

Report of Deputy Chief Executive

Report to Executive Board

Date: 19th June 2013

Subject: Best Council Plan 2013-17

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The current Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015 sets out our strategic priorities and targets. This was refreshed in 2012 to update targets but it was agreed that it would be more formally reviewed after two years. This review has been undertaken and changes are brought forward to Executive Board for their approval prior to going to Full Council. This recognises that the context we operate in has changed significantly over the past 2 years and as a result, therefore, the Council Business Plan also needs to change. The findings of the commission have also been used to further develop and shape our best council ambition in line with becoming a more enterprising council. The key changes for the Board to note are:

- Adoption of a “less is more” approach which has reduced the number of priorities and indicators to provide a clearer focus for the organisation on what is important. Service plans across the organisation will continue to be used to capture and monitor the wider actions and activities.
- In line with this a small set of Best Council Objectives form the central part to the new plan to provide some real clarity and focus for the whole council over the next 4 years. These effectively bring together key elements of the medium term financial plan and annual budget, the people plan, service priorities, our contribution to the outcomes in the city priority plan and organisational development activities in a more coherent and joined up way.
- The plan more clearly sets out what we want to achieve over the medium term ie by Mar 2017 as well as setting out for the first time what we will do over the coming year (2013/14) to enable clearer monitoring of our progress.

- Implementation of a more rolling approach to strategic planning with an annual review of activities for the year ahead. This will mean that the plan is more flexible and responsive.
- Changing the name to the Best Council Plan to better reflect our ambition in this area.

Recommendations

Executive Board are recommended to:

- Approve the Best Council Plan 2013-17 and recommend that Members of Full Council approve the plan at their meeting on 1st July 2013;
- recommend to Members of Full Council that Executive Board be authorised to make “in-year” amendments to these plans as may be required;
- approve the revisions to the Equality Improvement Priorities; and
- authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to complete the plans with any outstanding information prior to their submission for approval to Full Council on 1st July 2013.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report brings to Executive Board a new Best Council Plan 2013-17, to replace the current Council Business Plan 2011- 15, for approval prior to going to Full Council. It is important that the Council's strategic plans remain up-to-date, continue to reflect the main challenges, are relevant to the changing financial context and in light of this also include the right level of ambition for the people of Leeds..

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Best Council Plan 2013-17 aims to set out the strategic priorities for the council. It replaces the Council Business Plan 2011-15 following a mid-term review which recognised the significant change in the context for local government such that a new planning approach was needed. The financial challenge is key with the need for a clearer focus on what we do as well a change in the culture of how we work.
- 2.2 The 2012-13 performance report for the current City Priority and Council Business Plans is on the same agenda and this performance position also provides further context for the new plan.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Since agreeing the Council Business Plan the context for local government has changed dramatically with significant budget cuts and rising demand for public services. Alongside a central Government agenda of devolving power to individuals and communities, increasing choice and providing opportunities for local people to run their own services.
- 3.2 As a response to these challenges Leeds initiated and led a Commission on the Future of Local Government 2012 which sought to examine the role of local government in the 21st century. Central to the work of the commission was the concept of 'civic enterprise'. This is a new leadership style for local government where councils become more innovative and enterprising, business and other partners becomes more civic and communities become more engaged. The findings of the commission have been used to further develop and shape our best council ambition in line with becoming a more enterprising council. For examples the propositions from the commission have been used these to shape the plan in the following ways:
- Becoming civic entrepreneurs - eg shared leadership and values, strong democratic role, outcomes focus and working with communities
 - Stimulating jobs, homes and good growth - eg using the core strategy to good effect, and the Apprenticeship Training Academy to generate jobs
 - Establishing 21st Century infrastructure - eg physical, social or digital infrastructure, such as super-fast broadband, wrap up Leeds, neighbourhood networks

- Devising a new social contract - eg locality working and area committees, community engagement, mitigating impact of Welfare Reform, family group conferencing and other restorative approaches
- Making the most of devolution - eg City Deals and Local Enterprise Partnership

3.3 A new medium term financial plan (2013-17) has been developed alongside the budget for 2013-14 which will enable us to invest in our priorities as well as securing significant savings. As part of this the council has identified a number of programmes of work that are essential to ensuring our financial security in the medium to long term. Some of these programme also deliver our contribution to improving outcomes more directly for the public as well as embedding a civic enterprise approach. Others focus more on future proofing the council through a mixture of “enablers” that change culture and ways of working to create a fit for purpose structure and asset base or are more simply about spending less or generating more income.

3.4 In light of all these changes it is important that the plan continues to be fit for purpose and enables our leaders to focus on what is most important in order to drive the radical change that is needed. The draft Best Council Plan is set out in appendix 1 with the key changes set out below:

- Adoption of a “less is more” approach which has substantially reduced the number of priorities and indicators to provide a clearer focus for the organisation on what is important. Service plans across the organisation will continue to be used to capture and monitor the wider actions and activities.
- In line with this a small set of Best Council Objectives form the central part to the new plan to provide some real clarity and focus for the whole council over the next 4 years. These effectively bring together key elements of the medium term financial plan and annual budget, the people plan, service priorities, business improvement programmes, our contribution to the outcomes in the city priority plan and organisational development activities in a more coherent and joined up way.
- The plan more clearly sets out what we want to achieve over the medium term ie by Mar 2017 as well as setting out for the first time what we will do over the coming year (2013/14) to enable clearer monitoring of our progress.
- Implementation of a more rolling approach to strategic planning with an annual review of activities for the year ahead. This will mean that the plan is more flexible and responsive.
- Changing the name to the Best Council Plan to better reflect our ambition in this area.

3.5 By having a more focused Business Plan more reliance is placed on Service Plans within Directorates. These have been reviewed to cover the period 2013-15 to ensure that they include all the key priorities and performance measures, these will be monitored by within directorates throughout the year and used to directly inform appraisals. These will continue to be published on Insite and updated with progress throughout the year.

- 3.6 The Best Council Plan remains an important element of the overall planning framework and these linkages are set out within the draft plan itself. In particular the link to the City Priority Plan is important. The CPP sets out our Best City ambitions, ie those shared with our partners, in terms of outcomes and priorities along with the indicators we use to measure our success. These are delivered and performance managed by the 5 city partnerships many of whom have also developed a broader strategy/plan that sets out the wider range of outcomes/priorities. The role of the Best Council Plan is, therefore, to set out the council's main contribution to these shared outcomes.
- 3.7 One of the key element of the new plan is the Enabling Corporate Centre project with a central aim of supporting our political and officer leadership in promoting the strategic direction for the council and the city.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The development of this plan has been subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders including the Best Council Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team, key officers and Portfolio holders. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly the budget for 2013/14 and the medium term financial plan was informed by an extensive consultation process with the public and other key stakeholders. This identified spending priorities as well as endorsing the proposals put forward by the council for delivering the budget reductions eg reducing our asset base and charging for services.
- 4.1.2 The Best Council Plan forms part of the budget and policy framework and in line with the procedure rules the initial proposals for the plan were also subject to further member consultation through the Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board. Key feedback received from this Board is set out in appendix 2 alongside the response and changes made.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 A screening process has been undertaken on the new plan to look at how equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is relevant to, and addressed within, the new plan and is provided as a background document. Overall good assurance is provided that due regard for equality has been given, or is planned, for the objectives and priorities within the Best Council Plan 2013-17. In a small number of areas (listed below) due regard has not yet been given as these are new priorities which are currently being scoped and developed and are, therefore, not yet at the stage where impacts can be assessed. However, it should be noted that in all cases officers are aware of the requirement to do this and have plans in place to give due regard at an appropriate time:
- Developing a coherent approach to tackling poverty - this is likely to encompass a wide range of work and it is also likely that in many cases arrangements for due regard will already be in place eg recent welfare changes. Also by its very nature this is about addressing inequalities but when developed a screening process needs to ensure that there are not outstanding gaps.

- Asset Rationalisation Plan - whilst due regard has been given for relevant policies like the Community Asset Transfer policy further due regard will need to be given as more specific proposals are developed.
- Public Health - as this has only just transferred to the council public health is continuing to use existing process for giving due regard but will transfer to using the council's policies and procedures over time.
- Income, charging and trading - due regard will need to be given once specific proposals have been developed in this area to ensure decision makers are clear about the potential impacts on different groups.
- Organisational change programmes (inc Enabling Corporate Centre, Business Management and implementation of organisational design principles) - again many of these are still being developed and due regard will need to be given as more specific proposals are identified. Staff Equality Networks will need to be consulted as appropriate with impacts continuing to be monitored through the People Plan Equality Scorecard.

4.2.2 Related to this we have an agreed set of Equality Improvement Priorities 2011-15 which set out a number of specific equality objectives building upon priorities in the existing City Priority Plan and Council Business Plan. As a result of the changes to the Best Council Plan the related Equality Improvement Priorities have been reviewed and a number of changes proposed. The revised Equality Improvement Priorities are set out in appendix 3 and are brought to the Board for approval. Key changes are:

- Adult Social Care equality improvement priorities have been re-aligned to the Better Lives programme
- Revised wording for cultural and sporting priority to "Increase participation in Leeds' cultural and sporting opportunities"

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 This report bring to Executive Board an update on the council's priorities which ensures that these remain up-to-date and continue to reflect the most important issues.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 One of the main aims of the Best Council Plan is to enable the council to deliver the medium term financial plan and as such the resource implications are reflected there. The adoptions of a more rolling approach to business plan will enable better linkage between the annual budget setting and the business planning process.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications, all information within this report is available to the public and it is exempt from call in as it is a decision made within the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The corporate and directorate risk registers are subject to regular review to ensure that they reflect the priorities within the current strategic plans as well as

risk arising from other sources. The Risk Management Policy and processes ensure that the key risks associated with the priorities in these plans are appropriately risk assessed. Once the new plan is agreed a cross check will be done to ensure that key risks are included as appropriate. Supporting performance and risk reporting arrangements will also be reviewed in light of the new plan.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The past few years have seen significant changes to the context in which we are working including the general economic climate, government spending cuts, significant policy changes and increasing demands on our services. In light of these changes it is recognised that our strategic plans also need to change and a review of the Council Business Plan 2011-15 has been undertaken. This report brings the revised plan to Executive Board for approval and also proposes that it is renamed the Best Council Plan 2013-17 to better reflect our ambition to be the best council in the UK.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board are recommended to:

- approve the Best Council Plan 2013-17 and recommend that Members of Full Council approve the plan at their meeting on 1st July 2013;
- recommend to Members of Full Council that Executive Board be authorised to make “in-year” amendments to these plans as may be required;
- approve the revisions to the Equality Improvement Priorities set out in appendix 3; and
- authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to complete the plans with any outstanding information prior to their submission for approval to Full Council on 1st July 2013.

7 Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix 1 - Draft Plan

This appendix has been removed for Council as final draft of the Best Council Plan is included in the Council report at appendix 1.

Appendix 2 – Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board Feedback and Response

The Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board reviewed the draft Best Council Plan at their meeting on 22nd April with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The Board raised a number of issues and these are set out below along with the response in terms of changes to the plan or other actions. Overall the Board felt that the new plan helped to give some more focus and to prioritise the most important things we need to do. The addition of more clarity on the specific progress we are expect in in 2013/14 was also welcomed and the Board felt this would help them fulfil their critical friend role. There was considerable discussion about the importance of changing culture for the successful delivery of the plan with the Board acknowledging the difficulties of this. They endorsed the approach within the plan ie for staff to be more flexible and adaptable to changing needs; working better across the council and with partners; and the need for the council to be more enterprising and to find innovative solutions to the problems we face not least of which being the financial context. The Board recognised the progress in this area but also agreed that there was work still to be done.

A number of more specific points were raised:

1. The Board asked for clarification about the audience for the plan was this internal or external? It was agreed that this was primarily internal (both officers and members) as it aims to provide a clear set of priorities for the council. But as we are a public facing organisation with links to the City Priority Plan and the Best City outcomes then it also had an external audience.
2. Linked to this it was raised that the language used was not as clear or accessible as it could be. *Action: in finalising the plan the text has been reviewed and amended with this in mind. Also a single page summary has been produced that will be used to communicate the plan more widely and work is underway to develop a communications plan that will look at the needs of, and tailor communications to, the key audiences.*
3. The Board were concerned that some of the targets/success measures were not measurable and also felt that there was not always a balance between the 2013/14 compared to the March 2017. *Action: in finalising the plan this has been specific discussed with each Directorate and changes have been made in a number of areas.*
4. Members felt that they would need more detail on the accountability arrangements, the starting point and the interim delivery milestones to enable them to better fulfil their role as a critical friend. *Action: further work is underway to develop the wrap around performance management and accountability arrangements which will be consulted on with Scrutiny before they are finalised.*
5. There was a specific discussion around the objective on maximising income and trading and how well prepared we are for this change in approach. However, it was agreed that there are already some examples where we already do this successfully. Members were also keen that thought is given to potential un-intended consequences of trading where the council might be competing with local businesses which could be counter-productive to . *Action: this is area of work is still being developed a shaped and this feedback has been shared with the lead officer for consideration in developing plans in this area.*

6. Specific gaps were raised in the following areas:

- a. Mental health and in particular the employment issues related to this. **Response:** *this is in the process of being agreed as a “must do” within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Best City Plan. Therefore, this issue is already identified as a partnership priority.*
- b. Should community asset transfer to community or voluntary organisations be included with the objective on using our assets effectively objective. **Response:** *this is an option that will be considered are part of this work on a case by case basis in line with the agreed Community Asset Transfer framework. Therefore, it is considered too detailed an issue for this high level plan and is covered by service plans and other specific plans being developed around this objective.*
- c. Housing need - there was some discussion about whether the targets within the plan go far enough to meet the needs of the city, in particular for social housing. There was some discussion of the work already underway to develop the core strategy that is progressing this issue particularly around site allocations. **Response:** *this is a longer term issue and one which is influenced by many wider factors including access to funding and the broader economic conditions. However, the housing targets will be reviewed annually so that they can reflect work that continues through the Core Strategy and the Housing and Regeneration Board.*

Appendix 3 – Revised Equality Improvement Priorities 2013-15

The Best Council Plan draws together the council's contribution to the City Priority Plan with those areas and priorities specific to the council itself. There are a number of cross cutting equality objectives included in the Best Council Plan which provide the building blocks for ensuring that equality is embedded in all our service delivery and as an employer.

They are outlined here:

Council Value

Working with communities

Leeds communities are changing and it is vital that we have a clear understanding of who our citizens are in order to provide appropriate services in the most appropriate way.

Equality focus (objective)

There is good evidence of the equalities profile of Leeds, based on national and local data, which is regularly reviewed.

Equality Performance Area - Understanding our communities

Council Value

Being open, honest and trusted Treating people fairly

We will give due consideration to equality and diversity when we develop policies and make decisions. We will ensure that we fully understand the impacts of changed funding on different communities, and take this into account when making decisions

Equality focus (objective)

Councillors and Officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to Leeds are taken into account when making major decisions

Equality Performance Area – Showing leadership and working in partnership

Council Value

Working with communities

We will ensure communities are effectively able to influence what we do

Equality focus (objective)

Equality groups are integrally involved in consultation and engagement activities

Equality Performance Area - Involving our communities

Council Value

Treating people fairly

We will understand the make-up of our workforce and work to ensure it is representative of the population of Leeds

Equality focus (objective)

- To make the council an 'employer of choice' for people from groups in our communities whose diverse backgrounds are not yet fully represented in our workforce
- To demonstrate increased engagement, year on year, for staff from groups whose diversity is not yet fully represented in our workforce.
- To improve opportunities for progression to senior levels in the organisation particularly for black, and minority ethnic and disabled staff

Equality Performance Area - A modern and diverse workforce

City Priority Plan - Best city...for communities

Priority - Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Address the impact of burglary on Vulnerable Communities	There is an identified need to better assess the impact of burglary on emerging communities.
Tackle domestic violence and protect and support the most vulnerable young people	The overwhelming majority of domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women and children.
Improve citywide approaches to dealing with hate crime	Disability, race, homophobic and transphobic hate crime is experienced by many people.

Priority - Increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
There is a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities	In 2010/11 a small but concerning trend in youth related anti-social behaviour and damage which suggest deliberate targeting of vulnerable victims (adults with learning disabilities, BME residents in predominantly White British neighbourhoods, gay or lesbian couples) was recognised.

City Priority Plan - **Best city...for children and young people**

Priority - Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
(taken from the Children and Young People's Plan)

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Support children from all equality communities to be ready for learning	There are lower levels of attainment for some BME communities, people with special educational needs and those from poorer areas.

City Priority Plan - **Best city...to live**

Priority - Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Ensure that housing and regeneration investment meets the changing needs of individuals and communities	Households headed by women with children, BME groups and those living in the social rented sector are more likely to live in overcrowded or substandard housing. There are also significantly higher numbers of BME people and people with disabilities who are unemployed.

Priority - Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Improve energy efficiency	Many households containing people recovering from long term illness, disabled people, and pensioners cannot afford to heat their homes.

City Priority Plan - **Best city...for health and wellbeing**

Priority - Increase the number of people supported to live safely in their own home

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Better Lives through integration All citizens of Leeds will have access to, and benefit from, joined up services provided by integrated health and social care teams.	'Making it Real' markers are being used to understand how well Leeds is doing in making personalisation real for all citizens: Flexible integrated care and support – my support, my own way

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
<p>Better Lives through Housing Care and Support We will promote achievement of agreed personal outcomes (including increasing access and the equity of access to services) across all equality characteristics to encompass all communities and citizens of Leeds.</p>	<p>The following 'Making it Real' markers are being used:</p> <p>Active and supportive communities – keeping friends family and place Risk enablement – feeling in control and safe Personal budgets and self-funding – my money</p>

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
<p>Better Lives through Enterprise All citizens will have access to appropriate services and or support, with assistance to develop appropriate services from within the community.</p>	<p>The following 'Making it Real' markers are being used:</p> <p>Information and Advice – having the information I need, when I need it Active and supportive communities – keeping friends family and place Risk enablement – feeling in control and safe Personal budgets and self-funding – my money</p>

City Priority Plan - Best city...for business

Priority - Create more jobs and improve skills

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
<p>Increase access to employment opportunities and up-skill the workforce</p>	<p>There are lower levels of skills and employment amongst some communities in particular some BME groups, and disabled people.</p>

Priority - Support the sustainable growth of the Leeds' economy

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
<p>Improve financial inclusion</p>	<p>Lack of access to financial services disproportionately affects lone parents (typically female) disabled people, people with mental health illness, and those living in poorer areas.</p>

Priority - Improve journey times and the reliability of public transport

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Enable access for all to local services, education and employment centres by public transport	Disabled and elderly people have specific concerns in accessing transport.

Priority - Get more people involved in the city's cultural opportunities

Equality focus (objective)	Equality analysis
Increase participation in Leeds' cultural and sporting opportunities	People from poorer areas, BME people and disabled people do not access sport services as much as others. Low numbers of disabled people access libraries.
Enhance the quality of Leeds' Parks	Disabled people, those from a BME background, and men tend to visit parks less than other groups.