

## Report of Director City Development

### Report to Executive Board

**Date: 19 November 2014**

**Subject: Connectivity Improvements to South Bank**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): City and Hunslet		
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: 10.4(3) Appendix number: II		

### Summary of main issues

1. The revitalisation of Leeds Dock (formerly Clarence Dock), is a key component of the regeneration of the South Bank and the continued growth of the city centre to help achieve the city's vision to be Best City. The proposals set out in this report are in line with the objective of the Leeds City Council Best Council Plan to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
2. The issues surrounding the lack of success of the area are well documented: the former proposition failed, partly due to connectivity issues from the city centre. The new owner, Allied London, has a renewed vision and development proposition to attract new creative and digital businesses, enhance the facilities for local residents and workers, and animate the public realm to attract visitors of all ages to the waterfront, thereby helping to help drive footfall and exposure to the nearby Royal Armouries.
3. If successful, this will significantly help to realise the city's vision for South Bank and have a significant and positive impact on the local economy. Allied London has a strong track record in delivering successful regeneration, as exemplified by the successful Spinningfields scheme in Manchester which faced similar issues to those facing Leeds Dock. Key to this was close partnership working, and support from, the Local Authority.
4. Measures to address the connectivity issues outlined above have been identified: public realm improvements at a cost of £144,000 and four transport proposals: a low fare shuttle bus from the rail station to the South Bank including Leeds Dock, a free or

low fare water taxi service, improved cycle routes and storage and car sharing initiatives at a total cost of £1,547,500 over five years. Officers believe that significant investment is required to support the viability of Leeds Dock.

5. Leeds City Council has been unable to fund these measures on its own. However Allied London has offered, as a major landowner, to contribute £94,000 towards the costs of public realm improvements from the rail station to Leeds Dock and to meet the majority of the costs of the transport proposals.
6. Both officers and Allied London believe that the revitalisation of Leeds Dock is unlikely to succeed without close partnership working of all stakeholders and an enhance infrastructure within the South Bank.

## **Recommendations**

7. Executive Board is recommended to note that:
  - i) a contribution of £50k LCC funding will be sought from the capital programme and alongside private sector contributions of £94k will help fund public realm improvements from Leeds Rail Station through South Bank. Once the details have been finalised a report will be taken to Director of City Development for approval;
  - ii) a contribution of £25k is made from the Leeds Transport Plan towards the cycling and bus stop provision to complement the £150k City Connect scheme which will provide cycling infrastructure from the Leeds Railway Station to Leeds Bridge by extending facilities into the South Bank;
  - iii) funding will be allocated from the S106 Public Transport contributions to support public transport provision from the railway station to Leeds Dock. It is recommended that the bus is branded as 'City Bus (South Bank)', with fares kept in line with the existing City Bus (currently 50p).

## **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report outlines issues impacting on the potential success of Leeds Dock and the rest of South Bank and proposes contributing funding and in-kind support to a number of public realm, cycling and public transport improvements to improve connectivity to South Bank. The proposals set out in this report are in line with the objective of the Leeds City Council Best Council Plan to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds Dock (formerly Clarence Dock), is a key component of the city's vision for the regeneration of the South Bank and the continued growth of the city centre.

The issues surrounding the lack of success of the area are well documented: the former proposition failed to be sustainable, in particular with the commercial and leisure usages of the area. The new owner, Allied London has been progressing a renewed vision and development proposition for the area. This comprises of 133,700 sq. ft. of office workspace designed for technology, media and telecommunications users, 8,000 sq. ft. of convenience shopping, 10,000 sq. ft. of mezzanine gym space; 26,500 sq. ft. restaurants and bars and a new themed leisure attraction combining bar/restaurant, event space, heritage/ exhibition space, totalling 4-5,000 sq.ft. on Dam Island. (see Appendix I)

- 2.2 Allied London's strategy focusses on bringing fresh vitality to the area, attracting creative and digital industries and making it more of a destination for leisure whilst better meeting the day to day retail requirements of residents and workers. If successfully delivered, this will represent a major achievement for the city's vision for South Bank and it has the potential to have a significant and positive impact on the local economy. In particular, the focus on technology, media and telecommunications end users can support the digital economy of the area and broader city region, whilst the footfall generated by the leisure operators can help drive footfall and exposure to the nearby Royal Armouries The museum has seen its visitor figures as much as triple on weekends where Allied London have held events.
- 2.3 Allied London is developing a varied events programme for people of all ages; for example it held a Dragon Boat race as part of the Waterfront Festival and recently staged 'The White Whale' - a modern retelling the nautical classic Moby Dick - on the Leeds Liverpool Canal at the Dock. There have been outdoor cinema screenings throughout August and September.
- 2.4 November will see the arrival of the Leeds Dock weekend markets with a range of stalls, award winning street food, live music and a pop up bar. Leeds Dock is also hosting The Thought Bubble Festival from 9th – 16th November; this is the UK's largest event of its kind: an annual celebration of sequential art in all its forms, including everything from superhero comics to independent and small-press artists and writers. It will include free art and writing based workshops for young people and adults, a two day academic conference, talks and master classes led by industry professionals and a programme of art related film screenings. The events programme, changes towards everyday retail, better leisure provision and

increased office space are all helping to create a critical mass at Leeds Dock. Improvements to connectivity are now needed to support these changes.

- 2.5 Allied London has a strong track record in delivering successful regeneration, as exemplified by the successful Spinningfields scheme in Manchester – an area that faced similar issues to those that have faced New Dock. Key to this was close partnership working, and support from, the Local Authority.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 **Connectivity** is one of the most significant issues facing Leeds Dock. The area suffers from severance on a number of different levels:

- i. there is a limited cycle route through to the area;
- ii. the dominance of the highways provides a major physical and psychological barrier for pedestrians;
- iii. although public transport serves the area, there is only one bus service that serves Leeds Dock specifically – twice an hour, although this does not serve the rail station. Other routes serve bus-stops that are a 5 minute walk from Leeds Dock, but only one serves bus stops near to the rail station.
- iv. it is estimated that the journey time to Leeds Dock from the station, using public transport and additional walking time, is approximately 20 minutes plus, whilst it can be walked in less.

- 3.2 These issues are not just limited to Leeds Dock: the South Bank area in general suffers from these issues, and the colleges and pending free school development in particular share these issues. Thus, any efforts to address issues would have benefit for a number of different regeneration initiatives.

- 3.3 Allied London is proactively making investments to help tackle these problems and has funded the provision of two water taxi services Friday to Sunday which are free of charge. These provide access from Granary Wharf in Holbeck Urban Village to Leeds Dock. The taxis carried 4,534 adults and 1,692 children during the weekends in July, August & September; their value at present is primarily for supporting events at Leeds Dock including those at the Royal Armouries, enhancing the visitor experience and helping to market Leeds Dock, however, a more frequent service in future could provide a quick and pleasant means of transport to both Brewery Wharf (where it does not currently stop) and Leeds Dock. Allied London intend to continue to provide this service throughout the year, weather permitting, to support events at Leeds Dock; although they may make a small charge next year as users are surprised it is free and have indicated they would be happy to pay £1-£1.50.

### **3.4 Public Realm and Transport Provision**

- 3.5 Leeds City Council and Allied London have developed proposals to address the connectivity issues outlined above: public realm improvements at a cost of £144,000 and four transport proposals: a free shuttle bus from the rail station to

Leeds Dock, a free water taxi service, improved cycle routes and storage and car sharing initiatives at a total cost of £1,547,500 over five years.

- 3.6 **Public Realm Enhancements** Officers propose that the Council contributes £50,000 towards public realm improvements from the train station to Leeds Dock on a mix of way-finding and simple enhancements including tidying landscaping etc if Allied London commits £94,000 to undertake complementary proposals.
- 3.7 Officers propose a contribution of £25,000 is made from the LTP towards cycling and bus stop provision to complement the forthcoming £150,000 CityConnect scheme which will provide cycling infrastructure from the rail station to Leeds Bridge. The cycling provision will comprise signage and minor works on highways between Leeds Bridge and Leeds Dock via Bowman Lane, Armouries Way and Black Bull Street and take advantage of cycling facilities already installed. In the medium term there will be investigation of further improvements, and the NGT scheme will ultimately change the road layout in a way that has considered cyclists requirements.
- 3.8 Allied London has offered to make a substantial contribution to help fund a City Bus service for the South Bank from the train station area to Leeds Dock via Hunslet Road. Officers propose that the Council also makes a phased contribution towards this service, tendered through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. If the Council's support on public transport was initially phased over three years, we could then review the situation and, subject to funding availability and the success of the scheme, consider additional funding for the following two years. This would enable us to obtain best value for money by tendering the service for five years with a break clause at three years. The estimated cost of running a service and proposed contributions from the Council and Allied London are commercially sensitive and are therefore included in the confidential Exempt Appendix II. However Allied London's contribution to all four transport proposals outlined in paragraph 3.5 would be in excess of £1.2m over five years.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 There has been on-going consultation and engagement with key stakeholders in South Bank including landowners, businesses, residents and other interest groups. The lack of connectivity, the desire for a City Bus South, the need for better wayfinding and pedestrian and cycle routes is frequently cited as impacting on South Bank reaching its potential to help drive the regeneration of this area.

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

- 4.2.1 An EIA has been completed and the monitoring form is attached as Appendix III. Implementing the public realm and public transport proposals will make it easier and potentially safer for families and those with disabilities to access leisure opportunities in South Bank particularly at Leeds Dock and the Royal Armouries, thereby helping us to have a more child and age friendly city centre. They will make also it easier for those with disabilities arriving at or near the train station to access employment opportunities in South Bank.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The success of the South Bank is crucial in helping to deliver our objective to be the Best City. The proposals set out in this report are in line with the objective of the Leeds City Council Best Council Plan to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The main themes of “Good Growth” and “21st Century Infrastructure” from the report of the Commission for the Future of Local Government are also relevant. By making it easier for families to access events at Leeds Dock and the Royal Armouries, it will also help us to have a more child and age friendly city centre.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 **Public Realm Enhancements.** The Council and Allied London have estimated the cost of public realm improvements including minimal way-finding at £144,000. Economic Development has indicated that it will be able to contribute up to £50k this financial year to help meet some of the public realm/wayfinding costs. In addition there is a potential of up to £25k from the Leeds Transport Plan (a highways pot) for capital works re cycling, bus stop provision.
- 4.4.2 **City Bus to Leeds Dock.** The Combined Authority has given an initial estimate, subject to tendering, of the cost of a bus service with two vehicles operating broadly a 10 minute service between 07:00 – 19:00 Monday – Saturday for five years. The estimate and any proposed contributions from the Council and Allied London are commercially sensitive and are therefore included in the confidential Exempt Appendix II. It is not anticipated that there would be sufficient demand to run buses outside the proposed hours, partly because of the greatly reduced rail services at these times, however this will be reviewed if demand grows and if funding became available. The water taxis will continue to run on Sundays, canal conditions permitting.
- 4.4.3 The Combined Authority would prefer to operate the new service from 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 in line with their annual review of services. The provision of an additional bus service from the station requires permission from Network Rail, which has been granted.
- 4.4.4 **S106 Public Transport Contributions.** The Council has received £3.5m of monies which have been set aside for NGT. We want to be confident that, if some monies are used to support public transport provision to South Bank, it is more than likely that the funds will be replenished to ensure the £3.5m required by NGT is available.
- 4.4.5 There are a number of schemes under construction in the City Centre with S106 Agreements containing clauses for Public Transport contributions. The Council should, within the next year or two, receive a total of £492,276 from Central Square & Phase 1 Eastgate alone (respectively £229,804 & £262,472), which could replenish the pot to bring it back to the £3.5m minimum required by NGT. Clearly, these have not been received yet but with work underway, there is only a very low risk of these monies not being paid.

**4.4.6 Business Rate Retention.** If Leeds Dock is full after year 1, it will generate additional rates revenue of just over £1m over 5 years.

**4.4.7 Business Improvement District** There is a report elsewhere on this agenda on a potential City Centre Business Improvement District. The waterfront and South Bank is outside the proposed BID area. Investing in South Bank now will improve the viability of businesses in this area and increase the potential for a Waterfront & South Bank BID; which would generate even more investment in this area.

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

4.5.1 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report; procurement will be undertaken in accordance and Combined Authority procedures.

**4.6** The information contained in Appendix II is exempt under Access to Information Rule 10.4 (3) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of Appendix II as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### **4.7 Risk Management**

4.7.1 Committing to funding from the NGT pot in the expectation of public transport contributions from developments that are already on site replenishing the pot presents a low risk. In addition, improved transport provision will make it easier for new developments and new lettings in the South Bank, leading to greater Business Rate income to the Council.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The revitalisation of Leeds Dock is a key component of the regeneration of the South Bank and the continued growth of the city centre to help achieve the city's vision to be Best City. The issues surrounding the lack of success of the area are related to connectivity issues from the city centre. By making the proposed investments in public realm and public transport improvements the city council will be able to lever in substantial contributions in excess of our own investment from Allied London and resolve the connectivity issues. This will help to ensure the success of Leeds Dock in providing both employment and leisure opportunities, contribute to the success of the Royal Armouries and help to stimulate and consolidate other developments in the rest of the South Bank.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to note that:

- i) a contribution of £50k LCC funding will be sought from the capital programme and alongside private sector contributions of £94k will help fund public realm improvements from Leeds Rail Station through South Bank. Once the details have been finalised a report will be taken to Director of City Development for approval;

- ii) a contribution of £25k is made from the LTP towards the Cycling and bus stop provision to complement the £150k City Connect scheme which will provide cycling infrastructure from the Leeds Railway Station to Leeds Bridge by extending facilities into the South Bank;
- iii) funding will be allocated from the S106 Public Transport contributions to support public transport provision from the railway station to Leeds Dock. It is recommended that the bus is branded as 'City Bus (South Bank)', with fares kept in line with the existing City Bus (currently 50p).

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

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.