



Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date: 24th April 2007

Subject: EASEL Area Action Plan Preferred Options

Electoral Wards Affected:

Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills, Killingbeck & Seacroft, Temple Newsam, City & Hunslet & Chapel Allerton

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity



Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap



Executive Summary

Preparation of the EASEL Area Action Plan has been progressing since 2005. In summer 2006 the Council consulted on three different alternative futures for EASEL. Extensive public consultation was held and comments were received from some 1200 local residents and stakeholders. These comments have been used to help prepare the City Council's "Preferred Options" for the EASEL area. The Preferred Options set out for consultation the Council's proposed policy direction and shows the location and type of land use change within the area over the next 15-20 years. This document provides an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to respond to the Preferred Options proposed. A formal 6 week period of consultation will take place from 18th June - 30th July 2007 and responses received will inform preparation of the EASEL Area Action Plan for submission to Government. The Development Plan Panel is asked to recommend the Executive Board (6th June) to approve the Preferred Options for public consultation.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to obtain approval of the Development Plan Panel to consult on the Preferred Options for the EASEL Area Action Plan and for Development Plan Panel to recommend approval to the Executive Board.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The preparation of Development Plan Documents such as the EASEL Area Action Plan divides into 3 main stages:
- Issues and Options (Regulation 25)
 - Preferred Options (Regulation 26)
 - Submission of Draft Plan and Public Inquiry (Regulation 28)
- 2.2. In July 2005 Development Plan Panel gave approval for informal consultation to commence on the EASEL AAP "Early Issues for Consultation" document. This document raised awareness of the issues affecting the EASEL area and sought views from stakeholders and

the community on the nature of change required to achieve transformed and sustainable communities.

- 2.3 Leeds City Council published its “Alternative Options – Looking to the future” consultation document in June 2006. Three alternative options for change in EASEL were identified:

Option 1: Minor change

This option illustrated the ‘business as usual’ approach by setting out the changes which were already programmed by Leeds City Council and its partners to occur across the area.

This option provided:

- 63 hectares of sites for development
- 2,220 new homes
- 7.5 hectares of employment land

Option 2: Moderate change

Option 2 provided a medium level view of the type of change which could occur across EASEL. This option was regarded as going some way to addressing the problems which the area faces and would ensure that regeneration was undertaken in a more comprehensive and sustainable manner.

This option provided:

- 151 hectares of sites for development
- 4,960 new homes
- 27 hectares of employment land

Option 3: Transformational change

Option 3 demonstrated how the EASEL initiative could achieve transformational change in the EASEL area. Substantial intervention would provide better quality homes and more housing choice for local people and would allow the opportunity for new people to move into the area.

This option provided:

- 293 hectares of sites for development
- 9,700 new homes
- 50.5 hectares of employment land

- 2.4 During the consultation period 21 public events took place, over 1200 people attended open days, events and meetings or provided written comments. Most were positive about the need for change in the EASEL area to provide an improved quality of life for residents.

- 2.5 Some strong views emerged about the areas which should be redeveloped, particularly in relation to potential loss of greenspaces in South Seacroft and Osmondthorpe. These views were reflected in the questionnaire responses. In overall terms 63% of respondents who returned the questionnaire believed that Option 1 would bring about the most benefits to the EASEL area, 12% favoured Option 2 and 23% favoured Option 3. A high proportion (94%) of those who considered Option 1 to be the most beneficial option did so on the basis of a site specific objection to the potential loss of greenspace along the frontage of York Road and Foundry Lane, South Seacroft. These areas have been reinstated as greenspace in the Preferred Option.

3. THE PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Preferred Options have been prepared having regard to the following considerations:

- National, regional and local policy.
- The responses and views received on the three alternative options from stakeholders and members of the community.

- The sustainability appraisal and how the alternative options scored in terms of key sustainability criteria.
- Statistics and information on a wide range of issues, including deprivation, housing conditions, and the accessibility of sites.

3.2 In order to meet the strategic objectives of the Vision for Leeds, the EASEL Regeneration Initiative and the objectives of the Area Action Plan to bring about long lasting change in the EASEL area, the Preferred Options must ensure that sufficient development opportunities and improvements are included to bring about the level of change required to achieve sustainable communities. To this end, Option 3 broadly provided the opportunity to transform EASEL and create places where people will be happy to live and work now and in the future.

3.3 The Council's Preferred Options relate most closely to Option 3, but are subject to a number of alterations which have arisen following feedback received as part of the ongoing consultation.

3.4 The Preferred Options for EASEL set out the following:

The objectives of the Area Action Plan - these establish the vision and objectives for the EASEL Area Action Plan which define the overall strategy for the area and will guide more detailed policies.

Eight Strategic Themes – the eight themes within the Preferred Options guide the approach to development in EASEL. The themes are: housing; mixed use; priority improvement areas; retail and local services; education; greenspace and recreation; transport and movement; and design and sustainability.

Neighbourhood Strategies - The EASEL area is made up of a number of distinct neighbourhoods. Five neighbourhood groupings have been identified: Lincoln Green, Burmantofts and Harehills; Cross Green and Richmond Hill; Gipton; Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe; and Seacroft. The proposals for each neighbourhood are set out in broad terms and have been informed by the feedback received on the Alternative Options.

Delivery, Phasing and Monitoring – sets out the steps that the Area Action Plan will take to ensure that the proposals are achieved and monitored.

4 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

4.1 It is a requirement of the new planning system that Development Plan Documents are subjected to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The purpose of this is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the proposals from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with the objectives of sustainable development. The SA complies with the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

4.2 A Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken of the three alternative options and this has also helped to inform the Preferred Options.

4.3 The economic appraisal focused on the employment opportunities and conditions for economic growth and investment provided by each option. Subject to the proportion of employment uses brought forward on the designated mixed use sites and the implementation of transport links within and from the EASEL area, Option 3 is considered to have the greatest positive impact on the economic objectives as it identifies the greatest potential for employment and provides the most significant improvements to the transport system.

4.4 The social appraisal focused on proposals for housing and key services and facilities, including schools, health, cultural, leisure and recreation facilities, in addition to social cohesion and inclusion. Option 3 was considered to have the greatest positive impact on

social objectives, as it provides a comprehensive package of new housing and mixed use developments. The scale of development is sufficient to provide a realistic prospect of significant public transport infrastructure, new school provision and increased viability of existing and proposed centres.

- 4.5 In terms of the environmental appraisal, all three options would increase overall greenhouse gas emissions and the amount of waste generated. A key objective within the EASEL area is to achieve sustainable communities with positive environmental outcomes and any adverse implications minimised. Option 3 proposes significantly more development than Options 1 and 2 and as such the impact on air pollution and growth in waste potentially would be greater. However, there is the potential to bring about positive enhancements, and aim for more carbon neutral development to include the improvement of greenspace and general landscape quality, and the promotion of sustainable design and construction, waste recycling and energy efficiency.

5 CONSULTATION

Advance consultation

- 5.1 A Development Plan Panel and Ward Member briefing on the Preferred Options was held on 19th March 2007. Comments made by Members at the briefing are summarised below.

- The area deserves something iconic and special to set it apart.
- What is the process for introducing something iconic to change the image of the area?
- There need to be early wins in the process. The area is currently being blighted with demolitions with as yet no positive benefits/outcomes.
- Despite the high level of consultation on the regenerative benefits of EASEL there is cynicism from the public that nothing ever seems to happen.
- A key issue is the provision of local employment – it can't all be in EASEL but there needs to be good access to employment.
- Is it appropriate to extend existing schools in Harehills? Shouldn't we be building new schools which allow communities to merge?
- The public consultation that has taken place has been about strategic planning rather than local need. Has anyone asked local people what they would like in the area?
- There are proposals for building new schools but the key issue is improving literacy and numeracy amongst children.
- Will reduction in social housing units and their replacement through a broader range of affordable housing require tenants to be rehoused outside of the EASEL area?

- 5.2 A presentation of the Preferred Options was made to the East Leeds District Housing Partnership on 29th March 2007. Officers have been closely involved with the EASEL Regeneration Initiative which complements the AAP and have regularly attended EASEL Strategic Learning Group meetings. A number of internal themed meetings on leisure and recreation, housing, retail, employment and transportation have all helped to inform the Preferred Options.

Proposed public consultation

- 5.3 National regulations governing the preparation of LDF plans requires a consultation period of 6 weeks and notification to be sent to those organizations who the Council considers will be interested in or affected by the proposals. It is also required that the documents be made available at public places and on the internet.
- 5.4 The proposed consultation complies with the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Formal consultation on the Preferred Options is proposed during a 6 week period (18/6/07 – 30/7/07). Documents will be made available on the LCC website and in hardcopy at the Leonardo Building, the Central Library and libraries and One Stop Centres within and adjoining the EASEL area.

- 5.5 An extensive EASEL database has been developed which builds upon Neighbourhood Forum mailing lists and includes key stakeholders; Harehills and "Tog'ether" area residents networks; tenants and residents associations and all residents (850+) who have commented at the "Issues and Options" and "Alternative Options" stages. They will all be notified of the publication of the Preferred Options and given the opportunity to provide comments. In addition, posters, advertisements, leaflets, and press-releases will be used to publicise the proposals. Officers will also provide details of the AAP consultation to Local Forums and Area Committees which meet during the consultation period.
- 5.6 A public open day will be held within each of the EASEL neighbourhoods. Large scale display plans will be available and a short accessible version of the Preferred Options will be prepared to complement the full document. Staff from City Development, Neighbourhoods, and East and North East Leeds Housing will be on hand to explain and discuss both the AAP proposals and the EASEL Regeneration Initiative. We will continue to work with Yorkshire Planning Aid in the Harehills area, building on the extensive engagement which took place on the AAP Options. Consultation dates are shortly to be arranged. The aim will be to plan these towards the beginning of the consultation period to ensure sufficient time is available for responses to be made.

Further stages in the AAP

- 5.7 Following the public consultation, responses will be analyzed and a consultation statement issued. The AAP will be amended and submitted as a Draft AAP to the Secretary of State. This is likely to be in Spring 2008.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Preferred Options present a significant step toward adoption of the EASEL Area Action Plan and shows the location and type of land use change within the EASEL area over the next 15-20 years. It is important that the public consultation is wide ranging and effective in raising awareness of the Plan proposals and provides the opportunity for individuals and organizations involved to comment.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The Development Plan Panel is recommended to:

Recommend to the Executive Board that it approves the EASEL Area Action Plan Preferred Options for publication along with its Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents and formally invites representations between June 16th and July 30th 2007.