

# INCLUSIVE GROWTH LEEDS

2023-2030



Creating  
growth in  
our economy  
that works for  
everyone



## Foreword

It's right that we focus on inclusive growth, as for Leeds to be truly successful we need everyone living in the city to have the opportunity to flourish. Austerity has consequences, with people and businesses inevitably now less resilient to shocks when they arise. This was particularly clear during the pandemic and has resulted in rising inequality in Leeds, tackling this must continue to be our top priority.

The good news is our economy is growing and we can see all around us that the city is benefitting from billions of pounds of public and private investment. We want to be a city where this investment is directed to benefit local people, city wide to ensure inclusive growth. We are achieving this whilst at the same time leading the way in the UK to become a net zero city.

Leeds offers something unique, we are large enough to attract global brands but also agile enough to wrap our arms around smaller companies and the innovators of the future. We want Leeds to continue to be an outward looking city, part of a strong, northern economy that acts as a beacon for investment, a place that businesses and talent want to call home.

We all have a part to play. Businesses can help us determine the future we want, and we're asking them to do more to support local communities where they are based. The public sector needs to be more enterprising and efficient in delivering the services people need and creating places people feel proud of.

We want to use this strategy to show those in Whitehall what can be achieved and need the government to step up and provide funding, particularly on transport. A growing economy will lead to more income for the city, for example through increased business rates, council tax and the New Homes Bonus, easing pressure on local services and allowing us to provide more support to the most vulnerable. We face huge challenges - poverty and inequality, poor health, climate change - but in facing these challenges with optimism, underpinned by radical collaboration we can build a future that is more inclusive, healthier and greener.

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

# Our Mission

This strategy will help us deliver our Best City Ambition to tackle poverty and inequality and to improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. Our approach revolves around supporting one another to make Leeds the best it can be, sharing ideas and learning, working in genuine partnership, being ambitious about our collective social and environmental impact, and organisations sharing their resources and assets as we work towards common goals.

We've named this

## #TEAMLEEDS

Underpinning our Best City Ambition are three pillars. These priorities overlap and it is through addressing them together that we will be able to deliver our goals.

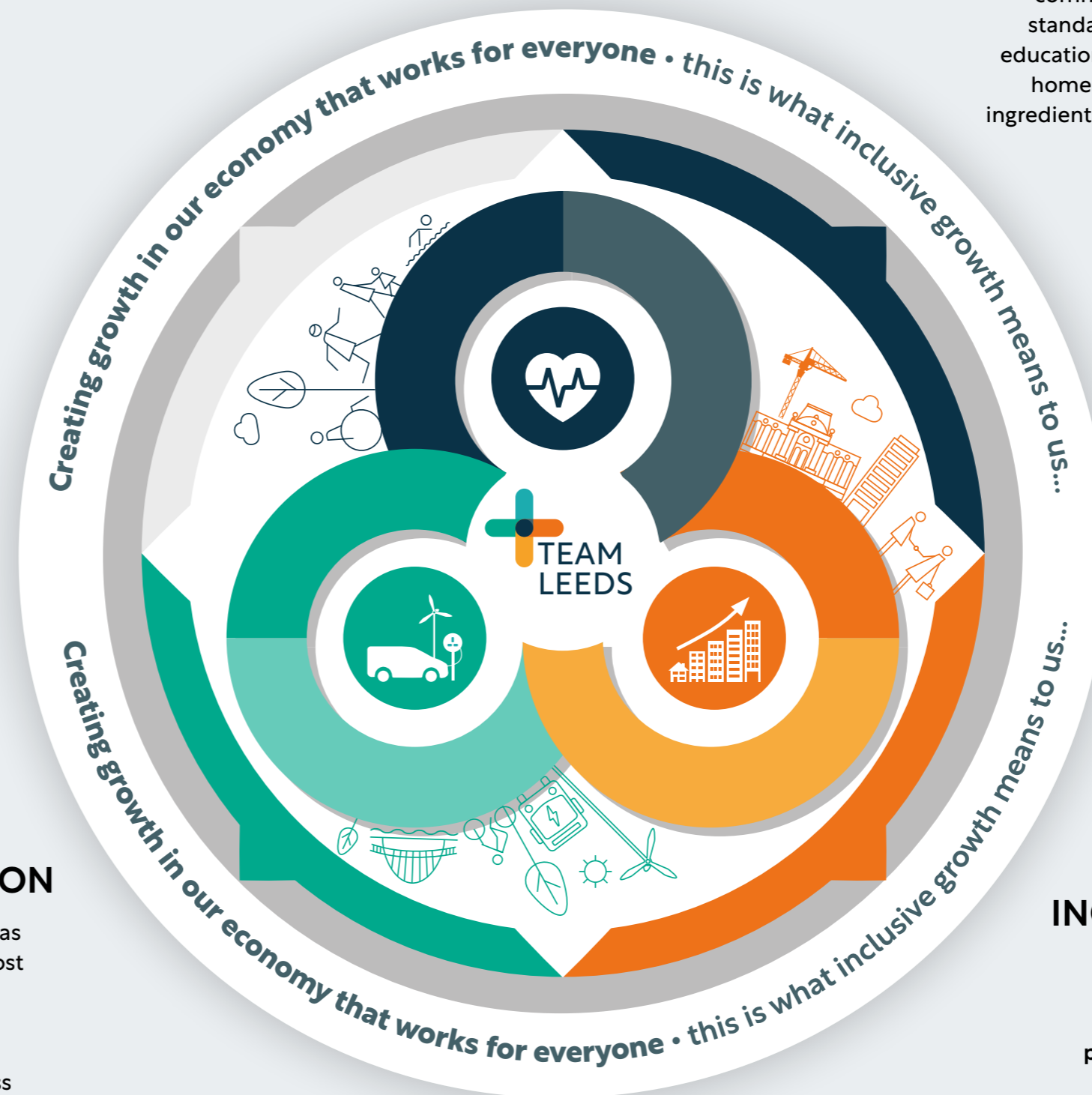
### ZERO CARBON AMBITION

Research by Forbes has ranked Leeds as the location in the UK showing the most progress on reaching net zero, citing our work on district heating, charging infrastructure and housing retrofit. By 2030 we will have made rapid progress towards carbon neutrality, reducing our impact on the planet, making places more resilient and adaptable to climate change, doing so in a fair way and growing the Leeds economy.

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our city's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises that breaking the cycle of poverty and poor health is more important than it has ever been.

Good health leads to wealth across communities. Raising people's living standards, their start in life, access to education and skills, quality of jobs and homes available are some of the key ingredients to improving people's health.



### INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Our previous growth strategy was published in 2018 and focussed on three priorities: **people, place and productivity**. Since then we've worked hard to deliver growth throughout a really challenging economic period. To continue this mission we have set out our priorities as nine big ideas.



# Our Story

Centrally located in the UK our geography is different to highly urbanised cities, encompassing market towns, award winning parks, a highly compact city centre growing faster than ever before, vibrant culture, sport and heritage, business hubs peppered throughout the city alongside pleasant and vibrant communities, and Yorkshire's finest countryside on our doorstep.

With our broad based economy we don't rely on one sector for growth, we attract talent from all areas. We have a rich, diverse population with over 100 nationalities settling in the city and we are proud to celebrate people for who they are. We are one of the most collaborative cities in Europe cementing our reputation as the place people come to try things out.

These strengths allow us to work with businesses to solve problems, be the place that is prepared to take risks and act as a test bed for ideas. They are just some of the reasons we are chosen as a location by major institutions like the new UK Infrastructure Bank and have attracted and retained global brands such as Burberry and DLA Piper.

Leeds is a self-starting city that doesn't rely on subsidies, the only core city that is a net contributor to the UK economy. By working together local leaders can deliver for our communities and we increasingly want to collaborate with government to pilot new forms of policy in the north. Leeds being chosen as the first Health and Social Care Hub is a good example of this and we are the perfect partner due to our strengths in health and data.

Innovators come to Leeds as our Team Leeds approach makes working together easy in a way that other places struggle to do, just look at the success of the Leeds Digital Festival. Collaboration between our Anchors Network has resulted in increased local spend in Leeds and more training and job opportunities for people of all backgrounds. Elsewhere, Channel 4, Leeds City College and firms like Lloyds are just some of the organisations who have bought into our ambition to deliver Inclusive Growth.

The productivity puzzle isn't a puzzle for us - better transport is what we need, specifically mass transit and better bus services. We know what the challenges are but it's clear we are working with limited resources, so the council and city will have to be agile and responsive to opportunities to secure capital and investment when opportunities arise.



“ One of the reasons Channel 4 chose Leeds was because there was a real desire from those involved in the city to work together, and with us, to collectively strengthen the creative sector ”



Want to be part of it? Sign up here



Our Inclusive Growth Delivery Partnership has over **1,000 members** and continues to grow

### Anchor Institutions

Anchor Institutions are large organisations like the council, universities and hospitals that have deep rooted connections - are 'anchored' - with the city. They are able to use their size and spending power to help address local problems and support workers, communities and smaller businesses.

### The Health and Social Care Hub

The Health and Social Care Hub is forging a new and diverse partnership between local and national parts of the health system, developing an effective model for central and local government to work together. The Hub will improve health outcomes whilst positioning health and social care as a career of choice.

# Our Progress

Leeds has much to be proud of. Here are just some of the ways we've delivered inclusive growth!

## LEADERSHIP

- Yorkshire has the fastest growing digital economy in the UK centred in Leeds
- We have the largest base of finance and professional services outside London
- We are pioneers in sustainable and green finance
- The Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and five other health-related bodies are all headquartered here, providing the IT infrastructure and data that underpins its day to day operations

## SKILLS

- Home to six universities with over 65,000 students, the city experiences a "brain gain" with more undergraduates and graduates moving into the city than leaving
- In 2022 we hosted careers fairs for over 12,000 people, and helped over 3,000 people into work
- We make things, with twice as many advanced-manufacturing companies than the national average

## CONNECTIONS & PLACES

- We've built over £4 billion worth of large-scale development projects over the last 10 years and over 1.5% of England's homes
- We're Connecting Leeds and since 2018, have completed £750 million investment in decarbonising transport, creating healthier streets, spaces and communities, flood alleviation and transforming the city centre
- We've completed the East Leeds Orbital Route - the biggest infrastructure project undertaken by the council in fifty years, easing congestion and unlocking 5,000 new homes and green space

## COLLABORATION

- We welcomed Channel 4 to the city, and now have one of the fastest growing Film and TV sectors in the UK
- We've unleashed our Year of Culture in 2023, and Arts Council England funding in the city increased from £21m to £29m
- We have secured over £100m grant funding since we declared the Climate Emergency in 2019 to support our green ambitions



# Our place in the region

Leeds is the largest core city in Yorkshire, driving economic activity and employment in the region and the Leader of Leeds City Council is also Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire. That's why we are aligned with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in delivering on our shared ambitions.

We will work in partnership with WYCA to support the missions of the West Yorkshire Plan including:

**Mission 1: A prosperous West Yorkshire - an inclusive economy with well paid jobs, focusing on:**

<b>Business Investment</b>	Work with our businesses to attract investment and jobs, improve productivity, increase resilience and achieve growth.
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<b>Jobs and skills</b>	Invest in talent of all ages to develop the skills and progression we need. Support the regional Fair Work Charter which engages employers to encourage fair pay, good and flexible working conditions and promotes diversity and social mobility in the workforce.
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**Mission 3: A well-connected West Yorkshire - a strong transport system: focusing on:**

<b>Delivery of key transport projects</b>	Bold investment to deliver a transformational transport system to benefit generations to come including rail improvements, a new mass transit system for West Yorkshire by 2040 and bus reform.
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**“ A brighter West Yorkshire - a place that works for all. An engine room of ideas and creativity, where anyone can make a home ”**  
*West Yorkshire Plan 2040*

**West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



# PEOPLE



**This section looks at the issues surrounding poverty and inequality, its impacts on health and how we can improve this, how we can support businesses to create more better paid, secure jobs, and make the most of training and education in the city to meet local needs.**



### Tackling poverty and inequality to improve people's lives

Ensure that Leeds is the best city in the UK to grow up in

Improve the health of the poorest the fastest

Continue to support the most disadvantaged communities and people



### Supporting people and businesses in a rapidly changing labour market

Raise the bar on inclusive recruitment, better jobs and healthy workplaces

Help people into work or to start a business, focusing on those who need our support the most

Enable people in work to learn new skills, progress throughout their career, and be able to change jobs



### Making sure education and training meets local needs

Develop talent in emerging and vital areas of the economy

Work together better as a city to enable people to progress from learning to employment



## Tackling poverty and inequality to improve people's lives



People's life chances are increasingly dictated by their backgrounds, wealth, gender, ethnicity and age. 22% of people in Leeds live in poverty and deprivation as defined through the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and this has intensified in recent years linked to austerity, welfare reform, the pandemic and cost of living crisis which have created cycles of unemployment or low-paid and insecure work.

The rate of people who are economically inactive has risen sharply with long term health conditions the primary factor. Far more women than men are economically inactive as a result of various factors including childcare, costing the city £1.5bn per year.

A job is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty. More and more children who are living in poverty are from households with at least one adult in work. This takes its toll, between 2014 and 2020, the number of children living in 'relative low-income' families increased by 26% in Great Britain, but by 49% in Leeds.

## Ensure that Leeds is the best city in the UK to grow up in

At the heart of our ambitions is the need to reduce the numbers of children living in poverty, and to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's lives. This is complex and difficult to do and requires investment from the government, public sector organisations, businesses and a strong third sector. Part of the solution to improving household income is providing better access to secure, well-paid employment, alongside affordable childcare, improved educational outcomes, tackling health inequalities and enriching opportunities for children and young people.

Almost half of the attainment gap between students at GCSE level is set in place before children start school. We are committed to supporting young people, particularly children with poorer learning outcomes, to attend school and achieve to their full potential. We want to raise the aspirations of young people to encourage them to continue into education, apprenticeships and employment.



Our Child Friendly Leeds programme is key to ensuring that all children and young people are safe from harm, do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life, enjoy healthy lives, have fun growing up and are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence.

When Leeds first set out its Child Friendly vision, we listened to the ideas of thousands of young people of all ages. In 2023, as Child Friendly Leeds turns 10 years old, we have again captured their Wishes for the city, including for Leeds to be a city that reduces the impact of poverty, for all children to be in learning settings which meet their needs, and for young people to have access to a wide range of work experience, employment and volunteering opportunities. For children to have access to opportunities they need to know about what is happening across the city and be able to travel around the city, which is also reflected in their Wishes.

King Charles III visits Leeds to celebrate 10 years of Child Friendly Leeds



Our campaign to make Leeds a child friendly city has grown to over 1,000 businesses and organisations who amplify the voice of children and put them at the heart of our economic plans. This has transformed child protection from an activity that wasn't previously joined up into a collective city endeavour. Our success with Child Friendly Leeds has been replicated across the country, as restorative working and supporting families to help themselves has led Leeds to two outstanding Ofsted assessments and much better children's outcomes.

## Spotlight...

See the Child Friendly Wishes here



### CASE STUDY - Healthy Holidays

Funded by the Department for Education, the Healthy Holidays Programme provides healthy food and enriching activities to children eligible for Free School Meals over the main school holidays, reaching almost 25,000 children in 2022. The programme has wide-reaching impacts from alleviating child poverty, improving the development of children at school, as well as supporting parents to be able to work during the school holidays and signposting them towards further financial and employment support available in the city.



## Improve the health of the poorest the fastest

We are committed to making Leeds fairer and healthier through our new status as a Marmot City. Working with the Institute for Health Equity (IHE), we aim to ensure that the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live and work, do not unfairly put their health at a disadvantage. We are looking at how factors such as how having the best start to life, good education opportunities and having a high quality, well-paid job can positively impact health outcomes.

We are ambitious about making our city mentally healthy. A key ingredient of good mental health is stable employment, so we have created a pathway from primary care with GPs able to refer patients into the council's employment and skills mental health programme to reach those with the greatest need.

Encouraging people to be more active is also important, with plans being explored to re-develop Fearnville Leisure Centre, envisaged to become a central community asset. We take pride in having green spaces that are clean, safe, well-maintained and accessible to everyone, with seven of our parks and green spaces recognised amongst the best in the country. Leeds City Bikes is creating a new eco-friendly and affordable public electric bike hire service making cycling easier, more accessible, and more attractive.

Utilising new technology can help monitor people's long-term conditions in their own home, or enable them to be discharged from hospital more quickly. This is key to promoting independence and removing the barriers preventing people from being able to work. Leeds has strengths in digital health, medical technology and health data and is already leading the way in the UK to reimagine health services.

## Continue to support the most disadvantaged communities and people

We will continue to work in partnership with communities to deliver changes that local people want to see. In 2017, we began prioritising neighbourhoods in the city which ranked in the top one percent of the most disadvantaged nationally. Following successful pilots, we have expanded our work to incorporate 12 neighbourhoods in Leeds, all of which are in the inner city. Actions being planned include empowering at-risk young people, supporting migrant families, tackling poor quality private housing and improving local parks, high streets and community spaces.

As more day-to-day activities are done online we need to improve access and understanding of digital technology to fight isolation. 100% Digital Leeds, the city's flagship digital inclusion programme has been adopting a 'furthest first' approach to support the most excluded people and communities in Leeds. The team works with over 200 organisations and has brought over £2 million of external funding into the city.

## Third Sector

Our third sector continues to play a major role in strengthening communities, providing access to opportunities, building skills, improving health and wellbeing, and promoting inclusion. Despite its importance the number of organisations, employees and volunteers in the sector are reducing due to budget and wider pressures. To manage demand, some third sector organisations are having to review the support they can provide.

To support the resilience of the sector, we need to recognise the role it plays in generating social value and providing a bridge into communities. We will work alongside third sector organisations to make it easier for businesses to partner with the sector, and for the sector to attract contracts and investment.



### CASE STUDY - Businesses making an impact

[One for the City](#) is creating a community of businesses committed to growing a more inclusive economy. Since launching in 2023, 10 businesses have committed to giving 1% of their profit or revenue to local charities and community organisations via Leeds Community Foundation.

### CASE STUDY - Community Health and Wellbeing Service

The new Community Health and Wellbeing Service aims to transform home care services from a traditional 'time and task' model to an outcomes focused, personalised provision co-commissioned with Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust. It will be delivered by small teams of neighbourhood care workers paid on better terms and conditions, with opportunities to deepen their skills and open new career pathways. The new service will start in three wards in April 2024.

# Supporting people and businesses in a rapidly changing labour market



The labour market has undergone significant changes in recent times, through the impacts of Brexit on the movement of workers, Covid-19 which accelerated a shift to working from home, and a movement from 'bricks to clicks' affecting retail, employment and the city centre.

All this has resulted in a tight labour market where a large number of people left work during the pandemic (including high numbers of those over 50) and a growth in poor health which created high numbers of job vacancies. High levels of inflation has also impacted consumer spending, and led to increased costs for businesses.

The structural change in the labour market is expected to continue, with emerging impacts of AI and further automation yet to work through. The transition to net zero will gather pace which will have consequences for the labour market in the future. Support for growing and shrinking sectors of our economy will need to be targeted and closely monitored.



Our Future Talent Plan was created by the city and sets out our vision for Leeds to be:

“a globally competitive city where we work together to enable the right opportunities for people and businesses to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market, and ensure that nobody is left behind”

This is a plan of action, focused on those who need our support the most. Working together with businesses and education providers as part of our Team Leeds approach will enable the city to benefit from a resilient labour force and strong talent pool. We've outlined some examples of the great things going on in the city within this chapter.



Find out what other organisations are doing and make connections here:



## Spotlight...



## Raise the bar on inclusive recruitment, better jobs and healthy workplaces

Research shows that companies with a diverse workforce, in terms of gender and ethnic diversity, are more likely to outperform other companies on profitability. Our Future Talent Plan helps organisations to prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion to overcome the labour market challenges of the future.

Fair pay is an important measure to drive up living standards and to attract and crucially retain talent. In 2022, 12.5% of Leeds residents earned less than the Real Living Wage (then £9.90 per hour). As a Council we are committed to paying all staff the Real Living Wage and in our role as a major employer, Leeds Anchor and civic leader, we continue to encourage other employers to pay it too.

We know that the increase of people not in work has primarily been driven by long-term sickness with this mostly impacting those over 50. This can partly be explained by ageing, but is also linked to NHS waiting lists which increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. All organisations in the city need to come together to create healthier workplaces, to encourage people back to work and help people already in work.

Organisations are already putting the Future Talent plan into practice. We have partnered with over 100 businesses including John Lewis and Network Rail as part of our Active Leeds workplace offer, to encourage physical activity for their employees. In the third sector, Women Friendly Leeds has developed a recruiter checklist, where employers are encouraged to recognise the positive aspects of gaps in career histories and non-work experiences. We also want to make sure that older people are valued as the assets they are, whether that is in work or as volunteers and carers.

## Help people into work or to start a business, focusing on those who need our support the most

We will continue to focus support where people face barriers to employment, a lack of opportunities to further their education or being limited by long-term health conditions. A key aspect of this is supporting people to take their first steps in developing their skills and finding work.



In 2022, our Employment and Skills Service supported over **3,700 people** to improve their skills, and **3,000 people** into work

One of our priorities is around supporting people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). We have worked with a range of organisations to launch a new annual SEND Next Choices event at Leeds First Direct Arena. The event is the biggest of its type in the UK and gives young people the opportunity to prepare for a life after education, and the number of attendees is building year on year with over 2,200 visitors in 2023.



*Our Developing You programme builds the confidence of unemployed people living in priority neighbourhoods with mental health challenges. 1 in 4 people on the programme have so far found work, and 3 in 4 improved their skills. As well as mental health, we are working with people with learning disabilities and autism.*

- *Over 850 people are on the programme*
- *58% of these people were previously unemployed*
- *87% of candidates are from a diverse background*



*Launched in June 2022 by the Lighthouse Futures Trust, the Leeds Inclusive Employer Network brings together employers from across the city to learn about topics such as recruiting and developing the skills of employees who may have learning difficulties or autism and creating an inclusive workplace culture.*

SEND Next Choices event at Leeds First Direct Arena



**Enable people in work to learn new skills, progress throughout their career, and be able to change jobs**

Our aim is for a strong workforce fit for the decade, where employers invest in and continually top up the skills of their employees, plugging current and future skills gaps and creating a reliable pipeline of talent in the city.

To give adults access to skills training and better jobs in growing sectors such as digital and net zero as well as construction and other technical occupations, we are

partnering with employers to deliver skills bootcamps. This flexible in-work training enables people to manage their other commitments and guarantees a job interview on completion of the course.



*In collaboration with Leeds City College, we held our first Lifelong Learning Week in 2022, which was focused on supporting learners to enhance their digital skills in terms of courses, apprenticeships and careers support.*

**“ Future Talent means nurturing, supporting and providing the next generation with the skills, tools and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential. It means breaking down barriers and removing obstacles so that all young people can flourish ”**

*Bill Jones, Executive Principal*



**Making sure education and training meets local needs**



**Develop talent in emerging and vital areas of the economy**

Education organisations and skills providers are already pivoting their provision in line with the labour market. We need to continue to bridge future skills gaps in the city by nurturing new talent, upskilling the workforce, and helping people choose the right career.

The digital and tech sectors are thriving, in 2022 tech hiring accounted for a fifth of all available roles in the city. Whilst we are attracting top talent, some employers are still reporting difficulties in finding the right people with the right skills and knowledge to fill immediate demand. Through our Future Talent Plan we are unlocking the potential of digital talent in Leeds, with a focus on untapped talent pools where people from diverse backgrounds don't see themselves in these careers.

As well as focusing on areas with high growth potential, we must also provide support for other sectors including health and care, hospitality and retail which have all been impacted by labour shortages. There are 62,000 people who work in health and care in Leeds with over 400 roles in the sector. However, vacancy and turnover rates are high and projected to increase. The Leeds Health and Care Academy is working to make Leeds the best city for training and working in the Health and Care Sector. In 2022, it supported 1,344 employees with learning opportunities and 211 people into employment through an Academy programme.



*Leeds Unleashed was launched in May 2023, where digital companies including XDESIGN, Sky, Glean and Burberry opened their doors to the public for the day, offering prospective talent the opportunity to go behind the scenes and get insight into different aspects of work in the companies.*



## Work together better as a city to enable people to progress from learning to employment

Our education, training and employment system needs to function in a way that provides clear progression pathways. To accelerate the good work that is already taking place, we need to build on and expand the relationships that exist between all organisations and continue to involve employers in education and training, including in apprenticeships, work experience, internships and careers education that aligns with labour market needs. We also need to review and simplify the support that is on offer in Leeds and improve the sharing of labour market data and intelligence.

Apprenticeships are a key route to entering the labour market and tackling skills shortages. Despite national measures being introduced to kick-start demand for apprenticeships including the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017, apprenticeship starts in Leeds have fallen by 40% since that year. Employers need support to create apprenticeships, particularly at lower levels, for new (rather than existing) employees, and for young people making their first step onto the ladder. In Leeds we host an annual Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair to encourage the take up of apprenticeships at all skill levels.

As part of maximising the assets and resources in our city, we need to support new places of learning to offer a broader range of career opportunities as the world of work changes. Plans are in place for a Leeds City College campus at Mabgate, and in the city centre a new Leeds Mathematics School and a new location for Leeds Trinity University are being established to bring new opportunities for students.



*Leeds Trinity University is a career-led institution which embeds work placements and projects that meet the needs of local organisations for students throughout their studies, while also delivering a significant volume of apprenticeships. It is committed to increasing engagement between local employers and its students, as well as sharing student insight intelligence with employers.*



*The Ahead Partnership deliver employer-led programmes in schools and colleges. Their Growing Talent Digital Leeds Programme helps schools with higher proportions of students from families on lower incomes and with ethnically diverse populations.*

“Expanding our investment in the UK’s talent is testament to the palpable energy and dynamism in the country’s tech sector and particularly of the emerging digital workforce in Leeds”



### CASE STUDY - Cognizant

Multinational technology firm Cognizant opened a new office in Leeds in 2022. The organisation is focused on creating over 1,000 new jobs in the city over a five-year period, including at least 200 entry-level positions as part of a long-term commitment to improving social mobility in the city.



## LEEDSANCHORS

The size of Anchor Institutions means that their decision making can have a big impact on local communities and economies. Currently we're working with 14 of the largest employers in Leeds who collectively employ over 55,000 people in the city.

We see the Leeds Anchors as key partners to help with the delivery of our Big Ideas. There are many ways they do this such as directing more of their spending locally, making year on year reductions in carbon emissions, helping local people to access jobs in their organisations, using data to monitor levels of wellbeing, offering training opportunities and through students and staff working in communities.

### Anchors in Action

A number of Anchor Institutions are **Connecting Communities to Health and Care Careers** as part of a programme led by Leeds Health and Care Academy. Scaling up a successful pilot helping residents from Lincoln Green to gain employment at the adjacent St James' Hospital, the programme signposts people from disadvantaged communities into vacancies, as well as education, training and language courses. As of 2023:

- Over 850 people are on the programme
- 58% of these people were previously unemployed
- 87% of candidates are from a diverse background

Students from Leeds Beckett University designed and built the **New Wortley Community Centre**, which is in a disadvantaged area with no funds for architectural consultancy. The project was named as one of the UK's 100 best breakthroughs for its significant impact on people's everyday lives.

Leeds College of Building have piloted a new approach to deliver **adult learning in community venues**. Co-developed with the Hamara Centre to meet local skills needs, the pilot has supported people from migrant backgrounds to improve their English and become more independent and connected to their community.

Leeds City Council has committed to increasing **local spending** from its budget of approximately £1 billion and support more local businesses to tender for work.

**Leeds Community Anchors Network** is a Leeds-wide network of trusted third sector and faith organisations which came together during the Covid pandemic. The Leeds Anchors are undertaking work to learn from the Community Anchors about how to better listen to communities, with an initial focus on finding community solutions to improve access to meaningful employment in the city.

**Community Wealth Building** - working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies to analyse current spending, some of the Leeds Anchors have agreed objectives to shift spending towards suppliers who generate greater economic and social benefit for local people. Members are now working together to adapt their procurement practice and identify sectors where they can collaborate to create more economically generative local markets.

### What's next?

We are now broadening our Leeds Anchors to include the private sector. By investing in the place where they operate, businesses are supporting potential workforces, suppliers and customers. Having a meaningful local impact is often necessary for contracts with the public sector, a powerful motivator for employees and can be an important differentiator for businesses seeking to attract diverse and talented people.

The Business Anchors will initially focus on large and medium sized businesses with the potential to have the greatest overall impact on the city. However, tools and resources will be made available for any business in Leeds that wants to re-invest in the city to create benefits for residents and communities.

## Spotlight...

Want to find out more about Leeds Anchors or get involved?

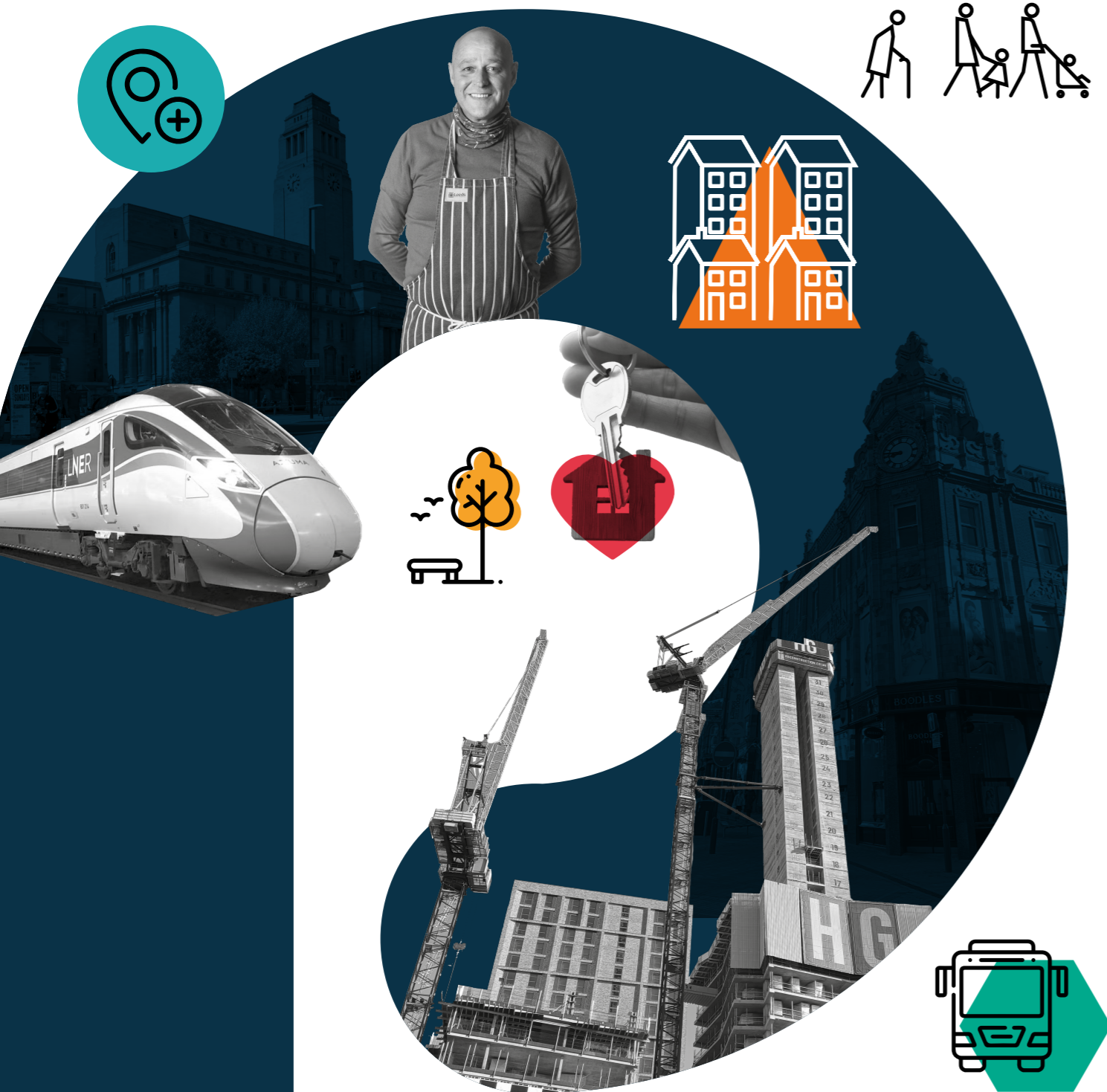


*Leeds Building Society provides free office space to community organisation Holbeck Together, supports their lunch club and donates food and toiletries to local residents*



*Residents of Lincoln Green who gained employment at St James's Hospital*





# PLACE

**This section sets out how we will make our places work, putting people first. Creating a city where you don't need a car, delivering jobs and homes in the right places, ensuring our city and local centres thrive, building in resilience and adapting for the future.**



## Investing in our places and transport to create a sustainable economy and greener future

Enable and drive key development locations across the city to create jobs and investment

Improve transport and connectivity to create a city where you don't need a car, bringing jobs and opportunities closer to people



## Maximising the potential of our city centre and local high streets

Continue to focus on developing a liveable, attractive and vibrant city centre with clear opportunities for growth

Support our local centres and high streets to respond to changes in the economy and diversify, as well as being attractive community centres to meet, shop, work and access services



## Connecting and strengthening our communities

Increase the benefits of city centre growth into surrounding communities

Build and improve more homes of the right type and quality, that are in the right places and increase the number that are affordable

Enable local people to make their own decisions on how to improve their communities



**Investing in  
our places  
and transport  
to create a  
sustainable  
economy and  
greener future**



Leeds has a large and varied geographical footprint with a large urban area, towns with unique character such as Morley, Otley and Wetherby, as well as smaller villages and rural areas that allow us to plan for sustainable growth more easily than many other comparative cities. To continue to be an attractive place where people want to live and work we need to select the right spaces for housing and business growth, places which have good transport links and which are connected to local communities. Our Local Plan will provide long term certainty to developers and businesses by setting out our locations for growth across Leeds up to 2040.

The skyline of the city has undergone an unprecedented period of change over the last 10 years, £4 billion has been invested in large scale development projects and we have an even larger active pipeline of over £7 billion. This is most noticeable in the city centre, but significant progress has also been made on bringing forward key growth areas across Leeds.

**“ There is such a great buzz about the city that it feels like the natural ‘Capital of the North’ to us. I didn’t have to do much persuasion to have the investment made here, and now this is our strategic hub ”**  
**netcompany**



## Enable and drive key development locations across the city to create jobs and investment

Outside the city centre we have identified current locations for growth across the city. Each has the potential to transform local places and offer regional if not national significance - they are all recognised by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as priority areas for development.

### North West Leeds Employment Hub

Sitting next to the airport, this 90 acres site is a major opportunity to deliver a 21st century business park for high growth sectors. It will support the economy in this part of the city and could help meet the needs of local businesses looking to grow and diversify. Public transport links are being improved including plans for a new parkway station.

### Kirkstall Forge

This is the city's largest and oldest brownfield site. Its new station built in 2016 was the first to open in Leeds for 40 years, supporting the award-winning first phase of office development. Development of the site is still in progress and will deliver over 1,000 new homes, 300,000 square feet of commercial floorspace and 100,000 square feet of leisure and retail development, all with high environmental credentials.

### Thorpe Park

Developed over the last 20 years the latest phase includes The Springs retail development in 2018 and new offices which opened in 2023. A new railway station together with Park and Ride facilities is set to open in 2025. Thorpe Park will deliver over 2 million square feet of office, leisure and retail development, complementing almost 5,000 homes in and around the **East Leeds Extension**, unlocked by the £150m East Leeds Orbital Route, which opened in 2022.

### Aire Valley

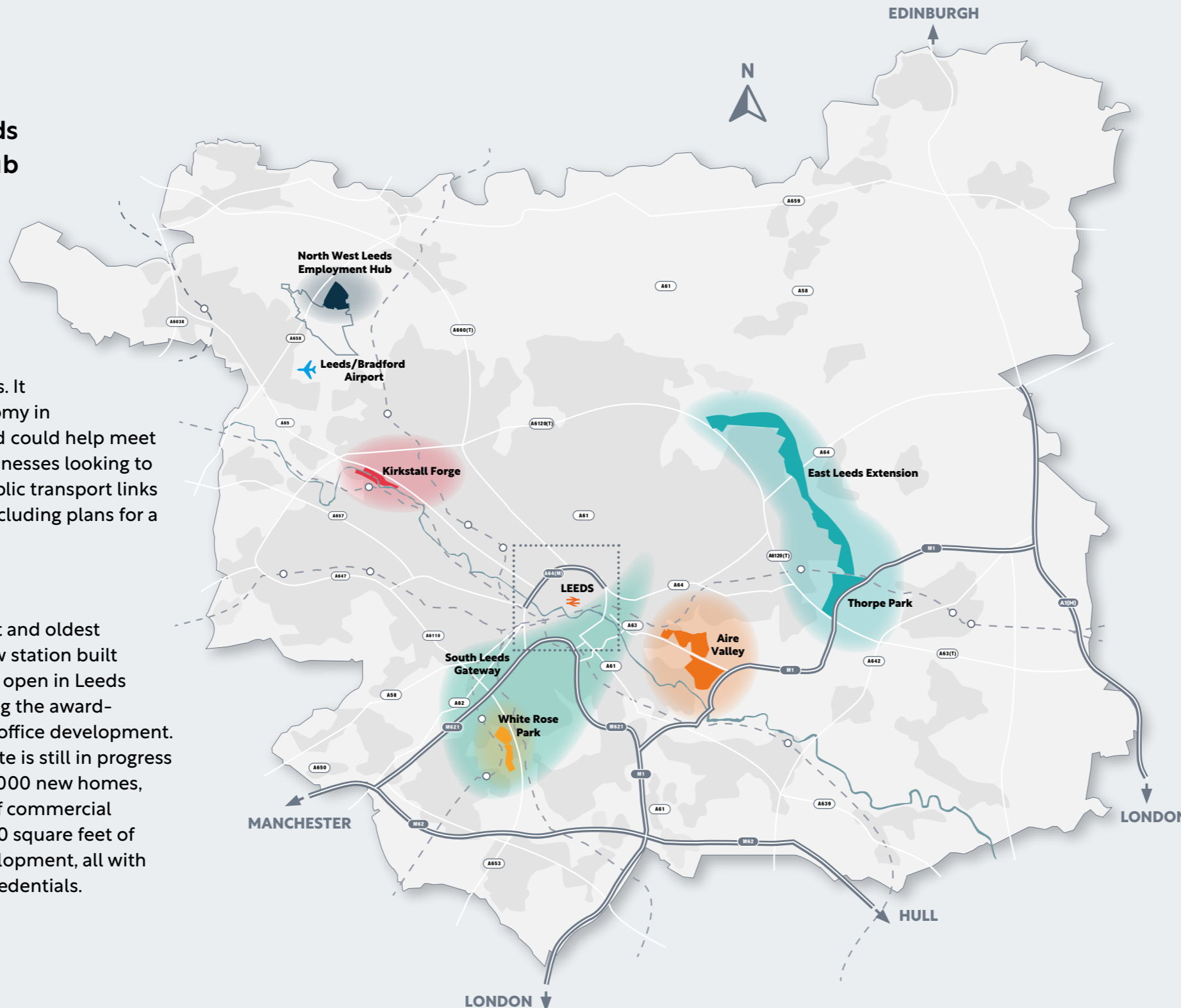
The Aire Valley Enterprise Zone supports a range of industrial, manufacturing and logistics employment and includes the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (which feeds heat into the Leeds Pipes network). Adjoining land at Skelton Grange is now coming forward for development and the Skelton Gate new settlement is now underway, to eventually deliver 1,800 new homes, with schools and community facilities supported by new and improved green infrastructure.

### South Leeds Gateway

Connecting our key hospital, health and life science assets at St James' and LGI through the city centre to Morley, a linked pipeline of projects worth over £2 billion unifying existing commitments for over 15,000 new homes, drawing together the Innovation Arc, Leeds Station, British Library North in the Temple Quarter, implementation of the first community driven inner city Neighbourhood Plan in Holbeck, ambitious plans to redevelop Leeds United's Elland Road stadium, redevelopment of White Rose Park and further development of Capitol Park.

### White Rose Park

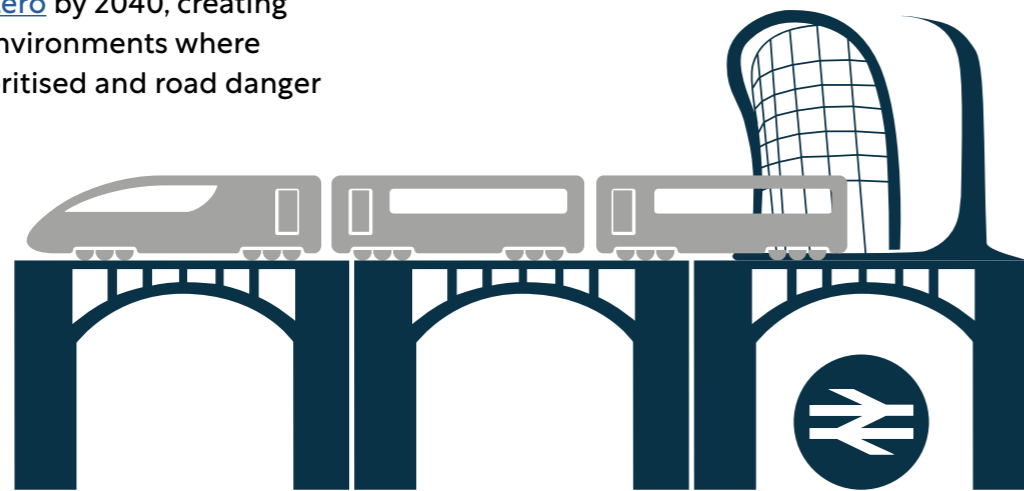
Major employment and leisure destination with a new station opening in 2024. A new Innovation Hub will support the park further becoming a test bed for smart city technologies, a 1 million square feet knowledge and talent-based campus of the future.



## Improve transport and connectivity to create a city where you don't need a car, bringing jobs and opportunities closer to people

Leeds is twice the geographical size of Birmingham and two thirds of its area is rural. We need a transit system that caters for our needs. Currently only 38% of Leeds' population can reach the city centre in 30 minutes using public transport, costing Leeds £2.8 billion in 2022 due to lost productivity. At the same time transport networks across the North are experiencing delays to services and train cancellations causing growing frustration to commuters. If we are serious about growth and getting people out of their cars then we need a reliable, affordable alternative.

Leeds and the wider region require an integrated transport system including high speed rail, buses and a new Mass Transit system so we can become as productive as other parts of the UK including the South-East and other similar sized European cities. Against this challenging backdrop we have still managed to invest over £750 million in transport upgrades since 2018 including Park and Ride facilities and improving bus journeys. Our [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy](#) sets out what we will do to make Leeds into a city where you don't need a car, ensuring walking and cycling are the first choice for the shortest trips. This will help us achieve [Vision Zero](#) by 2040, creating safe and healthy environments where active travel is prioritised and road danger is eliminated.



Leeds is the largest city in Western Europe without a Mass Transit system, but the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is developing plans for this to change with construction scheduled to start this decade and the first stage of the line likely to start in Leeds. Mass Transit will create a seamless transport system that meets the needs of all different journey types.

Work continues on the transformation of Leeds Station, the busiest transport hub in the North. Leeds currently relies on Victorian rail infrastructure despite seeing passenger growth of 192% over the past twenty years, far above the level of growth seen at stations in London. Meeting demand through to the mid 2030's will require more capacity than the existing station can provide. The only option remaining involves expansion into a T shaped station and as a city we have planned our growth around this.

For a fully integrated transport network to be complete it is vital that HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) are built to link our great northern cities. They will provide jobs and opportunities, remove congestion from our roads, and encourage the shift to lower-carbon travel. Ensuring the station continues to serve both Leeds and the national network is critical and we are working tirelessly with our transport partners to ensure they understand the city's needs.

Buses provide a lifeline for communities and we will continue to work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to support bus franchising which would give our region control over setting fares and routes. This will allow the services to be operated in the interests of local bus users, reducing car dependency and benefiting those people on lower incomes who make a lot of use of public transport.



Concept image showing proposed new station entrance



## Maximising the potential of our city centre and local high streets

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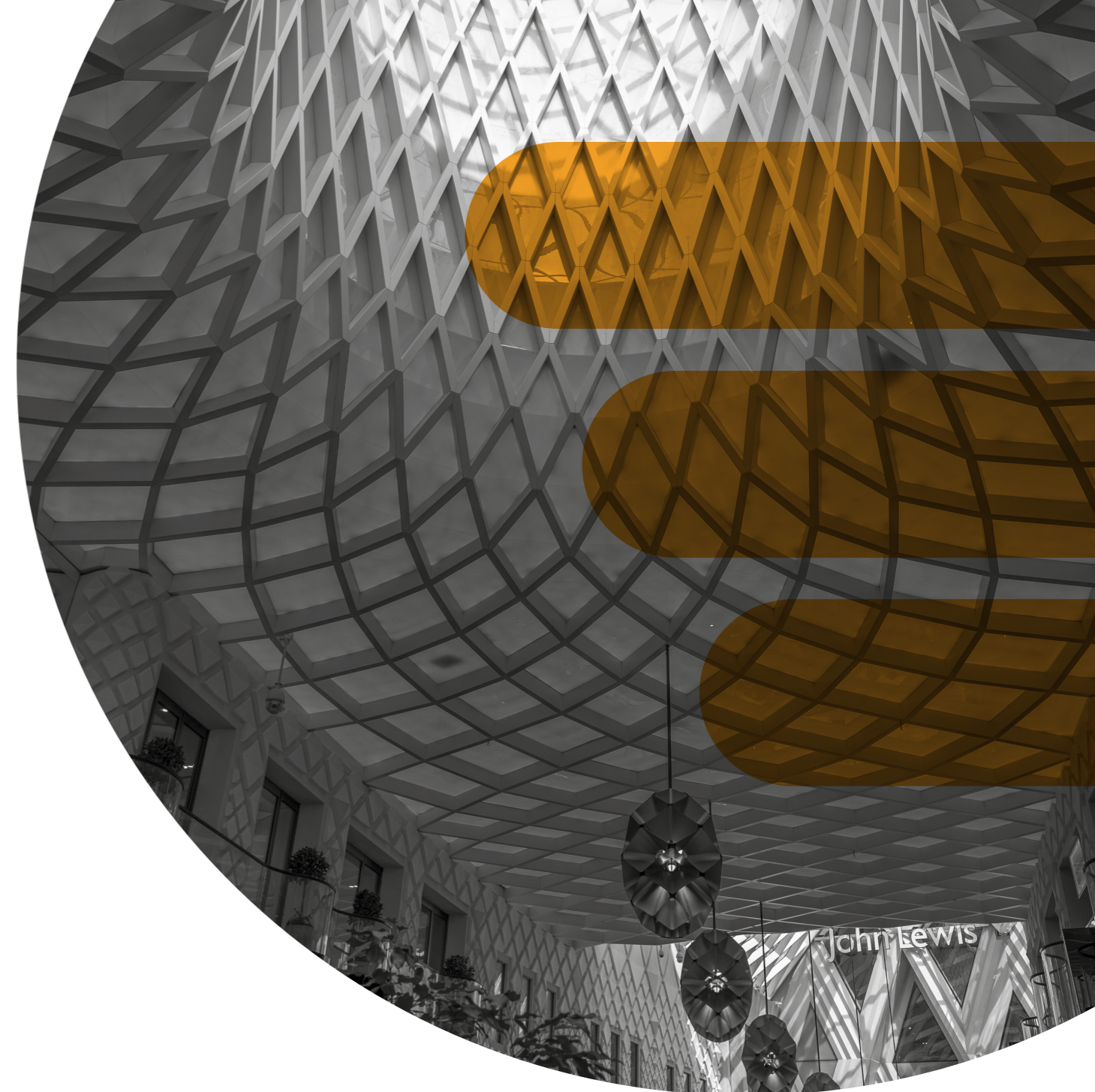
### Continue to focus on developing a liveable, attractive and vibrant city centre with clear opportunities for growth

Our city centre is the most productive area in Yorkshire, a hub for knowledge-intensive firms, jobs, workers, universities, government, start-ups and scale-ups with a strong cultural offer. Growth in the city has remained strong in the face of uncertainties in the property market with construction levels in 2022 the second highest since records began. Work has taken place to transform the look and feel of our civic spaces including at the Headrow, the Corn Exchange and Cookridge Street. Part of the reason our city centre is among the UK's most vibrant, clean and welcoming is because the private sector matches our investment, with LeedsBID (Leeds Business Improvement District) investing £14m in Leeds City Centre from 2020 - 2025.

Over the past few years, city centres have increasingly become a place where people want to socialise rather than simply shop or work. We see this in the number of people using Leeds city centre since the pandemic. In line with other major cities, fewer people are coming into the centre during the week due to a shift in work patterns, but weekends are still busy suggesting stronger demand for a mix of retail, leisure, culture and the night-time economy.

The Leeds office market has remained relatively resilient, with fewer recent vacancies than most of our major regional counterparts, but we need to monitor longer term trends closely. We have a strong offer which is less saturated than other cities, attracting inward investment from companies looking to the North. The traditional West End near the station is undergoing major redevelopment, creating a high quality new office campus at its heart. We have also seen the new offices in the South Bank confirming its position as a new employment destination. Given the expected demand for office space in the city, we will accommodate future growth to expand the 1.8 million square metres of office space (the size of 252 football pitches) that we already have.

Leeds is home to a high number of successful independent retailers, cafes, bars and restaurants. In the city centre, architectural gems like the Corn Exchange, Kirkgate Market, Thorntons and Queens Arcade lend themselves to independent and start-up retail, and indeed this Victorian architecture has inspired more recent retail developments like Victoria Gate and Trinity Leeds. It is the independent sector that gives Leeds and its town and local centres uniqueness and vibrancy. The Council will work with this sector, recognising that it has specific needs, to explore what practical support is required.



# Work underway in the city centre

## City Square

Redeveloped to put people first, removing through traffic and offering an improved welcome to the heart of Leeds, with future plans to deliver a fuller transformation, subject to securing funding and public consultation.

## Retail Core

Exploring new and refreshed city centre uses as part of the re-development of Debenhams and House of Fraser, bringing forward the development of Eastgate, rebuilding the Core Shopping Centre, refreshing St John's Centre, investing in a food village and hotel development at Kirkgate Market to breathe further life and attract more customers.

## High Street Heritage

Working with building and landowners to build on the successful restoration of the First White Cloth Hall to complete the regeneration of Kirkgate, Leeds' oldest street and to complete the New Briggate High Street Heritage Action Zone.

## National Poetry Centre

Proposed new flagship project of the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, creating a home to poetry and venue of international significance.

## Conference Centre

Early stage exploration of a new conference centre to cement our reputation as a top five conference destination in the UK.

## Leeds Station

Leeds Station main concourse redevelopment to put passengers first and create safe secure capacity and better connection to the city including a cycle hub for 500 bikes, combined with a comprehensive programme to improve the area around the station.

## Residential Development

The transformation of the city centre is stimulating the development of new neighbourhoods in the West End, Quarry Hill, Eastside and Mabgate.

## South Bank

Bringing residential development into the heart of the city close to Leeds Station, with a pipeline of thousands more, including new affordable housing and one of the most sustainable new developments in the UK - Citu's Climate Innovation District.

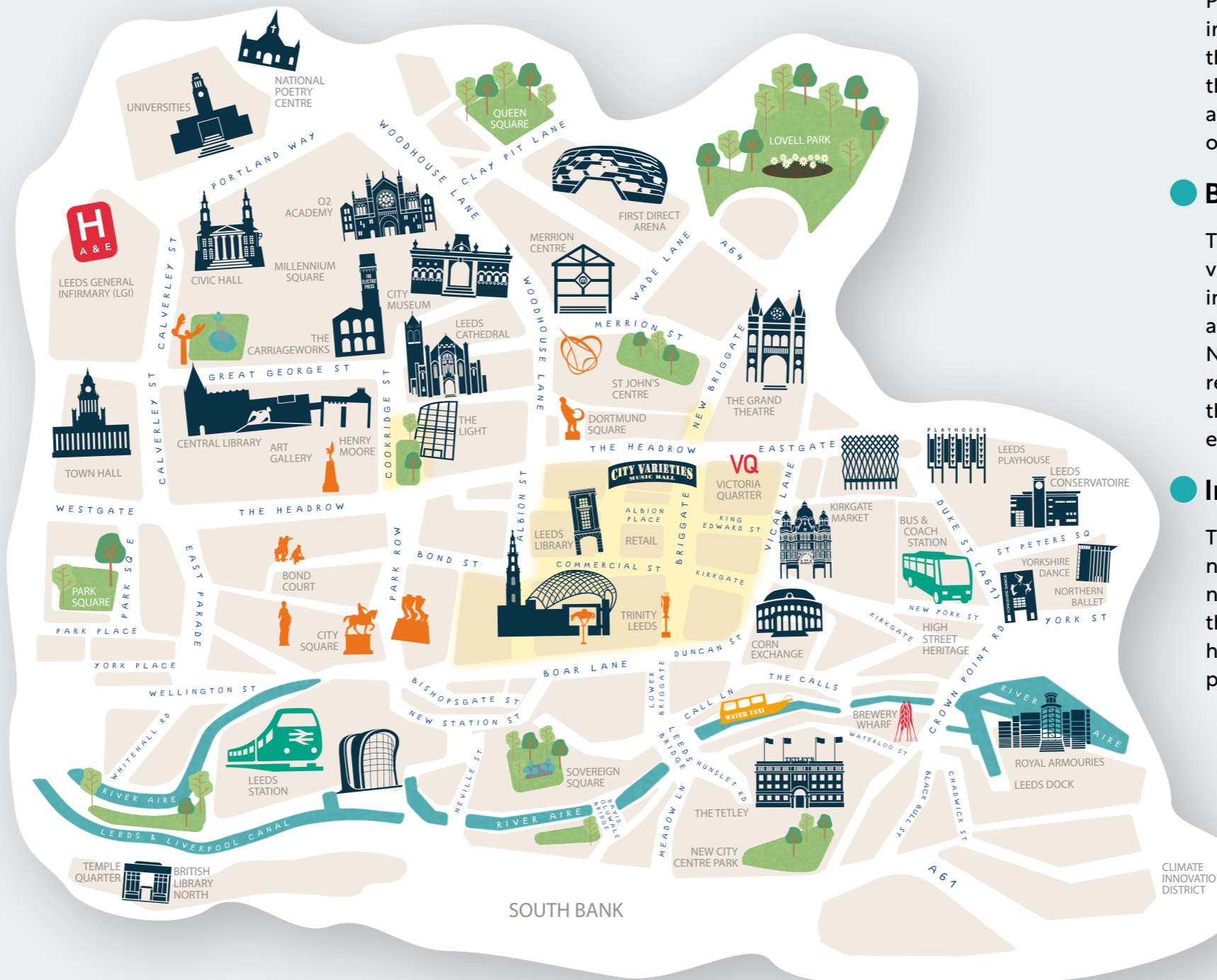
Phase 1 of largest new city centre park in the UK will open in 2023, providing the backdrop for the redevelopment of the former Tetley Brewery site alongside a new residential development opportunity at Meadow Lane.

## British Library North

The Temple Quarter is creating a new vibrant and distinctive neighbourhood in Holbeck, with proposals at an advanced stage for the British Library North at Temple Works, to anchor regeneration, form the southern part of the Innovation Arc and connect to the existing community of Holbeck.

## Innovation Arc

The Arc is a series of innovation neighbourhoods, formed around the natural anchors of our main universities, the proposed adult and children's hospitals, and major private sector partners.



## Support our local centres and high streets to respond to changes in the economy and diversify, as well as being attractive community centres to meet, shop, work and access services

- 80% of households in the city are in 'good' or 'walkable' locations to existing services
- 62 local centres and high streets across Leeds which serve as important hubs for local communities
- 1.4 million square metres of retail space in 2022 equivalent to 196 football pitches
- 70% units in local centres are independent businesses
- 95% of retail units occupied in 2022
- 93% of firms are adopting hybrid working models, with only 5% of businesses working entirely from an office

Each of our local centres and high streets possess a unique offer of retail, services and facilities, with many providing vital and easy access to fresh food and provisions. They are hubs for independent businesses and often provide much valued spaces where people can socialise, connect and celebrate local identity through events and festivals.

As more businesses adopt more hybrid working models there are opportunities for local high streets. Leeds has a strong flexible workspace market, with demand remaining stable and outperforming many comparable cities across the UK. We are creating new workspaces and start-up spaces in locations outside of the city centre through providing funding to businesses for collaboration, co-working space and business development within local communities.

Without access to any significant funding for most of our centres it is clear that we will need to find new ways to offer support and intervention. We will prioritise those areas that have the greatest challenges but also where we can add the most value.

**MORLEY**  
more than a place

## Morley Town Deal

As part of the Government's Towns Fund, £24.3m has been secured for town centre improvements including:

- Investment in parks, playgrounds, and town centre public realm
- Morley Town Hall refurbishment and a heritage grants programme for investment in traditional shop fronts and to restore key heritage buildings
- Partnership with Leeds City College to develop a new adult skills college, repurposing an historic town centre building
- New improved connections between the town centre and the train station

Spotlight...



## Connecting and strengthening our communities

BIG  
IDEA

### Increase the benefits of city centre growth into surrounding communities

The city centre will continue to be a key focus for investment, development and the delivery of new infrastructure. It is the most sustainable location for new jobs and homes. The success of the last 10 years and the compact nature of the city centre means that if we are to continue this momentum we need to consider how to grow beyond this footprint and deliver regeneration that will connect with and directly benefit the people living in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Despite much good work to improve public transport and active travel such as cycling, many of our inner city neighbourhoods remain cut off from the city centre by busy roads, rail infrastructure and generally poor-quality older development.

Building on our work in the last 10 years to restitch the city centre to the south of the river into South Bank, we are working with communities, land owners, businesses and developers to set out plans to bring forward new neighbourhoods within the fringe areas of the city centre.

#### ● South Bank

Exploring the next phases of development to achieve greater connection and integration with communities to the south in Holbeck, Beeston and West Hunslet.

#### ● Eastside

Major brownfield opportunities to be unlocked, exploration of further highway improvements, potential for better green infrastructure and connections to Richmond Hill and East End Park.

#### ● West End Riverside

An area of significant residential investment interest, unlocking access and benefits of the River Aire and canal, supporting the TV and Film sector employers in the area, complementing ambitions for the adjoining **Little Woodhouse** and **Armley** neighbourhoods and connecting to the new West End city centre businesses.

#### ● Hunslet Riverside

Harnessing the momentum created by the Climate Innovation District, Leeds Dock, Hunslet Mill and regeneration zone developing around the River Aire waterfront, and improving connection with Hunslet.

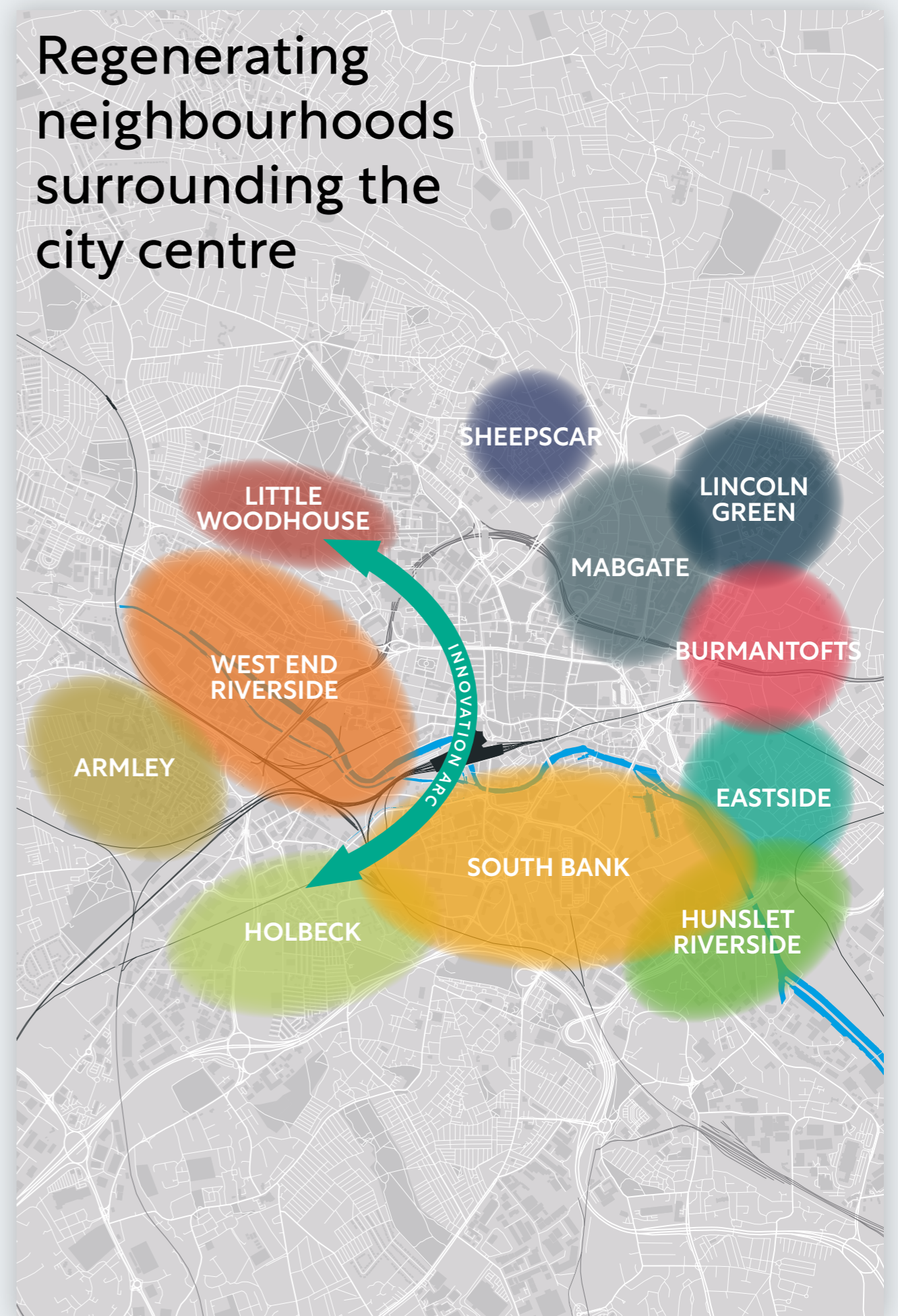
#### ● Mabgate

An emerging creative and education quarter. **Mabgate**, **Sheepscar** and **Lincoln Green** form one of Leeds' original inner urban neighbourhoods and there are opportunities to regenerate these areas with complementary residential, employment and community developments.

#### ● Innovation Arc

Anchored by the Leeds General Infirmary investment in two new hospitals and three universities creating the core of the Leeds knowledge economy. Growth here could improve integration with neighbourhoods to the west such as **Little Woodhouse**, improve access to economic opportunities and housing.

## Regenerating neighbourhoods surrounding the city centre



## Build and improve more homes of the right type and quality, that are in the right places and increase the number that are affordable

- The average rent in Leeds increased by 13% between 2021 and 2022
- Average house prices are approaching nine times the average salary (up from 7 times av. salary when previous Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy was published in 2018)
- There are currently over 26,000 individuals applying for homes through the Leeds Homes Register and the time taken to rehouse applicants has more than doubled over the last 5 years

A lack of housing supply of the right type, size and choice impacts any city's ability to attract and retain workers and holds back growth. In the last 5 years Leeds has delivered almost 17,000 new homes, a pace of delivery that requires at least 100 live construction sites of all types and sizes at any one time. There are currently 30,000 new homes with planning permission ready to start on site or already in construction, but we know that only 1 in 9 of every home given planning permission is built.

Cross sector partnership and collaboration are key to our successes to date. The Council plays a key role in engaging with development interests to problem solve and enable development where it can. There is limited public funding available to directly support development, and whilst the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Brownfield Housing Fund is helping to support the unlocking of sites for development more is needed to meet the full housing potential of the city.

We already have a strong and developing relationship with Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency, which recognises our nationally significant scale of housing delivery, and the opportunities to grow this further. In the city centre and around its edge this could see 20,000 new homes unlocked for development.

In the last five years 2,433 affordable homes have been developed in the city and in 2022 we achieved 618 new affordable homes, the highest of any Core City. We want to grow further, faster beyond this towards meeting the underlying housing need in the city, which currently requires 1,230 new affordable homes to be built each year.

Good housing provides the foundation for good health and we want to do more to improve parts of our council housing which is substandard. We are working to rehouse residents living in poor quality and unsafe housing. Plans are being developed to replace high-rise sites in Alwoodley, Gipton and Killingbeck with new modern housing. We will work to enhance the resources available to support vulnerable groups of residents to improve their homes.



*Artists impression of Points Cross. Set in the South Bank, this development from The Guinness Partnership will comprise 928 homes including 494 affordable homes across Phases 1 and 2. The affordable homes will be a mix of tenures including social rent and shared ownership, a model which can offer a more affordable way for Leeds residents to get on the property ladder in the city centre.*

### CASE STUDY - Unlocking private sector funding for retrofitting

A key enabler of our net zero ambitions is improving access to private sector finance. We are working with some of the country's biggest firms including Lloyds Banking Group to address the barriers that are preventing households from accessing green upgrades to their homes, including exploring innovative financing options for retrofitting.



## Enable local people to make their own decisions on how to improve their communities

As part of our Team Leeds approach, we are shifting power to citizens. We want to become a city which champions Community Wealth Building, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. We are already making progress through our work with the Leeds Anchors, making banking work better for people through Leeds Credit Union, one of the biggest Credit Unions in the UK, and encouraging the city's organisations to employ local people and procure local services.

Leeds has pioneered the use of ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) to create the largest programme of this type in the country, founded on the principle that given the tools and the opportunity, small groups of citizens can change the things they believe need changing in their community, better than anyone else. People are encouraged to consider what they can resolve themselves, what they need support to address and what is best delivered by the local authority and third sector.

By identifying and mobilising often-unrecognised assets, local areas are being revitalised and communities are creating local economic opportunities. The ABCD programme involves 14 neighbourhood sites across Leeds, including our inner city areas but also other parts of Leeds including Rothwell and Horsforth. Research by Leeds Beckett University showed that £14 of social value was returned for every £1 invested in ABCD as well as benefits for health and wellbeing and opportunities for employment.

As well as ABCD, there are seven neighbourhood forums in priority and inner neighbourhoods across the city: Beeston, Hyde Park, Kirkstall, Little Woodhouse, Chapeltown, Harehills and Mabgate, Lincoln Green and Burmantofts. Work so far has included protecting green spaces and heritage assets and improving awareness and knowledge of neighbourhood planning.



**Employed Community Builders** to strengthen connections within communities and develop asset maps showing the skills, talents, organisations and buildings in the local area



**Over 700 Community Connectors** who build trusted connections and reciprocal relationships with other residents

**The Hey Neighbour Scheme** developed in conjunction with partners, enabling individuals and community groups to access micro grants and partnerships to develop asset-based approaches



To further empower local communities the Council continues to review its operational estate and identify properties which may be suitable for communities to take on as Community Asset Transfers subject to detailed business cases being approved, to support the provision of local services and community facilities. Successful examples include Bramley Baths, Yeadon Town Hall, Headingley Primary School and Kentmere

Community Centre. We are also working together with Voluntary Action Leeds, to inform our future approach to Community Asset Transfers to ensure it aligns with the needs of the third sector and that the challenges associated with bringing forward viable solutions are better understood.



Image showing Leeds PIPES on Headrow

## Climate Change: The UK's leading city

Leeds is recognised as one of only 122 city authorities across the world that is part of the Carbon Disclosure Project's 2022 - A List. This signifies that we are leading the way on climate action, joining the likes of New York, Paris, Melbourne, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and Cape Town. There are vast opportunities for the public and private sector if we embrace net zero, creating jobs, upskilling our workforce and where innovation will bring us closer to achieving a greener future for everyone.

Our updated Local Plan will have a focus on net zero, renewable energy generation, flood management and green and blue infrastructure. We are also protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Leeds through



exploring ways that new developments can be supported to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain leaving habitats in a better state than they were before.

# Spotlight...



### Green and blue infrastructure

Green and blue infrastructure means our natural spaces and assets including parks, gardens and trees, as well as water bodies such as rivers and canals

## Climate adaptation across Leeds:



**Flood Alleviation Scheme**  
The first stage has been in place for the past five years and has helped to protect 3,000 residential properties and 500 businesses employing 22,000 people from flooding. Phase 2 of the scheme is projected to complete in 2023.

### District Heating (Leeds PIPES)

Over 26km of underground pipes have been installed that deliver heat via hot water to buildings connected to the network.



Over 1,800 homes, public sector and commercial buildings are connected to the £62m scheme which is expanding rapidly.

**Net Zero Homes Plan**  
£100m of social housing decarbonisation projects in addition to external funding, as well as targeting other public buildings and the owner occupier market.



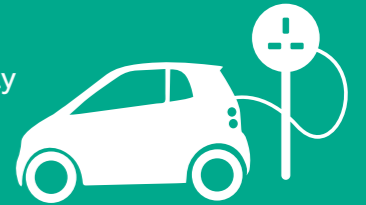
### Woodland Creation

The Woodland Creation Scheme is continuing its target of planting 50 hectares of trees per year on council land.



### Electric vehicles

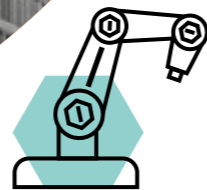
Leeds is experiencing a considerably faster uptake of cleaner and greener plug-in vehicles compared to any of the other largest English districts, according to official DfT data.



### Green spaces

We are improving the quality of existing and new green spaces around the city for the benefits of residents, especially children, including urban trails designed across Burmantofts, Richmond Hill and Harehills.





# PRODUCTIVITY

**This section sets out the ways in which we can improve productivity in Leeds to enable businesses to innovate and grow. It also looks at how important it is to continue to build the profile of Leeds for the region and the UK.**



**Stimulating innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future**

Back diverse innovators and entrepreneurs with the potential to develop high growth businesses

Invest in our innovation infrastructure including the Innovation Arc to create a centre of global significance



**Helping businesses and organisations to become more productive and thrive in the face of change**

Support our businesses to reach their growth potential

Help businesses to capitalise on technology and transition to net zero



**Promoting Leeds as a global destination for people to visit, live, work, study and invest**

Position Leeds as one of the UK's leading tourist and conference destinations

Value, protect and grow our culture and heritage

Strengthen our relationships across the globe to raise our profile and increase investment

**Why productivity is important**

To us productivity is not just about making factories work better and buying new kit. Raising productivity is key to increasing wages and living standards, delivering growth and generating revenue that can be used to improve public services. Productivity is about businesses being able to adapt, pivot and survive through changes, driving efficiencies and 'working smarter not harder'.

***Stimulating innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future***

**BIG  
IDEA**

**Back diverse innovators and entrepreneurs with the potential to develop high growth businesses**

Innovation is thriving in Leeds and is a key driver of future productivity growth. From the grassroots community led organisations like Leeds Digital Festival, to world leading Research and Development (R&D), health innovators and tech unicorns. We create the conditions for success and have benchmarked Leeds internationally through working with Massachusetts Institute of Technology on their Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP). Through this work, we validated our ambition for inclusive innovation, where we aim to support a diverse range of innovation driven entrepreneurs from all communities that have ideas with high growth potential.

**Innovation Ecosystem**

In Leeds our innovation ecosystem is made up of individual innovators and go-getters, businesses, educators and researchers, and places where people can come together either in physical spaces such as within the Innovation Arc, or through networks to learn new things. This is how new products, ideas, methods, and even ways of life are created.

With six universities in Leeds alone and nine in the City Region we have incredible talent at our fingertips and are actively working to remove barriers which prevent people from all backgrounds succeeding. We've collaborated consistently to invest in communities like FinTech North, LegalTech in Leeds, AI Tech UK, Digital Sport North, No Code Lab and backed Bruntwood SciTech with their female founders programme.

Along with our considerable assets the partnerships we've forged and the strong foundations we've created mean our ecosystem has the potential to be globally competitive. We recognise that we are still at the start of our journey in comparison to the more mature world leading cities, but this means that new companies can truly make their mark when they choose to invest in Leeds. We can build our principles of inclusive growth into our ecosystem rather than having to retrofit them which is what more mature innovation ecosystems such as Boston and San Francisco are now working out they need to do.

We have developed multiple routes to support innovators and entrepreneurs. At Nexus, people from communities that have been traditionally underserved when it comes to access to entrepreneurial opportunities can learn how to build investable, sustainable businesses with social impact. Part of the Mayor of West Yorkshire's £6 million fund for entrepreneurs - Innovative Entrepreneurs will support 75 individuals in our region over three years, beginning in September 2023.



**CASE STUDY - Nexus**

Nexus brings together the brightest minds from business, technology and academia. Their community of high-growth businesses is located across the globe but has its physical base in a state-of-the-art innovation hub on the University of Leeds campus – with members based as far away as Canada, France, Italy and Estonia. They help innovators and entrepreneurs make the right connections at the right time, providing access to research, talent and facilities across the University and beyond.

## Innovation Arc to create a centre of global significance

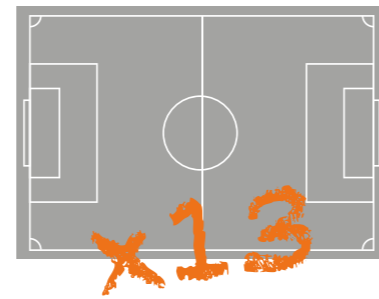
To us, innovation infrastructure means an environment for creating. It is not just about more desk space in shiny new offices. We need spaces for creativity and collaboration where ideas can be nurtured, a testbed to accelerate the application of products and research, universities that support the ecosystem and spin out the businesses of the future, wrapped in a city centre that can host high class conferences.

The Innovation Arc will facilitate this, drawing together innovation driven entrepreneurs, start-ups and business to share ideas and access capital to accelerate the development of new ideas. It will be underpinned by anchor institutions, leaders from across the city who share our values and goals.



Copyright: Nexus

### The Innovation Arc:



Unlock **1 million** square ft of new innovation space (the size of 13 Leeds United football pitches)

**3,000** new homes



New and improved **public spaces**



Create **1 million** square ft of refurbished space in nationally significant historic buildings

## Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) - A Digital Hospital

Artist Impression of new Hospital



**“The construction of two new hospitals at Leeds General Infirmary (LGI) is one of the most important developments for a generation - bringing positive improvements in healthcare in the region as well as being the catalyst for a new world class hub for research, healthtech, and innovation.”**

*Dame Linda Pollard, Chair of Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust*

LTHT is currently home to the National Pathology Imaging Co-operative, a global leading centre which uses artificial intelligence to improve cancer diagnosis. St James' Hospital has one of the world's first fully digital pathology labs, and there is potential to scale up activities as part of the hospital's redevelopment.

The Trust have used digital to influence the design, both in their delivery and their operation and maintenance of the new hospitals to create innovative solutions that will improve the experience of patients and staff. Patients and visitors will be able to use their digital devices to help them find their way around the hospital and know where they need to be for their appointments.

**Spotlight...**



# Innovation Arc

## ● University of Leeds

The University has 4,000 researchers in their post graduate community and has invested £100 million in five years to recruit future academic leaders. Since 1995 the University has created over 110 spin-out companies.

## ● Nexus

A vibrant community for innovators and entrepreneurs helping to turn their big ideas into reality.

## ● Leeds Beckett University

The University's research community and 22 research centres deliver innovative, world leading research that addresses contemporary societal challenges including climate change, public health and social inequality.

## ● Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust

The redevelopment of the Leeds General Infirmary site includes the creation of an Innovation Village - a world-class hub for research, innovation and technology in health and life sciences that will generate 4,000 new jobs.

## ● Leeds City Council

An anchor in the city that is committed to backing innovators and entrepreneurs, supporting communities, social enterprises, and our innovative sectors to thrive.

## ● British Library North

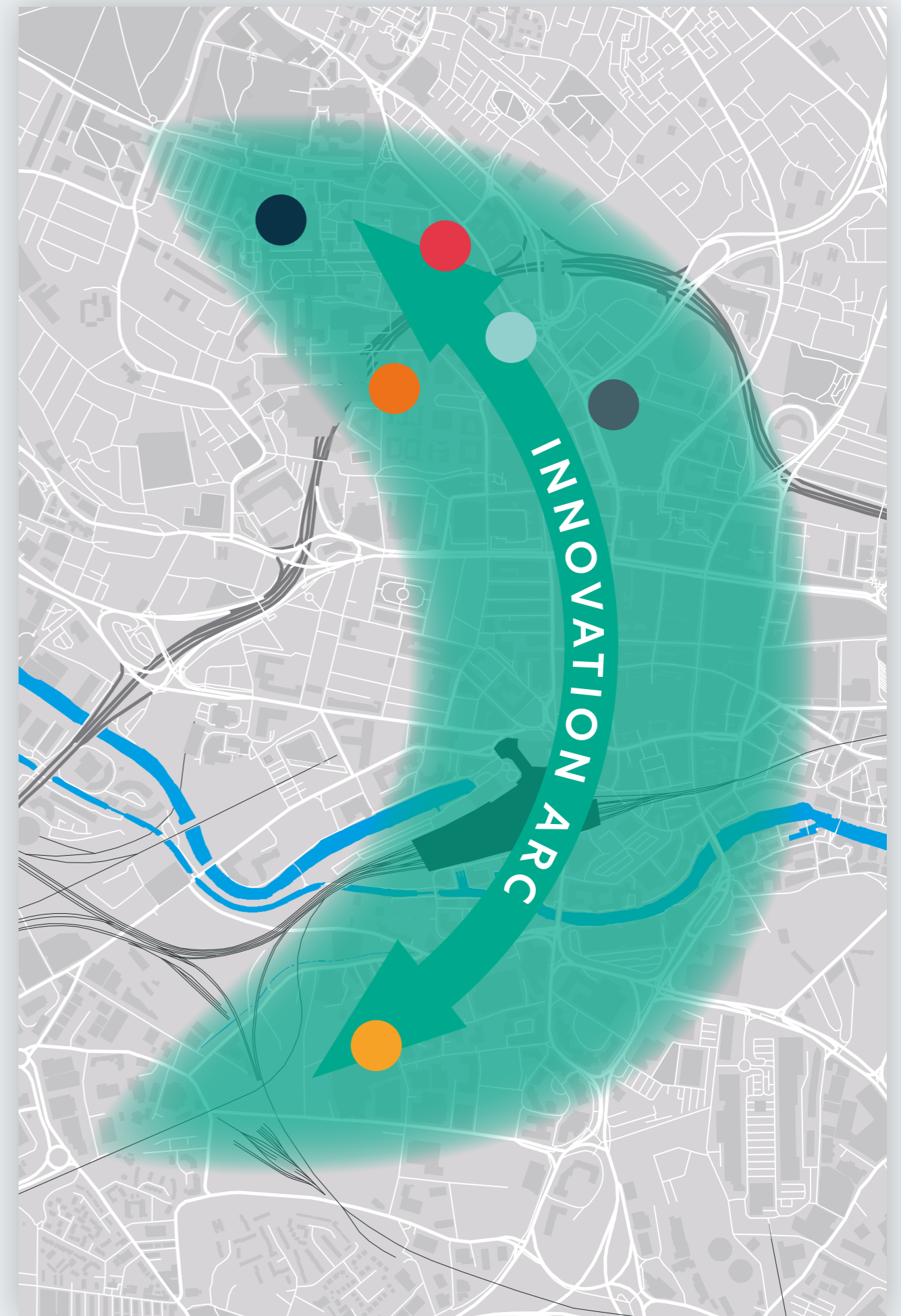
The British Library's ambitions for the North of England involve establishing a physical presence in Leeds city centre that enables it to open up its collections to audiences in the city and across the region as never before. The Library will sit at the intersection between culture and public engagement, research and innovation.

### Some examples across the region:

Innovation isn't constrained to the Arc, with lots happening across the city and wider region and we need to make sure companies have the space available for them to grow, including in places outside the city centre.

**Huddersfield:** There are opportunities to take advantage of the new National Health Innovation Campus at the University of Huddersfield and wider development within the "Station to Stadium enterprise corridor".

**Bradford:** Development within the Knowledge Quarter (including University of Bradford and Bradford College) and the City Centre Growth area, to complement the strengths of the University of Bradford which has one of the largest cohorts of AI graduates in the country.



## Helping businesses and organisations to become more productive and thrive in the face of change



### Support our businesses to reach their growth potential

SMEs are the backbone of our economy and with targeted support there is potential to generate significant business growth. Nationally there is a long tail of SMEs who are not reaching their full potential and we need to provide more support to SMEs particularly those based in the North of England where the productivity gap with London and the South East is significant. As a region if we can start to close this gap then this will help to create well paid job opportunities and additional tax revenues for the UK.

Working in partnership with the region's Growth Service, our focus is to help businesses increase their productivity through investing in new technology, new products, processes and employee skills. Support is available to help businesses to invest to create growth and new jobs. The Growth Service is a partnership between West Yorkshire Local Authorities and has a proven track record leveraging over £270m

#### Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

98% of businesses in Leeds are small / medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which are independent, employ less than 250 staff and have a turnover of less than £36m. Nationally SMEs employ 61% of the private sector workforce and earn 52% of the turnover for UK PLC

of private sector investment between 2015 and 2019.

The Growth Service aims to support more than 9,000 SMEs across West Yorkshire by 2026. SMEs are locally owned and embedded in their communities hence they have a vested interest in trying to support local communities. Work is ongoing to help businesses to make a wider difference to their local communities, examples include improving skills and employment opportunities for local and disadvantaged people, paying staff the Real Living Wage, or paying small business suppliers in accordance with the Prompt Payment Code.

Annually our region generates more than 10,000 start-ups. Many will begin at home or in locations close to where they live. Increasing the survivability and growth of start-ups and young businesses will create more employment opportunities in some of our more disadvantaged communities and we tailor our support packages to focus on these areas. Start-Up West Yorkshire provides an initial gateway to tailored business support with a range of support programmes available to help new businesses.

Examples include the AD:VENTURE programme, funded by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and partners. This provides tailored support to help new and young businesses to grow and achieve their full potential. One of the largest initiatives of its kind in England, the programme offers financial advice, grants and loans to help businesses to start and grow and a range of training and business advice. The programme has helped over 4,000 businesses across the region since 2016, helping to create over 700 jobs.

#### CASE STUDY - Youbee Media

Marketing consultancy agency Youbee Media was set up by a female entrepreneur seeking to create a business which would be flexible with her responsibilities as a mother. Through support from AD:VENTURE, the start-up has taken on more employees and encouraged staff development, as well as participating in the Northern Max Accelerator Programme to gain peer-to-peer support from other businesses.

#### CASE STUDY - Revolving Investment Fund (RIF)

The Revolving Investment Fund (RIF) has invested approximately £50m of local authority money since 2019. The RIF allows seven local authorities across the region (five West Yorkshire councils plus Harrogate and City of York) to work with commercial lenders to support developments that may otherwise stall and makes a financial return for all invested local authorities including Leeds. Examples include the first 3 phases of the CITU development which helped them prove the concept before they were able to secure funding from commercial lenders. It has also funded developments in the Film / TV sector and redevelopment of existing buildings as high quality flexible office accommodation.

*Secret to Empowerment event for women thinking of starting a business*



## Help businesses to capitalise on technology and transition to net zero

Utilisation of and investment in digital technology are central to future business growth. The Digital Enterprise programme has been delivering digital support across the region since 2016 and has helped over 2,000 SMEs, providing financial assistance towards digital investment projects and helping to disseminate best practice amongst SMEs. These can include removing duplication through joined up processes, replacing time consuming paper based systems with digital and automating simple and repetitive tasks.

A priority across the region is boosting the growth and productivity of our manufacturing sector, with the Leeds Manufacturing Festival continuing to build its profile bringing together employers with schools and colleges.

The green economy presents economic opportunities allowing businesses to future proof and grow in multiple ways, for example investing in low carbon technologies and sustainable materials. Investments that replace older technologies tend to help reduce energy consumption and waste. Cloud based technologies, where the processing of information is moved from inefficient local premises and infrastructures to state of the art data centres reduces energy, helps saving on bills and is good for the environment. The regional Business Sustainability Service offers support packages and professional advice to help SMEs be more climate resilient.

Promoting Leeds as a global destination for people to visit, live, work, study and invest



## Position Leeds as one of the UK's leading tourist and conference destinations

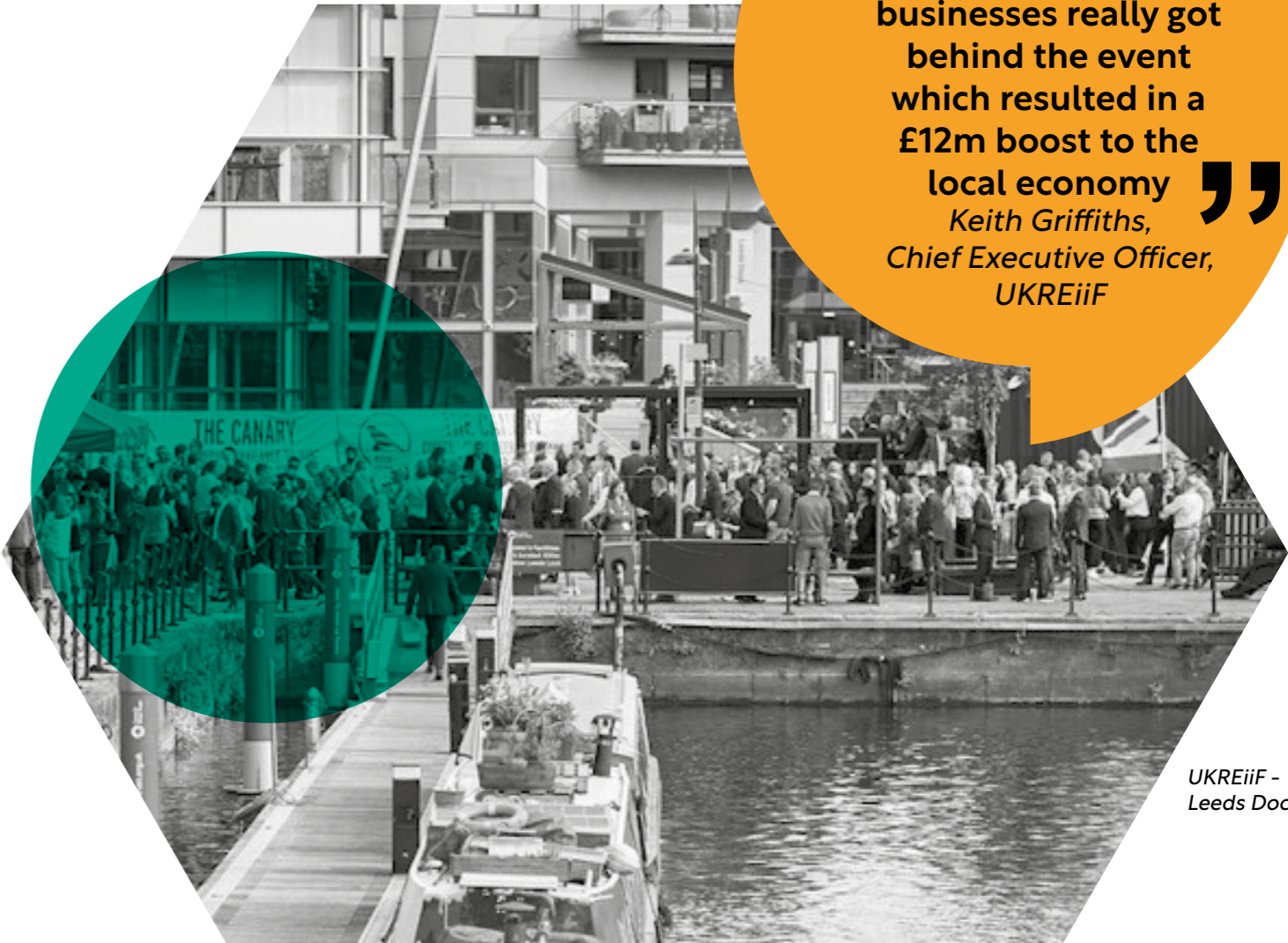
People come to Leeds because it is bursting with life and cultural energy, with a strong sporting legacy and a reputation for organising and hosting exceptional events. Grand historic architecture sits alongside

the latest sustainable living, unsigned bands play down the road from the world's biggest stars and independent shops mix with the biggest brands.

Driving up the number of visitors to Leeds generates more income for retail, hospitality and leisure with a knock on impact on productivity per employee. Leeds already has a track record in attracting business visitors and is home to UKREiIF, the UK's main real estate and infrastructure investment conference. We are bringing forward plans for a new state-of-the-art conference centre in the city to help cement our status as a conference destination. A key part of delivering major events will be ensuring that they support the city's net zero ambition.

“ UKREiIF creates a real buzz across the region. In 2023 local businesses really got behind the event which resulted in a £12m boost to the local economy ”

*Keith Griffiths,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
UKREiIF*



### CASE STUDY - Zixtel

Zixtel specialises in IT hardware and has moved towards a circular economy business model. It recently received investment through the Business Enterprise Fund to expand its recycling and recovery facility based at Thorp Arch, Wetherby, and its mission is now to 'close the loop' by creating a new source of supply of raw materials for the electronics industry and ensuring nothing goes into landfill.

UKREiIF - Leeds Dock



### Value, protect and grow our culture and heritage

Creative industries contributed £109bn to the UK economy in 2021. In Leeds, culture helped to draw people back into our city centre and high streets after the pandemic. It plays a role in showcasing what we have to offer and driving visitors to the city, as well as inspiring young talent, improving people's health and bringing communities together.

### Celebrating Culture In Leeds:

#### Yorkshire Sculpture International

attracting established and emerging artists from around the world with Leeds Art Gallery a key venue



Major sporting events such as the **World Triathlon Championship Series** and the **Rugby League World Cup**



Events and festivals such as **Light Night, Leeds International Film Festival, Leeds Lit Festival, Leeds Digital Festival and Leeds International Piano Competition**

Europe's longest running **Caribbean carnival parade**



One-off events such as **Smeaton300**, a 6-month long celebration of civil engineering and STEAM (injecting the arts into STEM) to celebrate Leeds-born John Smeaton's 300th birthday



**Supporting culture in communities** through our cultural investment programme, from providing opportunities

for people to experience the joy of Black British dance to a radio station connecting a group of asylum seekers into the community

“ A small community gathering for sharing food each week has the capacity to transform the lives of the vulnerable and isolated. Equally the bold, ambitious and controversial staging of theatre, performance and dance has the capacity to push our boundaries, or even break them ”  
*Leeds Culture Strategy 2017-2030*



The largest **FREE** pride march

**PRIDE** ❤️

As well as investing in culture, we need to protect our heritage - our historical buildings, parks and green spaces, industrial legacy and cultural traditions, stories, memories, celebrations and more. We will proactively maintain, care for and resource heritage across the city, revitalising assets that are at risk of decline and conserving historical and natural beauty for future generations:

**Heritage around the city:**



**Leeds Art Gallery:** ‘a world of art’, the city’s premier exhibition space, opened in 1888 and renovated in 2007

**Leeds City Museum:** formerly the Mechanics’ Institute and reopened in 2008 showcasing the history of Leeds



**TEMPLE NEWSAM**

**Temple Newsam:** Tudor Jacobean house and estate three miles from the city centre with an extraordinary collection of decorative art and multi-layered history

**Lotherton**

**Lotherton:** Edwardian Hall and grounds near Aberford



**Harewood House:** owned by the Harewood Trust, Harewood House was built in the 18th Century and has nationally renowned art collections

**ABBEY HOUSE MUSEUM** EST 1927

**Abbey House Museum:** family friendly exhibits exploring Victorian life in Leeds, and more recent social history



**Kirkstall Abbey:** well preserved Cistercian abbey founded in the 13th century

**Town Hall:** grand civic building dating from 1858, now serving as a concert venue and undergoing renovation



**Leeds Industrial Museum**

**Leeds Industrial Museum:** re-opened in 2023

**Thackray Museum of Medicine:** completed a £4m redevelopment and shortlisted for the Art Fund Museum of the Year Prize 2021



**Strengthen our relationships across the globe to raise our profile and increase investment**

Evidence suggests that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) helps to improve a region’s productivity as it tends to be in sectors with high productivity. We aim to increase foreign trade and investment and will support the work of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to ensure strong trade relations that attract and retain more high-value businesses to the city. This will be achieved through undertaking trade missions, de-risking investments, identifying property, connecting businesses with the local labour market and innovation ecosystem, and making sure they have the tools they need to flourish.

We are focused on making sure that this creates jobs for local people, provides opportunities for our strong pipeline of graduates as well as attracting top international talent.

We will continue to champion Leeds, a city at the cutting edge of new thinking, policy and practice and pioneers of inclusive growth, and gain influence on the global stage.



“ Our choice of Leeds underlines our belief in the strong talent available in the North of England ”  
*Burberry*



Light Night

**CASE STUDY - Eurocities**

Leeds is a committed member of the EUROCITIES network which brings together more than 200 cities in 38 countries. This includes participating in the EUROCITIES OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth initiative, which confronts challenges affecting cities ranging from housing affordability to net zero. We also drive collaborative work including exploring how European cities are tackling child poverty, sharing best practice around innovation ecosystems, and looking at how living labs can support the development of Smart Cities.

**CASE STUDY - Channel 4**

Channel 4 chose Leeds for its National HQ moving into the refurbished Majestic building in 2021, bolstering the city’s reputation as a hub for Film and TV. Acting as the catalyst to rejuvenate the sector, the city has more than doubled the amount of studio space for new film and TV productions. Channel 4 has also created 4Studio, which within a year of its launch has become the UK’s most viewed branded content partner, and its 4Skills initiatives have supported new talent from diverse backgrounds into the industry.

**CASE STUDY - National Poetry Centre**

Plans are currently in development for a UK home for poetry based in the centre of Leeds. Spearheaded by the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, the National Poetry Centre will make poetry accessible to everyone. It will provide spaces and resources for people to meet, read, share, create and perform poetry in all its forms.

## Leeds as a Digital City

Digital now underpins our economy, driving transformation and innovation across every sector and fuelling growth in new digital businesses, with the number of FinTech businesses in the region alone trebling from 2020 - 2023. In Leeds we have embraced the digital revolution, focusing as a city on delivering the talent and skills, infrastructure, business support and community necessary to support people and businesses to thrive. That's why we've gained a reputation as the digital capital of the North.

The pace of change is accelerating and we will continue to be proactive as we capitalise on new digital technologies, use of data, Artificial Intelligence and automation, to improve productivity and increase competitiveness. These advances will change the nature of work, making it important to raise the skills of the workforce alongside the adoption of technology.

Our Future Talent Plan is bringing together employers and skills providers to open up opportunities in the digital sector for people from right across the city and ensure that the workforce is equipped to be confident and productive in the digital economy. In Leeds we are also making sure that everyone has the essential digital skills they need to get online and adapt through our award winning 100% Digital Leeds programme.

Our digital community is the most collaborative in the UK. In Leeds entrepreneurs, corporates, public sector, skills providers and talent come together through regular meet ups and events from FinTech North and Legal Tech in Leeds, to WILD Digital, No Code Labs and our Data Ethics forum.



The Leeds Digital Festival, supported by Leeds City Council from the outset is now the largest 'open' tech event in the UK. The community is actively engaged in ensuring the sector is inclusive and diverse and is fundamental to our success.

We continue to work with digital infrastructure providers to facilitate rollout of further full fibre and 5G networks so everyone can benefit from the latest technology. Our ambition is for all homes and businesses to be able to benefit from gigabit capable services which can already be accessed by over 92% of premises in Leeds.

Our investment in the Innovation Arc, Ingenuity at White Rose, along with co-working spaces across the city will provide the spaces and places to incubate and apply new technologies, supporting the delivery of our ambitions as a city and growing our economy.

**“ I always say  
Leeds is the  
most collaborative  
tech sector in the UK**

*Stuart Clarke MBE,  
Festival Director of the  
Leeds Digital Festival*

**”**

**Spotlight...**

## CASE STUDY - PEXA

PEXA launched into the UK in 2022, seeking to transform the UK's 150-year-old conveyancing process, enabling digital remortgage transactions to streamline the process. The global Australian FinTech company acquired the Leeds-based property-related firm Optima Legal.

**“ Leeds is a key strategic location for PEXA, and its spirit of innovation and collaboration matches that of our business ”**

*PEXA Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer,  
Glenn King*



## CASE STUDY - White Rose Ingenuity Innovation Hub

Aiming to become the UK's leading smart cities innovation community. A purpose-built hub will launch in 2025 to run smart cities challenges, test and trial new technology, and host workshops and events. Ingenuity at White Rose Park will provide a real world testbed environment for smart technology.

## CASE STUDY - P-TECH

P-TECH is IBM's global education model which offers students the opportunity to deliver skills and competencies that will help them prepare better for the world of work and competitive Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) careers. In Leeds schools, employers and FE and HE partners work together to develop the programme. Part of this involves industry placements and there are currently a number of host organisations across the city, including Leeds City Council, offering the opportunity for students to work on real life projects and present their work.

# Delivering on our Big Ideas

Delivering our big ideas will only be possible through partnership and the actions of everyone who is part of Team Leeds. What's clear is that there are some key moves that can really move the dial and we will work to accelerate our progress to deliver them between 2023 and 2030 despite the challenging financial climate.

We know what the challenges are but it's clear we are working with limited resources, so the council and city will have to be agile and responsive to opportunities to secure capital and investment, as not all of these ambitions currently have funding.

1. Work with our Leeds Anchors to maximise the power of some of the city's biggest employers to help create more good jobs with fair pay, increase spending in local areas to help deliver Community Wealth Building and create pathways for the city's employers to make a real difference in their local communities
2. Ensure our health and care system is resilient and ready for the future through:
  - the delivery of new infrastructure including two new state of the art hospitals at the LGI site
  - leading the way on policy thinking through the Health and Social Care Hub and becoming a Marmot City
3. Make Leeds a city where you don't need a car by creating an integrated, affordable, reliable green transport system including rail and mass transit, one that is fit for the future connecting us both nationally and locally.
4. Continue to target and define growth areas across the city, connect these to communities in our Priority Wards and deliver good, accessible jobs
5. Build on the success of the South Bank to further regenerate neighbourhoods surrounding the city centre including new homes and development
6. Develop the South Leeds Gateway - connecting our key hospital, health and life science assets at St James' and LGI through the city centre to Morley, a linked pipeline of over £2 billion of development, drawing together the Innovation Arc, Leeds Station, Leeds Dock, Elland Road, White Rose and more
7. Accelerate growth of our innovation ecosystem through:
  - The Innovation Arc - Linking the universities, hospital, cultural and innovative assets to turbocharge entrepreneurs, businesses, Research & Development
  - Being a test bed for new ideas and products
  - Tackling the barriers that prevent innovation driven entrepreneurs from starting, acquiring funding and scaling up their businesses
  - Building new innovation spaces across the city including at White Rose and the LGI site
  - Continue to deliver world class digital infrastructure
8. Strengthen Leeds as a global city using our culture, assets, events and relationships to encourage tourism, trade and investment including delivery of British Library North, new conferencing facilities and the National Poetry Centre

## Green Economy

Our commitment to greening the economy is more than a single key move. It underpins all our ambitions as we work towards Net Zero. Tackling climate change will be a city-wide effort, with businesses adapting operations, protecting jobs and reskilling where necessary. Failing to act is not an option and only stores up more issues further down the line. The city's energy bill

is projected to hit £1.5bn in 2030 and £2bn in 2050 but could be cut in half if action is taken to improve efficiency. We are striving to develop an economy where health and wellbeing, social progress and community resilience to climate change are at the heart of our approach to growth.



# Key Sectors

Leeds has a broad based economy allowing us to be globally competitive. We need to play to our strengths recognising that some of the most exciting innovative ideas happen in the crossover between sectors such as digital, health and finance. Focusing on these areas in addition to maximising the impact on the rest of the economy will drive growth and innovation across the economy.

**“ Leeds is the perfect location from which to launch a billion dollar start-up  
Reed Smith ”**



## Cultural and Creative

As the UK's fastest growing sector, the individual life chances of one or two children in every Leeds classroom is linked to the strength of the cultural and creative sector in Leeds. We train more cultural and creative graduates in Leeds than any city outside of London and have a growing local skillset in media production and technology.

## Digital

The digital sector is thriving in Leeds. We attract global brands such as Cognizant and Pexa, major UK businesses such as Burberry's tech hub and home grown success stories like BJSS and Crisp, who offer real-time risk intelligence, have chosen Leeds as a place to scale. XR Games are making waves in the sector. We are an open city, with leaders in data from our universities through the Leeds Institute for Data Analytics to companies such as Data City, Experian and Panintelligence.

## Finance and Professional Services

It's no coincidence that 2021 saw the UK Infrastructure Bank, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England northern hub all locate here, as they recognised Leeds as a place for talent and research. Leeds is also the only city outside London to be home to all 3 of the UK's major credit reference agencies. One of the most significant revolutions in this space, FinTech now has more than 100 firms identified in the Leeds City Region, the vast majority of which are start-ups and scale-ups, a segment which has trebled in number between 2020 -2023.

## Green and Net Zero

There are over 20,000 net zero jobs across 470 companies in Leeds. As we transition more green jobs will be created, as well as existing jobs requiring upskilling. Leeds has the capability to be the home of green finance for the UK, a testbed for financial models that support the transition to net zero. We are home to globally award-winning companies focused on sustainability and green finance, including Answer Pay, Curveblock and Tred. The UK Infrastructure Bank is also tasked with accelerating investment into projects which cut emissions.

## Health

We have industry leaders in the health sector, with companies such as EMIS, TPP and Neotherix based here and businesses like BJSS, Infinity Works and Digibete who are transforming the NHS. There is a major public sector presence in the city with NHS England and Department of Health and Social Care both based here. We have created the only integrated open health data system in Britain making Leeds the engine room for the NHS.

## Manufacturing and Engineering

Manufacturing is our region's export base and is a major employer, but the industry has faced supply chain disruption and staff shortages. As the city grows there are many opportunities in infrastructure and Mass Transit will provide a huge boost for the sector. Net zero also presents opportunities and it is vital to support businesses in this sector as they transition.

# Measuring our Progress

We are monitoring the Leeds economy closely and have a series of indicators on our website which will update regularly.

In addition to traditional economic indicators such as number of jobs or the size of the economy, we are pioneering the use of the Social Progress Index. This measures inclusive growth by looking at the quality of life in different communities. The Social Progress Index enables the comparison of the city's 33 wards, showing whether they are improving each year in allowing for people's basic human needs, supporting their wellbeing, and giving people opportunity. It is making it easier to understand how well the city is doing and where our strengths and weaknesses lie.

