

Plans Panel (East)

Thursday, 31st May, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor D Congreve in the Chair

Councillors C Campbell, M Harland,
G Latty, C Macniven, A McKenna,
J Procter, E Taylor and P Truswell

1 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to this Extraordinary meeting of Plans Panel East. He particularly welcomed the new members of the Panel and asked the Chief Planning Officer to circulate to them some planning documents for example the Householder Design Guide and Core Strategy, which would be useful when considering applications

2 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal/prejudicial interests for the purposes of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor McKenna and Councillor Procter both declared personal interests through being members of the East Leeds Regeneration Board which had discussed the proposals (minute 4 refers)

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Finnigan

4 Pre-application presentation - East Leeds Extension

Members considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer detailing pre-application proposals for a major mixed-use development on land between Wetherby Road and York Road – the 'Northern Quadrant' of the East Leeds Extension. The Panel also received a presentation on behalf of the developers

Plans, photographs, drawings and graphics were displayed at the meeting. A site visit had taken place earlier in the day which Members had attended

The Chief Planning Officer introduced the report and highlighted the importance of the scheme for the city as a whole, for the existing communities in this area and for the people who would live and work in this new development

Mr Crabtree stressed that the presentation and discussions at the meeting were without prejudice to the application process but provided an opportunity to consider the proposals, seek clarification on matters and offer comments on the details presented to Members

Particular attention was drawn to section 8.0 of the report and the recommendations that arose from the meeting of the East Leeds Regeneration Board of 14th May 2012.

The background to the sites coming forward was outlined, ie the decision taken by Executive Board to release Phase 2 and 3 housing sites, particularly in view of the adverse outcome of recent planning appeal decisions on sites in the city

Several key issues were outlined for particular attention; these being

- highways and the existing problems in the area
- the East Leeds Orbital Road (ELOR); the nature of this and its role in relieving traffic pressures in the area and if this could be provided ahead of the development
- the timing and phasing of the proposals; the housing mix and whether specialist provision for older people should be considered
- education provision and the need for both primary and secondary provision as part of the scheme
- landscaping and green spaces

The Panel then received a presentation on behalf of the developers

Members were informed that a consortium had been formed which included the three landowners of the areas of land comprising the whole, 100 hectare site. Whilst the Phase 3 housing allocation also included Redhall, this area did not form part of the scheme being presented

In respect of the ELOR, it was stated that planning policy did not preclude the development from coming forward in phases and did not require the ELOR to be in place at the outset

In terms of timing, Members were informed that the development was being brought forward at this time to meet housing needs in the area

The design process was outlined with the Panel being informed that local context which included an understanding of how residents in the area used the existing facilities; their transport usage and architectural details of the surrounding areas of Shadwell, Thorner and Scholes had all been considered as had the positioning of utilities and the topography of the site

The aspirations of the community had been considered as part of two exhibition/consultations, with the first one showing the basic principles to enable residents to comment on and the second session showing how the comments received had been responded to. Feedback received relating to the siting of the new primary school had resulted in the developers reconsidering this away from the central location originally envisaged. Concerning highway issues, local residents' concerns about existing rat-running had been taken onboard and the modifications made to address this issue

Drawings and ideas about the scheme had been shared with Officers where issues relating to drainage; movement around the site and pedestrian links together with creating a sense of place and highways issues, especially the ELOR had begun to be worked up. Discussions had also taken place with Metro to consider the public transport requirements

Mr Kirkham of Persimmon Homes provided details about the benefits the development would bring in terms of homes, jobs and the wider economic benefits to the local economy and the Council in the form of the new homes bonus. Members were informed that of the 2,000 homes to be built, 300 – ie 15% - of these would be affordable housing. The site would be constructed in three phases, the first being an area east of Wetherby Road and an area of York Road which would start

independently. The second phase would be the area off York Road with the final phase of Skelton's Lane joining the two phases together

A phasing plan was also displayed which indicated the construction and infrastructure would be delivered over a 10 year period, from 2015 – 2025 with initially 80 homes being delivered in 2015 rising progressively to achieve in 2025, the full 2000 homes. The primary school would come on line during 2017-2018, with secondary school contributions being made in 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024. The developer's section of the ELOR would come on line during 2021-2022, whereas off-site and on-site highway works would be in place from 2015 as would training and apprenticeships which would last throughout the 10 year development period, the local centre would open in 2019 and extended bus services come on line from 2017-2022

The wider economic impact of the proposals were outlined, these being around 225 direct construction jobs, with around a further 275 indirect construction jobs being created. In terms of retail/leisure employment, around 95 jobs were envisaged and that the gross spending power from the development would be £19m with a new homes bonus to the Council of around £17,250,000

Members commented on the following matters:

- the pre-application presentation process and that whilst it gave the developers an opportunity to engage in discussions with the Panel, objectors to the proposals or local Ward Members were not afforded the same opportunity
- the importance of working together, as highlighted by the Chief Planning Officer, but that this did not seem to have happened in terms of consultation, particularly with Ward Members
- that the proposals would have an impact on the Garforth and Swillington Ward and the Wetherby Ward; that answers to concerns raised relating to issues in these Wards had not been forthcoming and the need for these matters to be addressed before the planning application was submitted
- the usefulness of pre-application presentations as a way to highlight areas which needed further work and consultation upon
- the need to appreciate the scale of the development and because of this to look at all aspects thoroughly and carefully
- whether major applications should be considered where the road infrastructure was not in place to support them
- the proposed building method, i.e. starting at both ends of the site – and why commencing in the middle and working outwards could not be considered
- the ELOR; that only part of it was being provided within this development; and not until 2021-2022, by which time there would be approximately 1200 – 1500 homes constructed and the view that the scheme and its impact on the wider area, particularly the Ring Road and Crossgates would only be ameliorated if the whole ELOR was in place
- that the ELOR would run across land owned by a number of people; that discussions on these matters could be lengthy and protracted with concerns about the delivery of this vital element of the scheme, particularly in view of the Thorpe Park development and that the much needed Manston Lane Link Road had not yet been built

- the possibility of conditioning the provision of the ELOR and a date for this to be in place
- the timescales for the provision of the main internal road and main spine roads and the need to know more about the intentions to stop intermittent traffic jams over the life of the development period with concerns that constructing relief roads, as proposed, only added to delays and traffic queuing
- the need to develop and implement a substantive public transport strategy which should be in operation from day one to encourage greater use of public transport
- the phasing timescales and that vital services e.g. the primary school and district centre would be provided after around 800 homes had been constructed, with concerns about this, particularly for highways as in the interim, people living on the site would need to commute for basic services
- education provision, concerns that whilst the developers had indicated there was spare capacity in the area and that some local Headteachers had expressed concerns about the development of a further primary school, that sufficient primary school provision was a concern. In the event that there was some spare capacity currently in primary schools, there would be the requirement for primary school places arising from the Grimes Dyke residential development and this had to be taken account of
- that details of the consultation carried out with the LEA and the Health Authority should be provided to Members
- that lessons had to be learned from the situation in North West Leeds where much development had taken place without the necessary infrastructure
- greenspace and open areas with concerns there were proposals to use developer contributions to improve existing provision
- the importance of siting the accommodation for older people close to the district centre
- the lack of healthcare facilities within the development
- affordable housing, that the level being offered was 15% in line with the current interim affordable housing policy but that given the likely length of the construction period to agree to a blanket 15% for affordable housing was not acceptable and that the Council should be seeking to ensure that the level of affordable housing provision could be revisited later on in the build programme to reflect the policy requirements which applied at that time
- the role of the East Leeds Regeneration Board on the form of the affordable housing and whether this should be provided on or off site, or a mixture of the two

The following additional information was provided by the developer's representatives who attended the meeting

- that the site was likely to have more than one developer working on it and that the proposed construction phasing had been devised taking into account highways for construction vehicle and drainage as there

was sewer capacity on the edge of the site whereas more extensive drainage was needed in the middle of the site

- that the more houses which could be built and sold would enable the infrastructure to be delivered
- that the main internal road would be provided in the middle section of the site and before houses were constructed
- that the information provided on education provision had been obtained from Children's Services
- public open space (POS) and that early discussions had centred around off-site provision but that more recently a country park had been suggested but that further discussions could take place on the amount and form of what POS was needed
- that in terms of healthcare, the developers could respond to what was considered to be required in a development of this scale
- the siting of affordable housing and that the developers were open to discussions on this

In summing up what was considered to be a useful session, the Chair made the following points:

- that an assessment of health needs of the area was required
- that a development framework for site was needed
- that further discussions were needed around education provision and the siting of the primary school which should be in the most appropriate location for the benefit of the new area and the existing housing around the site
- that the early employment and training initiatives the scheme would provide were welcomed
- that speed limits to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety should be considered, with possibly a limit of 30mph on spine roads and 20mph on other roads being implemented at the outset
- the need for much more consultation to be undertaken which meant working with the community; the importance of engaging with Community Consultative Forum and the need for the developers to listen to the views of the East Leeds Regeneration Board due to their important, strategic role in relation to the wider East Leeds area

RESOLVED - To note the report, the presentation and the comments now made

5 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 7th June 2012 at 1.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds