

UKREiif 2026

Leeds City Council Partner Pack



Introduction

Leeds is looking forward to welcoming over 16,000 delegates to UKREiiF 2026, the largest year to date, and we look forward to hosting it for its fifth year this year and sixth next.

In this pack, we have brought together key messages we will be using to promote the work of the city as a whole and also the work of Leeds City Council.

We have included:

- Key messages we will be promoting during the conference
- Our major projects
- Our headline events and where to find us
- Key social media messaging, account handles and assets

For more detailed information, case studies and content visit: www.invest-leeds.co.uk

Team Leads

Leeds is again delighted to host UKREiiF and has a substantial team from Leeds City Council supporting the event. Below are the key contacts, and we wish to extend our thanks to the huge team behind the scenes who are supporting the successful delivery of the event.



Cllr James Lewis
Leader of
Leeds City Council



Ed Whiting OBE
Chief Executive of
Leeds City Council



Angela Barnicle
Director of City
Development
Leeds City Council



Mark Mills
Chief Officer Asset
Management and
Regeneration
Leeds City Council



Martin Elliot
Chief Planning Officer
Leeds City Council



Dr Fiona Bolam
Chief Officer
Economy and Skills
Leeds City Council



Belinda Eldridge
Head of Inward
Investment
Leeds City Council



Tariq Sadiq
Inward
Investment Manager
Leeds City Council



Lee Arnell
Head of Place and
Regeneration
Programmes
Leeds City Council

£36 billion powerhouse

driving a £70 billion regional economy.

Ambition to generate

£20 billion

in economic growth and create

100,000 jobs.

Located at the heart of the UK and home of the Northern Square Mile.

6 universities with

75,000 students.

Organisations calling Leeds home



NATIONAL WEALTH FUND



Bank of England



Microsoft

We have a track record for delivery

£4 billion in infrastructure investment

over the last decade.

Our region is the

largest

financial and professional services hub outside of London.

Leeds' tech sector is growing

125%

faster than the national average.

With AI jobs growth outpacing London.

Leading the way on housing growth:

17,000

new homes built over the last five years.

1.5% of England's overall Housing supply.

£2.5 billion

mass transit
system for
West Yorkshire.



£100m+

district heating
network
providing
affordable and
low carbon heat.

One of the
largest and
most innovative

**flood
defence**

schemes in
the UK.

**Leeds &
Bradford**

population
bigger than
Birmingham.

Aire Park

largest city centre
park to
be delivered
in the UK.

£7 billion

investment
pipeline for
infrastructure.

**Leeds
Station**

busiest train
station in
the North.

Building
75,000

new homes and
transforming
neighbourhoods.

Ranked
**3rd
globally**

as a Health
Tech hub.

With one of the largest
concentrations of Health
Tech employees in the UK.

Key Messages

In Leeds, our £36 billion economy is outperforming the UK, and by supercharging our three key sectors, which already drive 60% of our growth, we have ambitious plans to unlock further economic growth with a £20 billion uplift and 100,000 new jobs. The city is defining and showcasing economic opportunity at the heart of the North.

Financial and Professional Services

Located in the heart of the UK and home to the northern square mile, West Yorkshire is the largest FPS sector outside London. We have a plan to more than double the growth in the sector in the city over the next decade and in turn create 50,000 jobs.

Leeds is a leader in LegalTech, and a growing hub for fintech and innovation which is seeing global anchors land in the city.

We are home to over 40 national and international banks, 150 accountancy firms including the Big Four, global legal companies and all 3 of the UK's major credit reference agencies

Leeds has strengths in payments, lending, banking, Wealthtech, RegTech and Green Finance.

Digital

West Yorkshire is home to 9,700 digital and tech businesses, employing over 50,000 people. The tech sector in Leeds is growing 125% faster than the national average with strengths in fintech, data, cybersecurity and AI businesses – underscoring its national significance and investor confidence.

Collaboration is key across the city and we are home to the UK's largest open tech event, the Leeds Digital Festival. The city's booming media, film, gaming and other creative sectors are home to the likes of Sky, Flutter, XR Games, Rockstar, Planet Sport and Channel 4. Leeds also boasts a wealth of agencies and consultancies, providing a range of bespoke services from marketing to design and software development, while welcoming international organisations such as the Canadian multinational, CGI, GoCardless and Australian FinTech unicorn, PEXA, to the city.

AI jobs in Leeds are outpacing London and the sector is forecast to add £4.6 billion to West Yorkshire's economy by 2035. There is major opportunity in East Leeds to build an AI Zone, centred around Microsoft which has invested over £100m to purchase a site at Skelton Grange as part of its £2.5bn commitment to the UK building hyperscale datacentres.

Health

When it comes to health innovation, Leeds is setting the pace and shaping the future. Home of the NHS, we rank in the top three globally as a healthtech hub, and our tech sector is growing 125% faster than the national average, with AI job growth outpacing London.

We're the government's go-to location to drive the national health mission and the place where national policy meets frontline innovation to deliver the 'three shifts' identified in the NHS 10-year plan.

This is the city where breakthroughs are born and ideas are tested at speed. It's where bold partnerships turn world-leading research into reality, and where businesses start, scale and go global thanks to standout support.

From world-first surgical techniques to globally-leading trials, Leeds has been transforming health and care for over a century. Innovation through collaboration is in our DNA.

Our city is home to a dedicated Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Leeds Health and Social Care Hub, and has now been chosen to:

- host The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA's) new Digital Hub, bringing regulation and innovation closer together for faster adoption and impact, and
- lead in the first wave of the government's National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme, which reflects our uniquely connected ecosystem, building on integration of NHS, social care and the voluntary sector to reduce health inequalities and bring care closer to home.

Leeds is one of the UK's top five research delivery centres, and a top UK city for health research funding - with more than £480m in combined UKRI medtech and NIHR funding. Crucially, we have a uniquely interconnected ecosystem connecting businesses with top healthtech support, plus one of the country's biggest teaching hospitals halving clinical trial setup times.

The West Yorkshire Investment Zone will deliver £160m of investment over ten years and is already supporting the development of the health innovation ecosystem with a series of capital and revenue investments in Leeds.

Major Projects

Boasting an extensive talent pipeline, 6 world-class universities, a vast range of sectors and an economy worth £36 billion, Leeds is a hotspot for business, finance and technology.

To support growth in Leeds, we have delivered:

- A new rail station at Kirkstall Forge.
- £46 million investment in Leeds Rail Station to create a multi-modal gateway including a pedestrian priority area, improved accessibility, segregated cycle lanes, a 700-space cycle hub and infrastructure for ebikes.
- The £200 million Leeds Public Transport Investment programme to improve public transport and active travel.
- £125 million flood alleviation scheme for the River Aire, providing critical flood resilience measures for the city.

The Next Big Projects Are...

Leeds Mayoral Development Zone

Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority are working to establish a multi-partner Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) to drive the delivery of the Leeds Transformational Regeneration areas, including the proposed New Town and parts of the West End Riverside and Eastern growth areas. This will be complemented through the creation of a single multi-agency 'Leeds Growth' team led by Leeds City Council, including regional and national public sector partners, to ensure a single front door with the public sector for developers and investors.

Leeds South Bank

The Government's announcement that the South Bank be considered as a potential 'New Town' location adds to the real momentum in this area. The area includes Vastint's Aire Park and residential developments, as well as two major investments in cultural anchors – the Royal Armouries and the opportunity for a new home for British Library North, and landmark regeneration schemes including Caddick's South Village.

Royal Armouries

An ambitious refurbishment and redevelopment plan which will deliver a new riverside cultural heritage, events and conference space, along with a new 150-bed hotel, providing a culture-led anchor for the regeneration of Leeds South Bank and guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the Royal Armouries Museum.

Elland Road

A landmark 30-acre regeneration project, anchored by Leeds United Football Club's ambitious redevelopment of its stadium creating a vibrant, mixed-use year-round destination for Leeds with the potential to unlock billions in the neighbourhood.

Temple Works

A new major mixed-use development, with potential for housing, innovation space and other destination uses, including the opportunity for a new home for British Library North – this Grade I Listed building is a landmark regeneration scheme.

Northern Square Mile

We are set to double the rate of growth of the city's thriving financial services cluster to create an additional 50,000 new jobs in the finance and professional services sector. This strategic economic zone is intrinsically linked to the ongoing development of the South Bank, accelerating the expansion of the city centre.

Leeds Innovation Arc

Brings together a series of innovation neighbourhoods, formed around the natural anchors of universities, the proposed adult and children's hospitals and major private sector partners. Set across 150 hectares of the city centre the Arc is stitching together some of the most significant innovation assets in the country.

Leeds Innovation Village

A key area within the Innovation Arc and a flagship project of the West Yorkshire Health Innovation and Digital Investment Zone, it will offer offices, lab space and homes, and accelerate high-growth sectors like HealthTech and MedTech. The regeneration of the Grade II* listed Old Medical School is the first step and a significant investment to accelerate delivery.

Leeds-Bradford Airport's Vision 2030

Backed by £200 million in private investment, the strategy is to improve passenger experience and drive sustainable growth as the airport reaches an anticipated seven million passengers a year by 2030. The aim is to create up to 5,500 new jobs and contribute £1 billion to the local economy. The new Parkway Railway Station will serve the airport alongside the proposals for the 36-hectare North West Leeds employment hub.

Skelton Grange

An important industrial and logistics space, having a 100MW battery energy storage system, energy and waste facility and a hyperscale data centre as part of Microsoft's recent next-generation AI investment in the UK. This puts Leeds in the global tier two for such facilities. This will be part of a new AI Opportunity Zone that has the potential to become a major data and technology cluster and unlock skills, jobs and innovation opportunities.

Leeds Rail Station Programme

Ahead of the completion of the Transpennine Route Upgrade, this scheme will add a new bridge between platforms, a new southern entrance, an improved concourse and an extended platform 14 so that Leeds station can continue to accommodate the increasing passenger demands for the busiest rail station in the north.

Future Pipeline

- Campus Reimagined – The University of Leeds's emerging masterplan framework.
- National Poetry Centre proposal to redevelop a former church into a centre for poetry and creative writing.
- East of Otley – plans to deliver a new neighbourhood with new homes, school and green space.
- North-West Leeds Employment Hub to develop business space close to Yeadon and Horsforth and in close proximity to Leeds Bradford Airport.



Leeds Headline Events

Tuesday 19 May 10:45 – 11:30

This is Leeds: From Terrace to Town 2026

@ [West Yorkshire Pavilion, Dockside and Dock Water, Pink Zone](#)

Following on from last year's event, there is now significant momentum to the delivery of key initiatives across Leeds. Join us for the launch of the Leeds Mayoral Development Zone - hearing first-hand from senior leaders at Leeds City Council, Homes England and West Yorkshire Combined Authority on our ambitious delivery plans, as well as major announcements on flagship projects.

Tuesday 19 May 11:30 – 12:30

Elland Road Neighbourhood: A once-in-a-generation sports-led regeneration opportunity

@ [West Yorkshire Pavilion, Dockside and Dock Water, Pink Zone](#)

Join us to hear first-hand the ambitions driving one of the country's sports-led regeneration opportunities. Plans to expand Leeds United's home are gathering pace, supported by a vision for the surrounding neighbourhood, improved transport through Mass Transit proposals, and a vibrant year-round destination shaped by the Elland Road Masterplan.

Tuesday 19 May 11:45 – 12:45

Unlocking National Growth: The Role of Northern Cities

@ [Public-Private Sector Stage, Royal Armouries, Green Zone](#)

The Northern Growth Corridor brings together Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield as one connected urban economy. With major rail investment now committed, the focus shifts to delivery: how better connectivity, faster city centre growth and coordinated investment can expand labour markets and drive productivity. Leaders will set out what is happening now and what is needed to unlock growth at scale.

Wednesday 20 May 13:45 – 14:45

The Northern Square Mile powering the next decade in UK financial services

@ [West Yorkshire Pavilion, Dockside and Dock Water, Pink Zone](#)

Exploring the next decade in financial services and how Leeds is uniquely positioned to lead the next wave of innovation in fintech, digital assets and regtech through its rare concentration of regulatory, technology and financial services power.

Thursday 21 May 11:00 – 12:00

Rethinking place through a child-friendly lens: Handing the mic to the next generation

@ [Industry In Focus Pavilion, Pavilion Quarter, Orange Zone](#)

What happens when over 250 young people help shape the future of place? This youth-led panel shares insights from a 12-month collaboration to rethink child-friendly design across streets, transport and development.

Leeds Fringe Events

Tuesday 19 May 15:00 - 15:45

Launch of Independent Spirit: A heritage Framework for Leeds

@ Leeds Discovery Centre, Carlisle Road, Leeds, LS10 1LB

Discover the past, hold the future. Join us for the launch of Independent Spirit, the city's first ever heritage framework in the unique surroundings of Leeds Discovery Centre, yards from Royal Armouries. Go behind the scenes to explore a million-object collection (yes, including Sid the Squid) with drinks, appetizers, and rare artifacts in hand.

Registration will be essential for entry. To register your interest please contact:

david.hopes@leeds.gov.uk

Wednesday 20 May 12:30-13:30

Anchored in Leeds: a movement for our city

@Leeds Discovery Centre, Carlisle Road, Leeds, LS10 1LB

Join civic and business Anchor leaders in conversation about the Leeds way to do business in our city, as we extend an invitation to be part of a movement of organisations that are not just in Leeds but of Leeds. A relaxed hour outside of the main UKREiiF programme at the Discovery Centre, the city's secret treasure trove at Leeds Dock. Lunch and refreshments from 12pm.

Booking advised: [Anchored in Leeds: a movement for our city // UKREiiF Fringe Tickets](#),

[Wednesday 20 May • 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Leeds Walking Tours

Tuesday 19 May 15:30 to 17:00

Leeds South Bank Tour

[@ Meet at Sovereign Square](#)

A guided walking tour of Leeds South Bank, led by Leeds City Council, charting its evolution from the adoption of the South Bank SPD in 2017 through to its current position as a nationally significant regeneration location. The walk will focus on infrastructure-led regeneration and the role of South Bank in delivering long-term housing and economic growth.

Please register your interest by emailing regeneration.team@leeds.gov.uk.

Tuesday 19th May from 16:00

Wellbeing Walk

[@ Meet at City Square – Thors Tipi](#)

This short walk is focused on gentle movement, spending time in some quiet spaces in the City. The walk is around 3 km in length and suitable for all. There is an opportunity for a drink and chat at the end – finishing back at Thors Tipi – City Square.

Places are limited, please contact neil.jones@leeds.gov.uk to reserve a space.

Wednesday 20 May 08:00 to 10:00

A Look into Leeds South Bank - Walking tour of a next-generation New Town

[@ Meet at: Hyatt Place, Sovereign Square](#)

A guided walking tour examining Leeds South Bank as a proposed next-generation New Town. Hosted by Leeds City Council with Arup, the walk will explore how existing and planned infrastructure is shaping density, land use and long-term value, and how South Bank demonstrates a new model for large-scale, infrastructure-enabled urban growth, including delivery of at least 10,000 new homes alongside employment and mixed-use development. Breakfast is provided ahead of the walk. **Invitation only.**

Wednesday 20 May 15.30-17.00

Riverfront Regeneration: walking tour in the city's west end

[@ Meet at: Granary Wharf – outside of The Hop at Granary Wharf, LS1 4BR, near Leeds Train Station](#)

An exploration of new and emerging regeneration along Leeds waterways in the west of the city. The Leeds Liverpool Canal and River Aire are central to the city's blue infrastructure network, and were recently the focus of works through Europe's largest Flood Alleviation scheme. Taking in exciting new developments – including Whitehall Riverside, Monk Bridge Viaduct and the Junction – and with updates from developers and architects who have driven regeneration in this area of the city, the tour will also give an insight into further regeneration opportunities along Leeds' waterways.

Please register your interest by emailing regeneration.team@leeds.gov.uk

Wednesday 20 May 15:30 to 17:00

Net-walking tour: place-making over the years & public art

[@ Meet at Brewery Wharf Tavern](#)

Join our netwalking tour to learn about Leeds as we know it today and how its regeneration is interwoven with the recent evolution of the city's public art and vibrant street art scene. Discover lesser known stories of Leeds past and how diverse artworks, such as Hibiscus Rising by internationally acclaimed artist Yinka Shonibare, continue to highlight creativity and representation within our very unique city centre.

Email sarah.priestley@leeds.gov.uk to request a place on this tour

Social Media Plan

We will be utilising LinkedIn as our main platform in the lead-up to and throughout UKREiiF.

Keep an eye on @Leeds City Council for updates on our key events, longer form content around key announcements, and short-form video roundups of the day.

We will be posting content from now, and throughout the event.

Please share, comment and engage with our content to help us spread the word further.

Below is a brief outline of the content going out throughout the event:

- **Monday:** Welcome to all delegates to UKREiiF, where to find us and a reminder of our sessions.
- **Tuesday:** LinkedIn article – roundup summarising the announcements from the day – Mayoral Development Zone and Elland Road. Video roundup post from the day
- **Wednesday:** LinkedIn article – Powering the next decade of FPS – Northern Square Mile. Video roundup post from the day
- **Thursday:** LinkedIn article – focus on sports-led regeneration. Thank you to all delegates for coming to Leeds, and thank you to UKREiiF.



Share your stories with us

Linkedin - @Leeds City Council #TeamLeeds

UNFORGETTABLE DELEGATE EXPERIENCES IN LEEDS

Conference
Leeds.

Leeds.

EXPERIENCE EXCEPTIONAL

VISITLEEDS

Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



[Click here to play the video](#)

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