

Strategy 2022—27

Leeds Museums
& Galleries

Deepening Connections, Widening Impact



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1. Who we are

We are people who care. We care for, and with, our communities and city. We care for objects, buildings, places and spaces. We care for our world, and our staff and volunteer teams.

Our vision is to create deeper connections with the people we serve using the collections and sites we care for, and to widen our impact on the world. We believe that by deepening our relationships and understanding of what we do, we will amplify our impact.

Leeds Museums & Galleries (LMG) is one of the largest local authority-run museum services in England, with some of the most significant multi-disciplinary collections in the UK.

Our 196 (FTE) staff (including 33 externally funded posts) care for 1.3 million objects across eight collections (Natural Sciences, Fine Art, Decorative Art, Dress and Textiles, Industrial History, Social History, World Cultures, and Archaeology), four of which have designated status.

We manage eight amazing venues across Leeds: Abbey House Museum (Grade II*), Kirkstall Abbey (Grade I listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument), Leeds Art Gallery (Grade II), Leeds City Museum (Grade II), Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills (Grade II* and II listed), Leeds Discovery Centre, Lotherton and Temple Newsam (Grade I listed).

Pre-Covid-19 our venues welcomed almost 1.7 million visitors and over 49,000 schoolchildren. Our websites continue to attract 3.5 million page views, and we have 300,000 followers on social media. We contribute at least £45 million a year to the local economy.



We are proud to be a local authority museum service. This grounds us within communities and the structure of the city, and gives a civic role for social justice; arts-led care, health and wellbeing; environmental responsibility; and as tourist attractions who bring visitors into the city. The people and communities we work with deserve the very best quality museum and gallery service for their city.

We have built a reputation as a leading, thoughtful and successful museum service which has a regional, national, and international role in developing best practice and supporting partners across the sector. Being a local authority museum service means that around £5m of our operating costs are funded by Leeds City Council.

We raise over £1.3m through a diverse range of services such as admissions, retail, catering and events. We are also proud of our National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England, who support us with £1.6m annually.

We have strong relationships with other funders, and have recently worked with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Museums Association, Art Fund, the Eranda Rothschild Foundation, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to successfully gain revenue income for specific programmes and projects.

We want to grow a strong, sustainable arts and cultural sector regionally, nationally and internationally.
We want to give even more back to the sector.

Locally, we do this through our governance roles with the Leeds Cultural Education Partnership, West Yorkshire Local Authority Museum Partnership (WYLAMP), Culture Consortium Leeds, community practitioner network, Yorkshire Accessible Museums Network (YAMN), the Leeds Philosophical and Literacy Society and the Leeds Civic Trust. Staff are on boards of cultural organisations and are school and Children's Centre governors.

Nationally, we support and participate in the National Museum Directors' Council, Museums Association, the Real World Science partnership, Happy Museum (Affiliate), Group for Education in Museums (GEM), Engage, Cultural Learning Alliance, GLAM Cares, Association for Cultural Enterprises, DLNET, Natural Sciences Collections

Association (NatSCA), Society for Museum Archaeologists, Social History Curators Group, Museum Ethnographers Group, Tate Plus Network, UK Registrars Group and the Institute of Conservation (ICON). Staff are on boards of trustees for other museums in the UK.

Internationally, we participate in the Eurocities networks, regularly lend collections across the world, and participate in conferences. Global work is an area of growth for us, and we will use digital communications, where possible, to mitigate environmental impact.

Digitally, our reach and influence have increased and we have led the way for the digital direction of the sector through our innovative online channels.

We want to build on, and sustain, our successes for the future.

Our mission:
We work with communities to share stories from our past and present to shape a better future for the people of Leeds.

Our Leeds City Council values are being open and honest, treating people fairly, spending money wisely, working as a team for Leeds and working with all communities. In turn, our service values are kindness, belonging, creativity, shared community and sustainability.

2. Our context

This strategy builds on the success of our Strategic Plan 2018-23. During this time, we diversified and deepened our relationships with different communities and partners; sustained an increase in visitor numbers across all sites; became sector leaders in cultural learning and digital engagement; improved the care, display, management and interpretation of our collections and buildings; grew our digital presence and brand; and played a leading role in environmental sustainability. We will build on these over the next five years.

However, global resources are finite and the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us that there are measures of success beyond statistics. We cannot continue linear growth of visitors and programmes without further damaging our world. For the future, we will operate on a thriving, circular economic model, that builds relationships and leads to inclusive environmental and financial sustainability.

The last two years of the pandemic have been challenging, but they have driven us to be creative, reflective, and reach wider and further using digital engagement. With our partners, we reflected on our

core purpose, values and direction, and cemented people, place and impact at our heart. We found new ways to be inclusive and measure our impact that will become part of our day-to-day practice.

The murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on black and ethnic minority people, have intensified LMG and Leeds City Council efforts to take further action to oppose racism (historic and present day) in all its forms and ensure that our practice truly reflects the diversity of the society we serve.



We welcome the world to Leeds. We will work with communities and partners to respond to the changing needs and demographics of the city. New programmes, facilities developments, and infrastructure will require extra resources, and changes to the way we work. Our staff are our greatest resource, and we need to look after them. How we will achieve this is set out through our outcomes and action plan.

Informing our work is Leeds's **Best City Ambition**, which contains a commitment to working together as Team Leeds and to be compassionate, tackle poverty and

reduce inequality through the pillars of inclusive economic growth, health and wellbeing and being a net carbon zero city by 2030.

The Leeds City Council **People Strategy (2020-25)** centres on creating a great all-round experience for staff; listening to, and acting on, lived experiences of colleagues; and building inclusive workplaces, practices, and cultures. This chimes with our practice and direction, and that of the Arts Council England investment principles.

Our work sits within, and supports, the **Leeds Culture Strategy (2017-30)**, creating a connected city with a ‘yes mentality’. In our collections and buildings, we hold the city’s identity, a sense of place, and the outcomes of its past creativity; working with our communities helps to build a better future for Leeds.

We are closely guided by **Let’s Create**, Arts Council England’s ambitious vision for 2030 which places special emphasis on quality, depth and impact at an individual, community and national level.

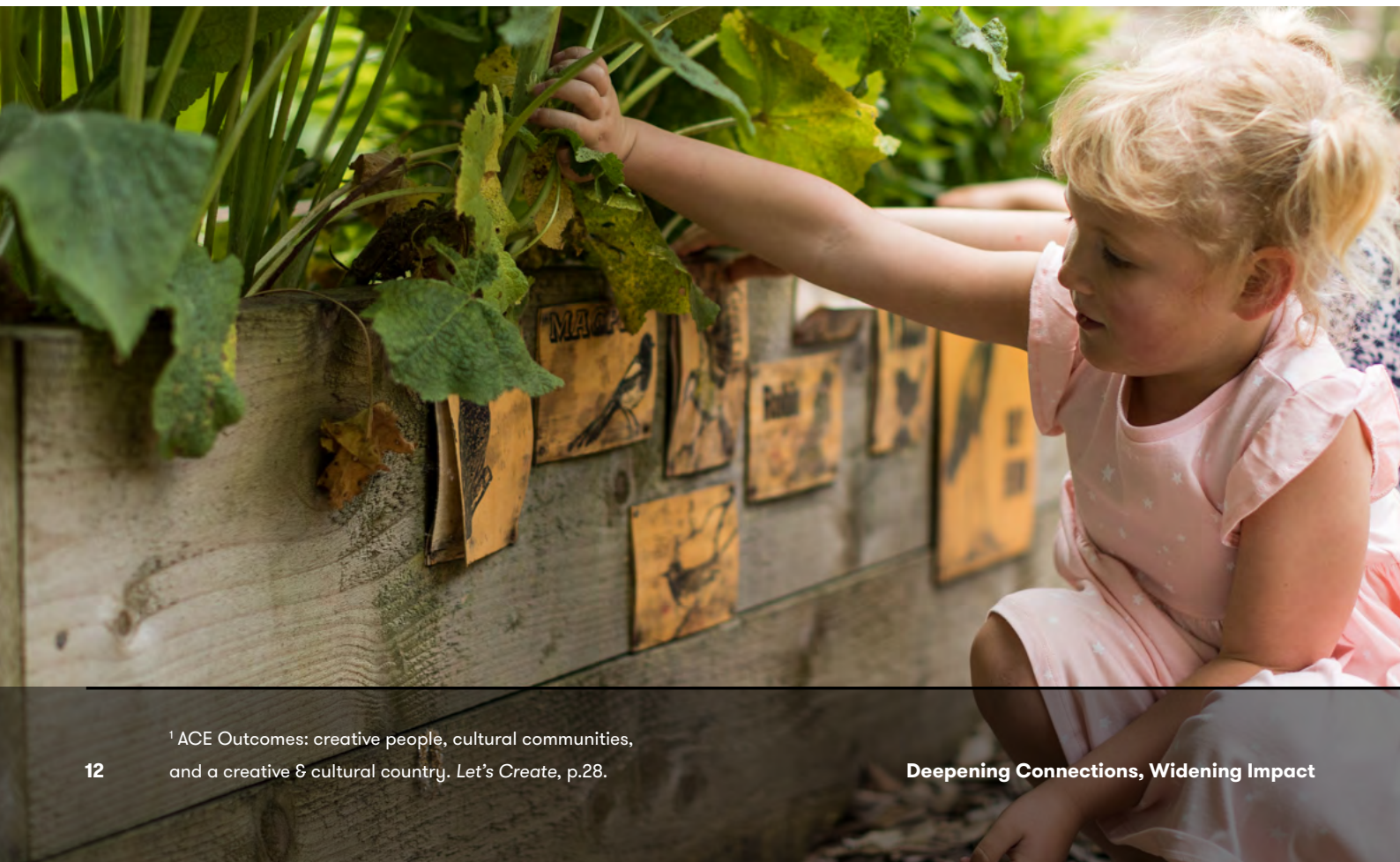


‘The natural world is boundless and awe-inspiring and we, in our natural science collections, hold a snapshot of it – right here in Leeds. I want people’s connection to it to motivate them to do more to care for it.’

Clare Brown, Natural Sciences Curator

3. Our outcomes

From 2022-27 we will be working towards six outcomes for people, communities and the wider world.¹ All of these outcomes are equally important, but they are given numbers here for ease of reference.



¹ ACE Outcomes: creative people, cultural communities, and a creative & cultural country. *Let's Create*, p.28.

Outcome 1: We will be more sustainable and responsible, financially and environmentally

We need to significantly improve our ability to raise income and tackle our costs. We will be ambitious, creative, and ethical in diversifying our income streams, balanced with our environmental and social responsibilities, and will be net

carbon zero by 2030. We will contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and ensure our work is focused to enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts, whilst leaving no-one behind.

To do this we will:

- Continue to take a leading role in environmental responsibility in Leeds and the cultural sector.
- Engage our audiences and use collections to inspire and support behaviour change to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency.
- Reduce our organisational environmental impact.
- Significantly improve our ability to raise income through innovation and diversification.
- Develop and embed a new approach to fundraising and sponsorship, in line with service values.
- Operate more efficiently and sustainably, streamlining operating costs.

Outcome 2: We will provide higher quality audience engagement and experiences, both physically and digitally

Our visitors want a relevant, seamless experience between the real and digital worlds. We will continue to embed the basic principles of audience engagement, use data intelligently, and dynamically deepen and prolong our relationships with audiences. This will need digital infrastructure changes and an emphasis

on training to improve digital literacy across the service. When our visitors reach our venues, we will welcome them and continue to create safe physical spaces, improving our accessibility and representation, so that our visitors make long-lasting memories with us. This will need physical infrastructure investments.

To do this we will:

- Develop, maintain and evaluate impactful and inclusive visitor experiences, blending physical and digital engagement.
- Improve, monitor and maintain permanent displays of our collections to ensure they remain high quality, engaging and relevant.
- Develop, maintain and evaluate excellence in front of house engagement teams.
- Embed an identity and sense of place in each venue, ensuring our values come across loud and clear, using our collections and buildings as a starting point.
- Upgrade our visitor facilities, focussing on improving accessibility and our provision for income generation.
- Build and deepen our relationships with audiences by providing seamless customer journeys and communication.

‘My two boys talked about growing the seeds ALL the way back into Leeds along the canal tow path. Such a small thing but it was the first week we’d been out anywhere since the FIRST lockdown and my anxiety and health have been awful, so it was such a big deal to me... pass on how grateful we all were to the staff for their kindness.’

Family after a visit to Leeds Industrial Museum

Outcome 3: We will continue to be a leader in collaborative, sustainable, accessible cultural learning and creative skills development

Our cultural learning offer will continue to evolve through reflection on practice, research, inclusion and co-development. We will lead on formal learning for Early Years, schools, home educators, FE/HE and adults (including the Leeds Curriculum and MyLearning.org, SEMH (people with social, emotional and mental health needs), curriculum planning, school membership, and teacher training);

inclusive intergenerational family work (including targeted social care provision); and support young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to gain employment skills through Careers for All. We will continue to support the wider cultural learning sector through training and mentoring. We will do this through building long term, robust relationships.

To do this we will:

- Evolve our object-centred learning programmes by reflecting on our practice, develop and deliver longitudinal research and share our learning through city-wide, regional, national and international networks.
- Co-develop, deliver and evaluate varied, high quality and inclusive provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and formal learning activities for all key stages (schools and home educators) with our collections at the heart.
- Further develop key partnerships and training with Further, Higher and adult education, including for initial teacher training (ITT).
- Co-develop, deliver and evaluate a varied, accessible and inclusive programme of family learning.
- Continue to develop, deliver and evaluate the MyLearning.org website for a national and international audience.
- Develop, deliver and evaluate inclusive programmes for young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Ensure all our staff and volunteers are fully trained in LCC safeguarding procedures and work with other services to fulfil our responsibilities for safeguarding.



Outcome 4: We will have an audience and workforce that is fully representative and reflective of the city

To realise our strategy, we need brilliant people with creative ideas; who have different lived experiences to bring those with them to LMG whether as a visitor, staff member or volunteer. We will work closely with communities to further create a culture of belonging, inclusivity and shared ownership. Leeds City Council strives for a workforce that represents our diverse city, and we will make sure that

staff from diverse backgrounds feel valued and heard. We will help, support and train professionals within LMG and the sector, including for staff wellbeing. We will find ways of improving working practices using digital technology. We will listen to our staff, accept challenge and make changes with the guidance of an independent oversight board as recommended by Arts Council England.

To do this we will:

- Investigate, co-develop with our workforce (including our potential workforce and audiences), deliver and evaluate inclusive recruitment practices.
- Develop training, clear progression routes and staff wellbeing support with our workforce.
- Train and support early career professionals to step into other roles outside of LMG / work in other sectors.
- Ensure our practice is representative of, and reflects the priorities of, our communities within the city.
- Work with our community partners to design and deliver a service-wide community engagement programme with collections and buildings at the heart.
- Be more vocal about LMG's work in relation to diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.

‘Studying artworks in my workshop at Leeds Art Gallery has changed my outlook on art itself, which excites and inspires me to strive to create pieces outside of my comfort zone and learn as much as possible.’

Further Education student

Outcome 5: We will have collections and heritage assets that are better known, better understood, and better cared for

We will work with partners to make our collections and buildings accessible, inclusive, relevant and representative. This involves acknowledging bias, telling whole stories and colonial histories through contemporary collecting and re-interpretation, making our buildings, spaces and programmes physically, sensorily and emotionally accessible, and making our collections database available online. This will be a long-term challenge for us. We will proactively look after,

conserve and make digitally accessible the buildings and objects within our care. Our wonderful historic buildings need maintenance, care and resources to enable them to be environmentally and financially responsible spaces. This will need planning and capital investment. We will utilise a deeper understanding of significance and relevance to develop our venues, deepen our connections with local communities and publicise the brilliant work we do together.

To do this we will:

- Better understand and promote the significance and relevance of our built heritage.
- Proactively maintain, conserve and enhance our built heritage assets.
- Ensure that our collections, built heritage assets and the stories we tell are representative of, and relevant to, the communities of Leeds and beyond.
- Care for and conserve our collections now and for the future, making them more accessible and better known.
- Undertake and promote research on our collections, and on our practice.
- Maintain and innovate in our collections management practices to support the work of the service.



Outcome 6: We will have an international reputation and reach.

Over the next five years we will seek to build our international reputation and reach, with a clear understanding of what we can offer Leeds and the world.

We will deepen our connections with international communities in the city, and partner with other museums and cultural organisations for global work.

To do this we will:

- Deepen links with international communities in Leeds using our collections.
- Strengthen links with international-facing organisations in Yorkshire and, through partnerships, identify areas of strength to reach new audience.
- Make the city's collections – and what we do with them – central to Leeds's international relationships.
- Enhance our digital audience engagement using our collections and buildings, both onsite and online, for those with accessibility needs and whose first language is not English.
- Host, present and attend more internationally-focussed events.
- Identify our international strengths and use these to continue to develop LMG brand awareness in all communications.

To achieve the outcomes we've identified, we are guided by the investment principles of Arts Council England:

- **Ambition and Quality:** we are committed to improving the quality of our work and leading the cultural sector.
- **Dynamism:** we are dynamic and agile, using innovation to respond to the challenges of the future.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** we are aiming to lead the way in our approach to environmental responsibility.
- **Inclusion and Relevance:** we strive to reflect the diversity of Leeds through all that we do.



4. How we will measure progress and understand impact

To understand our impact we want to change what and how we measure progress. An overreliance on quantitative measures misses much of the depth and essence of our collaborative work, and the drive for ever-increasing visitor numbers isn't environmentally responsible or sustainable. Equally, qualitative feedback benefits from measurable targets and different indicators of performance.

For the future we will use both qualitative and quantitative data to develop evaluation frameworks and robust research methodologies. This will enable us to demonstrate that participating in activity impacts participants, and the city, in specific ways.

We will use this data intelligently and dynamically for advocacy, resource deployment, and to give our visitors the best possible experience.

What we collect and when we report:

Regularity	Data	Audience	Format
Monthly	Service and site-specific quantitative data	LMG / LCC	Dashboard: managers' forum and staff newsletter
Quarterly	Service and site-specific quantitative data enriched with qualitative data that shows impact on communities and individuals	LMG, LCC, ACE	ACE quarterly report Presentation to oversight board
Annual	ACE annual audience data, KPIs and case studies	Internal and external stakeholders Museum sector Funding bodies	Submissions to Audience Finder dashboards, plus annual report Ward advocacy reports Annual staff conference
Bi-annual	LMG audience research	LMG Internal and external stakeholders Museum sector Funding bodies	Individual venue reports, and LMG report



‘Here at Leeds Museums & Galleries we have a very open approach to working with international partners, sharing best practice and learning from others to help build our future.’

David Hopes, Head of Service

5. Delivering our strategy

Our staff, volunteers and communities will deliver the strategy together. The outcomes will drive our planning documents, including our:

- **Strategic action plan**
- **Audience and engagement plan**
- **Workforce development plan**
- **Environmental sustainability policy and action plan**

Site development plans outline individual plans for each museum and gallery within the LMG family and are updated annually. Departmental team plans detail activity that individual teams will deliver across the service. From these, individual work plans and objectives for each staff member are updated within the framework of Leeds City Council's appraisal system.

The setting up of a development foundation and a focus on charitable giving will facilitate step change in raising funds to match our ambitions.



While the strategy emphasises depth and impact, there are new areas of activity which will require us to work differently. Being realistic, it will also mean making choices about which work we continue or discontinue, as well as being more ambitious sourcing external funding.

Leeds City Council has a wider financial challenge. We are required to raise income targets by £160k in 2022-23, and by £250k in 2023-24, and 2024-25.

Our commercial strategy will set out how we will do this at individual venues and across the service by reviewing our products, pricing and operating model, and make recommendations on how the service can

improve its financial sustainability while staying true to its values.

We will review the strategy and its accompanying action plan annually, and our risk register will set out how we intend managing risk responsibility across the service.

If you'd like to get in touch with Leeds Museums & Galleries please email us at **museumsandgalleries@leeds.gov.uk** or write to:

*Leeds Museums and Galleries
Leeds Discovery Centre, Carlisle Road
Leeds, LS10 1LB*

Thank you!

‘We have to acknowledge our past but focus on the future. Hiding our history is not the route to enlightenment. We have to understand our history and we have to confront our history. And I believe there is only one race - the human race.’

Member of the Youth Collective,
Leeds Art Gallery