

Commission on the Future of Local Government

The Commission on the Future of Local Government was initiated and led by Leeds City Council. It included high profile individuals from all sectors, such as Lord Victor Adebowale, Will Hutton, Tony Travers, Sir Merrick Cockell, Dame Jo Williams and Rashik Parmar. The Commission's report was launched at the House of Lords in July 2012. Since then Leeds City Council has worked hard, with its partners in the third and private sectors, and with the community to bring the Commission's idea of 'civic enterprise' to life.

This work was borne out of a desire to tackle the serious challenges that local government faces with a proactive and positive approach. Leeds City Council recognised that the current context does not allow business as usual: the relationship between councils and government has to change and so does the relationship between the citizen and the local state. The council cannot solve complex social problems on its own – it needs to work in active partnership. This means 'getting things done' and not just talking.

The Commission was based on one idea: **civic enterprise**. This is essentially a new leadership style for local government, where **councils become more enterprising, businesses and other partners become more civic and citizens become more engaged**. From this idea the Commission established five propositions.

Civic enterprise in Leeds

The Commission aimed to have a longer lasting impact than a report sat on a shelf. **Leeds City Council is aiming to be the first Enterprising Council** because we still see an important - but different - role for local government based on being **smaller in size but bigger in influence**. Leeds City Council is using the Commission propositions as a very clear policy direction, mainstreaming it into our organisational and financial plan.

So far Leeds City Council has achieved £145m savings without significant impact on front line services, a day lost to local industrial action or a compulsory redundancy, but there is so much more to be done.

Here are some examples of the outcomes progressing in the city:

Proposition 1: Becoming Civic Entrepreneurs

- **Leaders for Leeds:** cross sector leadership network connecting civic entrepreneurs around the city.
- **Leeds Empties Project:** social entrepreneurs uniting public, private and third sectors to bring empty properties up to standard and back into use. £50k pledged and one landlord secured funding for a 'green show home'.
- **Tour de France:** hosting le Grand Départ in Leeds and Yorkshire in 2014 with a lasting cycling, cultural and tourism legacy for the region.
- **Civic Enterprise Initiative:** action-research project providing a greater understanding of what an 'enterprising' Council means in practice.
- **Enterprise Officers Network:** mutual support to consider how to become enterprising including exploring 'spinning out' opportunities.

Proposition 2: Stimulating jobs, homes and good growth

- **Leeds Arena and the Trinity Shopping Centre:** sustaining and creating employment. Trinity is the only such retail centre to open outside London in 2013 and will create 2600 new jobs across the city region, contributing £94m to the regional economy.

- **Apprenticeship Training Agency:** established by the Council and Leeds City College, the Agency has engaged with over 100 SME businesses. Partners in the City are aiming to support over 7,000 new apprenticeships this year.
- **Health Hub:** establishing Leeds as a global centre for excellence in medical and healthcare innovation and data informatics.
- **Land Use Core Strategy:** setting an ambitious target of building 74,000 homes by 2028. 14,260 homes have been completed over the past 5 years (2,032 in the past year).

Proposition 3: Establishing 21st Century infrastructure

- **Wrap Up Leeds:** completed 15,000 insulation installations with plans for one large scale district heating facility to be powered by energy from waste.
- **Neighbourhood networks:** over 40 social enterprises supporting over 25,000 elderly people each year; jointly funded by NHS and Leeds City Council, managed by local people and volunteers – a vital social infrastructure.
- **Transport:** New Generation Transport - Leeds is to become the first UK city to get a modern trolleybus system. Plans are underway for a high speed rail link to London with long term aspirations for Leeds Station to expand.

Proposition 4: Devising a new social contract

- **Looking after our children:** reversed the trend on external care placements, saving £6m a year and giving children better life chances. Best ever exam and test results across all key stages especially for vulnerable children.
- **Ageing well:** increasing personalisation and focus on the individual in Adult Social Care; using technology to allow people to be independent in their home for longer. Transforming day care and housing services so adults can be supported, stimulated and included.
- **Safer Leeds:** burglaries down by 16.6% in 1 year (including by 33% in one ward); crime overall down by 45% in 10 years through active partnership.

Proposition 5: Solving the English question

- **City Deal:** £1bn investment in transport through a combined transport authority and a £400m fund for infrastructure modernisation.
- **Local Enterprise Partnership:** the first LEP to establish a coherent economic plan and number one LEP in the country for leadership on export; helped SMEs access £70m of finance through the first 3 rounds of RGF.

This work is being progressed in the context of our drive to embed civic enterprise in all we do. The council is encouraging an enterprising culture to develop and do things differently.

What does civic enterprise mean for you and your role? What examples of civic enterprise can you point to in your role or organisation? How can challenges to 'action oriented' partnership be overcome?

#civicenterprise
#localgov