

BRIEFING NOTE FOR SCRUTINY BOARD (CITY DEVELOPMENT)

TUESDAY 24 JULY 2007

STRATEGY AND POLICY SERVICE

Strategy and Policy embraces a wide range of functions that will influence how the city develops and prospers in the coming years. Central to our work is a co-ordinated and sustainable approach to longer term planning to ensure that we can deliver new jobs and services, homes and improved transportation facilities while continuing to protect and enhance the environment.

Our work recognises that if the city is to prosper it will need to complete internationally. Working with our European counterparts, in particular, we can raise the profile of the city as well as taking the opportunity to learn from best practice elsewhere. Similarly, there is a dialogue with colleagues in UK at a regional level, reflecting the city's role as regional capital. We must continue to ensure that the city's position and aspirations are properly reflected in the development of regional and sub-regional strategies, in particular the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.

Not all our work is about strategy. There is a wide range of practical work helping to deliver schemes on the ground; turning strategy into reality. This includes: major public transport initiatives; furthering proposals for regeneration areas and major projects; delivering greenspace and affordable housing, improving systems to keep traffic moving; and upgrading pedestrian crossings to meet the needs of the disabled. We also provide road safety training to schoolchildren throughout Leeds.

Another important strand of our work is in influencing and guiding development proposals to ensure consistency with policy. This includes: provision of design guidance (buildings and landscape); ensuring proposals are in line with the principles of sustainable development protecting our heritage; and managing traffic impacts to provide for the needs of non-car users in a safe environment.

Our work areas are:

- **Sustainable Development** – environmental management, policy and awareness, Design, Landscape and Conservation Area/Listed Building advice, Tree Protection, Nature Conservation, Minerals, Waste and Contaminated Land.
- **Transport Policy** – Transport Policies, Local Transport Plan; Programmes, Travel Awareness, Sustainable Transport, Environmental Studies and Assessment; Road Accident Analysis and Investigation; Road Safety; Education, Training and Promotion, and Transport Policy Monitoring.

- **Planning and Economic Policy** – Unitary Development Plan; Local Development Framework; Economic Strategy; Research and Data; Planning Frameworks/Briefs; and Project Implementation.
- **Urban Traffic Management Control** – managing the road network by signal control systems for the benefit of all road users. Keeping traffic moving by safe and efficient signal design, good control and high standard of maintenance.
- **Graphics and Communication** – providing Graphic Design and Mapping services in support of departmental and corporate activity and developing Internet/Intranet communications.

Service Priorities

At a general level the service's priorities reflect the direction set by the Vision and the Corporate Plan. The focus is therefore on:

- promotion of the role of Leeds as the regional capital including the importance of Leeds City Centre
- the development of plans and strategies that take forward the Vision 2 objectives and promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing
- the development of a transport system that supports more sustainable patterns of travel
- support for the major regeneration initiatives
- protection and enhancement of the environment, including support for waste and recycling initiatives, greenspace schemes and addressing issues of contamination
- encouraging high quality urban design in support of the Urban Renaissance Initiative and through all our development related activities
- promoting the principles of sustainable development and applying those principles in practice
- support for major City Council initiatives such as the various PFI programmes
- improving communications with all out stakeholders
- providing a monitoring and data analysis service to support these activities
- support a range of partnership working including various Leeds Initiative groups and area management

Recent Achievements

As previously indicated the work of the Service is wide ranging spanning strategy development and more direct action. The following gives a flavour of recent activity:

- Adoption of the Leeds UDP Review
- Transition to the new LDF development plan system including submission of an AMR and LDS, adaption of the Statement of Community Involvement and a submission to GOYH on 'saved policies'.
- Release of £356,000 for greenspace improvements covering 22 schemes.

- Delivery of road safety training to over 2,000 school children and review and approval of 44 school travel plans.
- Achieving 'Beacon' status for our work on financial inclusion.
- Successful testing of new software programmes for the provision of bus priority at signals in Leeds.
- Appointment to a new post of Climate Change Officer.
- Progress on major highways projects – Inner Ring Road Stage 7 and East Leeds Link Road – on target and budget.

Key Issues/Actions

1. Regional Policy

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) forms part of the development plan for Leeds. RSS has been through public examination and changes to the plan are to be published for comment in the autumn. LCC will need to respond and a key issue will be the likely scale of housing required for the district.

2. Climate Change

Following the appointment of the Climate Change Officer work is progressing on the Climate Change Strategy looking at the issues for Leeds in terms of adaptation and mitigation. A draft will be available for consultation in the autumn with the final version to be completed by the Council in summer 2008 consistent with the undertaking in the Nottingham Declaration.

3. Transportation

Dealing with movement and accessibility issues is a prerequisite for an attractive and economically successful city. This is a major area of activity at regional, district and local level, Initiatives include:

- Submission of outline business case for BRT to the DfT in autumn 2007.
- Review of City Centre Transport Strategy with particular focus south of the river linked to the City Centre AAP.
- Development of the Outer Ring Road Strategy indicating links to the Airport.
- Development of parking strategies for town and district centres – a report on priorities to go to Executive Board in autumn 2007.
- Post Supertram work including Park and Ride Options.

4. Local Development Framework

Moving to the new LDF system is a major task. Priority has been given to the development of a number of Area Action Plans (AAPs) to support the Council's regeneration priorities. Work is at various stages on the Core Strategy, City Centre APP, Aire Valley APP, Easel AAP, West Leeds APP and has recently commenced on a Waste DPD. Supporting the main strategy work a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are under production.

In addition to these broad strategic themes the range of activity and the level of development interest create pressures and a wide variety of other tasks are in hand that are significant in themselves. Examples include:

- Progress on the Contaminated Land Strategy.
- Responding to the need for Conservation Area Appraisals and Neighbourhood/Village Design Statements.
- Progress on 20 mph zones.
- Dealing with issues of flood risk.
- Responding to recent government White Papers.