

Issue date 22 January 2010

Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 – progress with development and next steps

Introduction

Members will be aware that this will be the third Vision for Leeds¹. The Leeds Initiative Executive agreed that a new Vision should be commissioned at their meeting of 25 March 2009, given the radical environmental, economic and social changes that have taken place since the publication of the last Vision in 2004. There is also, of course, a Government requirement to produce a sustainable community strategy for the city².

The approach

The approach adopted has not been to start with a blank piece of paper but to align findings from the review of Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020 with other strategic programmes, including, among others:

- Leeds Strategic Plan;
- Local Development Framework;
- Regeneration Framework;
- Agenda for Improved Economic Performance;
- Climate Change Strategy;
- Equality and Diversity plans and schemes;
- City Region Forerunner Agreement; and the
- City Region Transport and Housing Strategy.

The review of the Leeds Strategic Plan will lead to the preparation of a revised plan covering the period 2011 to 2014. This will represent the first three-year delivery plan for the Vision indicating the importance of a coherent read across of priorities and actions in the two documents.

Progress to date

A project team, comprising officers from across the full Leeds Initiative and Partnerships team, is meeting on a monthly basis, to drive the project forward and ensure the process is fully coordinated with the above strategies and plans. A higher level Vision Steering Group, comprising members from key partners across the city, will have met for the first time in January 2010, to advise on the shaping of the public consultation phase in summer 2010.

¹ Vision for Leeds – A Strategy for Sustainable Development, 1999 to 2009; Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020.

² Preparing community strategies: government guidance to local authorities.

In addition to desk research during the summer, the Leeds Initiative team interviewed 25 thematic experts from our partner organisations to prepare a paper which sets out 'Where are we now?'. The paper provided a starting point to shape thinking about what needs to change to meet the future challenges of the city. The report has been discussed in workshops at six of the Leeds Initiative's strategy and development groups, and the City Centre Partnership. Discussions at meetings of Safer Leeds, Children Leeds and the Neighbourhood Policy Group will follow. Wider stakeholder engagement was sought through events with the business and third sector and specific interest groups. A full list is attached at appendix II.

The questions that informed this stage of the process were:

- What type of city do we wish to be living in by 2030?
- What are the key issues?
- What do we think will be the big choices?

A full analysis of the emerging themes, themes, priorities, ideas and aims is attached at appendix I.

Next steps

The next phase of work will include feedback to the strategy and development groups and other stakeholders and seek their involvement in identifying existing evidence, data and information which will inform the preparation of the consultation exercise. A joint meeting of the Narrowing the Gap and Going up a League Boards will take place on 8 February to consider and discuss the conclusions drawn from the discussions around the 'Where are we now?' report to firm up a proposition which will form the basis of the consultation draft.

The Vision project team will identify the impact assessments that need to be undertaken in terms of risk, sustainability and equality.

A communications and media strategy will be drawn up during the spring. Consultation plans will be finalised through involvement leads and area managers, prior to a consultation document with targets and priorities being drafted by the end of April 2010.

The launch of the public consultation phase is planned to take place following the General Election in June 2010.

Appendix I

Conclusions from the 'Where are we now?' stakeholder engagement phase

The 'Where are we now?' report and the new Vision were discussed at no less than 27 different meetings and events, reaching a wider range of people at an earlier stage than has previously been realised.

General observations that emerged include the following:

- the importance of the city being ready with a skilled workforce when the recession ends;
- the realisation that a return to 'business as usual' is no longer appropriate;
- the need to ensure that tough decisions about resources are made in an open and transparent way; and
- the importance of strong leadership in creating a more outward-focused city.

Issues highlighted that the report failed to address included:

- housing;
- the impact and future use of digital technology and the creative industries; and
- the children's chapter being too positive in light of the unannounced OfSTED inspection, and subsequent CAA red flag, which raised concerns relating to issues of safeguarding in Leeds

The **online poll** on the Leeds Initiative's website, which was based on the themes emerging from the Leeds Initiative Assembly in June 2009, highlighted the importance of:

- sustainability;
- improving public transport (and, in particular) creating a light rail link from the airport to the city; and
- the need to provide mixed housing in the city that is fit for purpose.

The key comments and ideas emerging from the stakeholder phase have been clustered into three, overarching themes - **social, environmental and economic**. These three strands are often overlapping and it is recognised that many of the points summarised below are cross-cutting and could be placed in all three of these categories. There is also a need to ensure that the themes outlined in the 'Where are we now' report do not become new silos unable to effectively address cross-cutting issues.

Economic

An interesting and new, joint approach from the economic growth and sustainability factions emerged, which are no longer regarded as mutually exclusive but compatible and necessary, along with the need to develop a strong economy that is also socially equal. Other key points included:

- the need for the city to decide on its level of ambition;
- a strategy to develop a low-carbon economy;
- developing Leeds as a more self-sufficient city, with a stronger local economy;

- supporting and encouraging the creative industries sector; and
- the city's reliance on public sector jobs and likely job growth in low paid service jobs rather than higher paid jobs in the financial and legal sectors.

Transport also remains high on the agenda for the majority of stakeholders.

Key issues included:

- improving public transport, in particular developing a rail link from the airport to the city centre and upgrading of the East Coast mainline to enable the city to compete effectively and maintain its role as the regional capital (whilst recognising the potential conflict with the desire to be a sustainable city); and
- a sustainable transport strategy with cycle routes separated from both motor and pedestrian traffic.

In terms of the city's cultural provision it was felt that despite the huge improvements made in recent years Leeds is still only on a level playing field with other cities. The city is still missing opportunities to promote itself in a more coordinated way and improve its international profile.

Social

There are many factors which affect this strand, many of which are cross-cutting and interdependent. One of the most challenging issues which will influence our long-term planning is the projected growth in population to one million by 2030, including a greater number of both younger and older people, as well as an increase in the number of people from ethnic-minority communities. The challenge for Leeds will be to create a city in which these groups feel comfortable living together. Equality of opportunity and good community relations will lie at the heart of achieving this challenge. It is therefore crucial that equality is embedded in the next Vision for Leeds in more explicit ways than has been the case to date. Our ambitions for a safer and more harmonious city can only be achieved if we tackle housing, education, employment and health issues together – a significant challenge in the current economic climate.

Concerns also remain around the city's ability to 'narrow the gap' between those people who have benefited from the wealth of the city and those who have not and, in particular, the number of children and young people, and older people, living in poverty, as well as the need to support children and young people to make positive life choices.

Alongside these concerns, all aspects of health are recognised as being key to achieving the concept of holistic wellbeing and a good quality of life, in particular with the need for:

- a greater focus on ill health prevention;
- recognition that emotional wellbeing forms the basis of a good quality of life; and
- proactive management of alcohol issues.

The issues identified above have placed a sharper focus on making neighbourhoods good places for people to live. Regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods and improved neighbourhood management

will require investment and services geared to supporting and enabling vulnerable people and households to thrive in the neighbourhoods in which they live.

The challenge for the city will be to rethink how to make the most of existing and planned regeneration to achieve thriving neighbourhoods.

Environmental

In line with views expressed about the city's economy, a key theme to emerge was the development of economic growth that reduces negative environmental impacts and the need to create a self-sustainable city with low carbon housing, more effective types of transport and less reliance on fossil fuels.

In terms of the place shaping agenda there was an emphasis on doing more things locally, including:

- better cultural provision in local communities;
- producing and buying more local food through a sustainable healthy food strategy;
- more community initiatives, including skills sharing, to enable people to help others in their local area;
- improved local facilities, including shops and health services;
- the need to provide mixed housing across all localities that is fit for purpose; and
- better access to green spaces.

Next steps

As we move forward to the public consultation phase, we will need to focus in on the key questions we want answers to. However, there are two clear schools of thought emerging from consultation to date. These are:

- i) that in the current economic climate this Vision should be a sober one, recognising that constraints on public funding will mean city leaders will be required to make tough decisions and therefore we need to focus on what is achievable; and
- ii) that as a city we should be taking a more radical approach and that the city should be ambitious and aim to do something different and iconic in all three aspects of social, economic and environmental improvement.

Which of these approaches to pursue is part of the thinking that the joint Going Up A League and Narrowing the Gap Board meeting is asked to consider.

Appendix II

Meetings and events where the 'Where are we now?' paper was discussed.

Leeds Initiative Boards, Strategy and Development Groups

- Children Leeds 25/02/10
- City Centre Partnership 22/10/09
- Climate change partnership 1/12/09
- Cultural partnership 12/11/09
- Economy and Skills 3/12/09
- Going up a League Board 2/12/09
- Harmonious communities partnership 28/10/09
- Healthy Leeds 2/12/09
- Housing 15/01/10
- Leeds Initiative Executive 19/10/09
- Narrowing the Gap Board – 9/09/09, 16/12/09
- Neighbourhood Policy Group (tbc)
- Transport partnership 19/11/09
- Safer Leeds 25/02/10

3rd sector events

- Burley Hyde Park Community Network 24/02/10
- Café Economique (sustainability discussion group) – 12/01/10
- Chapeltown Development Trust 23/02/10
- Common Purpose event 30/10/09
- "Leeds Summat" 21/11/09
- Older People's Forum 11/02/10
- Third sector Leeds event 22/01/10
- Voice Health Forum 9/12/09

Council groups and meetings

- Area chairs 7/01/10
- City and Regional Scrutiny Board 8/10/09
- LSP Strategy Group 15/10/09

- Strategic Planning and Policy Board 7/01/10

Political groups

- Conservatives 18/01/09
- Greens 7/12/09
- Labour 30/11/09
- Liberal Democrats (tbc)
- Morley Independents 11/12/09

Business sector events

- Answertime 13/10/09
- Chamber Business Forum (tbc)
- Federation of Small Businesses (tbc)
- Institute of Directors (tbc)
- Skills Board (tbc)

City Region (tbc)

Equality groups

- Equality hubs
 - age 02/02/10
 - BME 03/02/10
 - carers 04/02/10
 - disability 28/01/10
 - religion/belief 20/01/10
- Equalities Network (tbc)