

Report of the Chief Planning Officer

Report to Development Plan Panel

Date: 6th January 2015

Subject: Supplementary Report - 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

- Members will recall that a report was tabled to the 16th December 2014 Development Plan Panel (DPP), which noted that, 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.
- Within this overall context, 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. At the DPP meeting on the 16th December, whilst generally supportive, members raised a number of issues in relation to the emerging AVL AAP proposals, where it was agreed that further information and clarification would be provided. Within the context of the DPP item on this agenda relating to employment proposals for the District, this report addresses the issues raised by members in relation to proposed employment proposals within AVLAAP, where these were submitted to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) but there is a preference, as part of the AVLAAP for this sites to be allocated for employment, as part of the overall package of proposals. The purpose of this report is to provide further explanation and clarity regarding these proposals. The outstanding AVLAAP issues relating the housing, green space and schools provision will be reported to Panel in due course.

Recommendation

4. Development Plan Panel is invited to consider and support the further points of explanation and clarification provided by this report.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 At the DPP meeting on the 16th December, raised a number of issues in relation to the emerging AVL AAP proposals, where it was agreed that further information and clarification would be provided. Within the context of the DPP item on this agenda relating to employment proposals for the District, this report addresses the issues raised by members in relation to proposed employment allocations within AVLAAP, where these were submitted to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) but there is a preference, as part of the AVLAAP for this sites to be allocated for employment, as part of the overall package of proposals. The purpose of this report is to provide further explanation and clarity regarding these proposals.

2.0 Background Information

Context

- 2.1 Members will recall that a report was tabled to the 16th December 2014 Development Plan Panel (DPP), which noted that, 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.
- 2.2 Within this overall context, 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.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The report to DPP on the 16th December included a schedule (D) relating to, "Alternative Options for Housing (Not Proposed to Allocate). These are sites previously 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 (or Policies under the adopted Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan) and targets. The reason it is proposed to reject the site as a housing allocation was set out in the schedule. In relation to this schedule members raised a number of issues relating to the merits of these sites for housing, their inclusion within the SHLAA and further explanation and clarification on the preference for employment is set out below.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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 (SP5) 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).
- 3.4 Appendix 1 to this report, sets out a schedule and assessment of five sites, which were submitted as part of the SHLAA. The sites are: Phases 3 & 4 Leeds, Valley Park, Knowsthorpe, The former Power Station at Skelton Grange, Haigh Park Road, Stourton and Temple Green. These sites are also identified on the attached Plan (Plan 1) and for completeness and to see the sites within the context of the overall AVL proposals, the AAP previously presented to the DPP meeting on 16th December, is also attached.
- 3.5 As set out above, the Core Strategy (SP5), sets out a minimum requirement for AVL to provide 250ha of land for employment uses. Due to the strategic location of the above sites (and their contribution to the overall portfolio of employment land opportunities in Leeds), their allocation in part or entire sites in the adopted Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP) e.g. Skelton Grange and significant site constraints (making them potentially unsuitable for housing) – the sites are regarded as being preferred for employment allocations as part of the AVLAAP. Appendix 1 sets out these issues in more detail.

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 6th January (employment sites) and 13th 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 In response to a number of issues raised by members at the 16th December, this report has provided further explanation and clarification on sites previously put forward for consideration during the preparation of the plan for housing, which it is not proposed to allocate. This assessment is based upon a range of factors including the key strategic and economic role of AVL for employment, policy consideration and site specific issues.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 Development Plan Panel is invited to consider and support the further points of explanation and clarification provided by this report.