and understanding the interface between the Locality Review and the Best City Ambition. Members welcomed

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the overriding influence that the Best City Ambition will have and the intention to ensure it influences other key strategies and plans when they are due to be reviewed.

- 3.39 The Social Progress Index and the use of economic indicators were challenged by Board members. Members were keen that economic indicators remain a feature of the city's approach, along with additional social indicators. Members were mindful of quality of information, data reliability and ensuring that comparison can take place based on reliable information. Assuming that to be the case members were keen that economic indicators are used at a local level, areas as small as the data would allow. The concern being that data at ward level can miss certain nuances within wards such as pockets deprivation or other issues that larger sample sizes can sometimes miss.

## 4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Executive Board is asked to consider the comments summarised in this document ahead of the final Best City Ambition proposals being referred to full Council in February 2022.

**Best City Ambition**

**January 2022**

**Report authors: Rebecca Atherton, Angela Brogden & Robert Clayton**