

PC/jef

9th January 2015

Mr Steve Speak
Deputy Chief Planning Officer
Development Department, Planning Services
The Leonardo Building
2 Rossington Street
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS2 8HD

Dear Steve

Re: Redevelopment of Headingley Stadium – Relationship with Land at Weetwood

We understand that the issue of Leeds Rugby Ltd's land at Weetwood was discussed at the recent Development Plan Panel on 6th January 2015. It is understood that at the meeting on 6th January, some Members queried the relationship between Leeds Rugby Ltd asset at Weetwood and the redevelopment of Headingley Stadium.

This response is submitted on behalf of Leeds Rugby Ltd and Yorkshire County Cricket Club who have been working together, and with your officer team, in order to deliver significant improvements to Headingley Stadium in order to secure the future of Test Match Cricket in Leeds. Work has also been led by YCCC with the Council and PWC to explore a package of funding mechanisms to enable the scheme to be implemented. The project is recognised as being of strategic importance for the City and the wider City Region.

The site at Weetwood is entirely in the ownership of Leeds Cricket, Football and Athletic Company Ltd, a subsidiary of Leeds Rugby Ltd, and was purchased following the closure of the Tetley Sports ground for the purpose of a training facility for Leeds Rugby. That training activity now takes place at Kirkstall. The land in question has not been used for sporting purposes since 1999. It has always been in private use and has not had any public recreation use on it during this period of ownership. It has not been maintained or required as a sports pitch for many years.

The funding package is to be made up of various sources including investment from the clubs and a LEP bid. The monies from the sale of the land at Weetwood (and land at Tingley, also owned by Leeds Rugby Ltd) is a fundamental part of that package in order to make the development finances work to allow the Stadium redevelopment. Over recent months, the team has worked closely with the City Council, including carrying out a robust exercise to identify the likely costings involved. It is clear that in order for the project to be delivered, the monies from a redevelopment at Weetwood is a fundamental part of the package. (There are various confidential submissions made to the Council related to the financial package and costings which the team would be happy to share with members of the Development Plans Panel on a confidential basis and which confirm this position)

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The land at Weetwood and Tingley are the only two surplus assets in the ownership of the club and hence represent the only opportunity to raise finances to form part of this funding package. Whilst the precise mechanism for delivery of the funds is subject to further discussions, it is expected that this will be dealt with by way of some form of a legal agreement prior to any planning permission being issued on the Leeds Rugby Ltd land to ensure that a link between the site and the redevelopment of the Stadium is confirmed.

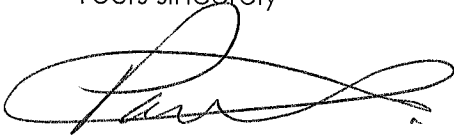
The proposals at Headingley involve the redevelopment of the joint (Cricket and Rugby) North South stand in order to improve capacity for International Cricket, quality of provision and to develop the ability for the required Sky TV coverage. (Again, there are detailed plans with the City Council officer team of these proposed works which will be subject to public consultation once they are at an appropriate stage of development) Part of the proposals, by necessity, include for some investment in the rugby South stand simply to retain adequate capacities as the redevelopment of this joint facility is delivered.

The proposals to bring forward this land to form part of the funding package is reflected through the adopted Core Strategy which recognises that improvements to major sporting venues, such as Headingley Stadium, may not always be financially viable and may require some form of enabling development in order to retain valuable sporting resources to harness economic and social benefits to the City.

Both of the Leeds Rugby's sites have been promoted through the emerging Site Allocations process for housing as part of the exercise to deliver monies to enable the redevelopment programme to be delivered. Weetwood represents an excellent site for housing in many regards, as confirmed by your officer reports. Work on the precise nature of the scheme, technical appraisals etc has been underway for some time as part of this exercise and will be shared with the community at an appropriate stage in the process.

Leeds Rugby Ltd reiterates its commitment that any financial returns from the development of the land at Weetwood will be invested at Headingley to assist with the Stadium redevelopment, in order to deliver the necessary works to enable the successful retention of International Cricket to be delivered.

Yours sincerely



Paul Caddick
Chairman

CC: Jane Cash - (LCC)
Sue Ansbro - WYG
Mark Arthur - (YCCC)