
Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL SOUTH AND WEST

Date: 3rd July 2014

Subject: Pre-application presentation – Reference: PREAPP/14/00506 – New office buildings to replace existing office extension at White Rose Office Park, Millshaw Park Lane, Beeston, LS11 0PP

Electoral Wards Affected:

Site is within Morley North Ward and close to the boundary with Beeston and Holbeck

☐ Yes

Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity ☐

Community Cohesion ☐

Narrowing the Gap ☐

RECOMMENDATION:

For Members to note the content of the report and presentation and to provide any comments on the proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 Two new office buildings are proposed at the White Rose Office Park, replacing an existing extension to the rear of the former Arlington Business Centre which is proposed to be demolished. It is understood that the current occupiers of the extension are to vacate the unit in the near future, and that the proposal to demolish the extension and provide two new office buildings in its place has come about as the preferred solution following a review of the existing extension and consideration of various options which also included refurbishing the existing extension and replacing it with a new extension.
- 1.2 This presentation forms part of an initial consultative process being carried out by the developer, Munroe K Ltd, with the local planning authority, in advance of their submitting an application for the development shortly after the Plans Panel meeting. The developer has advised that the replacement buildings are proposed on a like-for-like basis, with no net increase in the amount of office floorspace and no net loss of parking provision within the site.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing extension to the south west of the former Arlington Business Centre, and to build two new office buildings in this area.
- 2.2 The details submitted by the developer advise that the net office floorspace provided in the existing large single storey extension is 6264m². It is proposed to replace this with two three storey office buildings with smaller footprints, separated from each other and from the remainder of the existing building by new areas of landscaping. The total gross external area of the two new buildings would be around 400m² larger than the existing extension, however the submitted details confirm that their total net office floorspace would be identical to that currently provided in the extension.
- 2.3 The two new buildings would be almost identical in their design, with glazed walls incorporating sections of timber cladding, and flat roofs with photovoltaic panels. New landscaping is proposed in between the building, and on the roof of a new deck which is proposed to be built over the section of the undercroft vehicular access route which runs beneath part of the extension at present.
- 2.4 The development may necessitate the reconfiguration of some areas of car parking immediately around this area of the site, however the developer has confirmed that any spaces removed will be replaced, and that there would be no net loss of parking spaces as a result of the development.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The proposals relate to the south western section of the L-shaped former Arlington Business Centre, which occupies the central part of the Office Park site. One of the site's main internal vehicular circulation routes runs through an undercroft spanned by the section of the extension closest to the main building, whilst the remainder of the extension sits at ground level with surface parking and landscaping around it.
- 3.2 Since the construction of this original building on the site, the Office Park has seen significant additional development in recent years, including a recently completed, large new office building in the rear part of the site, and is now made up of a number of smaller office buildings of varying sizes, together with the central 'hub' building which provides cafe/restaurant facilities and other amenities for employees. There is some variety in the design approaches and materials used in the buildings on the site, reflecting the growth and evolution of the site over time.
- 3.3 The office park is located in south Leeds, to the north east of Morley, north west of Middleton and south west of Beeston. The site is bordered to the east by the A6110 Ring Road Beeston, which runs north-south from Junction 1 of the M621 to Junction 28 of the M62, and to the west by the Leeds-Huddersfield-Manchester railway line. The surrounding area is mixed in character, with the Millshaw Park Trading Estate to the north, the White Rose Shopping Centre to the south, residential properties on the opposite side of the A6110 to the east, and open land to the west on the opposite side of the railway line.
- 3.4 Whilst the front part of the site is relatively level, the rear part of the site slopes gradually uphill towards the railway banking and open land beyond to the west. The office park is served by two vehicular access routes, one directly from the A6110 roundabout to the south east of the site, and one from the trading estate to the north. As the office park has grown, additional parking has been provided in various parts of the site, including above ground multi-storey decks in the north western

corner of the site, and decks below ground in the centre of the site, whose flat, grassed roofs provide part of the landscaped setting of surrounding buildings. The areas around the office buildings in the front of the site are more formally landscaped with lawns and paths, whilst denser tree planting exists around the site boundaries, particularly those between the site and the shopping centre to the south east, and on the railway banking to the south west.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 The site has an extensive planning history, the most recent of which relates to the recently constructed office building in the rear part of the site, which was approved in September 2013 (application 13/02207/FU). Permission for this development was granted subject to a legal undertaking from the developer rescinding two extant but unimplemented permissions for office buildings on the site in favour of the revised scheme which has subsequently been built (applications 23/461/02/FU and 06/01513/FU).
- 4.2 The application building was originally constructed as a light industrial unit, but was converted to offices (becoming the Arlington Business Centre) in the late 1980s, after permission was granted for the change of use in 1987 (application H23/106/87/).
- 4.3 As the office park has grown, additional parking has been provided in various parts of the site, including above ground multi-storey decks in the north western corner of the site, and decks below ground in the centre of the site.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 An initial meeting was held with the developer in April 2014 to discuss their aspirations for the site and the background to the current proposals, which have emerged as the preferred option following consideration of various alternatives including refurbishment of the existing building. There has also been initial discussion regarding the details which would need to be submitted as part of an application.

6.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

- 6.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 6.2 The Development Plan consists of the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP) and the adopted Natural Resources and Waste DPD. The Local Development Framework will eventually replace the UDP but at the moment this is still in production with the Core Strategy at an advanced stage.
- 6.3 The site is unallocated in the UDP. The following UDP policies are relevant to the proposals:

GP5 – General planning considerations
GP7 – Planning obligations
E5 – Employment uses
N12 – Urban design principles
N13 – Design of new buildings

T2 – New development and highway safety
T2C – Travel Plans
T2D – Public transport contributions
T5 – Access for pedestrians and cyclists
T6 – Provision for disabled people
T24 – Parking
BD5 – New buildings, design and amenity
LD1 – Landscaping

6.4 The following DPD policies are also relevant:

MINERALS3 – Surface Coal resources
AIR1 – Management of Air Quality and inclusion of low emission measures
WATER1 – Water efficiency, including incorporation of sustainable drainage
WATER6 – Flood Risk Assessments
WATER7 – Surface water run-off
LAND1 – Contaminated land

Draft Core Strategy

6.5 The Emerging Core Strategy was examined by an Inspector in October 2013. The Inspector has subsequently indicated that two issues must be addressed if it is to be found sound, these are Affordable Housing and Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Sites. The Inspector's main modifications were published on the 13th March 2014 for six weeks public consultation – significant weight can now be attached to the Draft Core Strategy as amended by the main modifications.

SP1 – Location of development in main urban areas on previously developed land.
P10 – High quality design.
P12 – Good landscaping.
T2 – Accessibility.
EN1 – Carbon dioxide reduction in developments of 10 houses or more, or 1000 m² of floorspace
EN2 – Achievement of Code Level 4, or BREEAM Excellent (in 2013) for developments of 10 houses or more or 1000 m² of floorspace.
EN5 – Managing flood risk.
ID2 – Planning obligations and developer contributions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents

6.6 The following SPDs are relevant to the proposals:

SPD – Travel Plans
SPD – Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions

National Planning Policy

6.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and replaces previous Planning Policy Guidance/Statements in setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. One of the key principles at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.

6.8 The introduction of the NPPF has not changed the legal requirement that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy guidance in Annex 1 to the NPPF is that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

The closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.

7.0 MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development
2. Design and visual amenity
3. Highways and transport
4. Planning obligations
5. Determination of the application

8.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of development

- 8.1 The White Rose Office Park is not within a designated town centre, nor does it form part of an employment land allocation. However, the current proposals relate to the demolition of an existing office building and the construction of two new office buildings, reconfiguring the office accommodation in this part of the site but with no net increase in office floorspace, as confirmed by the developer. On this basis, as the proposals relate to the redevelopment of existing floorspace, rather than to the provision of additional office accommodation at the site, the proposals are considered acceptable in principle, and no sequential test or impact assessment is required in this instance.

- 8.2 **Do Members have any comments regarding the principle of the proposed development, on the basis that there would be no net increase in the amount of office space?**

Design and visual amenity

- 8.3 The proposed development would replace a large projection to the rear of one of the original office buildings on the site with two smaller but higher buildings. The design of the two buildings would incorporate large amounts of glazing with elements of timber cladding. Whilst discussions with design officers regarding the specific detailing of the proposed buildings, the proposed scale and materials are considered to be reflective of other office buildings within the Office Park, and the general design approach is considered to be acceptable in principle.

- 8.4 The replacement of the existing extension with two smaller detached buildings would break up the massing of buildings in this part of the site, and create new areas of landscaping around the buildings which, it is considered, would take the opportunity to enhance the setting and appearance of this part of the site.

- 8.5 **Members thoughts are sought regarding the design, scale and materials of the proposed buildings, and the intention to provide additional landscaping in the surrounding areas?**

Highways and transport

- 8.6 Details submitted by the developer confirm that, as well as there being no additional office floorspace proposed as a result of the development, there would be no net loss of parking provision within the site, although some reconfiguration of existing parking areas around this part of the site may be necessary. On this basis, highways officers have confirmed that a full transport assessment would not be necessary as part of an application, but have requested a statement setting out the detail of the proposals and assessing any likely highway implications or demonstrating why there would be no implications if this is considered to be the case.

- 8.7 On the basis that the developer has confirmed that there would be no increase in office floorspace and no net reduction in car parking, do Members consider that any further information is required as part of an application?**

Planning obligations

- 8.8 As the proposals relate to the redevelopment of existing office accommodation, with no net increase in office floorspace, highways officers have confirmed that there would be no requirement for a public transport contribution as part of the scheme.
- 8.9 Travelwise have advised that the Office Park's Travel Plan should be updated to incorporate the new development proposed, and that there is likely to be a monitoring fee for the Travel Plan associated with this, which would be calculated based on the floorspace once finalised. The developer has been made aware of this requirement.
- 8.10 As a major development, the proposals are also likely to attract a requirement for a local employment and training scheme, including jobs in construction as well as in the new office development.
- 8.11 The most appropriate mechanism for securing the Travel Plan and local employment provisions is currently being considered. This may be by section 106 agreement or by a unilateral undertaking from the developer, as was the case with the recent application for a new office building, although if no financial contributions are required, it may be possible for such matters to be dealt with by planning condition in the event that permission is granted.

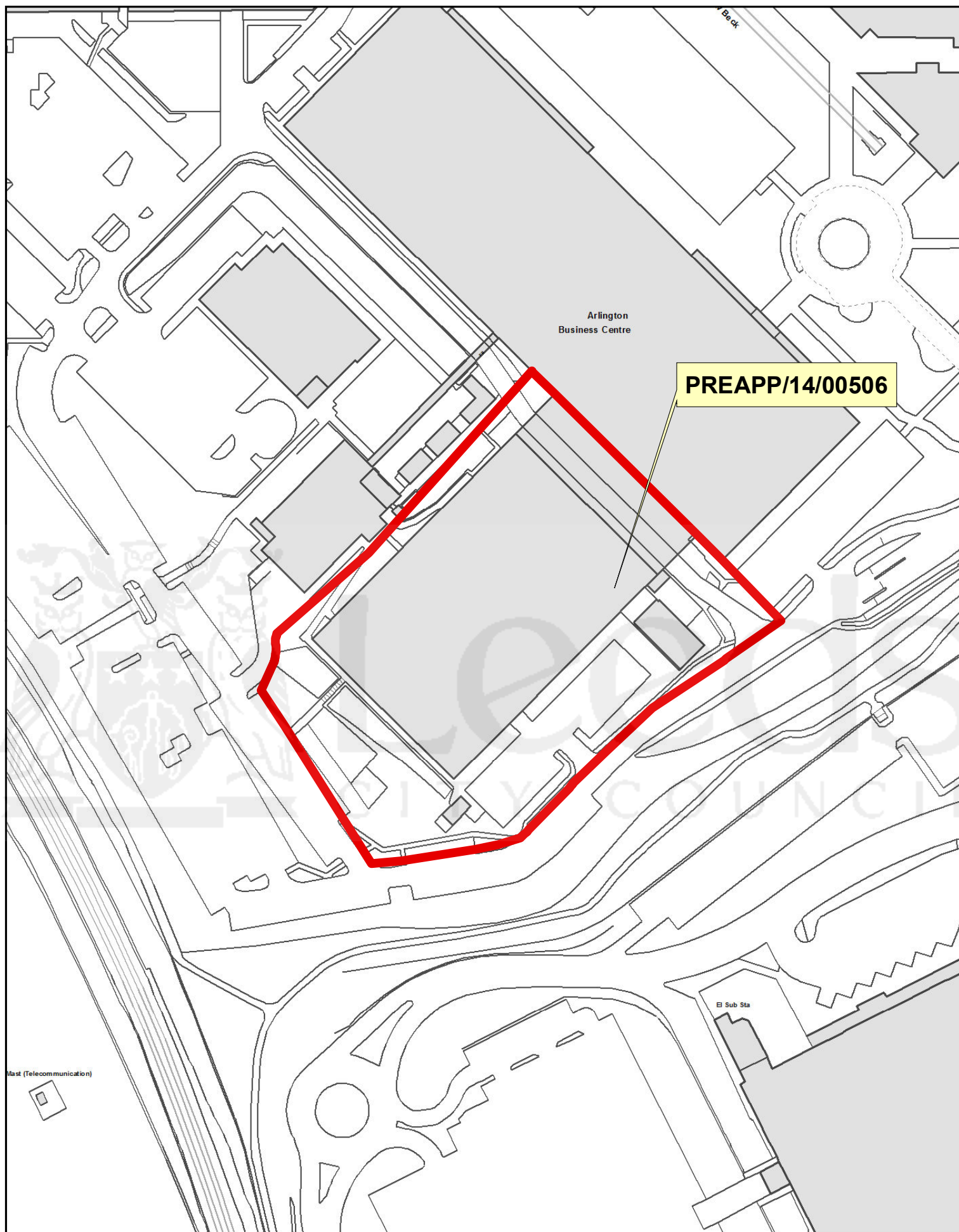
Determination of the application

- 8.12 The developer has confirmed that there would be no net increase in office floorspace as a result of the proposals. If in the light of this Members are satisfied that the principle of the development is acceptable, their views would be appreciated as to whether they feel that the forthcoming application could be determined under delegated powers rather than reported to Plans Panel, subject to the forthcoming application being submitted on this basis (i.e. no net increase in office floorspace and no net reduction in on-site parking), and no other objections to the principle of the development being received.
- 8.13 Do Members agree that the forthcoming application for the development could be determined under delegated powers, subject to no matters of principle being raised in objection to the proposals when formally submitted?**

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the presentation, and are invited to provide feedback on the issues outlined below:
- 1. Do Members have any comments regarding the principle of the proposed development, on the basis that there would be no net increase in the amount of office space?**
 - 2. What are Members' thoughts regarding the design, scale and materials of the proposed buildings, and the intention to provide additional landscaping in the surrounding areas?**

- 3. On the basis that the developer has confirmed that there would be no increase in office floorspace and no net reduction in car parking, do Members consider that any further information is required as part of an application?**
- 4. Do Members agree that the forthcoming application for the development could be determined under delegated powers, subject to no matters of principle being raised in objection to the proposals when formally submitted?**



SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL

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