Leeds, and local Leeds politics, should be the main focus of our think-tank.

Benefits:

* Much larger potential for change/influence
* Leeds Council has worked with think-tanks previously to implement large changes, e.g. LAN
* Leeds Council regularly undertakes large projects, e.g. the Leeds Cultural Festival. We could suggest things we’d like to see
* Enormous potential for “proof-of-concept”
* Local politics is largely ignored by many, even though changes in local politics are more attainable and would have huge impacts, especially considering Leeds is such a large city

Negatives:

* If we have a good reputation on national issues, our proposals may be taken more seriously
* People outside of Leeds will have more reason to read the think-tank if we focus on national politics
* People joining our society will likely want to speak on national issues, and many won’t be from Leeds

Meeting Notes

* Deciding our “North Focus” thing

Joseph’s issues:

* People from the South won’t really care
* Might be hard to get published in the FT
* Lots of policy areas which are vague e.g. Market Regulation which we can’t apply only to the North
* “North based” implies pressure group, we’re supposed to be non-partisan

Nic’s agreement:

* North focus only means issues which affect the North,
* Could be market regulation e.g., something which will reduce the ability of corporations
* Poverty – North issue
* North focus can be vague, doesn’t have to be too strict
* Why bother calling ourselves a “Northern” think-tank if it’s so vague?
  + Unique selling point
  + Makes us stand out

Nic’s disagreements:

* City council is not that powerful
* Local government doesn’t have much power
* Research on important issues is usually national, e.g., immigration

Hubert’s issues:

* How can we communicate a “Northern-focus”?
* I can’t force people to care about the North/local area – might be unavoidable
* Sometimes we’ll have to reduce the scope, we could turn it into a Northern issue
  + This may reduce the value by losing eyes on our columns
* I can’t force research groups to focus on the North/Leeds
* Best policy would be presenting all options and the resources we have in relation to Leeds City Council, but their research is ultimately up to them.
* National issue focus is needed, media connections from the IEA and being named in newspapers which are Westminster-based, does look very good.
* I agree that focusing on local issues would give the largest marginal benefit
* We can nudge, but impossible to force them to work on local issues

Joseph:

* Most important thing is access to policy leaders
  + Questions
  + Quotes
  + Roadplans
* We need to be able to prove that we can do good analysis so that the LCC actually listens to us
  + Will be good for rep. in general
* We shouldn’t shirk national issues
  + Good for reputation
  + Good for training student writers

Nic:

* Agree with Hubert that it’ll be hard to do things if they don’t care
  + It’s easy to put a “Leeds spin” after research is done
* If you choose a national rather than local issue, you’re trading off your chance of impact and instead gaining national visibility

We want to have a national and local focus, but nudge people to write policy proposals for local area

Nic is going to make a project timeline, policy group organisation chart,

We generally agree that if someone is writing something we are continuously not happy with, we’ll continue to edit and send back their work until it is up to scratch, rather than being lenient.

Junior researchers underperforming will probably have writing privileges taken away.