

**Report of the Director of City Development**

**Report to: Development Plans Panel**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

**Subject: Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation – initial Report of Consultation**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Consultation on the Site Allocations Plan 'Issues & Options' for housing, retail, employment and greenspace took place over 8 weeks from 4 June to 29 July 2013;
2. Sixteen drop-in events were held in the city centre and in settlements throughout the district, attended by approximately 1,000 people;
3. The drop-in events were supported by a strong marketing and promotion campaign and this was supplemented by informal exhibitions, meetings and workshops in some areas;
4. Approximately 5,000 submissions have been received in total. There have been 1932 online responses covering the following issues - housing (1661), green space (200), retail (51) and employment (20). One submission may contain representations on a number of sites;
5. An initial Report of Consultation is attached for Members information and comment. This covers the scope and methods of the consultation and initial information on how it went;
6. A draft Report of Consultation will be prepared in due course. This will include who made comments and what was said;
7. Officers will report back to Panel on the outcomes of the consultation and subsequent actions at a number of times;
8. The final Report of Consultation will cover the consultation process and the Council's response to the issues raised;

9. This Panel report covers four main issues – the consultation methods, the overall number of responses received, an early evaluation of the consultation and an outline of the next steps.

### **Recommendations:**

Development Plan Panel is requested to:

- 9.1 Note the key headlines from the consultation;
- 9.2 Note the attached initial information for the draft Report of Consultation, to be presented to Panel in due course.

## **1.0 Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an initial Report of Consultation of the recent Site Allocations Plan Issues and Options consultation. The report provides a basis for a detailed Report of Consultation covering the consultation process and responses to the issues raised.

## **2.0 Background Information**

### **Scope and Purpose of the Consultation**

- 2.1 Following consideration by Development Plan Panel and Executive Board, the consultation focussed on the following targeted issues and options:
  - 2.1.1 Locations for a range of **Housing** sites to meet the needs of the local current and future population;
  - 2.1.2 Locations for a range of **Employment** sites;
  - 2.1.3 Locations for **Retail** development (town centre boundaries and shopping centre frontages);
  - 2.1.4 **Greenspace** (review of existing allocations and potential new sites and proposed amendments arising from the open space needs assessment)

### **Consultation Principles**

- 2.2 The principles that informed the consultation were based on the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and on consultation good practice (these are outlined in the initial Report of Consultation).

### **Consultation Material**

- 2.3 The consultation material was designed to be informative, clear and welcoming and given the many positive comments made at the events this aim was achieved. A selection of photographs of the material is included in the initial Report of Consultation.

## **Marketing and promotion**

- 2.4 A marketing and promotion campaign was used to promote the consultation to a wide variety of stakeholders, using a wider variety of methods. An emphasis was placed engaging with 'hard to reach groups' (full details of the methods used are outlined in the initial Report of Consultation).

## **Consultation Programme**

- 2.3 At the Development Plan Panel meeting in April 2013 Panel Members agreed that the main focus of the consultation would be online and at sixteen events in the city centre and settlements throughout the district. These were 'drop-in' events and were held at the following locations – Civic Hall (3 events), Trinity (Shopping Centre), Wetherby, Cross Gates, Beeston, Morley, Armley, Rothwell, Otley, Horsforth, Pudsey, Roundhay, Harehills and Garforth. Details of each event as well the informal meetings and workshops that took place are provided in the initial Report of Consultation.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Approximately 5,000 representations have been received as written paper representation, email and via the online consultation form. Officers are currently sorting, reading and inputting these into the consultation database, which will be part of the draft Report of Consultation. Some of the main issues from the responses read and ordered so far are outlined below, but It may be that once all of the comments have been read and inputted other key issues will become apparent.

## **Level of interest and number of responses**

- 3.2 Of the 5,000 representations received, 1932 of these have been made online and cover the following issues - housing (1661), green space (200), retail (51) and employment (20). It is likely that the responses made by post (1,500) and email (1,500) will follow a similar pattern.

## **Key issues raised**

- 3.3 The majority of comments were on housing issues (perhaps as high as 75% of the comments made). A high number of comments have been received from Morley, Aireborough, Garforth, East Ardsley, Cookridge, Adel and Horsforth areas. It is likely that the other responses will show high responses from other areas too.
- 3.4 At this early stage it seems that the majority of the comments made were objection-focussed (only objecting to sites), rather than solution-focussed (i.e. offering alternative sites). This will be covered in the draft Report of Consultation.

## **Evaluation**

- 3.5 It is too early to assess the consultation fully but the events were generally well received, with many positive comments made on the consultation material and an

appreciation of the opportunity for one-to-one discussions with officers. The availability of material to take away was also appreciated by many, especially by those who wanted more time to consider the issues.

- 3.6 There were two main criticisms made of the consultation – that not enough was done to publicise the consultation and to make comments online was confusing and too time consuming. The Report of Consultation will have a more comprehensive account of all of these issues and will include lessons for the future also.

### **Next steps**

- 3.7 The immediate next steps will be for officers to read and input all of the comments into the consultation database for inclusion in the draft Report of Consultation. Further reports to Development Plan Panel will be prepared to consider responses to the issues raised, with a view to preparing The Publication Draft Plan as quickly as practicable. A programme timetable will be developed more fully within the context of the analysis of the consultation responses. It should be emphasised also that the overall timetable will be subject to the progress of the Core Strategy through Examination. It is anticipated at this stage that the Publication Draft will be subject to consultation in 2014 with a view to adoption in 2015.

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Local Development Framework (LDF)**

- 4.1.1 The Site Allocations Plan forms part of the Local Development Framework ('Local Plan') for Leeds. The Site Allocations Plan will eventually identify allocations for development which are consistent with the overall policy approach of the Core Strategy, whilst responding to and balancing the needs and aspirations of local communities and business.
- 4.1.2 The Core Strategy was submitted for independent examination in April 2013 and the Examination in Public commences in October 2013.

### **4.2 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.2.1 The 8 week period of consultation undertaken is longer than the usual statutory 6 week consultation period. This reflects the complexity of the task for not only the Council but to meet the needs of local communities and business.
- 4.2.2 The consultation strategy has been framed within the context of the City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### **4.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.3.1 The consultation undertaken has provided an opportunity for all communities across Leeds to participate in the process. In terms of preparing the consultation material it should be noted that an Equality Impact Assessment Screening was undertaken on the Core Strategy Publication draft and pre-submission changes. This document sets the strategic context for the Site Allocations Plan. In addition, an EIA has also been completed in the preparation of the Site Allocations Issues & Options document.

#### **4.4 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 4.4.1 The Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan play a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of the Vision for Leeds and the aspiration to be 'the best city in the UK'. Related to this overarching approach and in meeting a host of social, environmental and economic objectives the Site Allocations Plan also seeks to support and advance the implementation of a range of other key City Council and wider partnership priorities. These include the Leeds Growth Strategy, the City Priority Plan, the Council Business Plan, the Leeds Health and Well Being Strategy and the desire to be a 'child friendly city'.

#### **4.5 Resources and value for money**

- 4.5.1 The plan is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations, statutory requirements and within existing resources.

#### **4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.6.1 The plan is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations and statutory requirements. The plan is a Budgetary and Policy Framework document and as such will be considered by Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) at the appropriate time.

#### **4.7 Risk Management**

- 4.7.1 The plan is being prepared within the context of the LDF Regulations and statutory requirements. The preparation of the plan within the context of ongoing national reform to the planning system and in responding to local issues and priorities, is a challenging process. Consequently, at the appropriate time advice is sought from a number of sources, including legal advice and advice from the Planning Advisory Service and the Planning Inspectorate, as a basis to help manage risk and to keep the process moving forward.

### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The level of involvement in the consultation has been fairly high (very high in some areas), with most comments made on housing issues and options. This, and the complexity of some of the issues presents a challenge for the Council but with a consultation process that is fair, open and transparent these challenges can become opportunities for both the Council and local communities as the city seeks sustainable and agreed solutions to growth by working with communities and others in the coming months. The draft and the final Report of Consultation will be presented to Members of this Panel as soon as practicable and this will be a significant step in reaching that goal.

### **6. Recommendations**

Development Plan Panel is requested to:

- 6.1 Note the key headlines from the consultation;

6.2 Note the attached introductory information for the draft Report of Consultation, to be presented to Panel in due course.

## 7. **Background documents**<sup>1</sup>

7.1 Initial Report of Consultation (Appendix 1)

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.