



Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Meeting: Environment and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board

Date: 14th March 2011

Subject: New Strategic Plans 2011-15

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents for Scrutiny the proposals for the new set of strategic planning documents for advice and consideration before these go to Executive Board and Council for approval. This includes the proposals for the long term partnership strategy for the city - the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 - as well as the set of delivery plans for the first 4 years. These proposals have been developed in light of the current financial situation which means that we need our priorities to be much more focused than previous plans. These proposals also take into account the results of two recent public consultations on the Vision for Leeds and the Spending Challenge.

2 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 Scrutiny of the proposals for the most important plans and strategies, as specified within the Budget and Policy Framework, ensures that these plans are robust and include the issues that are important to local people. Therefore, this report brings to the Board the proposals for the new Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 along with the first set of priorities which will be delivered by the council, and its partners, over the next 4 years. In addition this report also includes the relevant priority from the Council Business Plan including the shared cross council priorities and the objectives for the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods for the next 2-4 years.

3 Background Information

- 3.1 In December Executive Board considered changes to the partnership and planning framework which would enable a better alignment between the partnership structures, strategic plans and our supporting performance management arrangements. Allied to this in the current financial climate there is a need for our strategic plans to focus on a smaller number of priorities to provide a more targeted and focused approach to delivering our long-term ambitions for the city.
- 3.2 In particular a number of changes to the planning framework are in the process of being discussed and approved with amendments to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework (contained in Article 4 of the Constitution) in train. These changes are scheduled to go to the General Purposes Committee in March and Full Council in April. The new city planning

framework is shown in appendix 1 and the role and function of each of these plans is detailed below:

- 3.2.1 **Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030** - is the Leeds Sustainable Community Strategy which sets-out the long term ambition and aspirations for the city. It is being developed by the Leeds Initiative in conjunction with all local partners, including the public, private, and third sectors. The draft Vision was subject to an extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders through the 'What if Leeds' campaign.
- 3.2.2 **City Priority Plans 2011 to 2015** – these are new city-wide partnership plans which identify the key outcomes and priorities to be delivered by the council, and its partners, over the next 4 years. They replace the Leeds Strategic Plan and are aligned to the new Strategic Partnerships which are listed below.
- Children's Trust Board
 - Safer and Stronger Communities Board
 - Sustainable Economy and Culture Board
 - Regeneration Board
 - Health and Wellbeing Board

These partnerships will own the plans and be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the agreed priorities. They are structured around a small set of short term (4 years) priorities each of which is measured through a headline indicator. As such they are the "must-do" priorities or "obsessions" for each partnership and may be supported by more detailed plans as the partnership sees fit. They are not the only things the partnerships will be responsible for but for the next 4 years they will be their top priorities.

The priorities are to be written in clear, simple language that will be meaningful to everyone including the public. The headline indicators are crucial and have been carefully selected in order to galvanise efforts to drive improved outcomes across the partnership and should also bring with it progress across a wider set of outcomes. For example increasing the proportion of people in Leeds who are physically active will in turn improve mental health, reduce cardiovascular disease, reduce sickness levels, prevent falls in the elderly, reduce obesity (for adults and children), reduces risk of premature death etc. In this way we can ensure that the effort of the partnership is sufficiently focused but as many of the proposed priorities are closely linked to other areas of challenge they will also drive the delivery of a broader range of outcomes across the city.

- 3.2.3 **Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015** – this is the single plan for the council that brings together all the priorities for the council alongside the medium term financial plan. It has two main elements; a small number of cross council priorities and a set of directorate priorities. The cross council priorities are clearly aligned to the council's values and will drive change across the whole of the organisation. The directorate element of the plan will outline the Directors own objectives and as such may include service transformation, service delivery and any significant contributions to the relevant City Priority Plans so that that are the most significant 'must do' priorities for the directorate.
- 3.3 These plans will run for a period of 4 years in order to align better to our financial planning cycles but will be reviewed after two years. They will be supported by more detailed service and locality plans so they will not include everything we do just the priorities. Service plans will continue to be published to provide members with a more detailed picture of the actions and activities happening across the authority. For this year in order to enable service plans to better reflect these priorities the deadline for completion has been extended until 30th June 2011.
- 3.4 The timeline for approval of the plans is for them to go to Executive Board in May; and for approval by Council in July 2011. However Members should note that the City Priority Plans for Regeneration and Sustainable Economy and Culture may have to follow a different timetable as the relevant Strategic Boards do not currently exist and need to be constituted first.

4 Main Issues

- 4.1 The ambition of the draft Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 proposes that Leeds should aim to be locally and internationally recognised as the “best city in the UK” – an aim which was well supported in the public consultation. The Council Business Plan also proposes the ambition to be the “best city council in the UK”. We recognise that these are challenging ambitions but having this clear goal provides some clarity on what we need to tackle first in order to achieve this aim. It is also important that we set out clearly what this means in order to be able to judge our progress and ultimately our success. The five City Priority Plans and the Council Business Plan seek to do this and set out the first set of the “must-do” priorities that will help us achieve our ambition. In addition direct links can be seen from the Vision to the City Priority Plans where Boards have described what ‘best city’ means for each theme, e.g. ‘the best city for children and families’.
- 4.2 Performance reporting arrangements are currently being developed but will be focused around the priorities in these plans. In addition it is anticipated that the Main Partnership Board will have a role to provide challenge to the 5 Strategic Boards in the following areas:
- Is there a sufficient level of ambition within the plans ie is each board doing enough to work towards the achievement of the aim to be the Best City?
 - Examining how well the city is doing overall in tackling poverty and inequality looking across all 5 boards and challenging whether sufficient progress is being made.
- 4.3 In drawing up our new long term Vision and 4-year delivery plans we have had to balance a number of conflicting demands. This is as a result of the difficult situation we find ourselves in with the toughest local government funding settlement in many years. This is on top of a ‘funding gap’ arising from changes to the make up of the city like an aging population, rising birth-rates and the overall growth of the city. At the same time the city is experiencing a difficult economic climate with for example rising unemployment, inflationary pressures, increasing demands for social housing and reforms to the welfare systems. Many of these factors are resulting in greater demands on local authority and partner services as well as reductions in our income. This has led us towards the approach proposed where our plans are focused on the absolute “must-do’s” and, therefore, inevitably do not include everything. The challenge for us is to ensure that we have got the right balance between focus while still including the most important issues for the city. As well as balancing our ambition for the city with what is realistic and achievable in light of the agreed Budget.
- 4.4 In light of this overall context then the further development of our partnership working arrangements is essential. Each Director has a clear leadership role to develop strong and productive working relationships with partners in order to create the environment for effective partnership working in their area. This will ensure that as a city we can maximise the opportunities to provide truly joined-up and efficient services for the people of Leeds. Therefore, this has been included specifically as a priority for each Director.
- 4.5 The priorities of relevance to the Environment and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Board are set out in Appendix 2 and includes the following elements:
- Vision – overall Vision aim to be recognised as ‘the best city in the UK, locally and internationally’ as well as the three supporting aims, to be a city which is:
 - fair, open and welcoming;
 - prosperous and sustainable; and
 - successful.
 - City Priority Plans – the appendix includes the outline of all 5 City Priority Plan in order to enable Members to look across the entirety of the city’s priorities. The Board may wish to particularly focus their attention on the Safer and Stronger Communities, Regeneration and Sustainable Economy and Culture Plans. However it is important the Board understands the overall picture.
 - Council Business Plan – the Board are asked for their views on the 5 Cross Council Priorities as well as the draft Directorate Priorities for Environments and Neighbourhoods.

4.6 Members are asked to look across the proposed set of strategic priorities and consider the following questions:

- Are the plans clear, simple and meaningful to all relevant audiences?
- Do the City Priority Plans and Council Business Plan clearly articulate the absolute “must-do’s” for the next 4 years?
- Work is currently on-going to develop the indicators and targets and Members as asked for their views/input into these - bearing in mind the need to balance ambition with what is realistic and achievable in the current financial climate?

Public Consultation

4.7 We have recently received the results of two major consultation exercises (on the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 30 and the Spending Challenge) and the outcomes of these consultations can be clearly seen within these proposed plans. Appendix 3 sets out the key issues that the public told us were important in these consultations and shows how these are included within the proposed set of priorities in the plans.

4.8 Clearly these plans with their stated aim of providing simplicity, clarity and focus do not include detail about what actions will be taken. It is proposed that each Cross Council and City Priority will be supported by an action plan and this will form the structure and focus for the performance reporting. Work is currently underway to develop these and it is proposed that these are brought to the relevant Scrutiny Board early in 2011/12.

4.9 The delivery of many of the priorities are inextricably linked and there are a number of cross cutting areas that have been raised as important issues such as tackling child poverty and improving the wider social determinants of health (ie good housing, access to employment, income levels etc). Many of the specific drivers for making improvements in these areas are already priorities which are included within the 5 City Priority Plans but it is recognised that we might want to bring these together to ensure progress is sufficient. Further work is underway to consider the role of the Main Partnership Board in challenging progress in these cross cutting areas. Once the action plans underneath have been developed (see above) a piece of work will be undertaken to identify these cross cutting areas that will inform further discussions about whether these are being adequately addressed.

5 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

5.1 The formal amendments to the Constitution to specifically include the City Priority Plans as a replacement to the Leeds Strategic Plan are underway but have not yet been completed. A report is being taken to the General Purposes Committee in March to consider these changes and make recommendations to full Council in April. Within this report it is proposed that all City Priority Plans are added to in the Budget and Policy Framework alongside the Vision and the Council Business Plan which are already included. Provided that this amendment is agreed then the Vision for Leeds, the 5 City Priority Plans and Council Business Plan would collectively represent the medium and long term policy and strategy for the city. Therefore they are being brought to Scrutiny at this time in line with the Budget and Policy Framework procedure rules for discussion and challenge.

5.2 Members should note that these priorities are also being consulted on with Partners across the city through the relevant strategic partnerships or with key stakeholders where these boards have not yet been constituted.

6 Legal and Resource Implications

6.1 It is important that the outcomes and priorities within our strategic plans are realistic and achievable and, in particular, that they align with the agreed budget. Members are specifically asked to consider this issue and provide their views as part of this consultation.

6.2 From April 2011 the Council will have a general public duty under the Equalities Act to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations

This is underpinned by specific duties which require public bodies to develop specific, measurable and reasonable equality objectives to further the aims of the general duty and to publish data and performance relating to these. As part of the specific duty the equality information needs to be accessible and the decision has been made in Leeds that the most pragmatic way of ensuring this is the case is to provide all the appropriate information in one place ie to produce an Equality Scheme. The priorities within these plans (well as the action plans that sit underneath) will be used as the basis for the development of this Scheme.

6.3 During the consultation period work will be undertaken to consider equality in each of these plans and will be subject to the council's equality impact assessment process.

7 Conclusions

7.1 This report brings to the Board the long term Vision and strategic priorities for the next four years. Members are asked to look across these priorities and make sure that they provide enough focus while also including all the most important things for the next 4 years while at the same time being realistic and achievable in terms of the resources available. These plans will be our focus for the next 4 years and it is vital that Members can collectively own them and that they reflect Member's ambitions for the council and for the city.

8 Recommendation

8.1 Members of the Board are asked to provide their views and feedback on the proposals for the new Vision and first set of strategic priorities to deliver the Vision over the next 4 years. In particular Members are asked to consider the following questions:

- Are the plans clear, simple and meaningful to all relevant audiences?
- Do the City Priority Plans and Council Business Plan clearly articulate the absolute "must-do's" for the next 4 years?
- Work is currently on-going to develop the indicators and targets and Members as asked for their views/input into these - bearing in mind the need to balance ambition with what is realistic and achievable in the current financial climate?

Background Papers

Executive Board Report on "Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2011/12" 11th Feb 2011

Executive Board report on "Proposed changes to the Leeds Initiative Partnership and the City Planning Framework" 10th Dec 2010

Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules