



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### *CITY PLANS PANEL*

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015

**Subject: POSTION STATEMENT/PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION BY COMMERCIAL ESTATES GROUP (CEG) TO PRESENT AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE KIRKSTALL FORGE DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION 11/01400/EXT FOR A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING RESIDENTIAL, OFFICES, LEISURE, HOTEL, RETAIL & BAR/RESTAURANTS INCLUDING ACCESS, SITE REMEDIATION, CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES AND RIVER WORKS, CAR PARKING AND LANDSCAPING.**

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

**Kirkstall, Horsforth and Bramley and Stanningley**

Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information only. The site owner/applicant (CEG) and their representatives will present an update on their planned implementation of the above outline planning permission and to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Members will no doubt be familiar with the Kirkstall Forge site as Commercial Estates Group, the owner and developer of this site, have engaged with this Panel on many previous occasions dating back to 2004 since their acquisition of the site in 2003. The purpose of this pre-application presentation is to provide Members with an update and overview of the progress of the site's redevelopment but also to review and comment upon more detailed proposes relating to Phase 1.

## 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 2.1 The site comprises the former 23-hectare Kirkstall Forge site. It is adjoined to the north by the A65, Hawksworth Wood and post-war residential development whilst to the south it is adjoined by Bramley Fall Woods and the railway line/Leeds Liverpool canal to the south. To the west is open land in the Green belt along the valley bottom leading to the Newlay Conservation Area with further open land to the east leading towards the important heritage site of Kirkstall Abbey. The site is accessed from the A65 at a distance of circa 6km (3.7m) from the city centre.
- 2.2 The former commercial buildings have now been fully cleared with the exception of the listed buildings. Network Rail has also recently commenced work on the construction of the new Kirkstall Forge station in accordance with planning permission 10/01211/FU.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Outline planning permission for the re-development of Kirkstall Forge was originally granted on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (application 24/96/05/OT) with details of access approved as part of this outline and matters of design, layout, appearance, landscaping reserved for future consideration. The indicative development at that time comprised the following elements:
- 1,355 dwellings (1,109 apartments and 246 townhouses/ maisonettes);
  - 146,000 square feet of offices;
  - Support facilities including bars, restaurants, small scale retail, health and fitness and spa, banking, hotel, a crèche and accommodation for social community uses totalling 104,000 square feet;
  - Preservation and change of use of existing Grade II Listed lower forge building to provide food and drink uses;
  - Change of use of the Grade II Listed stables to residential.
  - Areas of amenity green space;
  - Wildlife and ecological enhancements;
  - Park and ride for approximately 150 cars in association with a rail station;
  - Improvements to vehicular junctions, allowing access to the A65;
  - Internal access roads, catering for new bus services;
  - Network of pedestrian and cycle routes, enabling connections to the national cycle network and canal towpath, including new footpaths alongside the former abbey mill race;
  - New pedestrian and vehicular bridge across River Aire;
  - Site remediation works;
  - Riverside improvement works and creation of flood relief channel.
- 3.2 In recognition of the economic slowdown that followed the granting of the original outline planning permission, an extension of time of this permission was granted on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014 in accordance with planning permission 11/01400/EXT. It was approved by Plans Panel West on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011 with the decision finally issued on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014 following resolution of the Section 106 agreement. This outline permission is identical in terms of the extent of development to the original outline with the exception of an amendment to the Section 106 agreement to provide additional funding for the new Kirkstall Forge train station. The train station, approved in accordance with 10/01211/FU has now commenced on site with the first trains due to stop at the station in October 2015.
- 3.3 The focus of this pre-application presentation is three-fold:

- (i) To present a general update on the delivery of the overall Masterplan for the Kirkstall Forge site;
- (ii) To provide Members with information in relation to the first element of the first phase of development comprising a circa 100,000 square foot (circa 10,000 square metres) Grade A Office development within Use Class B1. The office block, referred to within the Masterplan as J1, will be sited immediately to the north of the railway station. Cooper Cromar Architects have been instructed to progress with J1. This will take the form of a Reserved Matters application to consider matters of design (scale), layout, landscaping and appearance only.
- (iii) To provide Members with information in relation to the second element of the first phase of development comprising two x 100 unit Private Residential Sector (PRS) blocks and 1 x 50 apartment block with units for sale adjacent to the above office development. These two PRS blocks are identified in the Masterplan as Blocks J3/J4 and will deliver circa 300 homes for private rental. HTA Architects have been appointed to develop the scheme for J3/J4, which will also progress to the submission of a Reserved Matters application to consider matters of design (scale), layout, landscaping and appearance.

3.4 The above Reserved Matters applications to effectively seek to discharge Conditions 1, 2 and 3 of 11/01400/EXT in relation to Phase 1 and are due for submission in Spring/Summer 2015.

#### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 Members were originally invited to view the Kirkstall Forge site in December 2004 with initial plans for its re-development reported on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2005. City Panel Members noted an update report on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005 with a further full briefing provided on site on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2006. Plans Panel West then subsequently granted the original outline planning permission for Kirkstall Forge on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

4.2 On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Members of West Panel were provided with a progress report regarding Kirkstall Forge inviting Members views, where their general support was given. The extension of time was then subsequently granted by Plans Panel West on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

4.3 Over the past six months Officers have undertaken some very initial meetings with CEG and their professional teams to explore the detailed design of the proposed Phase 1 office and residential blocks outlined above. These meetings have considered initial concepts only. CEG have also held a Liaison meeting with Kirkstall Ward Members and the local community, which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 with a further meeting planned for 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

#### **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

5.1 In this case, the principle of the mixed use development of the Kirkstall Forge site has clearly been established by the outline planning approval. The Reserved Matters applications outlined above will relate only to matters of siting, design (scale), appearance and the landscaping of Phase 1.

#### **5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force in March 2012 and represents the government's commitment to sustainable development, through its intention to make the planning system more streamlined, localised and less restrictive. It aims to do this by reducing regulatory burdens and by placing sustainability at the heart of the development process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.

The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes.
- Seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.
- Encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings.
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.

On 6 March 2014 the Government launched the National Planning Practice Guidance, which brought together most national planning guidance and circulars under one web-based resource.

### 5.3 **Development Plan**

- 5.3.1 The Leeds Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 12th November 2014. This now forms the development plan for Leeds together with the Natural Resources & Waste Plan and saved policies from the UDP. A number of former UDP saved policies have been superseded by Core Strategy policies and have been deleted as a result of its adoption. Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy provides a full list of 'deleted' UDP policies and policies that continue to be 'saved' (including most land use allocations).

Relevant Saved UDP Policies would include

GP5: All relevant planning considerations

BD2: New buildings

LD1: Landscaping

- 5.3.2 Relevant Core Strategy Policies include:

Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design and enhancing existing landscapes and spaces.

Policy P12 states that landscapes will be conserved and enhanced.

Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements for new development.

### 5.4 **Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

## 5.5 **Other material considerations**

### 5.5.1 **Best Council Plan**

The Plan identifies 6 objectives in order to achieve the best council outcomes identified between 2014-2017. One of the three best Council outcomes (Best Council Plan 2013-17) is to “improve the quality of life for our residents”, and the priority “Maximising housing growth to meet the needs of the city in line with the Core strategy” within the Best Council objective “Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth” which gives a strong foundation to improving the quality of housing and ‘livability’ of places delivered under this ambitious programme for the city. Also, the objective “Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth” is of relevance to this proposal. This would be achieved by improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses, meeting the skills needs of business to support growth, boosting the local economy, creating ‘more jobs, better jobs’ by working with employers and businesses, and continuing to secure local training and recruitment schemes.

### 5.5.2 **Vision for Leeds 2011-2030**

One of the aims is that by 2030 Leeds’ economy will be more prosperous and sustainable. This includes having a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the local economy, and creating significant job opportunities. The vision also states that Leeds will be a great place to live, where local people benefit from regeneration investment, and there is sufficient housing, including affordable housing that meets the need of the community.

### 5.5.3 **City Priority Plan 2011-2015**

The Plan states that Leeds will be the best city to live in. The City Priority Plan includes an objective to maximise investment to increase housing choice and affordability. The sustainable growth of a prosperous Leeds’ economy is also a priority. The key headline indicators relevant to this proposal would be the creation of more jobs, more skills, and the growth of the local economy, and an increase in the number of hectares of vacant brownfield land under redevelopment.

### 5.5.4 **The Leeds Standard**

The Leeds Standard was adopted by the Council’s Executive Board on 17 September 2014. The introduction of a Leeds Standard to ensure excellent quality in the delivery of new council homes under three themes: Design Quality, Space Standards and Energy Efficiency Standards. It sets out how the Council can use the Leeds Standard in its role as Council landlord through its delivery and procurement approaches. Through its actions the Council can also seek to influence quality in the private sector. Those aspects of the Standard concerned with design quality will be addressed through better and more consistent application of the Council’s Neighbourhoods for Living guidance. The Leeds Standard sets out the importance of excellent quality housing in supporting the economic growth ambitions of the council.

## 6.0 **ISSUES**

6.1 Members are asked to consider the following matters in particular:

**Do Members have any comments on the overall phasing of development at Kirkstall Forge?**

**What are Members' views on the design quality of the residential and office blocks proposed as part of Phase 1?**

**What are Members' views on the general siting of the buildings and the spaces between them, including the distances between facing windows for privacy and overlooking?**

**Background Papers:**

None