

**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**Report to Development Plan Panel**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

**Subject: Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan – Site Proposals**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, City & Hunslet, Garforth & Swillington, Middleton Park, Temple Newsam.		
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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

**Summary of main issues**

1. The Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVL AAP) will form part of the development plan for Leeds: the Local Development Framework (LDF) or Local Plan. The scope of the AVL AAP was established by the Executive Board in May 2005 to provide the future planning framework to guide the regeneration of an area of the Lower Aire Valley. The Aire Valley Leeds area extends from Leeds City Centre south east to the M1 and beyond. This is a key strategic location for Leeds and the City Region as the location of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone and includes a range of major development opportunities including the South Bank of the City Centre. The area contains over 400 hectares of development land which can help meet Leeds' need for housing and provide new jobs.
2. National planning guidance (the NPPF) requires the Council to determine the scale of housing needed over the plan period. This is set out in the adopted Core Strategy which, amongst other things, indicates that we need to allocate land for 66,000 new dwellings together with safeguarded land that provides further scope beyond the plan period, should this be necessary. Spatial Policy 5 of the Core Strategy sets a target to identify land for 6,500 new homes and 250 hectares of employment land within a distinctive green environment, enabling an innovative new living and working community,

supported by the necessary community facilities and infrastructure, which will become a national model for sustainable development.

3. The first stage of plan preparation started back in 2005 and the plan has subsequently evolved through three stages of public consultation: Early Issues and Options in 2005; Alternative Options in 2006 and Preferred Options in 2007.
4. Since 2007 there has been a review of the proposals to take account of:
  - the downturn in the economy post 2008, which has impacted on the viability of development;
  - potential new ways of funding infrastructure;
  - the need to make development sustainable e.g. promoting energy efficiency and green energy and industry;
  - The preparation and adoption of the Leeds Core Strategy and changes to national planning policy;
  - The Enterprise Zone which was designated in April 2012.
4. In addition, an informal consultation took place in 2011 to ask views on two key changes. These were:
  - The promotion of the area as an Urban Eco Settlement (UES); and
  - Proposed boundary changes to include parts of the City Centre, Hunslet and Richmond Hill.
5. The informal consultation was accompanied by a plan showing proposed allocations and other proposals in the area within the extended plan area.
6. This report provides an update and proposed timetable to progress the AVL AAP to Publication Draft consultation to complement work on the Site Allocations Plan, which is being presented to the Development Plan Panel in January 2015.
7. This report presents the selection of sites proposed for allocation in the Aire Valley Area Action Plan, which represents a refinement of the sites which were consulted on in 2011. The Development Plan Panel on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 will consider allocations for green space; retail, employment and housing and safeguarded land for the rest of the District, as proposed through the Site Allocations Plan. This report does not present the final draft AVL Area Action Plan, this will need further consideration through Development Plan Panel and Executive Board.

## **Recommendation**

8. Development Plan Panel is invited to recommend the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan proposed allocations to Executive Board. Once agreed by Executive Board, the Publication Draft Plan will be prepared and, subject to further approval, will be placed on deposit for a period of formal consultation anticipated Summer/Autumn 2015.



## **1.0 Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks endorsement to the site allocations proposed for the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (the AAP). Members are requested to agree that the allocations be recommended to the Executive Board to complement the allocations proposed in the Site Allocations Plan covering the rest of Leeds District. Once agreed by Executive Board, the Publication Draft Plan will be prepared, and subject to approval, will be placed on deposit for a period of formal consultation in Summer/Autumn 2015.
- 1.2 In aspiring to be the 'best city in the UK', the adopted Core Strategy takes forward the spatial and land use elements of this vision. Central to this approach is the desire to plan for anticipated population changes and the homes, jobs, education and investment needed across the District in a sustainable manner. Within this strategic context, the AVL AAP supports these ambitions and sets out the opportunities to assist in delivering a major economic development and regeneration opportunity of national, regional and local importance. The Aire Valley area covers an area of 1,300 hectares stretching between Leeds City Centre and the M1 motorway at Skelton (J45). Whilst securing the existing employment base the primary opportunity is the delivery of a new sustainable district (Urban Eco Settlement) facilitating a range of new jobs and homes. The area has already designated 142 hectares of land alongside the East Leeds Link Road as the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone. The AVL AAP will provide the framework through plan-wide and site specific allocations to deliver the strategic ambitions and principles for this area as set out in the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 Further reports will request Development Plan Panel to agree in principle the sites to be allocated in the Site Allocations Plan (housing; employment; retail and green space) in January 2015. This report seeks similar agreement in principle of the sites proposed to be allocated in the Aire Valley Leeds AAP. This is a separate planning policy framework for this geographical area. Like the Site Allocations Plan, detailed policies for the area will need further consideration through Development Plan Panel and agreement at Executive Board. It is proposed that this will take the form of specific Aire Action Plan area policies based around five smaller local areas: East Bank, Richmond Hill and Cross Green; Central Aire Valley (Enterprise Zone, Cross Green Industrial Estate & Stourton); Skelton Gate (east of the M1); Hunslet and South Bank (City Centre).

## **2.0 Background Information**

### Context

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the Council to have an up to date development plan, or Local Plan. This needs to include both strategic policies and the site specific allocations that put the policies into effect. The Council has recently adopted its Core Strategy (12<sup>th</sup> November 2014) which amongst other things sets a housing target for a minimum of

6,500 new homes and 250 hectares of land for employment uses within the Aire Valley as part of a low carbon community.

- 2.2 Site allocation is part of a process that must ultimately lead to the delivery of new development of an appropriate form and quality, alongside the necessary infrastructure. It is not simply a matter of allocating land but about place making, creating “liveable” communities which are healthy, child friendly and fully consider the needs of older people. In reflecting these principles, the focus for the Aire Valley is to consolidate and establish an ‘Urban Eco Settlement’ which uniquely combines opportunities for economic and housing development. The preparation of the AAP is a continuation of the work undertaken on the Core Strategy and has a focus upon detailed delivery. This has involved dialogue with other Council services, infrastructure providers, communities and other stakeholders. It will be important to recognise the changing demographic picture to ensure that the schools, elderly care facilities, recreation facilities and provision for other community needs are met over the plan period and beyond.
- 2.3 Much time has passed since the close of the last formal public consultation stage on Preferred Options in 2007 and the amended AAP boundary and designation of the Urban Eco Settlement in 2011. However, preferred allocations were included in the 2011 consultation, which was undertaken following Executive Board approval for the boundary extension granted in July 2010. These are therefore not new proposals but a refinement of the details and delivery alongside continuing to work up the detailed evidence base supporting the plan. Whilst the preparation of the AVL AAP has been a key corporate priority, emphasis has been placed on the submission and adoption of the Core Strategy. With that in place it is now necessary and timely to progress the AAP concurrent with the Site Allocations Plan. The preparation of these documents and their adoption will enable the District to have in place a comprehensive set of allocations for development.
- 2.4 The material before the Panel today presents the sites recommended to be allocated for various uses within the Aire Valley Leeds AAP area. The reason for showing these sites now, without the detailed Plan is to enable members to consider the provision of housing, employment, green space, retail and proposals for centres in this specific geographical area prior to considering the list of sites to be allocated across the rest of the District (in the Site Allocations Plan). Both the AVL AAP and the Site Allocations Plan set out how the adopted Core Strategy targets will be met over the plan period from 2012-2028. The Aire Valley AAP will significantly assist in meeting the housing targets for the Housing Market Characteristic Areas of the City Centre; Inner and East and in a small part Outer South. The aim of this Panel and the Panel meeting in January 2015 is for members to recommend to Executive Board the proposed allocations.
- 2.5 The scope of the AAP will differ from that of the Site Allocations Plan, reflecting the specific role of area action plans in providing a framework for delivery of major development and supporting infrastructure and the particular focus of the Aire Valley AAP in promoting major regeneration, housing and

economic development opportunities within the context of an Urban Eco Settlement.

2.6 Additional proposals in the AAP will include, but not be limited to the following issues:

- Proposals to improve access to job opportunities in the Aire Valley from communities in east and south Leeds;
- Proposals for improving public health including reference to wider public health initiative in the area (including retrofitting and energy efficiency initiatives related to existing homes and initiatives to encourage people to grow more of their own food);
- A transport strategy with detailed transport infrastructure proposals including improvements to the public transport, cycle and pedestrian network and new bridge crossings;
- Identification of locally significant undesignated heritage assets;
- Identification of a local green infrastructure network and habitat network and proposals to enhance the network;
- Proposals relating to the creation of district heating network in the Aire Valley based on the Energy Recovery Facility under construction at Newmarket Lane

2.9 This further material will be presented with the draft Plan at a future Development Plan Panel.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

#### Overview

3.1 The material presented today reflects work on the AAP since the 2011 Consultation refining the detail of the land use proposals taking into consideration the suitability (including the sustainability), availability and deliverability of the sites and identifying the capacity of sites for the proposed uses. Schedules of sites are set out in Appendices 1-4 and Plans in Appendix 5.

3.2 All the sites proposed within the AAP lie within the City Centre or Main Urban Area (as defined on Core Strategy Map 3) and most are on previously developed land. This is consistent with the Core Strategy's Spatial Development Strategy and Spatial Policy 1 which prioritises identifying land for development on previously developed land in the Main Urban Area. The scale of development opportunities in the area are reflected in the designation of Aire Valley Leeds as a Priority Programme Area within the Core Strategy. Specific requirements for housing and employment development and other uses are set out in Core Strategy Spatial Policy 5. For the avoidance of doubt, allocations made in the Aire Valley AAP will contribute towards meeting District wide requirements (for housing and employment), alongside those proposed in the Site Allocations Plan.

## Housing

- 3.3 The Core Strategy establishes a need to find land for 66,000 dwellings. Policies SP6 and 7 provide some guiding principles to aid site identification and set a target for the 11 Housing Market Characteristic Areas (HMCAs). The Aire Valley has a target to deliver a minimum of 6,500 new homes over the plan period in accordance with Spatial Policy 5. This will contribute to the overall District wide housing target and to the targets in a number of HMCAs (City Centre, Inner Area and East – Plan 5 -see Appendix 5, shows the HMCA boundaries in Aire Valley Leeds). The source of sites for consideration has been the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) together with any new sites put forward for consideration in earlier public consultations.
- 3.4 Appendix 1 sets out details of the proposed housing sites to be identified and allocated in the AAP to meet the area's housing target. This is set out for each HMCA separately with the total for Aire Valley AAP area set out in the table at the end of the Appendix.

### *Identified housing sites*

- 3.5 Between April 2012 and September 2014 housing development has taken place which contributes towards the Core Strategy targets. In addition, further sites were under construction or had a planning permission which had not yet started as of 30 September 2014. These existing permission/completions are shown as 'identified' housing sites on Plan 1 (see Appendix 5). The schedule in Part A of Appendix 1 shows the number of dwellings remaining on identified sites within each HMCA. The 'identified sites' provide a total capacity of **1,646 dwellings** in the Aire Valley AAP area during the plan period (see Part C of Appendix 1), just over 25% of the overall minimum target. Further updates will be made, as required, to ensure that the Publication Draft Plan presents the most up to date data possible, so the totals categorised as 'identified' housing sites may be subject to change.

### *Housing and Mixed Use Allocations*

- 3.6 Part B of Appendix 1 sets out details of proposed allocations for housing and mixed use development, which is expected to include a proportion of housing, for each HMCA. These sites are derived from the SHLAA which includes sites put forward by respondents to earlier consultations. The schedule sets out the proposed allocation at the previous stage of public consultation in 2011. The sites are shown on Plan 1 (see Appendix 5) as housing or mixed use allocations.
- 3.7 Site capacities are an estimate of the number of housing units that a site would be expected to deliver. They are generally based on the standard densities approach used in the SHLAA which assumes different densities for City Centre, edge of City Centre and other urban sites. This makes allowance for green space and ancillary uses on site to support the development.
- 3.8 Mixed use allocations are generally proposed within and on the edge of the City Centre. These are sites which are suitable for housing and for Town Centre uses such as offices, commercial leisure, hotels and food and drink

uses in accordance with Core Strategy and national planning policy. Where mixed use allocations are proposed, capacity estimates assume that half of the site is developed for housing. Within major regeneration areas, such as the South Bank of the City Centre, it is proposed that there will be some element of flexibility over potential uses particularly in response to major opportunities associated with the location and delivery of the proposed HS2 station in Leeds, which is subject to some uncertainty. At the same time it is important for a significant element of housing to be delivered in these areas to meet the targets set out in the Core Strategy.

- 3.9 The South Bank Planning Statement area is identified separately on Plan 1 (See Appendix 5). A Planning Statement was adopted in 2011 for the area, which includes the former Tetley's Brewery and New Lane sites and the Asda House (HQ) building. The statement allows a mix of uses across the area, including housing, based around a proposal for a 3.5 hectare City Park (see green space section below). This part of the South Bank, whilst promoting a considerable opportunity, faces a level of uncertainty associated with the HS2 proposals. Consequently, it is important that the AAP takes adopts a flexible approach which reflects this. The housing capacity for the area has been calculated on the basis of half the land being developed for housing, allowing for a mix of uses and creation of the City Park. This calculation excludes the Asda House and land within the operational boundary of the Leeds New Lane Station as shown in the Government's HS2 Phase 2 consultation document from 2013.
- 3.10 There are three major housing allocations proposed in the East HMCA at the former Copperfields College site, the Bridgewater Road North site (opposite the vacant Hunslet Mill complex) and the Skelton Gate site, east of the M1. Skelton Gate is one of the largest housing proposals in the District which can make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of the area. The site includes the existing Skelton Business Park employment allocation which has not been implemented and Green Belt land to the south of the existing business parks which has been proposed as a potential housing site in the Site Allocations document (Site Ref 1295B) as part of the Green Belt review being undertaken for that document. The AAP will specify site-specific requirements in a detailed policy in order to secure a sustainable development on a phased basis at Skelton Gate supported by schools, highway and public transport infrastructure, local shopping and services and green space.
- 3.11 As the summary table in Part C of Appendix 1 shows the proposed allocations for housing and mixed use in the Aire Valley Leeds AAP area provide a total capacity of **5,032 dwellings** from allocations (1,987 in the City Centre HMCA, 2,318 in the East HMCA and 727 in the Inner Area HMCA). Adding this capacity to the identified sites, brings the total capacity of housing proposals in the AAP up to **6,678 dwellings**. This exceeds the minimum targets of 6,500 set out in the Core Strategy. In addition, if the capacity of the proposed housing site on current Green Belt land south of Skelton Gate is added to the AAP total, the total capacity of identified and proposed housing sites in the Aire Valley Urban Eco Settlement area is approximately **7,300 dwellings**.



### *Alternative Housing Options*

- 3.12 Part D of Appendix 1 sets out the 'alternative housing options' – those sites put forward for consideration during the preparation of the plan which it is not proposed to allocate the site for housing on grounds of suitability, availability and/or deliverability or because an alternative use is considered to be more appropriate taking into account Core Strategy policies and targets. The reason it is proposed to reject the site as a housing allocation is set out in the schedule. The alternative options are shown on Plan 2 (see Appendix 5).

### *Employment*

- 3.13 The Aire Valley AAP area includes some of the largest existing and potential employment and business locations in Leeds City Region, including the City Region's only Enterprise Zone and the major regeneration opportunity within the South Bank area, in addition to existing well-established industrial areas including the Cross Green Industrial Estate, Stourton and parts of Hunslet.
- 3.14 District wide, the requirements set out in the Core Strategy for general employment land (mainly research and development, industrial and distribution uses) is 493 hectares and the figure for office floorspace is 1 million sqm. Spatial Policy 5 requires the Aire Valley area to provide a minimum 250 hectares of land for a range of employment uses. As well as considering quantitative requirements, it is important that the quality of employment sites is considered to ensure that a range of sites is provided to meet the specific needs of growth sectors in line with the wider aspirations set out in the Core Strategy (which reflects the priority growth sectors set out as part of the Leeds Growth Strategy).
- 3.15 The source of sites for assessment comes from the Employment Land Review as well as a call for sites and previous consultation responses to the draft AVL AAP. Appendices 2 and 3 set out details of the proposed employment sites to be identified and allocated in the AAP to meet the area's target and to provide a range of quality sites which can attract growth sectors. This is separated into office (Appendix 2) and general employment sites (Appendix 3) reflecting the separate district wide target for each. As with housing sites, this includes identified sites (completed, under constructed or with a planning permission which has yet to start) and proposed allocations. The location of identified and proposed employment sites is shown on Plan 1 (see Appendix 5).

### *Office sites*

- 3.16 A number of office sites in the AAP area have been constructed since 2012 or have an existing planning permission which has not yet started (see Parts A and B of Appendix 2). These identified sites provide a total office floorspace capacity of approximately **65,000 sqm**. This includes the remaining phases of the Leeds Valley Park office development in Stourton off the M621 J7 and M1 J44 which has a potential remaining capacity of 46,000 sq m.
- 3.17 Further sites have potential for office development within and on the edge of the city centre. In line with the approach set out in the Core Strategy, it is proposed sites in this location are allocated for mixed use allowing for a

proportion of housing at the site in line with the proposals set out in the housing section above. The potential capacity for each site in terms of office floorspace is based on the assumption that half the site is developed for offices. This uses a standard plot ratio (office floorspace to site area) of 150%. This allows for multi-storey office development with some car parking, public space and landscaping. A further allowance has been made for small-scale office development at the proposed Skelton Gate housing allocation amounting to a total of 10,000 sqm. This would be restricted to areas of the site which are unsuitable for housing development and to provide a buffer between the motorway and proposed housing.

- 3.18 In total the proposed mixed use allocations and the Skelton Gate site have potential to provide up to **144,000 sqm** of additional office floorspace (as shown in Part C of Appendix 2). Added to the capacity in identified sites this brings the total potential office floorspace identified in the AAP to approximately **208,000 sqm**. The land area within the identified and proposed office sites equates to approximately **22 hectares**, allowing for housing within mixed use sites.
- 3.19 Part D of Appendix 2 sets out the alternative office sites that have been put forward for consideration during the preparation of the plan and the reasons for rejecting the site (shown on Plan 2, Appendix 5). In all cases this relates to preference for either housing or general employment uses which are required to meet the targets set out in the Core Strategy.

#### *General employment*

- 3.20 A significant number of sites have an existing planning permission for general employment development (mainly industrial and storage and distribution uses). These sites are concentrated in the industrial part of the Aire Valley area and include the vast majority of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone sites where construction has started on a number of plots. Parts A and B of Appendix 3 show sites completed, under construction and with a planning permission that has not yet started. In total these sites provide a total of **152.2 hectares** of general employment land. The largest of these sites are located in the Enterprise Zone including Temple Green (70 hectares), Logic Leeds (49 hectares) and the remaining development plots at Thornes Farm Business Park (9 hectares).
- 3.21 Part C of Appendix 3 sets out a schedule of proposed allocations for general employment. These mainly consist of smaller infill sites within the existing industrial areas; Cross Green, Stourton and Hunslet, which are suitable and available for general employment use, providing a further **34.3 hectares**.
- 3.22 In addition to general employment land identified and allocation through the AAP a number of allocations have been made and are proposed through the adopted Natural Resources & Waste Plan, which will count towards meeting employment land requirements. This includes Strategic Waste Allocations and proposed allocations for rail and canal freight uses. Although not proposals of the AAP these specialist employment uses will count towards the employment land requirements and are shown on Plan 1 and set out in the schedule in

Part D of Appendix 3 for information. In total these sites provide a further **41.3 hectares** of employment land.

- 3.23 A further **4.3 hectares** of land has been identified as part of the NGT trolleybus Park and Ride proposal at Stourton (see Part E of Appendix 3). The scheme incorporates a vehicle and staff depot on land next to the park and ride facility which is considered to be an employment use. The calculation of the land area excludes the park and ride facility itself. This proposal will require approval under the Transport and Works Act outside the AAP process.
- 3.24 Part F of Appendix 3 sets out the alternative general employment sites that have been put forward for consideration during the preparation of the plan and the reasons for rejecting the site (shown on Plan 2, Appendix 5).
- 3.25 In total the identified and proposed allocations for general employment use, together with the Natural Resources and Waste allocations and proposed NGT trolleybus depot at Stourton provide over **232 hectares** of employment land within the boundary of the Aire Valley Urban Eco Settlement. This represents nearly half the general employment land requirement for the District.
- 3.26 When the land area proposed for offices use (included mixed use sites) are added to the general employment sites, a total of **254 hectares** of land is proposed for employment uses which exceeds the 250 hectare target set out in Spatial Policy 5.

#### Green space

- 3.27 The Aire Valley lies within an extensive network of strategic green space and green infrastructure (as shown on Core Strategy Map 16) including Temple Newsam Park, the Lower Aire Valley nature reserves (including St Aidan's), Wyke Beck Way and Rothwell Country Park. Consequently, a key dimension of the AAP and the Urban Eco Settlement concept, is to protect and enhance this network, for the benefit of local communities, business, visitors and investors.
- 3.28 The Core Strategy sets out the standards for new green space provision in Policy G3. The information collected as part of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (July 2011) has been used as a baseline for the preparation of the AAP as it provided a more up to date picture of green space in Leeds than the UDP Review 2006. This has flagged up where UDP green space designations are no longer functioning as greenspace; where the boundaries of known green space sites have changed and where new pieces of land are being used as green space. Both existing UDP green space and green space identified in the Open Space Assessment is shown on Plan 3 (see Appendix 5) for information.
- 3.29 Using this updated data, the quantity and quality of existing green space across the area has been assessed against Policy G3. This has identified whether there is an adequate amount of each type of green space and

whether these sites are of sufficient quality. Table 1 in Appendix 4 provides a schedule of green space sites in the Aire Valley showing their type, area and quality. Table 2 (Appendix 4) assesses the quantity of each type of green space against Policy G3. These tables only include green space which is open to general public use and therefore excludes school playing fields and other green spaces which have restricted public access.

- 3.30 Table 2 shows there is over 130 hectares of publically accessible green space in the Aire Valley (almost 10% of the total land area). The vast majority of this green space is made up of natural green space along the River Aire corridor, including the canal towpath and the Skelton Lake area. Overall levels of green space significantly exceed that which would be required by Policy G3. However, there are deficiencies of four types of green space (parks and gardens, amenity space, outdoor sports and allotments). The deficiency identified for both amenity space and outdoor sports is relatively small (under 1 hectare). Allotment provision is in deficiency, which would be increased if the disused site at Pontefract Lane in Cross Green was excluded from the assessment. Parks and gardens have the most significant existing deficiency (over 10 hectares in total). However, it should be noted that two large parks (East End Park and Temple Newsam) lie immediately on the edge of the plan area and within walking distance of some existing communities and proposed allocations. These parks therefore have an important role in meeting the green space needs of the Aire Valley AAP area and form a key part of a wider Green Infrastructure network.
- 3.31 The proposals for housing and employment allocation shown on Plan 1 (see Appendix 5) will involve the loss or reduction in size of a small number of existing poor quality green spaces shown on Plan 3 (see Appendix 5). Table 3 of Appendix 4 sets out the justification for the proposed losses in more detail. In two cases this reflects decisions on earlier planning applications to allow development of all or part of the site to secure improvements to the wider green space. In the case of the Copperfields site, it is to allow the redevelopment of the site for housing which would include provision of new areas of high quality green space to serve future residents of the site and the wider community, whilst retaining the existing pitch used by East Leeds Rugby League Club. Plan 1 (see Appendix 5) shows the existing green space designations that it is proposed to protect under Core Strategy Policy G6.
- 3.32 To address existing deficiencies and plan for housing growth in the area, the AAP also includes proposals for new areas of green space which are set out in more detail in Table 4 of Appendix 4. This is led by proposals to create an iconic new park in the South Bank of the City Centre, centred on the former Tetley's Brewery Site (shown on Plan 1 – Appendix 5). Proposals for the City Park were introduced as part of the South Bank Planning Statement which sets out an aspiration to create a 3.5 hectares park on a phased basis alongside development in the surrounding area. The park will help meet the outdoor recreational needs of the growing South Bank community and will be accompanied by proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle routes to improve connections from the traditional heart of the City Centre north of the

river and surrounding communities, including the East Bank, Richmond Hill, Cross Green and Hunslet area in the Aire Valley.

- 3.33 Further new areas of green space will be provided within new development in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy G4 which relates to green space provision within housing development outside the City Centre and Policy G5 which relates to commercial and housing development on sites above 0.5 hectares within the City Centre. The AAP will also include proposals relating to improvement of existing green space and enhancing the accessibility of local communities to the extensive areas of green space along the River Aire corridor by provision of new and improved pedestrian and cycle links.

#### Retail and Centres

- 3.34 In accordance with Core Strategy Spatial Policy 5, an important role for the AAP is to identify new retail services of an appropriate scale to both address existing deficiencies and to serve new development proposed in the plan.
- 3.35 The area is served by two existing centres identified and listed under Core Strategy Policy P1 and shown on the current Policies Map. This includes part of the City Centre and all of Hunslet Town Centre. The Core Strategy also refers to potential for a new centre within the Richmond Hill area which lies partly within the AAP area to support the role played by Hunslet Town Centre as the main centre serving the Aire Valley. Leeds Dock (formerly Clarence Dock and New Dock) is also identified as Local Convenience Centre within the City Centre in Map 10 of the Core Strategy. The boundaries of this centre are shown on Plan 1 (see Appendix 5).
- 3.36 A review of the boundary of Hunslet Town Centre has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the AAP this has identified potential extensions to the boundary of the centre, the primary shopping area (where retail uses are focused) and the primary and secondary shopping frontages. Plan 4 (see Appendix 5) shows the proposed changes to the centre boundaries and frontages compared to the existing UDP Policies Map. Two boundary extensions are proposed. To the north of Whitfield Avenue the boundary extension reflects the extent of town centre uses such as leisure and community uses and recognises the importance of the Garden Gate public house in its function and heritage value to the centre. The boundary extension to the south west of the existing centre is proposed to identify under-used land which has the potential to be redeveloped to improve the scale and range of shopping and other services within the centre. The extension would also incorporate the adjacent Mecca Bingo site - an existing Town Centre use.
- 3.37 In addition, the AAP promotes the provision of a new local centre at Skelton Gate (shown on Plan 1 – see Appendix 5) to serve the new housing development proposed at the site. The purpose of the centre would be to ensure people living in the new development could access local shops and services within walking distance consistent with principles of sustainable development. As part of the retail provision there is potential for a new food

store. The scale of this store would need to be limited (to a maximum floor space limit of 2,000 sqm) to ensure that it would not attract trips from a wide area.

- 3.38 The Copperfields site in Cross Green has also been identified as having potential to provide for a food store (up to a maximum floorspace of 2,000 sqm) to help address a long standing local deficiency in food store provision in the Richmond Hill and Cross Green area and to promote better access to fresh food for local residents. The store would be provided as part of the wider redevelopment of the site for housing, a primary school and green space and would be subject to securing a food retail operator.

### Infrastructure

#### *Transport*

- 3.39 Detailed transport modelling has been undertaken of proposed allocations in the AAP, alongside those being considered within the Site Allocations Plan to establish any strategic and detailed highway improvements required. This supports earlier transport assessments undertaken to support the preparation of the AAP and the wider regeneration of the Aire Valley area.
- 3.40 This work will be used to help identify detailed site and off site requirements for inclusion in relevant site policies to ensure delivery of sustainable development and to mitigate impacts on the strategic highway network to acceptable levels.

#### *School provision*

- 3.41 Children's Services have been continuously involved in the site selection process and in identifying sites where new school provision is needed. They have looked at whether existing schools are at capacity or not, which ones could expand, and where this is not possible, where a new school will need to be provided as part of a housing allocation. This has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan as school catchment areas overlap the AAP boundary.
- 3.42 The housing proposals in the Aire Valley AAP area, set out in this report, generate the need for two two-form entry primary schools. This includes a two-form entry primary school to serve the Skelton Gate site, which generates the need for a primary school in its own right, and a further school to serve the inner part of the area, which it is proposed would be located within the development of the former Copperfields College site in Cross Green.
- 3.43 The estimated increase in secondary school places required does not support the provision of a new secondary school in itself but a new free school (The Ruth Gorse Academy) is proposed to open in 2016 at Black Bull Street in the South Bank area which would be an important contribution to serving the needs of the area. The AAP will set out proposals to improve public transport, cycling and pedestrian links between proposed housing development and this and other secondary schools located just outside the boundary of the plan area.

### *Health facilities*

- 3.44 The Office for Public Health has been involved in the preparation of the AAP. They advise that health services, such as GP surgeries, will be commissioned to meet demand from future housing development in the area. However, given the distance between the proposed housing site at Skelton Gate and existing health services and the need to promote accessible services it is proposed that provision for a health centre / GP premises be included within the specific requirements for the site.

### *Flood risk*

- 3.45 A number of the sites considered and proposed in the AAP are in areas at higher risk of flooding and identified within Flood Zone 2 (greater than 1:1000 years probability of flooding) and Flood Zone 3 (greater than 1:100 year probability of flooding) according to the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps.
- 3.46 The Council is required to undertake a flood risk sequential and exception test of these sites in accordance with national planning policy. A draft flood risk assessment, which includes a sequential and exception test, has been prepared with input from the Council's Flood Risk Management Team and in consultation with the Environment Agency. Further work is being undertaken at the request of the EA but it is considered that all development proposed in the AAP will be able to satisfy the sequential test based on the quantum of development proposed for the area in the Core Strategy. An exception test has been undertaken for each site by the Flood Risk Management Team which demonstrates the wider sustainability benefits of the proposal and sets out specific development requirements to ensure that the development can be made safe during its lifetime including, for example, finished floor levels and evacuation plans. It should also be noted that all the proposed housing developments in higher risk flood zones in the AAP will be afforded further protection on completion of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme between Leeds Station and Knostrop Cut in 2016.
- 3.47 The flood risk assessment has also considered the risk from surface water flooding which is not considered to be a significant risk in the area subject to development complying with the Council's existing guidance.

## **4.0 Other considerations**

### Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.1 As outlined in this report, the Core Strategy provides the overall strategic context for the preparation of the Aire Valley AAP. Proposals contained in the AAP therefore need to be in conformity with the overall approach of the Core Strategy, which has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and has appraised the overall level of housing and employment provision for the area.
- 4.2 With regard to the Aire Valley AAP, a Sustainability Appraisal Report was produced to accompany the Preferred Options Consultation in 2007. This

report is being updated to include the boundary extension to the plan area and to reflect changes to proposed allocations, new sites and alternative options proposed and has been used to inform the allocations set out in this report. This work includes an assessment of all the sites being considered for housing and employment and changes to green space designations and Town Centre boundaries.

- 4.3 To allow proper consideration of the sustainability of development proposals across the District, the sustainability appraisal of Aire Valley AAP sites is to be combined with those being considered for the Site Allocations Plan in the rest of the District. This will be presented to Panel at the 6<sup>th</sup> January (employment sites) and 13<sup>th</sup> January (housing sites) meeting respectively.

#### Duty to Co-operate

- 4.4 The Localism Act (2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), provides details of legal and soundness requirements that the Council and other public bodies have to satisfy. This includes a 'duty to cooperate' on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, especially those that relate to strategic priorities and allocations set out as part of the Core Strategy and related Development Plan Documents (including the homes and jobs planned for). As emphasised in this report, the Aire Valley AAP has been prepared within the context of the adopted Leeds Core Strategy. In finding the Plan sound, the Core Strategy Inspector confirmed that the City Council had demonstrated compliance with the Duty to Co-operate requirements. Within the context of the preparation of the AV AAP, the broad strategic approach and quantum of development have therefore been accepted through the Duty to Co-operate process. Any further issues will therefore relate to detailed matters set out in the AAP. As a consequence, the City Council will continue to work through the established Duty to Co-operate processes, in the preparation of the Publication draft Plan, although no major issues are anticipated.

### **5.0 Corporate Considerations**

#### 5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.1 The Core Strategy has now been adopted and has been found by an independent Inspector to be sound (this also includes compliance with the Duty to Co-operate and the regulated requirements for public consultation and engagement). There has been extensive consultation with members in the course of preparing the Issues & Options; Alternative Options and Preferred Options material since 2005. The next round of consultation will take place after the Publication Plan has been agreed by Executive Board at a date to be agreed in early 2015.

#### 5.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.2.1 In the preparation of the Core Strategy, due regard has been given to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration issues. This has included the completion of EDCI Screening of the Core Strategy and meeting the



requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which has meant that these Plans are subject to the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of such Appraisals is to assess (and where appropriate strengthen) the document's policies, in relation to a series of social (and health), environmental and economic objectives. As part of this process, issues of Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration, are embedded as part of the Appraisal's objectives. The Aire Valley AAP material reflects the approach set out in the Core Strategy. Nevertheless an Equality Impact Assessment Screening will be undertaken on the proposed site allocations and will be part of the package to be presented to Executive Board. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration issues are being considered as part of the preparation of the plan and through the sustainability appraisal work which is ongoing.

### 5.3. Council Policies and City Priorities

5.3.1 The Core Strategy, the emerging Site Allocations Plan and Aire Valley Leeds AAP, play a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of the Vision for Leeds and the aspiration to the 'the best city in the UK'. Related to this overarching approach and in addressing a range of social, environmental and economic objectives, where these Plans also seeks to support and advance the implementation of a range of other key City Council and wider partnership documents. These include the Best Council Plan (2013-17) and Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013-2015).

### 5.4 Resources and value for money

5.4.1 The preparation of statutory Development Plan Documents is an essential but a very resource intensive process. This is due to the time and cost of document preparation (relating to public consultation and engagement), the preparation and monitoring of an extensive evidence base, legal advice and Independent Examination. These challenges are compounded currently by the financial constraints upon the public sector and resourcing levels, concurrent with new technical and planning policy pressures arising from more recent legislation (including the Community Infrastructure Levy and Localism Act). There are considerable demands for officers, members and the community in taking the Development Plan process forward.

5.4.2 For the Local Development Framework to be as up to date as possible, the Council now needs to produce the AVL AAP as quickly as possible, alongside the Site Allocations Plan, following the adoption of its Core Strategy. This will provide value for money in that the council will influence and direct where development goes. Without an up to date plan the presumption in favour of development by the Government means that any development in conformity with national policy will be acceptable, regardless of any previous positions of the authority, which could have implications in terms of resources and value for money.

## 5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 The Aire Valley Leeds AAP will follow the statutory development plan process (Local Development Framework). The report is not eligible for call in as no decision is being taken.

## 5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 Without a current allocations plan for this geographical area, aspects of the existing UDP allocations will become out of date and will not reflect or deliver the Core Strategy policies and proposals. Early delivery is therefore essential, alongside the Site Allocations Plan, to enable the Council to demonstrate that sufficient land will be available when needed to meet the Core Strategy targets. As identified at 5.4.2 above, without an up to date plan the presumption in favour of development by the Government means that any development or neighbourhood plan in conformity with national policy will be acceptable, regardless of any previous positions of the authority. The more the work progresses, the more material weight can be given to it.

## 6.0 **Conclusion**

6.1 This report has set out recommendations for proposed allocations for housing and employment, protected green space designations, retail development and proposed changes to the boundary of Hunslet Town Centre. It is intended that these proposals will form the basis of the preparation of the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan, part of the Local Development Framework for Leeds. This has refined proposals set out in earlier public consultations on the plan.

6.2 It is considered that the package of allocations proposed provide the basis for a future planning framework that reflects the importance of the area as one the key strategic growth locations in Leeds City Region and a major regeneration opportunity of national, regional and local importance, whilst helping deliver the aspirations of the Urban Eco Settlement. They will deliver the objectives and requirements for the area set out in the Core Strategy by identifying land for over 6,500 new homes and 250 hectares of land for employment uses, promoting brownfield housing development in a sustainable location, providing jobs opportunities close to disadvantaged communities, and supported by an enhanced green space network and improved retail provision. This will complement the proposed allocations in the Site Allocations Plan, covering the rest of the District.

## 7.0 **Recommendation**

7.1 Development Plan Panel is invited to recommend the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan proposed allocations to Executive Board. Once agreed by Executive Board, the Publication Draft Plan will be prepared and, subject to further approval, will be placed on deposit for a period of formal consultation anticipated Summer/Autumn 2015.

8.0 Background Papers<sup>1</sup>

## 8.1

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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.