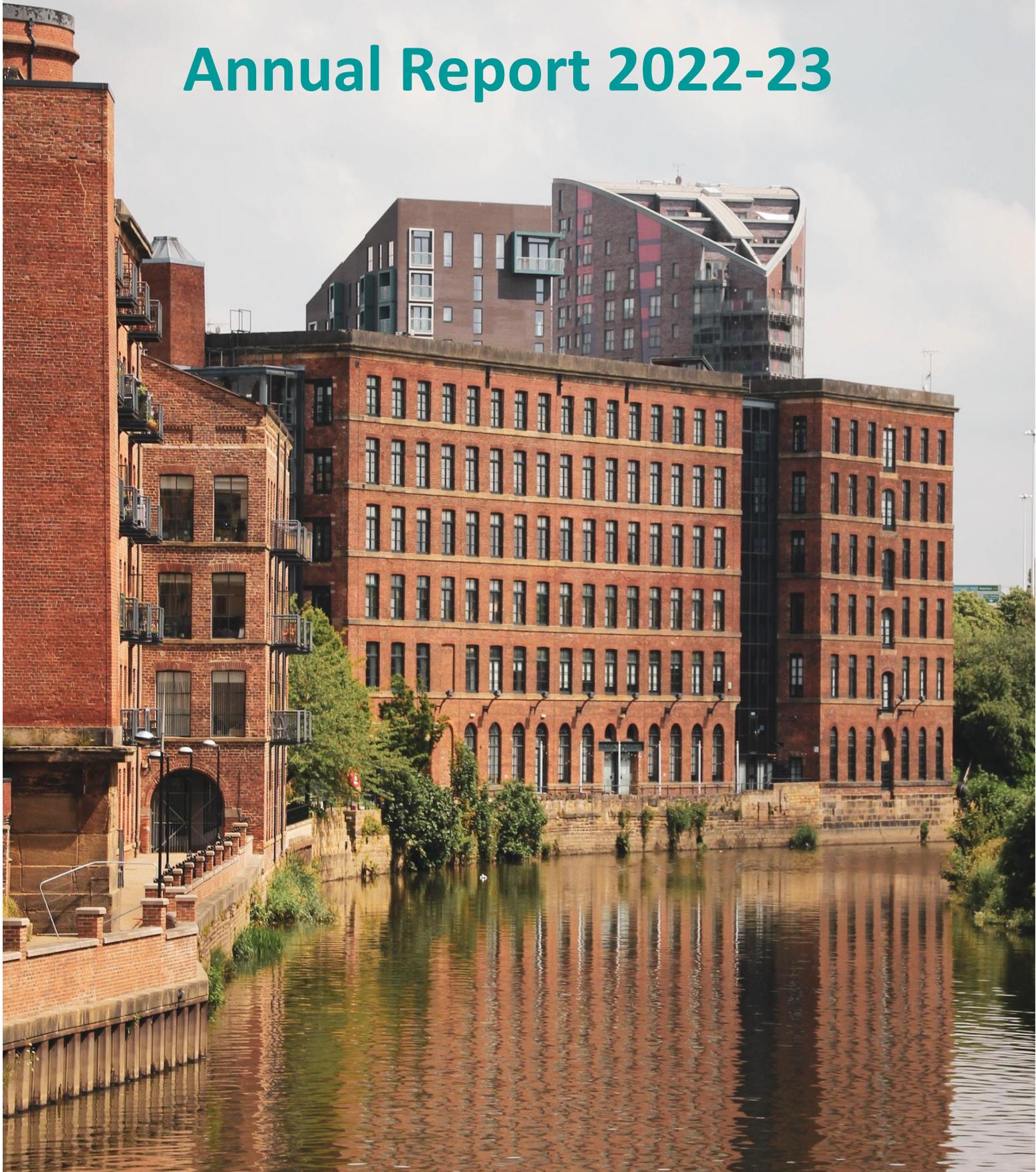


Plans Panels and Development Plan Panel Annual Report 2022-23



Introduction

Welcome to this annual report covering April 2022 to March 2023. The role of the Plans Panels is to determine the applications which fall under the Chief Planning Officer's "Exceptions" in the Delegation Scheme; therefore, this report is not intended to reflect the work of the Development Management or Enforcement Service per se but instead focus on the work and activity undertaken by the three Area Plans Panels and the Development Plan Panel. It also highlights and reviews some of the activity in this period and describes some of the key achievements in helping deliver the Best City ambitions for Leeds. As well as reflecting on the reporting period, this Annual Report also looks ahead to 2023-24 and describes some of the key challenges coming forward.

Over 15 residential schemes have been determined by Plans Panels to deliver the homes the city needs as well as a number of schemes for purpose-built student accommodation to help house the city's student population. A number of 3G pitches have also been determined; these can be controversial with issues around the perceived environmental and health risks; however Members have dealt with these appropriately, focussing on the planning matters with other issues covered by legislation and other guidance. A refocused Member referral to Panel process, supported by reasons for referral based on planning material considerations ensures that the work of the Panels is directed and can add value.

The work of the Plans Panels can be challenging, balancing the current and future needs of the district, delivering the inclusive growth needed, whilst still taking account of local communities; all of this delivered within the national legislative and policy driven framework of what is possible lawfully and what is not. In facilitating this process, through the Plans Panel Chairs (and Panel members), a framework exists which enables opportunities for pre-application presentations, position statements and the ability for community representatives to address the Panel to share their concerns and ideas, in addition to the public speaking rights at the final determination stage.

At the time of writing this report, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill on 26 October 2023 received royal assent, becoming an Act. Whilst this event is outside of the reporting period for this report, the Act will have significant implications for the Local Planning Authority and consequently the Plans Panel and Development Plan Panel, who will respond accordingly; this is especially key given the ongoing budgetary and resourcing pressures.

The work of the Development Plan Panel continues to set ambitious planning policies for the district that respond to our net zero, inclusive growth and health and well-being priorities. These are being progressed through the two Local Plan Updates and also supplementary planning documents on Highways matters and the Innovation Arc in the City Centre. In recognition of the importance of public engagement in the planning, the Panel endorsed an updated Statement of Community Involvement, which uniquely applied targets to seek to improve response rates from all wards and from younger people.

Finally, the work of the Plans Panels and Development Plan Panel continue to deliver positive outcomes for the district and the people of Leeds. Through the work of the Panels,

long term investment is secured, environmental improvements are made and any negative impacts upon communities are mitigated. This approach therefore reflects the priorities of the adopted Local Plan and the Council's Best City ambitions for inclusive growth, responding to the climate emergency and health and wellbeing. We look forward to another successful year ahead.



Cllr Helen Hayden,
Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Plans Panel activity 2022-23



31 Plans Panel meetings and 4 Development Plan Panel meetings



Pre-application presentations including new homes at land on Sweet Street and Headrow House



Granted permission for over 4,000 new homes, including co-living scheme and affordable rent scheme



Determined six schemes incorporating Purpose Built Student Accommodation



almost £5m in offsite contributions from approved schemes delivered through Section 106 agreements

Generated

£4.15m

in Community Infrastructure Levy through approved schemes

Significant schemes considered by the Plans Panel

Mixed use development at 10-81 Kirkstall Road for c.1,500 flats, c.5000 sqm of commercial and community uses, new riverside public realm and river footbridge



Mixed tenure residential scheme consisting of 11 blocks of apartments, including 1 block of 362 student rooms. The scheme also includes 14 Town Houses and four low-rise non-residential buildings, along with landscaping and parking. Commercial and community uses at ground-floor level. New bridge for pedestrians and cyclists, linking the site to the wider cycle network, along with a riverside walkway. 7% of the

total units would be committed for affordable housing, with a further 28% affordable housing provision secured via Homes England funding

Capitol Park, Topcliffe Lane, Morley for large warehouse/business units covering over 38ha, including provision of enhanced public spaces and connections to existing residential areas



The development relates to a key General Employment Allocation, 38.44 hectares in size. The employment site is recognised within the Local Planning Authority's Development Plan, and identified as a suitable general employment site within the Site Allocation Plan (SAP) 2019.

Leeds Golf Centre, Wike Ridge Lane – extensions and annexe building to existing clubhouse including changes to the car park, the construction of 35 holiday lodges with associated landscaping and parking and outline planning for change of use of agricultural land to golf course, realignment of the existing driving range, creation of adventure golf area and alterations to existing golf course to create footgolf course.



This proposal at Panel generated extensive Member discussion regarding the importance of the Green Belt and the appropriateness of rural tourism development and was subsequently refused, in accordance with the officer recommendation

Land Off Racecourse Approach, Wetherby – a reserved matters scheme for 762 dwellings



This scheme represented a significant residential development in Wetherby and one of the larger housing in the Site Allocations Plan. This development proposal was of significant interest within the local community and Members noted the quality of the public consultation undertaken by the developer and the proactive approach by officers in engaging on this scheme.

Development comprising 58 apartments for affordable rent, including communal and ancillary spaces on land at Railway Street, Saxton Gardens



100% affordable housing scheme but following concerns by Members relating to the housing mix and amenity standards improvements were secured in addition to improved pedestrian links.

Conversion and extension of Belmont House to create 9 apartments and 1 town house: Demolition of Roundhouse and the construction of one block of 8 apartments: demolition of the coach house and the construction of one block 6 apartments 20 Wood Lane, Headingley Racecourse



Sensitive location with residential boundaries. Following Panel concerns, the scheme was amended to reduce the height and dominance of the proposed extension to Belmont House, and to strengthen tree protection and sustainability requirements and provide appropriate affordable housing and green space levels.

Development Plans Panel

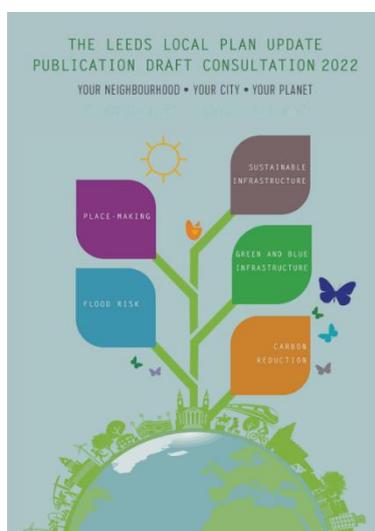
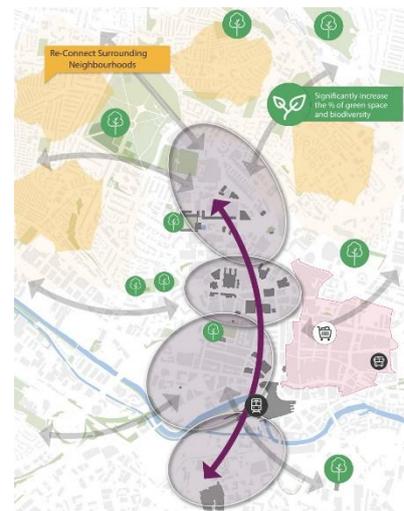
The main focus of the Development Plans Panel has been progressing updates to the Leeds Local Plan, but it also focussed on agreeing a revised Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), an Innovation District SPD in the City Centre and a revised Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) revision sets out how Leeds City Council should undertake consultation and engagement on Local Plan documents and planning applications, detailing how we will comply with statutory requirements and to help ensure that the consultation and engagement that we undertake is inclusive. The SCI developed new principles and uniquely, a set of targets to enable us to assess whether we are increasing our reach with engagement within different communities around the district e.g. across all wards and with younger people as well as seeking feedback on the consultations themselves.

The Transport SPD brought several existing technical documents together and updated them to reflect the Council declared Climate Emergency as well as the Connecting Leeds Strategy. It sets out guidance to be used by developers, design teams and others, and seeks to stimulate innovative designs that are appropriate for the context, character and location of a site and can be used safely by the travelling public. Designs are encouraged to incorporate quality approved sustainable materials that are low carbon, visually attractive, require minimum maintenance, and are in keeping with the specific local character of the area.

The Innovation Arc, set in the west of the city centre, contains a significant cluster of innovation assets both in the private and public sectors. The Panel steered development of an SPD to support the city to respond to the opportunity this cluster presents and set out the barriers to unlock and principles for the area's ongoing development, including

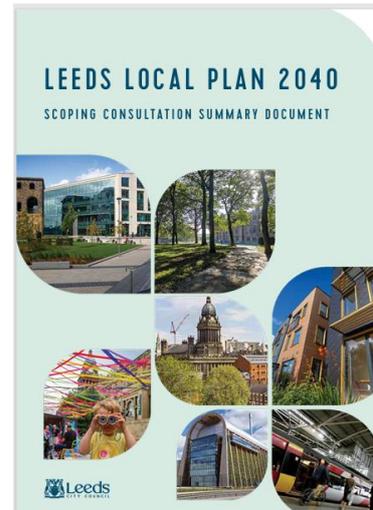
considering the heritage assets and active travel connectivity within the area.



In terms of the Local Plan the work of the Panel was in two parts. The first, the Leeds Local Plan Update – “Your City, Your Neighbourhood, Your Planet” focuses on the Council’s efforts to tackle the climate emergency, net zero, green and blue infrastructure, flood risk, sustainable infrastructure and place making. The Panel steered the development of Regulation 19 draft policies which were consulted on in December 2022 and reported back to the Panel in January 2023. This work was supported by two informal DPP workshops in place of formal meetings.

The second, began the process of a root and branch review of the existing Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plans – the “Leeds Local Plan 2022 – 2040”. This plan was consulted on in early 2023 and it sets out the intent to consider revising policies on:

- Spatial Strategy – where new development should take place
- Housing – what type and size of new housing is needed
- Economic Development – whether more land is required for new / expanding businesses
- Role of City and Local Centres – do we need to protect facilities and services in our centres
- Minerals & Waste – how we manage waste and the extraction of resources while protecting local environments
- Transport & Connectivity – integrating accessible and sustainable travel throughout the District



This work was supported by two informal DPP workshops in place of formal meetings

Reflecting on the year

Member training

All Plans Panel members and substitute Plans Panel members in 2022-23 have undertaken the prescribed compulsory training. Additionally, a programme of discretionary member training produced for 2022 23. Sessions were made available to all members of the Council and four sessions were offered: • Affordable Housing • Carbon Reduction & Environmental Improvement • Enforcement • Conservation

Joint Plans Panel

A meeting of the Joint Plans Panel took place in July 2022, (an informal meeting of all the Plans Panel and Development Plan Panel) and discussed:

- 2021- 22 Performance of the service
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

...and looking ahead to 2023-24

There are a number of changes which will impact on the work of the Plans Panels and Development Plans Panel during the forthcoming year and include:

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA)

The long-awaited Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was enacted on 26 October 2023. Whilst this event falls outside of the reporting period of this annual report, the implications arising from this new Act will need to be considered and implemented by the service in the years to come. The LURA is intended to both bring in key provisions to bring

forward the government's levelling-up agenda, while making statutory changes that underpin a number of proposed planning reforms.

It contains provisions to ensure local planning authorities have design codes in place covering their entire area, changes to national development management policies and environmental outcome reports. It also strengthens the powers and sanctions available to local planning authorities' enforcement processes to deal with individuals who fail to abide by the rules and process of the planning system. The LURA is also the starting block for replacing the current system of developer contributions via Section 106 planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy, through a new Infrastructure Levy and a new requirement to prepare infrastructure delivery strategies.

Possible Government response to feedback on proposed changes to plan-making

DLUHC launched a 12-week consultation on plan-making on 25 July, setting out how it expects councils to ensure that plans take no more than 30 months to produce. The consultation, designed to implement changes to plan-making contained in the LURA, proposes six stages for local plan preparation and three mandatory gateway checks involving inspectors, all of which must be completed within the 30-month timescale. Development Plan Panel considered this at their September 2023 meeting.

The department intends to have in place the regulations, policy and guidance to support the new system by autumn 2024. At that point it will begin by testing the system with around ten authorities, under a phased roll-out approach, before further authorities are grouped together in batches of 25 or fewer from June 2025, to start work on new-style plans.

City-wide Design Code

The Government is keen to delivery design quality as well as quantity, especially in new housing. Design quality underpins the placemaking policies of the Leeds Local Plan Update, which is soon to be submitted to Government for independent examination. The Government's chosen method to roll out better design is through Design Codes, which will have full weight in decision making and are a set of concise, illustrated design requirements to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. Preparing a new design code will be a requirement of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act and will add to the existing duties of the planning department.

Bio Diversity Net Gain

The requirement to ensure that all development approved via the planning process delivers 10% biodiversity net gain is due to come into force early 2024. While the mandate was brought in via the 2021 Environment Act, the government is yet to publish much of the regulations setting out precisely how the system will work. Members of Development Plan Panel have been kept updated on the implications for the service. At the same time as responding to the new burdens that this will place on the service the Council is exploring the opportunities for delivery of biodiversity improvements on its own land.