

# Leeds Ambitions



A city at its best

Healthy ● Growing ● Thriving ● Resilient





# Foreword

**Ambition is something we understand well in Leeds. It runs through our communities, businesses and public institutions. Ambition has defined the character of Leeds across its history, sometimes attainable, often challenging, but the drive to succeed and feel pride in our city is something you can sense every day you spend here.**

The Leeds Ambitions capture that collective feeling. They reflect the things the people of Leeds have told us they are ambitious about and what they want for the future. Through the Ambitions we have set out a series of goals to work towards together as Team Leeds - not an easy task, but one that we know will help Leeds and all its people reach their full potential.

At the heart of this work is a mission to tackle poverty and inequality to enable everyone to enjoy a share of the city's success. That means taking on the tough, entrenched issues which have challenged our communities and city for years - and doing this more effectively by working at both a city level as a group of partners and alongside the people most affected at neighbourhood level. The Leeds Ambitions sets out a plan for how we will aim to do that.

Next year will mark 400 years since Leeds received its first royal charter to become an 'incorporated borough' - granted its first powers of self-government. Four centuries later we are embarking on a new era of devolved power with the English Devolution Bill set to give our city and region greater control over the levers which can accelerate inclusive economic growth. Unlocking this growth by working in partnership across Leeds and West Yorkshire is crucial if we are going to achieve the goals we set out in the Leeds Ambitions - it is how we bring in new investment, how we see productivity and wages increase to put more money in people's pockets, and how we position Leeds at the forefront of taking on the big social and environmental challenges of our time.

We have huge strengths to build on and a level of potential that many other places in the UK would envy. Leeds is already the largest financial and professional services centre outside London, generating £11bn in GVA per year and providing one in five jobs in the city. We are a major centre for health and digital technology with leading strengths in HealthTech and FinTech. We are at the forefront of the green agenda with the UK's first climate commission started here and a key part of our Team Leeds partnership. These assets and many more, alongside a fundamental commitment to use public powers to drive inclusivity, reduce health inequalities and tackle climate change mean we are uniquely positioned to lead the way in building a modern, tech-enabled economy which can support people to live healthier lives and truly provide opportunity for everyone.

We will find challenges along the way, not least the need to embark on fundamental reform and integration of services across the public sector so they become more financially sustainable in a changing world. But in Team Leeds we have the capability, resilience and passion to face those challenges head on.

Everyone in Leeds has an important part to play in the journey to take the Leeds Ambitions forward over the next decade. Hearing the voices and harnessing the energy of us all is how we will power this movement together. To everyone who is part of Team Leeds and will be in the future - thank you.

**Councillor James Lewis,  
Leader of Leeds City Council**

*James Lewis*





# Introduction

This is a plan for the City of Leeds - owned and driven forward by organisations and people in every part of the city. Our shared goal is that Leeds reaches its full potential - for everyone living, working, studying or visiting here, it really is the best city.

We know this will not happen if we do not tackle

**poverty and inequality in Leeds**

...so this is our core mission

This is a bold ambition, that will need the participation and contribution of every organisation working in the city. It requires all of us to give our best, and to support each other to do so. And to be bold in sharing resources generously - of time, expertise and where we have it, money - so that every pound or hour spent or invested in Leeds goes as far as possible. When we talk about 'Team Leeds', this is what we mean.

## Our Four Ambitions

The Four Ambitions we have for Leeds are the priorities we choose to achieve this mission of reducing poverty and inequality - providing a framework as the city's anti-poverty strategy. They capture what we have heard from people and communities and what we have learned from doing this work together over the last couple of decades. They are informed by what partners across the city see as the biggest opportunities ahead of the greatest challenges we must overcome to unlock our potential. The Ambitions sharpen our focus on the things that will make the biggest difference to improving people's lives in Leeds over the next decade.

As well as pulling together across our city, achieving each of these Ambitions means collaborating at a local, regional and national scale, working closely with West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin - including through the [West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan](#) - with the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, and with counterparts in neighbouring areas and other major cities to deliver the best for Leeds communities and shape our city's future.

**Health and Wellbeing**

HEALTHY

**Inclusive Growth**

GROWING

**Strong Communities**

THRIVING

**Sustainable City**

RESILIENT





# Leeds in 2025

## ...an evolving city in a changing context

Working collectively to drive forward our city's future is not new to us in Leeds. Across the city and in every community, our partnerships have a strong track record of improving people's lives and developing our places to make Leeds the best city to live, work, play, study and visit.

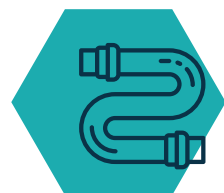
Over recent years, by working together as Team Leeds, we have:



Built new and affordable homes at the fastest rate since the 1980s, with over **4,400** homes built last year alone and 1.5% of all new homes in England over the last five years.



Developed innovative new approaches that promote greater independence through intermediate care, with over **1,200** fewer hospital admissions annually.



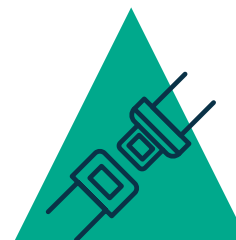
Created one of the UK's largest and fastest growing heat networks, with Leeds PIPES now serving more than **3,000** homes and businesses.



Brought statutory services together with the voluntary and community sector to integrate activity so it better serves local people, reducing the number of Leeds neighbourhoods featuring in the bottom 1% of the English Indices of Deprivation.



Raised the public and private sector finance needed to complete ambitious **£200m** flood alleviation schemes, including introducing new innovations to the UK for the first time.



Stopped the increase, and started to see a decline, in the number of people being killed or seriously injured on Leeds roads - bucking regional and national trends.



Built strong relationships between NHS, council, third sector and community partners in Local Care Partnerships to provide joined up support to the **45,000** residents who have complex health needs.



Continued to see relative success in reducing homelessness, with around **66%** fewer households in temporary accommodation than the Core Cities average.



Delivered Early Help Services that respond to families when they reach out for help, providing support at the earliest point before situations become worse. Families can approach anyone working with them who will respond, assess need, and connect with the right people to identify how help should be provided.

...making Leeds the best city to live, work, play, study and visit





These examples demonstrate that our Team Leeds approach can and does work, helping us to grow the city and improve people's lives. But we also know we are working in a complex and changing world where national and global factors influence what happens here in Leeds.

Our city itself is also continuing to change – often in ways which add to the richness and diversity of our culture and communities, but at times also in a way which highlights the big challenges we continue to face, particularly around the impact of poverty and inequality.



Our population continues to rise – increasing by **9%** over the last decade and projected to keep growing at a rate of **3%** to 2035.



Like everywhere in the UK, we have an ageing population, with the number of people aged 80–84 expected to increase by **27%** by 2030.



We also see growth in our younger population too, with a more than **6%** rise in the number of 15–19-year-olds by 2030.



We see demand for services across the public and third sectors continuing to increase – with challenges on both volume and complexity in cases causing pressure on the front line and challenging financial sustainability of the system.



Population growth is fastest in our low-income communities where people are more likely to experience poverty – at a time when we already have a quarter of adults and a third of children living in neighbourhoods amongst the **10%** most deprived nationally.



Poverty and inequality in Leeds is stubborn and entrenched, with around **20–22%** people living in relative poverty each year for more than a decade, despite all the good work ongoing in the city.



The Leeds economy remains strong and resilient, with business confidence in the service sector on the rise, but national and global factors mean this remains a volatile picture.



As with other Core Cities, productivity levels in our economy remain stubbornly low and lag behind London and the South East. Closing this gap would mean **£3bn** extra added to the UK economy each year.

Responding in the right way to these challenges is a big part of how we will take forward our Ambitions for Leeds. That task will not be easy, but we also have reasons to be optimistic.

### We are putting communities first

With a more than 10-year track record as innovators in Asset Based Community Development, a decade of children growing up with outstanding children's services, cross-city commitments to promoting lived experience and citizen voices, and services evolving to work with communities in a more integrated way, closer to where they live.

### We are tackling climate change

With Leeds seen as providing global leadership, the city's emissions reducing by **38%** since 2005, with the council achieving a **63%** reduction, and organisations across Leeds aiming to reach net zero.

### We are growing our economy, and progress is accelerating

With the biggest jobs growth in knowledge-intensive businesses of all UK cities since 2010 and a labour market rich in future talent with over **75,000** students a year and a net 'brain gain'.

### We are working to overcome our transport challenge

With Leeds remaining the largest city in Western Europe without a mass transit system, and just **38%** of the population being able to reach the city centre in 30 minutes by public transport, but West Yorkshire Mass Transit is coming!

### We are investing in the future

With a **£7billion+** investment pipeline we are ready to deliver major transformative projects over the next five years, including Mass Transit and our Vision for Leeds to build around **50,000** new homes



# Our TEAM LEEDS Approach

It is about sharing ideas and learning, working in genuine partnership in the city and across West Yorkshire, being ambitious about our collective social, economic and environmental impact, and using our buildings, assets, relationships and other resources more collectively and creatively to deliver on shared goals.

We see **Team Leeds** as an **ever-evolving movement** which everyone is invited to be part of - made up of the people who live or work here, and those who champion all of the distinct and diverse parts of the city nationally and internationally. Team Leeds is more than just a slogan; it is a real-life way of thinking and working that we see every day in our communities. The challenge for us now is to build on what we have already achieved and take this approach to the next level, growing our collective impact and ensuring Team Leeds is truly owned and driven by everyone in Leeds – people, communities, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and public and private sectors.

“ Team Leeds is about supporting one another to **make Leeds the best it can be** ”

Across our partnership we have developed a set of ways of working to strengthen and grow the Team Leeds approach. They are designed to sit alongside individual and organisational values - ideally being reflection in organisational and strategic plans across the city. They should guide the way we conduct our partnership working, and act as an informal and supportive set of expectations we can have of one another.

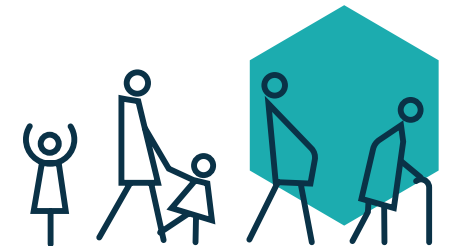
Throughout all the ways of working runs a **core commitment to tackling systemic injustice, and promoting the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion**. Organisations across Team Leeds have clear commitments to this in how they do business and support their own workforces, and together we bring these same values into our partnership work together.

We will promote and adopt these ways of working to drive a successful Team Leeds approach:



## CHAMPIONING COMMUNITY POWER

Expanding on work to shift power to people so they can make the positive changes they want to see, strengthening prevention, promoting inclusion and enabling communities to thrive in places they love.



## PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Listening and communicating with compassion to focus on what people can do not what they can't, supported by better integration and co-ordination of services in our communities.



## CREATING SOCIAL VALUE

Encouraging every business and organisation to be an active part of Team Leeds by seeking to enhance their civic and social impact, contribute to the city and connect with their local community and nature.



## BEING EVIDENCE INFORMED

Making best use of data, research, technology and best practice from around the world to learn what matters most to people and focus on what works.



## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Harnessing the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, partnership ethos and 'get it done' attitude of Leeds, prioritising actions over words and delivering what we say we will.





Over the next 12 months Team Leeds will come together to create a shared plan for how we co-ordinate our activity focused around the four Ambitions for Leeds. In doing this we will continue to evolve the depth of our work together, putting the ways or working into action to increase the collective impact we are making.

### Creating the leadership needed around the Four Ambitions

Each of the Four Ambitions will be championed by a convenor who will bring the city together to co-ordinate work and drive progress. Those convenors will ensure partners stay connected throughout the year, with a clear focus on understanding where we are collectively achieving what we want to, and any areas where change is needed to ensure we maintain momentum. We will use the State of the City event every December to bring the total of that work together, celebrate our successes, and identify key focus areas for the year ahead.

### Understanding our strengths, challenges and areas of opportunity

While our challenges are great and often our resources are increasingly stretched, we also have a wealth of knowledge, skills, experience and connections in Leeds. With all organisations under financial pressure, working together effectively to reform services and strengthen prevention working increasingly at neighbourhood level to manage demand in the right way is imperative in the years ahead. We will enhance our approach across Team Leeds to sharing data, mapping our resources and aligning our activity under each Ambition so we can better support one another and unlock added value wherever it might exist. We will develop this work over the coming months, with more detailed plans published by Summer 2026.

### Deepening our connections across the city to drive bigger impact

Growing and deepening the ethos we have around distributed and generous leadership in Team Leeds will be key in achieving our Ambitions. We will continue to promote inclusion and empower people to step forward and take responsibility, but while ensuring different areas of activity are well connected so action is taken in a joined-up way. Renewed focus will be given to strengthening collaboration and resource exchange between the private and third sectors to unlock greater social value which is equitably accessed and distributed. We will also accelerate plans for a Community Power Engine Room to support Team Leeds to put our ambitions in this area into practice more consistently.

Throughout the city conversation that has informed the creation of the Leeds Ambitions, we heard a consistent sense amongst partners and leaders in Leeds that there is scope to simplify the strategies and partnerships we have in place – removing duplication, making governance more consistent, and making our strategies easier to navigate for practitioners and the public alike. Over 2025/26, and as the impact of changes brought about by national

Government becomes clearer, we will explore options to respond to this feedback.

Everyone is invited to be an active part of Team Leeds and there are lots of ways you can get involved. You will find examples of the work we are doing together and contact points on the Leeds Ambition website

[www.leedsambitions.co.uk](http://www.leedsambitions.co.uk)

### Leeds Social Value Charter

To support efforts to unlock greater social value, Team Leeds will refresh the city's Social Value Charter to make sure every contract and investment delivers maximum benefit for our communities. The current Charter champions principles such as creating local jobs, supporting community-led organisations, buying sustainably and ethically, and keeping the "Leeds pound" in our local economy.

Yet, there is a shared sense we are not always getting the best we can through our current approach, with well-intentioned efforts scattered across less impactful activities, and no shared framework to direct them towards our city's biggest priorities.

The updated Charter will provide that strategic focus, aligning social value delivery with the goals set out in the Leeds Ambitions and bringing everyone to the table. By working in partnership across sectors, Leeds will ensure social value is a powerful, coordinated driver of lasting change.

### Leeds Philanthropy Strategy

There is growing interest in Leeds around how a bold city-level philanthropy strategy could unlock new resources to support delivery of the Leeds Ambitions in our communities. Building on national momentum for place-based giving, the strategy would celebrate our civic identity, connect those who have prospered here with opportunities to give back, and aim to attract support from the Leeds diaspora nationally and internationally.

Development will need to be undertaken in close partnership, and draw on the city's expertise in this space, with early steps including mapping our philanthropy ecosystem, learning from international best practice, and convening stakeholders from the VCSE sector, business, and local government to shape a compelling narrative which can spark a high level of interest.

By aligning local generosity with shared priorities, we can strengthen grassroots organisations, support transformative projects, and enhance Leeds's national and global profile – ensuring that our culture of giving becomes an impactful force in achieving the Leeds Ambitions.

### Leeds City Research Strategy

Team Leeds has a commitment to make best use of evidence in shaping our work, helping make the biggest possible positive impact with the resources we have. To accelerate and enhance this commitment, we are bringing together the knowledge and skills held in our communities and world-class universities to create an approach to research that addresses the priorities of people who live and work here.

Through partnerships including Leeds Academic Collaboration with the Third Sector and Leeds Academic Health Partnership, as well as through active community-led initiatives and the local implementation of Areas of Research Interest, we are mobilising academic expertise to better understand complex challenges, taking an evidence-based approach to policy, and creating practical solutions to help reduce poverty and inequality. As a city, strengthening our research and innovation ecosystem remain key priorities in unlocking the potential of the Leeds Ambitions.



# Four Ambitions for Leeds

**HEALTHY**

**GROWING**

**THRIVING**

**RESILIENT**

These Four Ambitions bring together the key priorities set out in the main strategies we are working together towards. They bring an overall focus to our shared vision for the future of Leeds - a city where we work collectively to tackle poverty and inequality in everything we do, and where in doing that we strive to grasp the huge opportunities Leeds will have in the decade ahead.

The Ambitions are set out here with the intention of encouraging businesses, organisations and communities across Leeds to be an active part of helping this city achieve its potential. We are not starting from scratch; there is outstanding work already happening across the city. We hope by connecting through the Leeds Ambitions we will enable more alignment of activities across organisations with this direction, so together we can unlock the added value of our work, improve its coherence and maximise the impact we can have collectively.

The Ambitions are not entirely independent of each other - in fact many of the biggest opportunities and challenges we see in Leeds would have an impact across most or all of them. This reflects the complex reality of people's lives, where our health, employment, housing, education and environment (to name just some!) are interconnected, with each factor influencing the others throughout our lives. The Ambitions are also not intended to reflect everything we are doing, but they highlight some key areas where across our partnerships we believe there is an opportunity to 'turn the dial' and accelerate progress in the city over the next decade.

These priorities are also set in the context of Leeds being the core city of our region, and the economic powerhouse of Yorkshire and the Humber. The Ambitions and goals position and connect Leeds to work at a regional level - aligning importantly with the West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan, regional and sub-regional climate and environment plans, and a range of sub-regional health strategies.

For each Ambition we have set out few highlights of the work Team Leeds is doing to take the city forward. Alongside this, the city insights provide a high-level indication of why the goals matter, where there are strengths and opportunities we are aiming to build on, or where we have a difficult challenge to overcome. More detail on both the work of Team Leeds and the analysis of the state of the city is available on the Leeds Ambitions website

[www.leedsambitions.co.uk](http://www.leedsambitions.co.uk)





# Four Ambitions for Leeds

[www.leedsambitions.co.uk](http://www.leedsambitions.co.uk)

## Strong Communities

Leeds will be a welcoming, safe and clean city where people have the power to make the changes that are important to them, with cohesive and united neighbourhoods where people are living healthier lives and enjoying the city's vibrant social, cultural and sporting offer.

## Health & Wellbeing

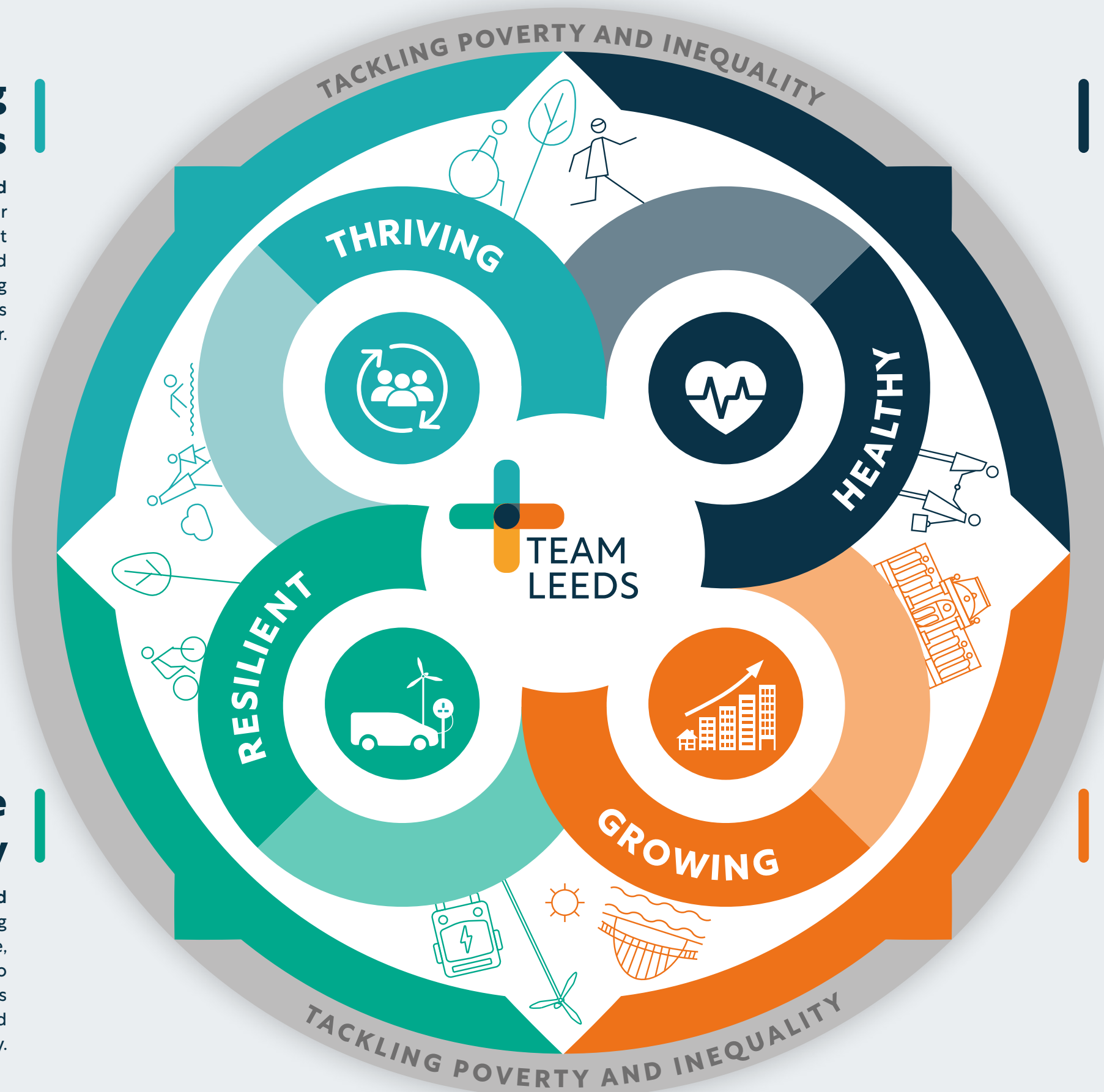
Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone: where together we create the conditions for healthier lives so people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest, and everyone is supported to thrive from early years to later life.

## Sustainable City

Leeds will be the UK's first net zero and nature positive city, rapidly reducing carbon emissions and restoring nature, supporting people and businesses to make increasingly sustainable choices that improve their standard of living and create a regenerative thriving city.

## Inclusive Growth

Leeds will be a place where we reduce poverty and inequality by creating growth in our economy that works for all, where everyone gets a great education, businesses find the talent they need to start, innovate and grow, investment increases and together we deliver an inclusive, healthier and more sustainable future.





# Health and Wellbeing



**HEALTHY**

**Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone:**  
where together we create the conditions for healthier lives so people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest, and everyone is supported to thrive from early years to later life.

## Three goals underpinning this Ambition:



Ensuring children have the best start in life in a child-friendly city, where they can enjoy a healthy, happy, friendly and safe childhood, and their right to play, have fun and enjoy nature is championed.



Creating a fairer, healthier city where we are reducing mental and physical health inequalities by ensuring everyone has access to the building blocks for good health and to clinical excellence in healthcare services.



Building an age-friendly city where people in later life are valued and age well, leading healthy, connected, fulfilling and independent lives.

## City Insights - Health and Wellbeing

Leeds has a life expectancy gap of 12.1 year (women) and 11.7 year (men) between the most and least affluent areas in Leeds.

Leeds has 61,500 unpaid carers, roughly 8% of the population delivering 1.4 million hours of unpaid care weekly - worth an estimated £1.4bn annually.

Mental ill-health is costing Leeds £500m due to lost productivity, benefit payments and pressure on health and social care services.

### Delivery partnership for the HEALTHY Ambition

Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

### With activity convened by

Sara Munro,  
Chief Executive of Leeds & York  
Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Leeds  
**Health and Wellbeing**  
Board



**Leeds and York Partnership**  
NHS Foundation Trust





# TEAM LEEDS

*activity to deliver this Ambition...*

As a city we are working collectively to create the conditions for good health within our communities – focusing on prevention, early intervention and tackling the root causes of health inequalities.

## Protecting people's health

In Leeds, health protection plans and services are delivered in an integrated way, through a robust system of partners that have achieved national recognition for their successes. This approach brings together Leeds City Council, local communities, third sector organisations, faith leaders and Elected Members to help shape how the city responds to and complex health risks, as seen during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Promoting good mental wellbeing

We are pulling together as a city to put mental health first, investing in resident and workplace wellbeing and equitable access to the things that promote mental wellbeing, including good education, meaningful work, and quality green spaces. Our city initiatives are nationally recognised, such as [Being You Leeds](#), [Mindful Employer](#) and the [Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service](#). spark a high level of interest.

## Getting people moving

Leeds Everyone Move More aims to address the significant inequalities in physical activity levels that exist across Leeds; inactivity levels in many low-income communities are nearly double those of the most affluent areas. Through the city's Physical Activity Ambition, Leeds City Council is leading work supported by a wide range of partners to deliver projects such as Get Set Leeds – [Local and Active Travel Social Prescribing](#), alongside developing a city-wide plan for active ageing and generating funding to create more spaces to be active, such as play zones and bike hubs.

## Improving health through housing

This programme brings together NHS and third sector organisations, Leeds City Council, and housing associations to improve health by addressing poor housing. One intervention aimed at addressing housing issues for patients who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness has received 376 referrals, with one case alone saving Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust £38,000 in hospital bed days by fast-tracking the patient's housing repairs.

## Giving children the best start in life

Part of being a Child Friendly City, the city's Best Start and Beyond Alliance is aiming to improve population health and reduce inequalities for children aged 0 – 5, recognising the significant and stubborn inequality gap we continue to see between children in Leeds depending on the circumstances into which they are born. The Alliance has developed plans to improve early years education and attainment; healthy weight; oral health; publishing a clear start for life offer; speech language and communication; preparation for parenthood and parenting support; housing; healthy preconception; and the first 1001 days.

## Harnessing creativity to support wellbeing

Leeds is trailblazing new approaches to creative health, connecting practitioners, health professionals, commissioners, and communities, and the city is helping define what a creative, connected approach to wellbeing looks like. Partnerships such as the [Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network](#) – which recently [published a collaborative report](#) with third sector infrastructure organisations on the creative health space in Leeds – are driving this work by supporting creative health activities tailored to local communities and specific population groups, delivered in local places and focus on creating and maintaining resident health.

Our health and care system, enabled by robust strategic partnerships and a commitment to public service reform, supports people of all ages and demographics to manage their health and live independently.

## Improving health and wellbeing in neighbourhoods

Improving the delivery of health and care services through more joined-up ways of working, more effective use of data and shared resources. In Leeds, this work sets out to improve health outcomes, providing person-centred care where everyone will experience better communication, effective coordination, and compassion in the delivery of services. We are building on strong foundations of service collaboration and partnership with the third sector, with ambitions to explore development of a total place-style approach as part of this work.

## Transforming intermediate care


[HomeFirst](#) is transforming intermediate care across the city, providing more joined up care close to home, enabling people to live more independent lives. This collaboration between health and care partners, Leeds City Council and VCSE organisations has led to over 1,200 fewer hospital admissions annually, a reduction in hospital stays by a third, and more people receiving care in better settings.

### Transforming community mental health

This programme is transforming how primary and community mental health services are delivered, bringing together NHS organisations, Leeds City Council, the VCSE sector, and shaped by people with lived experience. The work aims to provide people with early access to the right care and support they need, close to home.

### Establishing a provider partnership

Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust (LCH), Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTH), and Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LYPFT) are working with Leeds City Council to form a formal ‘provider partnership’ that will improve people’s health, join up care, and create a more local, neighbourhood-based health service to help deliver shared priorities. It follows the national direction of travel towards provider collaboration.



**Leeds is a global leader in health and care innovation - our research strengths and health partnerships drive change locally, attracting investment and national recognition.**


### Developing world-leading innovation

Led by health and care research and innovation partners and working through the Leeds Academic Health Partnership, Health Innovation Leeds is a city-wide innovation hub showcasing world-leading developments in HealthTech, digital, data and AI. Health Innovation Leeds represents over 30 years in health and care research, receiving more than £200m in awards, £80m in National Institute for Health and Care Research funding since 2018, and places Leeds as the third top location for HealthTech companies internationally.

### Combining expertise to push what is possible

Partners across the city continue to support innovation in health and care driving collaboration and excellence through the Leeds Academic Health Partnership. We are working together to use our collective strengths to foster a thriving innovation ecosystem and support economic growth that benefits everyone. The evidence-led approach being taken means brings opportunities to attract talent and investment to Leeds and position the city as a globally leading health and care research and innovation destination. As part of that approach, partners continue to work with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and the world-leading clinicians and innovators through the Innovation Pop-Up who transform advances in science and technology into real work solutions.





#### Key supporting plans and strategies

- [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Healthy Leeds Plan](#)
- [All Age Mental Health Strategy](#)
- [Children and Young People’s Plan](#)
- [Age Friendly Strategy](#)

#### Main supporting partnerships

- [Health and Wellbeing Board](#)
- [Children & Young People’s Partnership](#)
- [Age Friendly Board](#)
- [Leeds Academic Health Partnership](#)
- [Marmot Strategic Partnership](#)
- [Leeds Health and Care Partnership](#)





## Inclusive Growth

**GROWING**

**Leeds will be a place where we reduce poverty and inequality by creating growth in our economy that works for all,** where everyone gets a great education, businesses find the talent they need to start, innovate and grow, investment increases and together we deliver an inclusive, healthier and more sustainable future.

## Three goals underpinning this Ambition:



Providing outstanding education and training to create the diverse, highly skilled, agile and resilient workforce our businesses and economy need for the future, growing and retaining talent in a city which supports everyone to reach their potential.



Growing the Leeds economy and stimulating innovation in key and emerging sectors, increasing public and private investment, improving productivity and creating good jobs.



Delivering the infrastructure and regeneration that meets housing needs, supports our sustainability aims and provides better connectivity to enable our communities, businesses and economy to be world leading.

## City Insights – Inclusive Growth

A £29bn economy, with Leeds the driving force of a regional economy worth £70bn

21% of residents are living in relative poverty with 1 in 8 earning less than the real living wage, meaning 74,000 working age adults experience in-work poverty.

Largest financial and professional services sector outside London, providing 1 in 5 jobs and generating £11bn (nearly 40%) of total GVA each year.

### Delivery partnership for the **GROWING Ambition**

Leeds Inclusive Growth Partnership

### With activity convened by

Professor Peter Slee,  
Vice Chancellor of  
Leeds Beckett University





# TEAM LEEDS

*activity to deliver this Ambition...*

**We focus on getting the foundations right - creating great places where people want to live, improving connectivity and supporting businesses to thrive.**

## Building homes through plan-led development

Over a five year period from 2020 to 2025, Leeds has built over 17,000 new homes and more affordable homes than any other Core City, with the pace of affordable housing construction continuing to increase. Leeds City Council facilitates the Leeds Affordable Housing Framework, collaborating with registered providers and other partners to boost the supply of affordable homes. The council is also part of the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, which aims to support the wellbeing of residents and communities.

## Investing in our transport infrastructure

Leeds and the wider region require an integrated transport system that caters for our needs, including Mass Transit, rail, buses, road and active travel improvements. Leeds City Council is working with West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other partners to deliver Mass Transit, the biggest investment in connectivity for decades, whilst also improving capacity at Leeds Station, the busiest train station in the North.

## Promoting culture, sport and major events

Leeds's cultural offer makes a huge contribution to enriching people's lives, and it is also a major asset for the city's

image and reputation nationally and internationally, attracting over 31 million day and night time visitors in 2023. Our strong and growing cultural offer makes Leeds an increasingly attractive place to live or do business and forms a key part of plans for growth and regeneration in the next decade. Targeted public and private investment is accelerating our ambitions, including schemes for British Library North, National Poetry Centre and the Royal Armouries.

## Supporting businesses to succeed

Leeds offers a supportive environment for businesses to start, grow and locate to because of our strong partnerships between public sector, industry and academia. The West Yorkshire Business Support Service provides a single point of access for entrepreneurs and SMEs seeking advice, funding and networking opportunities.

## Strengthening and connecting communities

Through the Leeds Transformational Regeneration Partnership, which involves Leeds City Council, central government, Homes England and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds has embarked on a 10-year programme of change and investment to revitalise six disadvantaged neighbourhoods around the city centre and unlock the delivery of 50,000 new homes.

## Growing Leeds, growing West Yorkshire

The West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan aims to boost the region's fastest growing business sectors in line with the Government's national Industrial Strategy. It also prioritises enabling all businesses to

succeed, a region of learning and creativity, an integrated transport network, and supporting thriving places. Leeds, as the core city in our region, plays a major role in driving regional growth.

**We understand the impact of poverty and inequality and stay focused on connecting people to opportunity so everyone can reach their full potential.**

## Fostering collaboration between Anchors and communities

With funding from the Health Foundation and working through the Good Jobs, Better Health, Fairer Futures project connections have been forged between Anchors and local communities facing disadvantage, working with Leeds Community Anchor Network as a gateway to generate and embed new ways of working with communities. Through a number of community listening exercises, Anchors have identified local priorities regarding employment and skills, and are collaborating with community members to co-develop practical solutions.

## Reducing economic inactivity

As part of ensuring Leeds is a city where everyone can reach their full potential, we understand the range and nature of barriers that can get in the way. Tackling economic inactivity caused by poor health enables people to live healthier and more fulfilled

lives. Team Leeds partners in regional and local government, health and care system organisations and providers, VCSE sector and more are collaborating to support people experiencing (or at risk of) health challenges into jobs or help move them closer to work. Work ongoing includes the Health and Growth Accelerator (via WY ICB), Work and Health Trailblazer (via WYCA), and Connect to Work (via WYCA).

## Supporting people with SEND

Organisations across Leeds are coming together to support people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to take their next or first steps in developing their skills and/or finding work and other opportunities. This includes an annual SEND Next Choices event for young people at Leeds First Direct Bank Arena, the Leeds Inclusive Employer Network launched by the Lighthouse Futures Trust, and a SEND Employment Forum launched by Leeds City Council.



### Supporting financial wellbeing

Working in partnership, Leeds adopts an evidence-based and collaborative approach to promoting financial inclusion, aiming to ensure access to free, impartial and confidential advice, and affordable financial services for everyone. Since 2022, over £60 million has been distributed via public services and third sector organisations to low-income households. Projects include the integrated Leeds Advice Service Contract, Leeds Money Information Centre, Leeds School Uniform Exchange, co-ordinated action on Food Insecurity, and the Healthy Holidays Programme.

### Enhancing digital access

100% Digital Leeds is the city’s flagship digital inclusion programme adopting a ‘furthest first’ approach to support the most digitally excluded people and communities in Leeds. Since 2018, it has secured over £4m funding, most of which has been used to enhance the capacity of third sector organisations to promote digital inclusion in the communities they serve. Many of these organisations have used funding to appoint their own digital inclusion officers, who are trained and supported by 100% Digital Leeds.

### Backing diverse innovators and entrepreneurs

SheCanShine is an initiative which empowers and supports women to start a business, providing workshops, mentoring, free office space and networking opportunities. The project is delivered from Harehills, and positions entrepreneurship as a pathway to financial independence. The Lifted Project is another project aiming to grow the number of female-founded high-growth enterprises and increase the capital invested into female founders in our region.

### Creating a more diverse workforce

The collaborative One Workforce approach across health and social care is narrowing inequalities in Leeds by adapting recruitment practices in the city’s lower-income communities. In 2024/25, 1507 residents engaged, of those 47% were economically inactive. The partnership supported 427 people into education or training and 195 people into employment, 77% of which were employed within four weeks, and 536 referrals were made to specialist services for learning and employment support, with 87% of those employed remaining in work after 12 months. The success of the partnership has supported us to secure Trailblazer funding for West Yorkshire.

### Tackling educational inequalities

Representing a network of networks, the Leeds Learning Alliance has an ambitious vision to improve education across Leeds and boost outcomes for all learners. The Alliance aims to support communities across the city through inclusive learning opportunities, sharing resources, strengthening leadership, and enabling clear pathways into employment. Since the Alliance began in 2019 membership has grown significantly, rising from four organisations to 41 by its fourth year and 83 by its sixth year, and now supports over 135,000 learners at all stages of life.

We are supporting our high growth sectors to succeed, creating a resilient and productive modern economy which attracts global investment.

### Developing the Northern Square Mile

Building on our reputation as the major hub for Finance and Professional Services (FPS) outside London, we will be the financial centre of the North. We will grow the size, scale and diversity of the sector in Leeds, anchored in the next generation of FPS: FinTech, AI, Legal Tech and green finance. The Northern Square Mile will be focused on the City Centre West End and South Bank areas of the city.

### Leading on Digital and Tech

Leeds has more than 3,000 digital and data companies, and we are seeing investment in new technologies including AI. The £2.5bn data investment by Microsoft to develop a hyperscale data centre in Leeds has huge potential to unlock new business and research activity in the city.

### Deepening strengths in HealthTech

Leeds is part of the £160m West Yorkshire HealthTech and Digital Investment Zone. Our long-term collaborative strengths in both the private and public sectors mean that Leeds is ranked third internationally as a location for HealthTech companies (among comparator cities). We are growing a cluster of health innovation within our £2bn Innovation Arc, bringing businesses and Anchor institutions together to accelerate the development of new ideas. Team Leeds is contributing to supporting business incubation through development at Leeds Beckett Sport Campus and with Nexus at the University of Leeds. We are supporting businesses to grow through the Health Innovation Yorkshire Propel Programme.

Key supporting plans and strategies

[Inclusive Growth Strategy](#)  
[West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan](#)  
[Leeds Local Plan](#)  
[Housing Strategy](#)  
[Children & Young People’s Plan](#)

Main supporting partnerships

[Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership](#)  
Leeds Innovation Partnership  
[Local Visitor Economy Partnership](#)  
[Culture Consortium Leeds](#)





## Strong Communities

**Leeds will be a welcoming, safe and clean city** where people have the power to make the changes that are important to them, with cohesive and united neighbourhoods where people are living healthier lives and enjoying the city's vibrant social, cultural and sporting offer.

**THRIVING**

## Three goals underpinning this Ambition:



Ensuring neighbourhoods feel safe, with communities coming together to promote good relations and build a stronger sense of shared belonging.



Shaping places that people are proud to live and work in, where neighbourhoods are clean and well looked after, nature is thriving, and people feel a strong sense of ownership over their local community.



Improving access to culture, sport, the arts and each other - across the city and in our neighbourhoods - so people have equitable opportunity to find and enjoy social connections and experiences which enrich their lives.

## City Insights - Strong Communities

Leeds is home to over 812,000 people, representing 100+ nationalities and speaking more than 175 languages.

Leeds third sector includes 1,878 registered organisations working towards social determinants of health, with 6,465 employees and over 31,500 volunteers.

69% of surveyed residents in Leeds feel 'very safe' or 'quite safe' in their community, 5% higher than the overall rate across West Yorkshire.

**Convenor for the  
THRIVING Ambition**

Voluntary Action Leeds and  
Chief Officer, Anna Martin

**Voluntary  
Action Leeds**  
Supporting Communities Together



# TEAM LEEDS

*activity to deliver this Ambition...*

**We are responsive to the needs of neighbourhoods, working closely with local people so we focus on what matters most to them.**

## Making our roads safer

[West Yorkshire Vision Zero](#) is key to creating safer streets in Leeds where everyone feels secure. It brings together local, regional, and national partnerships, including Leeds Safe Roads, West Yorkshire Safe Roads, Road Safety Great Britain, and community partnerships to help eliminate fatal and serious road injuries through education, enforcement, and infrastructure that supports safe travel. Since starting the work in 2022, the average number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads each month has reduced from 46 to 37 - but there is more work to do.

## Taking on organised crime

Reflecting a place-based approach to combating serious and organised crime in communities, developed at a national level and delivered locally as CommUnity Harehills. West Yorkshire Police, along with statutory and third sector partners, have pooled together skills and resource to address organised crime in Harehills, achieving a reduction of 40% in all crime, and 60% reduction in most serious crime within the first six months.

## Helping with the cost of living

Leeds's first [community shop](#) opened in Swarcliffe in 2025. The shop offers free membership to local residents on means-tested benefits, offering access to a community cafe, heavily discounted groceries, and courses designed to promote independence and employability. On average, Community Shop saves members £212 per month on groceries, helping to ease financial pressures by addressing the root causes of food insecurity in communities experiencing social inequality, creating a pathway out of poverty that enables 53% of shop members to leave after a year as they become more financially stable.

## Opening our arms as a welcoming city

As a [City of Sanctuary](#), partners across Leeds respond to migration with compassion, purpose and pride and are committed to building an inclusive and welcoming culture for all communities who call Leeds home. Much of the work ongoing focuses on taking a holistic approach to community building, helping people understand and connect with their those around them, fostering shared knowledge, trust and relationships. Local voices and grassroots leadership are a key part of how this is done, as partners and communities work together to deliver meaningful, lasting change.

## Tackling food poverty and reducing waste

Part of the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network and linked with both the FoodWise and the national Feeding Britain initiative, Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) brings together a wide range of food aid providers,

distributors and key public services to help reduce the impact of food insecurity affecting an estimated 91,000 adults and 26,000 children. Now celebrating its 10th year, LFAN coordinates support including foodbanks, soup kitchens, specialist services for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, with 142,459 meals provided through drop-in and street outreach in 2023/24.

**Breaking down traditional barriers between institutions, services and communities is helping us create an integrated system which is more effective and sustainable long term.**

## Integrating services in communities

Locality working brings together key public services, Local Care Partnerships, Community Committees, and communities in a place-based approach to improve resident outcomes and tackle inequality. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, this work has helped seven Leeds neighbourhoods move out of the nation's 1% most deprived areas, seeing better outcomes than other parts of the city which have not benefited from the same focus and support. This impact is driving ambitious plans for partners to enhance and scale this approach across the city, including through emerging plans for a neighbourhood health model.

## Exploring innovative approaches to maximise impact

Team Leeds partners are exploring renewed Total Place-style approaches as part of a public service reform agenda to deliver greater impact and support financial sustainability. By examining whole systems

rather than individual services, we can spot duplication, unlock efficiencies, and direct investment where it matters most. Alongside this, we are adopting a Test, Learn and Grow model - piloting innovative ideas, learning from real-world results, and refining before wider roll-out. This approach reflects our Team Leeds ways of working, enabling rapid responses to complex challenges, embedding continuous improvement, and ensuring every pound delivers the greatest possible benefit for people and communities.

## Keeping it Local

Leeds City Council is part of the locality network dedicated to transforming public services by prioritising local partnerships and investment known as Keeping it Local. The Council is committed to sharing power and maximising local strengths to support the right people to deliver the right services in the right places. We recognise the local multiplier effect and the benefits of keeping the "Leeds Pound" in Leeds through procurement spend in the local economy, focusing on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow.





Leeds is a diverse city made up of unique neighbourhoods, where community voices are listened to and help shape decisions and investment to maximise social impact.

**Building on our city’s strengths**

Leeds is a national leader for the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model, rolling out initiatives across the city that support people and communities to make the changes that are important to them. There are brilliant examples of communities leading this approach themselves, such as We Are Seacroft in East Leeds. ABCD builds on what’s strong, mapping community assets from local businesses through to community organisations and harnessing individual knowledge and skills to connect and mobilise people at place. An independent study found this approach provides a return of up to £36.90 in social value for each £1 invested.

**Collaborating through culture**

Leeds’s cultural community collaborates through networks including Arts Together, Culture Consortium Leeds, Music:Leeds and Libraries in Leeds, as well as groups taking a culture-led approach to achieving key ambitions – Leeds Arts, Health and Wellbeing Network (LAHWN), Sustainability in the Arts in Leeds (SAIL) and Leeds 33 (the city’s Local Cultural Education Partnership). The diversity of Leeds’s cultural offer is vast and one of its greatest assets, but the sector is keen to build greater cohesion to drive resilience, be a catalyst for inclusive growth and better reflect and engage the city’s communities on a local, national and international stage. Team Leeds will work together to develop a new strategy for culture and heritage, to be announced in 2026 as Leeds celebrates its 400th year.

**Fostering inclusion through collaboration**

Leeds is a committed member of the Council of Europe’s Intercultural Cities Network, with a collective drive to create an inclusive, equitable, and culturally enriched society. This affiliation enables Leeds to collaborate with cities across Europe, where we can share knowledge and best practices to inform local policy. Leeds’s involvement underscores a dedication to promoting social cohesion, celebrating diversity, and ensuring that all residents feel valued and empowered within the civic landscape.

**Supporting communities to lead**

The Leeds Community Power Fund - newly created in 2025 - puts people first, enabling city-wide partnerships and collaborations between community organisations and residents to innovate and create positive change in their area. This new fund will provide support for grassroots-led community initiatives shaped by the lived experiences of people in Leeds communities, helping build safer, more resilient and culturally rich communities.

**Valuing the voices of children and young people**

Providing a voice and influence to children, young people, parents and carers in decision-making via programmes such as the Leeds Children’s Mayor, working with schools on democracy and holding takeover events, all demonstrating our commitment to children and young people and acknowledging their right to shape their own future.



**Key supporting plans and strategies**

[Leeds Third Sector Strategy](#)  
[Leeds Volunteering Strategy](#)  
Safer Leeds Strategy  
[Leeds Culture Strategy](#)

**Main supporting partnerships**

Third Sector Partnership  
[Leeds Community Anchors Network](#)  
[Safer Leeds Partnership](#)  
Neighbourhood Improvement Board





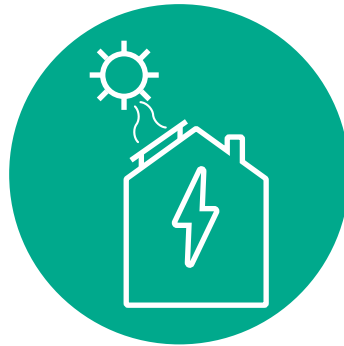
Leeds will be the UK's first net zero and nature positive city, rapidly reducing carbon emissions and restoring nature, supporting people and businesses to make increasingly sustainable choices that improve their standard of living and create a regenerative thriving city.

**RESILIENT**

## Three goals underpinning this Ambition:



Improving the resilience of our people, communities, businesses and services to the changing climate, restoring our connection with nature and creating quality green space where people can be active.



Rapidly reducing carbon emissions, creating warmer homes and lower energy bills which help people out of fuel poverty and support businesses to lower their costs.



Connecting the city by improving our transport system to be more sustainable, accessible, safe and affordable, providing people with good alternatives to car use.

## City Insights - Sustainable City

Leeds carbon emissions have reduced by 38% since 2005, and we were the first UK city to establish our own Climate Commission.

13.8% of Leeds residents are living in fuel poverty, higher than the national average at 11.4%.

Leeds station is the busiest in the North, with over 30 million passengers annually - but the city remains the largest in Western Europe without a mass transit system.

**Convenor for the RESILIENT Ambition**

Leeds Climate Commission and Director, Rosa Foster

**LEEDS CLIMATE COMMISSION**





## TEAM LEEDS

*activity to deliver this Ambition...*

We are a city that takes action to make it easier for people to make more sustainable choices in their daily lives, helping to achieve a just transition to net zero.

### Driving the agenda

Leeds is home to the first Climate Commission, creating a model that has been adopted in more than 25 cities and regions in the UK. Established in 2017, the Commission has been at the forefront of informing and mobilising climate action, including developing the first city Net Zero Route map and the first Citizens Jury on net zero in the UK. It continues to drive evidence-led action through convening, catalysing and innovating.

### Promoting Active Travel

Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority share an ambition for a well-connected city and region. Alongside a £2.8m investment in Leeds City Bikes, providing 300 e-bikes and over 70,000 journeys annually, a further £7.79m from Active Travel England will create new sustainable modes of transport, expected to generate up to 16 million extra walking, wheeling and cycling trips each year. Community- and research-led projects are also driving progress in this space, for example through the INFUZE collaboration supporting communities to design low-carbon alternatives to car ownership.

### Encouraging sustainable food choices

The Consumer Data Research Centre, based at University of Leeds, has developed a Carbon Calculator, making it easier for food venues and caterers to estimate the carbon footprint, land use, and water use of meals based on their ingredients. As well as supporting Leeds City Council to achieve its goal of halving the carbon footprint of the meals it serves by 2030, this tool has enabled FoodWise to develop a Recipe Hub with a collection of sustainable, affordable, and nutritious recipes for people to make.

### Tackling climate change through community action

Climate Action Leeds (CAL) is a network which has been active since 2020, striving to achieve a zero-carbon, nature-friendly, socially just Leeds by the 2030s. Through support to establish climate hubs across Leeds, the CAL movement has worked to mobilise and catalyse community-led activity to make the city cleaner, greener and fairer. Working with communities and a network of organisations has enabled delivery of many exciting initiatives, including walk-to-school weeks, forest gardens, bin yard makeovers, the Leeds Climate Curriculum, Leeds Community Energy group, and crowdfunding to secure woodland for community use.



Our infrastructure is adapting to the growing pressures of climate change, helping to create a more resilient city that protects people, places and businesses.

### Rolling out district heating

Leeds PIPES network delivered by local, and regional partners including Leeds City Council, WYCA, and Northern Powerhouse, is an innovative district heating solution supplying homes, businesses and public buildings with affordable, reliable and low carbon heating. Over £70m has been invested to date, saving 6,467 tonnes of carbon in 2024, and creating 430 green jobs.

### Adapting with world class flood alleviation

Strengthening climate resilience is pivotal to protecting homes, communities, businesses and jobs across Leeds. Plan-led development and partnerships makes a difference, as shown by the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme delivered by Leeds City Council, the Environment Agency, and countless stakeholders which has delivered investment of £200m to protect over 4,000 homes, more than 1,000 businesses and 33,000 jobs in Leeds.

### Decarbonising homes and businesses

Decarbonising homes through retrofitting and sustainable place-making is vital for a greener future. The Citu-developed Leeds Climate Innovation District is a global exemplar, creating neighbourhoods that promote community, and connects people to green spaces and cultural assets. Similarly, Leeds has been at the forefront of decarbonisation across the public sector, with over £40m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme invested in improving public buildings and strengthening climate resilience, aiming to reduce emissions by 75% by 2037.





In Leeds, we are working together to restore and enhance our natural capital, improving biodiversity, nature recovery and access to high quality green spaces.

Planting trees to improve our environment

Central to the Northern Forest programme, growth of the White Rose Forest is a collaborative effort between government agencies, local and combined authorities, national parks and charities from across West and North Yorkshire. The partnership plans to increase tree and woodland coverage to 16.5%, ensuring 70% of woodland is sustainably managed and more than half of households live close to accessible woodland by 2050 - strengthening climate resilience, improving health outcomes, and supporting nature recovery.

Improving green space alongside local communities

This work represents over £280k in investment, and a community listening exercise lasting over 18 months to understand local needs from their green spaces and the impact of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in their area. People and key services were brought together to help shape delivery, creating an inclusive space for teenagers and young people, discouraging ASB, whilst protecting and improving access to green spaces, enabling people to live healthily and happily.

Increasing biodiversity

Working through Leeds Habitat Company, Leeds City Council is setting out to create long lasting improvements to our public green spaces by providing developers opportunity to have a positive impact on local biodiversity and wildlife by buying Biodiversity Net Gain units on council land. The early stage of this work will focus on improvements at Rothwell Country Park, Skelton Lake, Killingbeck Fields and Otley Chevin Forest Park.



Key supporting plans and strategies

- [Yorkshire & Humber Climate Action Plan](#)
- [West Yorkshire Climate & Environment Plan](#)
- [Leeds Local Plan](#)
- [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy](#)
- [Parks and Green Spaces Strategy](#)
- [Leeds Food Strategy](#)

Main supporting partnerships

- [Leeds Climate Commission](#)



Driving our ambitions forward...

# TEAM LEEDS PARTNERSHIPS

Being radically collaborative has become a key part of what defines Team Leeds when it is working at its best

One of our biggest strengths in Leeds is our people - with all their diversity, strengths and passions - and the networks and partnerships they create which drive so much of what is good here. It is something we hear all the time from visitors to the city - that **the sense of partnership and togetherness they see in Leeds is rare and unique** - and it gives us an enormous platform on which to build.

Our achievements in Leeds over the last couple of decades are in large part owed to this spirit of genuine partnership. It's allowed us to think bigger, problem solve in new ways, be more innovative and responsibly take bigger risks to deliver on priorities for the city. **Being radically collaborative has become a key part of what defines Team Leeds when it is working at its best** and will be crucial as we take forward the Leeds Ambitions.

Leeds doesn't have a 'top table' - we don't believe in that. The breadth and inclusiveness of our city partnerships remains a big strength, one that enables more people from a wider range of backgrounds to contribute. As we evolve our approach now, however, we need to harness a renewed focus on making stronger connections between those brilliant partnerships, combining efforts to achieve maximum impact, and **making every pound spent in Leeds go further**.

## Anchors in the city

Leeds's networks of Anchors provide an important route to come together as Team Leeds to focus on collective goals, driving progress on the Leeds Ambitions and championing our mission to tackle poverty and inequality. Anchors are organisations that have a strong interest in seeing their local place thrive and have made a practical commitment of how they will contribute to this. Over recent years the city's networks of Anchors have provided a focal point for discussion and action while remaining more inclusive than traditional city partnership structures. Now we want to take this approach to the next level.

Together, building on the experience of existing Anchor organisations, we will **grow a larger movement of Anchors, with an opportunity for every organisation in Leeds to act as a local Anchor**. This expansion will be supported by developing good practice guides - based on learning to date - on issues where progress has been made, including on breaking barriers to inclusive recruitment, community listening, social value in purchasing, healthy workplaces and

reducing scope three carbon emissions.

This Autumn, Leeds Anchors will publish their first external report capturing the impact of their work together. We have a huge opportunity to amplify and accelerate this progress, spreading it to hundreds of more organisations right across Leeds, with potentially game-changing impact on the progress we see towards our shared Leeds Ambitions.

### Leeds Anchor Network

Leeds Anchor Network is a group of 14 of the city's largest (mainly) public sector employers. They come together and focus on areas where they can make a difference for people as an employer, through procurement, through service delivery or as a civic partner. Each organisation has completed the Anchor Progression Framework to self-assess their contribution to Leeds and identify areas for focus.

[Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network](#)



### Leeds Business Anchors

The Leeds Business Anchors Network encourages businesses to work together, alongside other partners in the city, to maximise their positive contribution to benefit the people of Leeds. Its members have self-assessed their local contribution through the Business Anchor Progression Framework and use these insights to agree areas for collaborative action.

[Leeds Business Anchors](#)



### Leeds Community Anchor Network

Part of the wider vibrant ecosystem of local organisations and groups in the third sector, Leeds Community Anchor Network (LCAN) is a movement of independent local organisations promoting citizen-led activity and partnerships. In addition to their own activities, Community Anchors show generous leadership to help and support other groups and communities, as well as acting as advocates at a city level. Its members have committed to a partnership agreement, with a set of shared values and ways of working with each other.

[Leeds Community Anchor Network](#)





## Age Friendly Leeds

Leeds has a longstanding ambition to be the best city to grow old in and a place where people age well, lead healthy, connected, fulfilling, independent lives and are valued, feel respected and are recognised as assets. The city's work focuses on six areas, aligned to the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly domains: Active, Included and Respected; Employment and Learning; Healthy and Independent Ageing; Housing; Public and Civic Spaces; Travel and Road Safety.

A key driver of our Leeds Ambitions, this work is co-produced and co-delivered in a Team Leeds way by the Age Friendly Leeds Board in collaboration with statutory, voluntary and community and private sector partners. Together, partners are embedding consideration of Age Friendly into all policies and services, ensuring diverse voices are used alongside data and evidence to focus on what matters to people in later life and what works.

Leeds is nationally recognised as a leading example of Age Friendly innovation, setting the benchmark for best practice in creating a city where everyone can age well.



## Child Friendly Leeds

Since 2013, [Child Friendly Leeds \(CFL\)](#) has grown into a city-wide movement placing children's voices at the heart of Leeds's future. Over 80,000 children and young people have shaped the refreshed CFL "12 Wishes" and highlighted priorities such as mental wellbeing, environmental action, safe spaces, and opportunity.

The Child Friendly Leeds ambassador network - now over 600 strong with representatives from schools, businesses, and the third sector - drives action city-wide. Ambassadors support projects from work-experience schemes to public transport improvements and contribute to the Child Friendly Leeds Awards, a high-energy and fun-packed annual event organised by children and young people themselves.

The city's success with Child Friendly Leeds has been replicated across the country, as restorative working and supporting families to help themselves has led Leeds to three outstanding Ofsted assessments and much better children's outcomes.



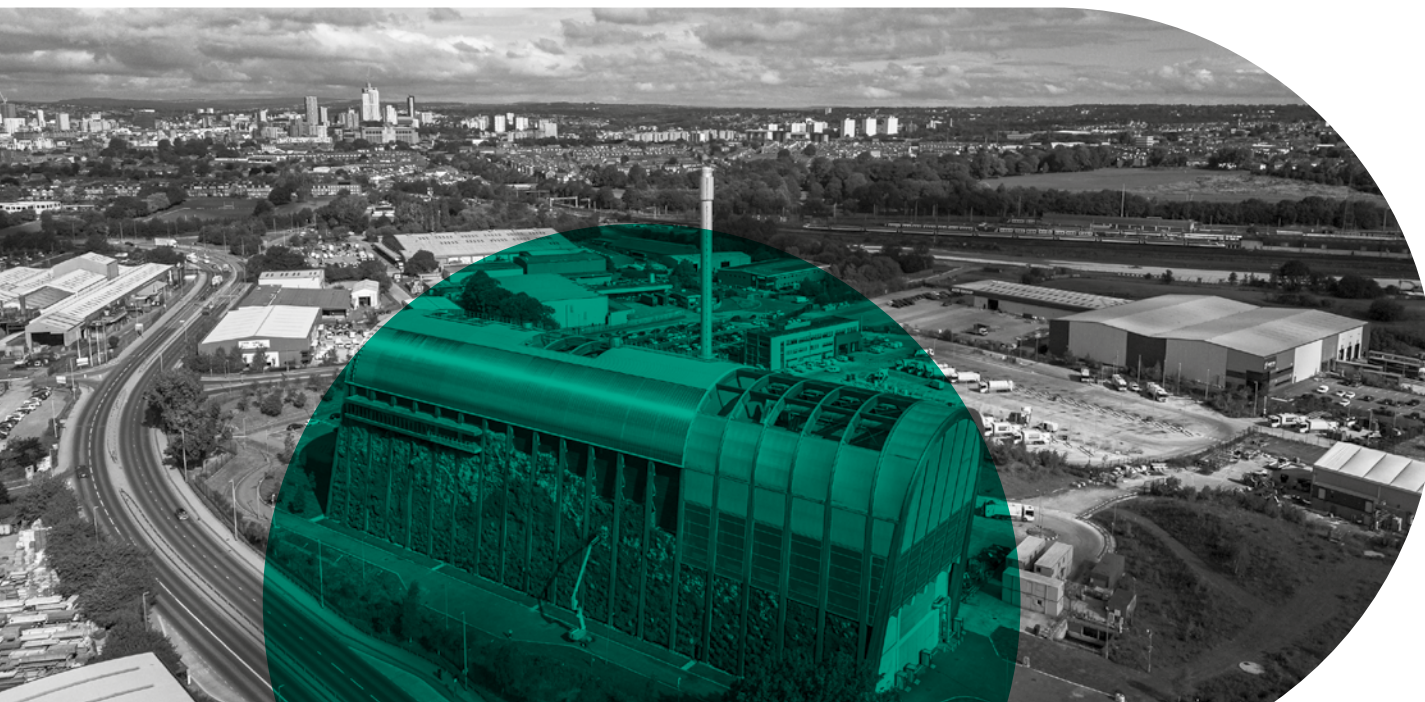
## Convening around the Leeds Ambitions

The Leeds Ambitions are deliberately bold and will be challenging to achieve. No single organisation - including Leeds City Council - can deliver on them alone. Making the progress we want to see, and that is needed to deliver for our people and communities and to see Leeds reach its potential, will need to be a shared endeavour, owned and driven by everyone in the city. By harnessing our collaborative spirit, pairing it with clear goals, tangible actions and shared accountability, we can achieve more than the sum of our parts. That is the mission of Team Leeds.

To help us achieve this, each of the four Leeds Ambitions will be adopted by a convenor. Supported by Leeds City Council, those convenors will:

- Create the space for city-level conversations about working towards the Ambition, including bringing city partners together to track progress and maintain momentum, as well as exploring ways to improve data and information sharing to inform the collective work of Team Leeds.
- Work closely with Leeds City Council to create a vibrant, inclusive and engaging State of the City event each December, where the city can come together to track progress on the Ambitions and set goals for the year ahead.
- Identify opportunities to promote the Leeds Ambitions within the city, nationally and internationally, helping tell the story of what our city is about and how people can be part of it.

Beyond the work of convenors, Anchors and others, we need to bring the Ambitions to life through the day-to-day activity happening all over Leeds. All of us share the challenge and opportunity to make them part of an ongoing and evolving conversation with the city and all of its communities - continuing to strengthen the connection to real people and their real lives, and the improvements we want to see for them and our city in the future.





# Tracking our Impact

Tackling poverty and inequality is at the heart of our Leeds Ambitions. We know that across Leeds, many issues disproportionately impact some groups of people and communities more than others, making stubborn long-term challenges even more difficult to overcome. Therefore, many of the ways we will track our progress are specifically focused on identifying, understanding and seeking to address the inequalities that persist in our society, closing the gap between those who are doing well and those who are doing less well.

It is for individual organisations to measure the impact of their own activity in detail; we don't seek to cut across that here. Instead, as a group of partners we have developed a set of tools to help us regularly check in on the overall socio-economic health of our city. We take a relatively high-level approach, built around a small number of metrics focused on key population outcomes alongside broader economic and environmental indicators.

A wider range of more detailed data is tracked and analysed - including through the key strategies which underpin the Leeds Ambitions - with much of this made publicly available on the [Leeds Observatory](#).

## Fairer, Healthier - Leeds as a Marmot City

Being a Marmot City means Leeds has made a commitment to building a fairer city to reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing. It is about ensuring everyone has access to the right 'building blocks' for good health, including high-quality and secure housing, better education, reliable and well-paid jobs, and a clean environment.

We have a clear set of recommendations that structure the 'Fairer, Healthier Leeds' programme and these are guiding us as we go further and faster to address health inequalities in the city and ensure this is embedded in everything we do. Alongside the thematic work ongoing where excellent progress is being made - for example across housing and health - a key outcome from the work so far is a deeper commitment to understanding the inequalities which exist in Leeds and more effectively tracking the impact Team Leeds is making through this lens. You can find more detail on Leeds work in this area [here](#).

## Ambitions Scorecard

Work is already ongoing to develop a deeper long-term approach to measuring progress and evaluation on the Leeds Ambitions, harnessing the strengths of academia and communities alike in our city. In the interim, a balanced scorecard of leading indicators will be used to track headline progress

against the Ambitions and goals we have set out. Wherever possible, and in line with our core mission, analysis will disaggregate the data to provide a clearer understanding of the inequalities present in Leeds by deprivation decile, ward, ethnicity or other relevant proxy characteristic (for example, children on free school meals).

The scorecard will form the backbone of a new State of the City annual report to be produced from 2026 onwards, setting out the trajectories of progress towards the goals set out in the Leeds Ambitions. Production of the report will be led by Leeds City Council, with support from other organisations in the city.

The indicators included are:

### HEALTHY: Health and Wellbeing

- Life expectancy at birth in years (male and female)
- School children feeling happy every or most days
- Children in low-income families, local area statistics
- Common mental health issues, recorded by GPs, all ages
- Severe mental illness, recorded by GPs, all ages
- Physical inactivity, recorded by GPs, adults 50+ years
- Babies with low birth weight, rate per 1,000 live births
- Children with a healthy weight, Reception (4-5 years old)
- Pupils achieving a good level of development at end of Reception
- Preventable unplanned care use

### GROWING: Inclusive Growth

- People earning less than UK Real Living Wage, Full time / Part time
- Employment rate
- Economic inactivity, by age group
- New business start-ups
- 5-year business survival rate
- Affordable homes delivered
- Pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing and maths (combined) end of Key Stage 2
- Average attainment 8 score
- 16-17-year-olds not in education, employment or training

The scorecard is organised around the Four Ambitions, and incorporates the Fairer, Healthier indicators developed as part of Leeds becoming a Marmot City. Regular updates will be published through a new dashboard on the Leeds Ambitions website.

### THRIVING: Strong Communities

- Households in temporary accommodation
- Anti-social behaviour incidents
- Number of volunteers in Leeds
- Number killed and seriously injured on roads, all age groups / children and young people
- Hate crime incidents
- Young people involved in serious violence
- Households with access to green space
- People engaged in cultural activities

### RESILIENT: Sustainable City

- Premises at EPC C or better, residential / commercial
- Reduction in citywide carbon emissions against 2005 baseline
- Buildings at risk of flooding, homes / critical infrastructure
- Hectares of trees planted and % increase in tree canopy cover
- Household waste across Leeds re-used, recycled, composted or used to create energy
- Households in fuel poverty - annual
- District heating connections across the city
- Public transport powered by low-carbon or zero-carbon emissions technology
- Adults who walk or cycle for travel at least once per week

## Learning from the people of Leeds

Using data and analysis is an important part of measuring progress but alone this is not enough. Listening to people’s lived experiences is crucial in understanding where we are making a positive difference and where greater focus is needed. The voices of local people and communities - what it really feels like to live and work in Leeds - should carry equal weight with the data in how we track our impact.

As well as these everyday channels, we have a range of specific ways to gain insights from local people, including via:

**The Big Leeds Chat** - co-ordinated by Healthwatch Leeds, the Big Leeds Chat is a series of local events in which we engage with people in conversation to find out what matters to them, and what they need to improve their health and wellbeing. The themes emerging from previous Chats have been wide-ranging and touch on all aspects of the Leeds Ambitions.

**Leeds Poverty Truth Commission** - now on their fourth commission and innovating through the ‘[Resourcing the City](#)’ work, many leaders from organisations across Leeds have now participated alongside community commissioners with real life experience of the struggle against poverty. Harnessing these previous commissioners as a group of advocates has powerful potential to shape the way we work as Team Leeds moving forward.

Partners across Leeds are already connecting with communities through the work that they do. Working towards the Leeds Ambitions will need a more agile, responsive and joined-up approach to make the best use of these many routes to gain insight from the experiences of our residents, customers, patients, students or service users - to learn from people and communities through whatever relationship it is we have with them.

**Leeds Citizens Panel** - facilitated by Leeds City Council, the Citizens Panel is a large group of adults of different ages and backgrounds who have volunteered to help measure public opinion by taking part in different types of consultation and engagement activity. The Panel offers an opportunity for local people to shape the local policies and decisions which affect their lives.

**LCAN Community Listening** - in 2024, Leeds Community Anchors Network (LCAN) engaged with people across all wards in Leeds, using a range of inclusive and accessible methods to gather stories, feedback and ideas. The exercise was built on the clear belief that communities know what they need and have the wisdoms and solutions to achieve change and its findings have been published [here](#).

As Team Leeds we will continue to develop new and innovative ways to approach citizen engagement, seeking to meet people where they are and enhance the influence that local people have over the decisions which affect their lives.



Get in touch and get involved:

[www.leedsambitions.co.uk](http://www.leedsambitions.co.uk)



