

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 22ND JUNE, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis in the Chair

Councillors S Arif, A Carter, D Coupar,
S Golton, M Harland, H Hayden, J Pryor,
M Rafique and F Venner

- 1 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**
There was no information contained within the agenda which was designated as being exempt from publication.
- 2 Late Items**
There were no late items of business submitted to the Board for consideration.
- 3 Declaration of Interests**
There were no interests declared at the meeting.
- 4 Minutes**
RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th April 2022 be approved as a correct record.

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

- 5 Outcome of the statutory notice on a proposal to decommission the Resource Provision at Gledhow Primary School**
Further to Minute No. 131, 16 March 2022, the Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the outcomes from the publication of a statutory notice on a proposal to decommission the Speech and Language Resource Provision at Gledhow Primary School with effect from August 2022. Specifically, the report invited the Board to review the outcome of the statutory notice and approve the proposal to decommission the Resource Provision from end of the 2021/22 academic year.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member presented the key points of this proposal, and noted that there had been no responses received throughout the statutory notice period.

A Member made enquiries regarding the proposal when considering the wider provision of, and demand for speech and language services across the city moving forward. In response, the Board was provided with further detail on the actions which had been taken when drawing up the proposals, such as the associated consultation exercise and the work undertaken which had identified that the proposals would be better suited to providing good outcomes for the young people using the service. Also, it was noted that there was confidence that the new model would deliver sufficient provision in the

city. Responding to a further enquiry on sufficiency of provision, officers undertook to liaise with health colleagues to provide the Member in question with further detail on this.

In agreeing the proposals detailed within the submitted report, Councillor A Carter reiterated the comments that he had made during the consideration of this item regarding sufficiency of service provision.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the outcomes from the statutory notice, be noted, and that the proposal to decommission the Resource Provision from the end of the academic year 2021/22, as detailed within the report, be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Learning Inclusion.

6 The New Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme

Further to Minute No. 19, 22 June 2016, the Director of Resources and the Director of City Development submitted a joint report regarding the review of the Discretionary Business Rates Relief policy which had been undertaken, and which presented proposals for a new scheme for the Board's consideration, which aimed to support the creation, retention and improvement of employment delivering inclusive growth in the city.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board received further detail regarding the proposal to cap the total scheme value at £1.75m, which it was noted was a cap level that had been carried over from the previously agreed scheme. In addition, responding to a specific enquiry, clarification was provided that whilst the Council's Community Centres were charged Business Rates, the Council did not apply for those centres to be part of the Business Rates Relief scheme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the policy for the new Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme, as detailed within the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) That the decision to award discretionary business rate relief be delegated to the Director of City Development, together with authority to make any minor alterations to the approved scheme.

7 Securing the proposed new public artwork in memory of David Oluwale and for the City of Leeds, and Authority to enter into an Agreement with Leeds Culture Trust

The Director of City Development submitted a report which provided information on the collaborative work being undertaken to establish a new landmark public art commission for Leeds designed to commemorate the life of David Oluwale and to also provide representation and aspiration to the community he came from. The report sought approval regarding related expenditure, and also sought authority to enter into an agreement with Leeds

Culture Trust to set out the respective obligations between the parties with regard to delivering the project.

Responding to Members' enquiries, assurance was provided on the actions which were being taken to ensure that the Council was fully supporting Leeds 2023's fundraising strategy for the initiative and that Board Members would receive regular updates as appropriate in relation to this project and its financial position. In addition, it was noted that the £1.83m would be included within the overall fundraising aspirations of Leeds 2023 in the delivery of the year of culture, and during the year this project would be one of signature events.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That approval be given to Leeds City Council front funding the cost of the project, as detailed within the submitted report, up to £1.83m, to be held against the Capital Programme contingency reserve, with the amount being held against the reserve being reduced as the fundraising progresses;
- (b) That the authority required to enter into an agreement with Leeds Culture Trust in order to set out the respective obligations between the parties with regard to delivering the project, be approved;
- (c) That Board Members receive regular updates, as appropriate, in relation to this project and its financial position.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE

8 Submission of Round 2 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Bids

Further to Minute No. 138, 20th April 2022, the Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update on the current position regarding the Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). In addition, the report also sought approval of the submission of the proposed bids, and also sought approval of related expenditure, as detailed.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member provided an overview of the actions taken to date which had led to the proposed round 2 LUF bids, as detailed within the submitted report. The Executive Member thanked those officers who had progressed the proposed submissions to this stage in what had been a limited timeframe.

Members noted the approach which had been taken towards the bids in terms of the number of bids proposed and the broad range of projects that they covered. Responding to a Member's enquiries both on that approach and also on whether there was a prioritisation of the bids, it was noted that when submitted, each bid would be assessed in its own right and whilst the Council had not been asked to prioritise the bids, should a request be received from Government in relation to this, it was undertaken that a process would be established, as appropriate.

In conclusion, Members noted the role of the constituency MPs in the respective bids, the fact that it was unknown whether there would be any further LUF funding rounds in the future, that Government feedback on LUF bids whether they be successful or otherwise, would be welcomed, and that Leeds had been allocated 'priority status' for this second round, which had afforded the Council the opportunity to submit a bid for each constituency.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That agreement be given for the projects as listed in paragraphs 5-10 of the submitted report to be submitted as the Council's bids under Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, and that the necessary authority be delegated to the Director of City Development to enable the Director to undertake the necessary work to finalise and refine the bids in order to ensure submissions by the deadline of 6th July 2022;
- (b) That agreement be given for the use of the Council's Capital Programme contingency funds as a source of match funding to the LUF bids and/or that agreement be given to use such funds to underwrite the unknown outcome of other external funding bids relating to the LUF projects, as set out in paras 24-30 of the submitted report;
- (c) That in the event of bid success, agreement be given for the Director of City Development to undertake the further work necessary to progress all required planning and other statutory approvals that will need to be in place to enable delivery of the LUF-funded projects, in consultation with the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate and the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles, as appropriate and as relevant in each case;
- (d) That the decisions taken in relation to this report be exempted from the Call In process, due to the risk that the deadline for bid submission on the 6th July 2022 is missed, as further detailed in paragraphs 34 – 35 of the submitted report.

(The Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules state that a decision may be declared as being exempt from the Call In process by the decision taker if it is considered that the matter is urgent and any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's, or the public's interests. In line with this, the resolutions contained within this minute were exempted from the Call In process, as per resolution (d) above, and for the reasons as detailed within sections 34 - 35 of the submitted report)

9 Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway Scheme

Further to Minute No. 80, 17th October 2018, the Director of City Development submitted a report regarding the Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway project (LSSTG) which was being delivered as part of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Transforming Cities Fund programme. The LSSTG project, which was a joint undertaking with WYCA and Network Rail aimed to address issues of capacity, accessibility, health and safety, security and connectivity from the station's entrance on New Station Street to the City

Centre and South Bank. Specifically, the report sought required approvals for an injection into the Capital Programme and associated authority to spend.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member provided an overview of the development of the scheme to date, what the proposed works entailed, details of the associated timeframe and gave a brief summary of the consultation exercise undertaken. Detail was also provided on the latest trends in passenger numbers accessing the station. The Executive Member also highlighted that in order to meet the long term needs of Leeds Station it was proposed by Network Rail to create a pedestrian priority area on New Station Street which was owned by Network Rail, with it also being noted that the proposed works would predominately be delivered on Network Rail property and that Network Rail would manage and maintain the asset when completed.

A Member highlighted concerns from some taxi and private hire trade representatives and from some representing disability groups on the proposals which had been brought to his attention. It was noted that such concerns were specifically regarding disabled accessibility and the relocation of the taxi rank to Bishopgate Street and the potential for capacity related issues arising. In response, it was emphasised that whilst the Council would continue to work with partners on such matters and in acknowledging the related concerns which had been raised, it was reiterated that New Station Street was Network Rail property and the security decision to remove vehicles from New Station Street had been taken by Network Rail.

In relation to the concerns regarding disabled access, the Board received an overview of the breadth of consultation undertaken, and whilst the concerns raised as part of that consultation were acknowledged, the level of support which had been provided was highlighted. In addition, details were provided on how the proposals aimed to improve accessibility, including disabled access in the vicinity of the station. Finally, officers undertook to provide the Member in question with further detail / a briefing around the modelling and design work that had taken place and which had led to the proposals, should this be required.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the previous injections and authority to spend of £9.737m up to the end of May 2022, specifically for development works and advanced works at Bishopgate East, Neville Street, and Dark Neville Street ahead of the main construction programme, be noted;
- (b) That the remaining injection of £25.912m from a total of £35.649m available funding into the Capital Programme be approved (which is subject to subsequent approval at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Transport Committee on 1st July 2022 and entering into a subsequent Funding Agreement with WYCA); with such funding delivering the main construction element of Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway (LSSTG) project;

- (c) That it be noted that approval to enter into the contracts associated with the delivery of the LSSTG will be subject to the approval of the Director of City Development, under delegated decision-making authority;
- (d) That the authority to spend £25.912m on the LSSTG programme in order to deliver the remaining main construction element of the LSSTG project, be approved, which will be funded by the Transforming Cities Fund and administered by WYCA, subject to the WYCA Transport Committee of 1st July 2022.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor A Carter required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on the decisions referred to within this Minute)

RESOURCES

10 Social Value Fund Proposal

The Director of Resources submitted a report, which further to the establishment of the Leeds Social Value Charter in 2016, presented the development of an outline proposal for a Social Value Fund, which involved charging suppliers/tenderers an annual fee to contribute towards social and economic value in Leeds, with the aim of the proposal being to provide a simple mechanism to generate a significant new income stream through which social value could be enhanced via procurement.

In presenting the report the Executive Member provided an overview of the proposals for the scheme, gave details of the consultation undertaken to date and noted that it was expected that the proposal could potentially generate more than £500,000 every year.

Whilst being supportive of the principle of raising funds for the promotion of social value, concerns were raised regarding this proposal in terms of the focus it placed upon the private sector, the timing of the proposals and the impact it may potentially have upon other existing fund raising schemes. In response, the Board received further detail regarding the Council's existing obligation to derive social value benefit from its procurement process, and how this scheme aimed to establish a simple and proportionate way of achieving that from the significant number of smaller contractors the Council had. In addition, further detail was provided on the positive response which had been received on the proposals to date.

RESOLVED – That the Social Value Fund proposal, as detailed within the submitted report, be approved for implementation by the Director of Resources.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor A Carter and Councillor S Golton required it to be recorded that they both respectively voted against the decisions referred to within this Minute)

11 **Financial Performance – Outturn financial year ended 31st March 2022**

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report presenting the Council's final outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year in respect of both the revenue and capital budgets and also the Housing Revenue Account. The report also included expenditure on schools. In addition, the report also sought approval of proposals regarding the creation of earmarked reserves and injections into the Capital Programme.

In introducing the report, the Executive Member extended her thanks on behalf of the Board to the Chief Officer Financial Services and her team for the work which had been undertaken in getting the Council to its outturn position, given the range and scale of challenges which continued to be faced, with it being noted that the final position on the General Fund shows an underspend of £1.5m.

In response to a Member's specific enquiry, the Board received further detail on the financial implications for the Council should any potential pay settlement in the current financial year be above what had already been budgeted for.

Responding to a Member's comments, the Board received an update on the current position in relation directorate budget reviews and the delivery of directorate budget action plans. Further to this, whilst acknowledging the financial support that the Council had received from Government during the pandemic, it was noted that the Authority had not been allocated further resource to deal with related backlogs, which had been the case in some other sectors. It was also noted that dialogue continued with the Government on such matters, however, when considering the significant financial challenges that continued to be faced by the Council, it was emphasised that all directorates would need to undertake financial reviews moving forward.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Council's outturn position for the 2021/22 financial year, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted;
- (b) That the creation of earmarked reserves, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be agreed, and that the release of such reserves be delegated to the Chief Officer Financial Services;
- (c) That it be noted that the Chief Officer Financial Services will be responsible for the implementation of the actions (detailed above/below) following the conclusion of the "Call In" period;
- (d) That the following injections into the Capital Programme be approved, as detailed at Appendix 5A (iii) to the submitted report:-
 - £63,116.9k of Basic Need and High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) Grants for Schools;
 - £27,743.7k of external contributions for the Connecting Leeds / Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme;
 - £2,499.3k of external contributions for Leeds Playhouse; and

- £3,746.5k of other external contributions;
- (e) That the additional Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme (CRIS) allocations to Wards and Community Committees for the period October 2021 to March 2022 of £262.3k, be noted.

12 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2021/22

The Chief Officer (Financial Services) submitted a report which presented the Council's Treasury Management Outturn position for 2021/22.

Responding to a Member's enquiries, the Board received further detail on the actions taken within the treasury management strategy which had resulted in an overall saving to the revenue budget, information on why borrowing levels had reduced during the reporting period and also on the actions being taken to mitigate risk against the potential implications for the Council should interest rates continue to rise.

RESOLVED – That the Treasury Management outturn position for 2021/22, as detailed within the submitted report, be noted, together with the fact that treasury activity has remained within the Treasury Management strategy and policy framework.

ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

13 OfSTED Inspection Report

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report presenting the findings of the recent Ofsted inspection of Leeds' Local Authority Children's Services which had been carried out between 21st February to 4th March 2022. A copy of the full inspection report was appended to the submitted report for Members' consideration.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted the Council's significant achievement of maintaining its 'Outstanding' judgement following the recent Ofsted inspection of Leeds local authority children's services, particularly given the unprecedented challenges which had been faced as a result of the pandemic. The Executive Member then provided the Board with a detailed overview of the inspection's outcomes and it was underlined that the Council would not become complacent in light of this judgement, with emphasis being placed on the fact that outstanding did not mean perfection. It was also noted that senior leadership would develop an improvement plan based upon the inspection's findings and work with the Children and Families Scrutiny Board on the implementation of that plan was intended. In conclusion, the Executive Member paid tribute to and thanked the Director of Children and Families, together with his team of staff for their continued dedication to the children of Leeds, with it being highlighted that this 'Outstanding' outcome was a testimony to their efforts. Members of the Board and the Chief Executive echoed the Executive Member's thanks to the officers across the Children and Families directorate.

In considering the report, Members welcomed the Executive Member's comments about not becoming complacent and highlighted the importance of remaining vigilant in the protection of children, and also looked forward to further innovation and improvement in appropriate service areas to build upon that which had already been achieved.

Members highlighted that whilst the priority would always be the wellbeing of children in Leeds, there were benefits for the service in the sharing of best practice with other Authorities, where appropriate.

Responding to a specific enquiry, the Board received an update on the next steps in relation to a review into the notification of serious child safeguarding incidents following previous consideration of this matter by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, with it being noted that a report was intended to be submitted from the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership Review Advisory Group to the Scrutiny Board in due course.

In response to a further enquiry, the Board received information on the range of actions being taken to address the impact upon Leeds arising from the national challenge currently faced in relation to social worker shortages which resulted in higher case loads. This was in addition to the information which had been provided on such matters by the Executive Member as part of her introductory comments.

In conclusion, the Executive Member provided an overview of the improvements which had been made following the Ofsted visit in 2021, which were reflected in the most recent Ofsted outcomes. It was also highlighted how a lot of Leeds practice was being recognised nationally. Finally, the Executive Member reiterated her thanks, on behalf of the Board, to the staff across the Children and Families directorate.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report, in particular OfSTED's recognition that Leeds has maintained a relentless focus on prioritising services and support to children and families, be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that Leeds has maintained its 'Outstanding' rating and will address the identified areas for improvement;
- (c) That the Board's appreciation and thanks be formally recorded, for the following:-
 - Front line staff and managers whose often challenging day to day work has made such a difference to the lives of children and families in Leeds;
 - Elected Members and senior officers of the Council who have prioritised children despite significant challenges arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic and 12 years of austerity and cuts to Local Government funding;

- The support of our partners, third sector colleagues, businesses and communities across the city who have supported this work through Child Friendly Leeds, which enters its tenth year in 2022;
- (d) That it be noted that the officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Director of Children and Families.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

14 Approval of the updated Leeds Housing Strategy

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment submitted a report which presented and sought approval of a new strategy for Leeds Housing for the period 2022 to 2027 which had been developed around six key themes. The report noted that the proposed new strategy built upon the previous Housing Strategy (2016 – 2021) and set out the city’s ambitions for housing over the next five years, whilst also reflecting the evolving priorities and changes to legislation which have occurred.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member highlighted how the proposed strategy was built upon its predecessor, but now reflected the evolving challenges currently being faced in this area which the strategy aimed to focus upon via the six key themes within it.

Responding to a Member’s enquiry, the Board received assurance and further detail on the performance monitoring against the key themes of the strategy that would be undertaken, with the key role of the Leeds Housing Strategy Board in this process being emphasised.

Also, the importance of partnership working with colleagues in planning services was highlighted and acknowledged in order to ensure the best outcomes for residents and communities across Leeds.

Similarly, in response to a Member’s comments, the importance of delivering appropriate levels of suitable housing in all communities across Leeds was acknowledged, with further information on the actions being taken in this area being provided, which again included the partnership working arrangements which were in place, as referenced above.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the new Leeds Housing Strategy 2022-2027, as presented at appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment and the Chief Housing Officer will be accountable for the implementation of the new strategy and overseeing its delivery.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 24TH JUNE 2022

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS: 5.00 P.M., FRIDAY, 1ST JULY 2022