



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 14 MAY 2015

Subject: PLANNING APPLICATION REF. 15/00415/FU FOR 312 DWELLINGS INCLUDING NEW OPEN SPACE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LOW FOLD, SOUTH ACCOMMODATION ROAD, LEEDS – POSITION STATEMENT

APPLICANT	DATE VALID	TARGET DATE
Citu (Low Fold) LLP	02.02.2015	21.05.2015 (extended)

Electoral Wards Affected:

**City and Hunslet
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill**

Yes Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: For Members to note the content of the position statement and to provide feedback on the questions posed at section 11.0 of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 Members are requested to give comment on the progress of this application, which if acceptable, would deliver new family housing and flats, and promote the regeneration of a large brownfield site on the edge of the City Centre, in the Aire Valley regeneration area.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 The application proposal is for 312 dwellings set within new landscaped open space and associated works. The dwelling mix consists of 150 houses (102x 3 bed, 48x 4 bed) and 162 apartments (47x 1 bed, 115x 2 bed).
- 2.2 The townhouses would be in 16 groups of terraces at 3 or 4 storeys. There are three apartment blocks being 7, 8 and 9 storeys, with one block a mixture of 'stacked

townhouses' and flats, giving 20 groups of dwellings in total. These aim to provide a buffer from the road network to the north, and frame gateway views into the City Centre from the east. 95% of the dwellings would be generally south facing. All the townhouses would feature rooftop gardens, and some would also feature covered glazed lightwells from the roof to the ground floor. The flats also feature a communal rooftop amenity space. The proposals for private amenity space can be summarised as follows:

Communal Roof Terrace (Floor 1 – houses and flats)

- Elongated natural stone paving planks and/or bamboo decking creating a landscaped corridor with access to apartments.
- Low timber planters would provide areas for informal seating and would include vibrant colourful planting beds of herbaceous and ornamental shrubs to provide structure and year round winter interest.
- Planters to include areas for 'Grow Your Own' to encourage community participation.
- The deck area to Block Q and R would include a place to play and gather for families, the space would include tree trunk climbing posts and an undulating rubber play surface
- Trees in this area would be small species and suitable for containerised planting. Trees would be planted in brightly coloured oversized plant pots to create interest.

Communal Roof Garden (Floors 9+8 flats)

- Larger planters would act as a visual barrier to the road and make the space feel more private
- 'Grow your own' planters for the use of residents. There would be strips of planting at the entrances made up of robust plants which would require low. A variety in heights and textures would give structure and added interest.

Private Roof Garden floor 3 (houses), 4 (houses) and 7 (flats)

- Domestic scale spaces with opportunities for residents to create their own gardens and contribute to the wider landscape scheme and create interest at height.
- Trees to be limited in size due to loading and planting opportunities.

2.3 The houses and flats have been designed along Passivhaus principles, and the form and detailing of the buildings express the sustainability features. There are a variety of modern material cladding proposals which would create variety to the riverside, road frontage and throughout the scheme. The dwelling designs would be as follows (see Appendix 1 proposed site layout plan):

Block A 4 Townhouses

2x3-bed houses 145 sqm

3 bed house 105 sqm

4 bed house 132 sqm

Material: Dark red metal mesh cladding

Block B 10 Townhouses (9x3bed, 1x4Bed)

2 x3 bed 104 sqm

4x 3-bed 108 sqm

3 bed 120 sqm

3 Bed – 115 sqm

3 Bed - 125 sqm

4 Bed – 132 sqm

Material: Black and natural coloured timber cladding

Block C - 6 Townhouses (4x3Bed, 2x4Bed)

4x 3 Bed – 146 sqm
2x 4 Bed – 131 sqm
Material: Black metal mesh cladding

Block D - 14No. Townhouses (12x3Bed 2x4Bed)
6x 3 Bed – 146 sqm
2x 3 Bed – 104 sqm
2x 3 Bed – 130 sqm
3 Bed – 104 sqm
3 Bed – 120 sqm
Material: Black and natural coloured timber cladding

Block E – 4 Townhouses (2x3Bed 2x4Bed)
4 Bed – 145 sqm
4 Bed – 161 sqm
3Bed – 124 sqm
3 Bed – 145 sqm
Material: Dark red metal mesh cladding.

Block F – 8 Townhouses (7x3Bed 1x4Bed)
4x 3 Bed – 146 sqm
3x 3 Bed – 104 sqm
4 Bed – 132 sqm
Material: Eternit Equitone and natural timber cladding.

Block G - 4 Townhouses (3x3Bed, 1x4Bed)
3x 3Bed – 110 sqm
4Bed – 146 sqm
Material: Black metal mesh cladding

Block H - 10 Townhouses (5x3 Bed, 5x4Bed)
4x 3 Bed – 146 sqm
2x 4 Bed – 135 sqm
3 Bed – 118 sqm
4 Bed – 125 sqm
2x 4 Bed – 132 sqm
Material: Natural timber cladding

Block I - 4 Townhouses (4x 3Bed)
3Bed – 165 sqm
3Bed – 158 sqm
3Bed – 149 sqm
3 Bed – 140 sqm
Material: Black metal cladding

Block J - 12 Townhouses (10x 3Bed, 2x4Bed)
4 Bed – 123 sqm
3 Bed – 134 sqm
4Bed – 165 sqm
5x 3 Bed – 146 sqm
3 Bed – 141 sqm
2x 3 Bed – 104 sqm
3Bed – 119 sqm
Material: Natural timber cladding

Block K - 14 Townhouses (11x3Bed, 3x4Bed)

7x 3Bed – 146 sqm

2x 4Bed – 131 sqm

4x 3Bed – 104 sqm

1x 4Bed – 131 sqm

Material: Black and natural coloured timber cladding

Block L - 6 Townhouses (3x3Bed, 3x4Bed)

4 Bed – 123 sqm

4 Bed – 123 sqm

3 Bed – 113 sqm

3 Bed – 122 sqm

3Bed – 133 sqm

4Bed – 128 sqm

Material: Natural timber cladding

Block M - 8 Townhouses (7x3Bed, 1x4Bed)

4x 3 Bed – 146 sqm

4 Bed – 143 sqm

3x 3 Bed – 104 sqm

Material: Red coloured metal mesh cladding

Block N 4 Townhouses (4x4Beds)

2x 4 Bed – 128 sqm

2x 4 Bed – 135 sqm

Material: Equitone and natural timber cladding

Block O – 9 Townhouses (7x3Bed, 2x4Bed)

2x 3 Bed – 145 sqm

2x 3 Bed – 134 sqm

2x 3 Bed – 104 sqm

4 Bed – 146 sqm

3 Bed – 125 sqm

4 Bed – 163 sqm

Material: Black metal cladding

Block P- 6 Stacked townhouses (2 x 3Beds, 4x4Beds)

2x 4 Bed – 161 sqm

3 Bed – 126 sqm

2x 4 Bed – 181 sqm

3 Bed – 147 sqm

Material: Black and natural colour timber cladding

Block Q - 54 Flats (11x1Beds, 43x2Beds)

11x 1Beds – 50 sqm

43 x 2Beds – 60-75 sqm

Material: Grey and black Eternit Equitone cladding

Block R - 64 Flats (18x1Beds, 46x2Beds)

11x 1Beds – Circa 45-60 sqm

43 x 2Beds – Circa 45-70 sqm

Material: Grey and black Eternit Equitone cladding

Block S - 64 Flats (18x1Beds, 24x2Beds)

11x 1Beds – 45-60 sqm

43 x 2Beds – 45-70 sqm

Material: Grey and black Eternit Equitone cladding

Block T - 29 Stacked townhouses (2x2Beds, 15x3Beds, 12x4Beds)

2 Bed – 43 sqm

2 Bed – 66 sqm

15x 3 Beds –100-120 sqm

12x 4Beds –130-135 sqm

Material: Grey and black Eternit Equitone cladding

- 2.6 The applicant's proposal would aim to create sustainable family living in a City Centre environment. The dwellings would be available for purchase on long leases, with the energy and utilities systems and public realm managed by a community interest company owned by the residents themselves. An on-site caretaker would manage the day-to-day running of the site, such as landscape and communal area maintenance, and arrangement of the communal refuse and recycling bins for collection. Refuse and recycling stores are located off the main service road, with the site manager moving them to the service point on collection day.
- 2.7 The proposed dwellings would be constructed to a zero-carbon standard which means that they would not require conventional heating. The ambient heat given off in the house would be retained through a highly insulated air tight structure. The electricity would be generated on-site through solar PV panels which would feed power into a private grid around the development. This would all be controlled through an energy monitoring app via resident's smart phones. Residents would also benefit from free solar energy to heat their hot water or charge their electric cars. The homes would be cost effective to live in, and would be a demonstrator project for sustainable low carbon living for Leeds.
- 2.8 Low Fold has an existing site access directly off the signalised A61/ A63 junction. This would provide the single vehicle access to the site. Car parking would be hidden under the housing and the scheme design would provide clutter free landscaped public realm, with a sustainable drainage system. There would be provision for 247 parking spaces (including electric charging provision) across the development. This is based on one parking space per house and 60% provision for the flats. There would be 372 secure cycle parking spaces and 10 motorcycle parking spaces at basement level. The residents would access site-specific real-time public transport information and local car share opportunities via smartphone apps, a sustainable travel initiative which has been successful at Citu's other developments such as Greenhouse and is due to be rolled out at Little Kelham in Sheffield.
- 2.9 The space between the apartment blocks and the townhouses would be some 10-28m wide, and would be designed to prioritise pedestrian use with only limited access for service vehicles and removal vans by pre-arrangement only. There would be an approximately 16m wide by 300m long public riverside space. This river frontage incorporate public access and inaccessible areas for biodiversity reasons, including the safeguarding of wildlife corridors for protected species such as otters. Although not part of the formal planning application the applicant is willing to commit to the provision of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge link over the River Aire, which would improve connectivity to the existing and proposed facilities on the South Bank. However, the applicant states that the cost of providing the bridge is equivalent to the cost of half the policy-compliant affordable housing provision (2.5% on-site), and therefore they would only propose 2.5% affordable housing if the

delivery of a bridge is considered necessary or desirable. The delivery of the bridge would need to be secured by a Section 106 agreement.

2.10 The public realm landscaping scheme can be summarised as follows by character area:

South Accommodation Road Verge

- Undulating planting beds would provide a green buffer of shrubs and herbaceous perennials and grasses between the road and the grey and black Equitone clad façade of Blocks T, S, R and Q
- Semi mature Turkish Hazel (approx. 6m tall) trees
- Trailing plants such as Boston ivy provide seasonal interest and colour along the north facing wall
- Sections of low brick wall to path edge with tree planting and the lift/stair cores would create a rhythm to the road corridor

Low Fold Access Road

- Curving swept path road with pinch points and a buff, light grey and white mix of concrete aggregate setts built to adoptable standards including 2m wide footpaths and planting beds
- Planting beds and lawn areas with a mix of extra heavy standard and semi mature trees to line the road
- Swathes of grasses and perennials would line the footpaths

Low Fold Place and Bridge Landing

- A new central space with a raised lawn seating island, including group of 8 trees set in hard landscaping with timber benches
- A high quality paving area and a new lawn (sprint lawn) where there would be an opportunity for community events
- Curved bands of paving and planting to tie in with the contouring of the site and the "Fold" landscape and seating feature that would run throughout the site
- Groups of trees would flank the bridge approach and provide a dappled canopy for the bridge landing point

Main Path

- The curving proposals would reflect the topography of the site
- A mix of herbaceous plants and ornamental shrubs planted in large swathes along the path length
- 400m running route and trim trail equipment
- Informal play area on a mounded landscape including climbing posts and boulders
- Trees include extra heavy standard Black Cherry Plums, Honey Locust, Ornamental Pear and Birch

Riverside

- Native seasonal bulbs would be provided within a buffer zone of grass/wildflowers, adjacent to areas of native prairie style planting and riparian planting.
- Trim Trail equipment, seating and a circular level access route to the southern end of the site.
- The river bank slope would be terraced using willow hurdles and coir rolls, lower terraces to be reinforced using slope stabilisation netting and seeded to stabilise the soil.

- Riparian planting to include areas of wildflower plug planting, marginals, shrubs and feathered trees in accordance with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust species list to provide a naturalised river bank (River Aire Valley Project).
- An area would be blocked off from public access using timber and wire stock proof fence to develop a natural habitat area for flora and fauna, including bird boxes and the potential for an otter holt location.

2.11 A number of documents were submitted in support of the application:

- Scaled Plans
- Planning Statement (incorporating Employment Needs Assessment)
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Affordable Housing Statement
- CIL / Section 106 Heads of Terms
- Completed CIL Additional Questions Form and Form 2 (social housing relief)
- Affordable Housing Pro Forma (plus plan showing location)
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Design & Access Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Desk Top Archaeological Report
- Noise Assessment
- Air quality and odour assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Ecological Appraisal
- Otter Survey
- Tree Survey
- Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
- Flood Risk Sequential Assessment
- Desk Top Ground Report
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The approximately 6-acre/2.4 hectare brownfield vacant site sits on the eastern fringe of Leeds City Centre, within the Aire Valley regeneration area. The site is bounded by the River Aire to the south and the Inner Ring Road to the north. Beyond the road network lies traditional housing at Richmond Hill. To the south and east lie the predominantly commercial warehousing and industrial uses of the Aire Valley, such as Vickers Oils and Allied Glass. The majority of the site lies in flood risk zone 1, but parts of the site lie in flood risk zones 2 and 3. To the north lies the recent Echo residential development (14 storeys). Local heritage assets include the Grade I listed St. Saviours Church, Grade II listed Boyds Mill, and the Grade II listed St. Hilda's Church. To the north west lies the Rose Wharf (Grade II listed) offices and its car park. To the south east lies a cleared site at the junction with South Accommodation Road and the A63 Pontefract Lane, currently in use as unauthorised external storage (the occupier is due to vacate the site next month).
- 3.2 The site lies within the designated Aire Valley Leeds Urban Eco-Settlement. The scheme has potential to contribute to the planned new housing provision (over 6500 homes) and place-making opportunities for this area. The site also has potential to connect to the South Bank by linking over the River Aire to the Trans Pennine Trail.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 Over the last ten years, new residential apartments and listed building conversions have been built along East Street, such as Robert's Wharf, East Street Mills and Echo. Offices at Rose Wharf also add to the mix of uses and activity along East Street. To the north, residential refurbishment projects at Saxton by Urban Splash have taken place. The site also faces the now cleared former Hydro Aluminium site, which was the subject of planning permission reference 06/02364/FU for a mixed use flats and offices scheme, which has now expired. The neighbouring site to Low Fold to the south east previously benefited from planning permission for a 13 storey residential development for 229 flats (ref. 20/526/05/FU), now expired.
- 4.2 Low Fold 20/132/05/OT Outline application to layout access and erect 842 flats, offices and A1/A2/A3/A4 uses with 1067 car parking spaces. The application was approved in principle at Plans Panel (City Centre) 26 April 2007 subject to the completion of the Section 106 agreement. The agreement was not signed by the applicant, and therefore the application was finally disposed of on 29 June 2009
- 4.3 Low Fold 20/133/05/OT Outline application to layout access and erect 747 flats offices and A1/A3 retail space with 781 car parking spaces. The application was finally disposed of on 03 June 2008.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

- 5.1 Pre-application meetings were held with the developer and their professional team in late 2014.
- 5.2 City and Hunslet Ward and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward Members were consulted by email on 20 November 2014 regarding the initial pre-application scheme. Councillor Maureen Ingham (Burmantofts and Richmond Hill) welcomed more details regarding the proposed bridge link over the River Aire.
- 5.3 Citu presented their initial proposal to Councillors at City Plans Panel on 14 December 2014. Members were generally supportive of the proposal but raised the following matters:
- the energy efficient aspects of the proposal
 - the inclusion of "back to backs" within the scheme
 - the proposed materials and the need for further information on this
 - the need to ensure the proposals did not add to existing road congestion and the need to consider the use of river taxis
 - the importance of the delivery of the bridge link

In relation to the specific issues raised in the officer report, the following responses were provided by Members:

- that Members agreed that the proposed use of the site for a residential scheme and the mix of dwellings proposed would be appropriate
- that on the quality of the homes proposed, these were considered to be very good in respect of space standards, energy efficiency and sustainable construction, however further consideration was required of the proposed finishing materials
- that the balance of private amenity space, communal residents' amenity space and public realm provision was appropriate for the mix of dwellings proposed however in respect of affordable housing provision, the 3% proposed was considered to be an initial offer and needs to be justified against the Councils normal affordable housing policy

- on privacy and overlooking, there was a need to explore the balance between the gaps created through the design of the scheme
- that given the wide road infrastructure between the site and the scale of the nearby 14 storey Echo flats, that the scale of the proposed development was considered to be appropriate at this gateway location
- to note Members' views on the necessity of the bridge to connect the development to surrounding communities and facilities
- that subject to the agreement of Transport Development Services (to ensure there would be no adverse impact on highways safety or amenities) that the proposed level of car parking was considered to be acceptable
- the need for affordable housing provision at an acceptable level

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

6.1 Planning application publicity consisted of:

6.1.1 Site Notice posted 13.02.2015

6.1.2 Press Notice published 05.03.2015

6.1.3 City and Hunslet and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward Councillors consulted by email 9.03.2015

6.2 Leeds Civic Trust support the application proposal for the following reasons:

- the scheme includes high quality family housing
- the layout of the blocks and the open space provision are excellent
- the use of taller buildings to shield the site from the noise of the nearby road is a sensible response to the location.
- The Trust believes that the proposed footbridge over the river, which would connect the scheme with Leeds Dock, is an integral part of the scheme. We hope that Citu will do everything in its power to ensure that the bridge is constructed at the same time as this scheme - the applicant deserves the support of the City Council and other agencies in ensuring this happens. Although the city centre lies within walking distance, there are few shops or community amenities in the immediate area, this makes provision of a bridge link to Leeds Dock more essential. The provision of shops and other community amenities will ensure this area is attractive to families and other long stay residents.
- Leeds Civic Trust congratulate the applicant on a brave proposal for a difficult site

7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

7.1 Statutory:

7.1.1 LCC Transport Development Services

The proposals are acceptable in principle. The site will need to be integrated with the existing pedestrian and cycle network and the pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the Aire is considered essential. Further information on the bridge is required. The access junction will need to include a link with the existing cycle facilities at the A61/A63 signalised junction and the applicant has shown this on the submitted plans. The access road would be designed and constructed to adoptable standards. The applicant needs to investigate the possibility of providing Car Club spaces on the access road. Additional cycle parking locations should be considered and more detailed drawings demonstrating that there is sufficient space are required. Motorcycle parking locations also need to be shown. The junction modelling indicates

that there will be queuing back to upstream junctions; mitigating measures need to be identified. The access road, Low Fold, is adopted for approximately 100m from the junction with South Accommodation Road. The Transport Assessment acknowledges that the full length of the access road would need to be constructed to adoptable standards. The proposals will require some redundant areas of highway to be formally stopped-up. However, the applicant has been advised that the full length of access road up to the lower car park entry would form part of the adopted highway. The drawing will need to be revised to indicate this.

Buses - there is a bus stop outside the site frontage that is served by the 61 and 86A bus routes. The 61 is an hourly daytime service that travels towards Burmantofts and Harehills whilst the 86A is an hourly evening service from Bramley and Armley to St. James's hospital. There are stops on Easy Road for services in the opposite direction. Although within a 5 minute walking distance, these routes involves using several controlled Toucan crossings of the busy and wide A61/ A63 junction.

Stops for the 62/62A services are also on Easy Road. These provide a bus service to the city centre via Cross Green at a 30 minute frequency during the weekday daytime. The Transport Assessment also identifies bus stops for the 28 service on Clarence Road which are beyond a 5 minute walk distance without the bridge. There are 3 services per hour during weekday daytime periods. Leeds Dock will also be served by a CityBus (South) service which will provide a link with Leeds rail station.

The combined services within a 5 minute walk are below the requirements of the Core Strategy. However on the basis that (a) a pedestrian/ cycle bridge will be provided over the River Aire, and (b) the site is within walking distance of the city centre for able bodied pedestrians, the existing public transport provision would be appropriate.

Walking and Cycling

There are existing Toucan crossings to the east of the access junction that will assist cyclists crossing the A61/ A63 junction and connecting with the cycle route along the A63 Pontefract Lane. It will also provide access to the emerging employment opportunities in the Aire Valley. The access drawing should show a cycle lane and advanced stop line thereby connecting the access road with these existing facilities.

The applicant has been asked to examine the walking and cycling routes to local facilities (such as shops, schools and medical facilities) in the Transport Assessment. The pedestrian route to Richmond Hill Primary School requires the use of controlled crossings of the A63. There are dropped kerbs on this route so no additional improvements are required. The most direct pedestrian route to Mount St. Mary's High School would use Ellerby Road. This has narrow and incomplete footways. The shortest pedestrian route to the doctor's surgery and pharmacy on Upper Accommodation Road would be via Ellerby Lane. There is an improvement scheme for Ellerby Road/ Ellerby Lane which includes the provision of continuous 2m footways on both sides of Ellerby Road.

The proposed River Aire bridge will provide a link to the existing cycle route along the south side of the river and facilities south of the Aire including the proposed Ruth Gorse Academy on Black Bull Street. This would be within walking distance of the site with the bridge in place. However, no preliminary design information of the bridge has been provided, such as details of ramps/ steps or how it would tie-in with the site and the towpath route on the south side. It is also noted that the submitted drawings refer to a "future bridge" and that it would be subject to a separate planning application. However, the bridge is considered essential in making the site accessible – particularly in terms of education and public transport – and further

information is required. This should include feasibility/ land take requirements and timescales.

The internal layout should include a signed cycle route along Low Fold between the proposed bridge and the Toucan crossing at the A61 South Accommodation Road. Low Fold is an existing spur to the site directly off the signalised A61/ A63 gyratory. This would provide the single vehicle access to the site. Whilst a second vehicular access would normally be required for a scheme of this size, a single access is acceptable given the site constraints and the ratio of apartments to houses.

There is a proposal for a 5.5m access road with 2m wide pedestrian routes delineated with a 30mm upstand kerb. The revised layout is appropriate for a low speed environment which is expected to be used by pedestrians and cyclists. The Street Design Guide gives advice on features that would restrain speeds (pp31-35) such as localised widening with a cycle by-pass. A ramped entry treatment would also be required to inform drivers that they are entering a reduced speed environment.

A Traffic Regulation Order will be required along Low Fold. The access road will need to have waiting restrictions otherwise it will be used for on-street parking to the detriment of pedestrians and cyclists.

The full length of the access road would be constructed to adoptable standards and offered for adoption under Section 38 of the Highways Act. The layout has been forwarded to the adoption team for comment.

The speed limit for the access road should be no higher than 20mph in accordance with the Street Design Guide. For the avoidance of doubt the cost of road markings, signage and appropriate speed limit Orders will be fully funded by the developer (inclusive of staff fees and legal costs).

The layout can accommodate the turning manoeuvres of a large refuse vehicle. The requested swept paths of the refuse vehicle on the access road and the internal car parks have been provided and are acceptable.

The main concern relates to servicing and deliveries. Given the site layout, parking area access points and the number of properties, there is likely to be demand for vehicle access onto the pedestrian routes that run alongside the properties. The means by which this will be managed needs to be set out. As explained at the recent meeting, a permanent management presence is the only way that it can be ensured that the bollards to these areas are lowered only when required. This will need to be set out in an agreed Management Statement which will be conditioned.

In terms of traffic impact the apartment and town house trip rates are similar to those agreed in the assessment of the approved Otter Island scheme (13/05566/FU). The traffic distribution and assignment based on census data is also considered reasonable.

It was agreed that capacity assessments would only be required at the signalised A61 South Accommodation Road/ A63 Knowsthorpe Crescent junction. As requested, the applicant has used the Leeds Transport Model data to identify traffic growth from the 2014 survey year to the 2021 assessment year. This includes major developments in the City Centre and the Aire Valley as well as the Aire Valley Park and Ride site.

There were concerns raised about the increase in traffic queues predicted on the signalised South Accommodation Road junctions as a result of the introduction of an

additional signalised access. Urban Traffic Control (UTC) have advised that the signal timings can be adjusted to largely mitigate the impact of the access and no off-site improvements are required beyond the immediate access. Should the application be approved, UTC will need to advise whether temporary signals during construction are acceptable or whether the signalised access will be required prior to development commencing.

Car Parking - The townhouses will have either 3 or 4 bedrooms. The provision of 1 space per house is therefore below the benchmark set out in the Street Design Guide. It is recognised that part of the site is within the city centre boundary and is likely to attract a lower proportion of 2 car households. There is also a significant barrier to cross in the A61/ A63 gyratory for residents to reach the nearest uncontrolled on-street spaces in Richmond Hill such as Dial Street and Easy Road. However, further justification is required that the level of parking will not create problems on surrounding streets. The applicant has provided census data of car ownership in the area/ in similar locations and a scale drawing showing the on-street parking, including, TRO restrictions, within 800m of the site. However, Highways officers remain concerned that visitor parking may lead to on-street parking issues. There is no visitor parking proposed, which is not satisfactorily addressed in the Transport Assessment. Given the inclusion of 3 and 4 bed family housing, there will be visitor demand particularly at weekends. A suggestion that visitors will use the Leeds Dock car park is not considered realistic. The other suggestion that visitors could use a mobile phone app to identify spaces that are not in use does not appear practical. Presumably spaces will be individually allocated – how therefore can these spaces then be used by visitors? How will the return time of residents and duration of visitor stays be known? Visitor parking should be provided and details shown on a revised drawing although a reduction from the starting point in the Street Design Guide would be appropriate

There would be 97 spaces for the 162 apartments – a 60% level of provision. This reflects the historic apartment provision in the East Street corridor, and is considered the minimum level given the location on the fringe of the City Centre. Details need to be provided as to how these spaces will be allocated, which can be agreed by condition

Each car parking space will have an electricity supply so that an electric vehicle charging point can be readily installed.

Given the number of residents it is considered that two Car Club spaces should be provided on the access road. The applicant should contact the current car club operator and TravelWise; they will also be able to advise on the likely costs of the package for residents membership and trial use. This should be secured via the Section 106 agreement.

Cycles - The cycle parking provision of one space per dwelling is appropriate.

7.1.2 Canals and Rivers Trust

No objection subject to conditions regarding prevention of contamination, landscaping and details of foundations. The Canals and River Trust would need to be involved in as a key consultee pre-application discussions regarding any future bridge.

7.1.3 Environment Agency

Objection on the grounds that the scheme would unacceptably increase flood risk. The latest modelling carried out for the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme shows that the site would be located in Flood Zone 1. However, the EA have not yet agreed this

latest modelling, so that it can be adopted and become the definitive EA Flood Map. The applicant is in discussions directly with the EA to agree which data should be used for this scheme, and whether additional compensatory flood storage is required in the scheme design. Plans Panel will be updated verbally on the outcome of these discussions.

7.1.4 Coal Authority

No objection subject to condition regarding intrusive site investigation works to be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues on the site.

7.2 Non-statutory:

7.2.1 LCC Flood Risk Management

No objection subject to condition regarding details of surface water drainage

7.2.2 LCC Public Rights of Way

There is an historic riverside footpath running alongside the frontage of this development. Public access to this route is currently severely restricted but we would like to see it incorporated into the broad public green promenade. Further details and designs for paths through this landscaped area would be appreciated, however in the meantime we would request that the path should link southwards to the existing path beneath Richmond Bridge and north east back to East Street. The potential bridge across the River Aire is of great interest as it would improve the accessibility of this development for walking and cycling, because it would provide a direct link to the Trans Pennine Trail/National Cycle Network Route on the opposite bank. This would then offer a mostly traffic free route into Leeds City Centre.

7.2.3 LCC Environmental Protection

Environmental Health officers have assessed the submitted reports and sought further clarification regarding noise, air quality and industrial odour issues.

7.2.4 LCC Nature Conservation Officer

The inclusion of an ecology area at the eastern end of the site is positive. This area will be designed through appropriate fencing (livestock post-and-wire) and dense planting to exclude the public. This will also allow a suitable location for an artificial otter holt. The soft landscaping to the river frontage is also supported but we should request more details of how this will be achieved in relation to the riverside terracing/riparian planting – the main objective for this should be providing biodiversity features (to off-set loss of riverside trees) and will need specialist long-term management. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity), Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (to include an artificial otter holt, and monitoring and management of biodiversity features by a specialist ecological company), and the eradication of non-native species would be required by condition.

7.2.5 Yorkshire Water – no comments at time of writing

7.2.6 LCC Waste Management

No objection, however good management of waste facilities will be required as the size of the facilities fall below the Council's usual standards

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

8.1 Development Plan

8.1.1 Leeds Core Strategy 2014

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 Policies would include:

GP5 all relevant planning considerations
BD2 new buildings
T7A cycle parking
T7B motorcycle parking
T24 Car parking provision
LD1 landscaping

The Low Fold site is currently allocated for employment uses under Saved UDPR Policy EC3:C.

Relevant Core Strategy Policies include:

Spatial Policy 4 – Identifies the Aire Valley Leeds as a Regeneration Priority Programme Area. Priority will be given to developments that include housing quality, affordability and choice, improve access to employment and skills development, enhance green infrastructure and greenspace, upgrade the local business environment and improve local facilities and services. Emerging work on the draft Aire Valley Area Action Plan has proposed the site as a housing allocation which would make a significant contribution towards meeting the area's requirement to provide 6,500 dwellings. This allocation was approved at Executive Board in February 2015 as the basis for consultation on the publication draft version of the plan. Issues relating to the loss of employment land (based on the existing allocation) are discussed in the appraisal section of this report.

Spatial Policy 5 – Sets out the broad principles for development in the Aire Valley Regeneration Priority Programme Area including targets for housing (6,500 units) and employment land (250 ha) specific to the area.

Spatial Policy 7 – Sets out the spatial distribution of the district wide housing requirement between Housing Market Characteristic Area. The Low Fold site is in the Inner Area with a requirement to provide 10,000 units (2012-28)

Spatial Policy 8 states that training/skills and job creation initiatives would be supported by planning agreements linked to the implementation of appropriate developments given planning permission.

Spatial Policy 11 – Transport Investment Priorities – includes a priority related to improved facilities for pedestrians to promote safety and accessibility, particularly connectivity between the edges of the City Centre and the City Centre itself.

Policy CC3: Improving connectivity between the City Centre and neighbouring communities – provide and improve routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods to improve access and make walking and cycling easier.

Spatial Policy 13 – Strategic Green Infrastructure – The River Aire corridor is part of the GI network described in the policy. The applicant will also need to address Policy G1 (green infrastructure) and G9 (biodiversity).

Policy H2 – New housing development on non-allocated sites & Policy T2 accessibility requirements – refers the capacity of infrastructure and accessibility standards in Appendix 3. Links to local shops, primary schools, secondary schools, parks and employment locations are important.

Policy H3 – Density of development. A minimum density target of 65 dwellings per hectare is set for edge of centre locations.

Policy H4 says that developments should include an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to address needs measured over the long-term taking into account the nature of the development and character of the location.

Policy H5 – Affordable Housing. The site lies within Affordable Housing Zone 3 on Map 12 of the Core Strategy. According to the policy, the affordable housing requirement would be 5% of the total number of units, with 40% for households on lower quartile earnings and 60% for households on lower decile earnings

Policy EC3 Safeguarding existing employment land and industrial areas.

Policy G4 – Open space requirements. Outside the City Centre the normal requirement is 80 sqm per dwelling.

Policy G9 Biodiversity improvements

Policies EN1 & EN2. Policy set targets for CO2 reduction and sustainable design & construction, including Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.

Policies EN4 District Heating. This site is not within the areas identified as having most potential in the Aire Valley & City Centre Energy Masterplan.

Policy EN5 – flood risk. A flood risk assessment and sequential test would be required as some of site lies in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Housing is proposed in Zone 3 and therefore the exceptions test would also be required. The applicant would need to consider the layout of site and potential for locating green space in the in higher flood risk zones in accordance with NPPG advice.

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.

8.1.3 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013

The Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document (Local Plan) is part of the Local Development Framework. The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, like minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way. Policies regarding flood risk, drainage, air quality, trees, and land contamination are relevant to this proposal. The site is within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for Coal (Minerals 3) and partly within Minerals Safeguarding Area for Sand & Gravel (Minerals 2).

8.2 **Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

SPD Street Design Guide
SPD Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions
SPD Travel Plans
SPD Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction
SPD Biodiversity and Waterfront Development
SPG Neighbourhoods for Living
SPG Leeds Waterfront Strategy

5.6 **Other material considerations**

5.6.1 **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” gives a strong foundation to improving the quality of housing and ‘liveability’ of places delivered under this ambitious programme for the city.

5.6.2 **Vision for Leeds 2011-2030**

The vision 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.

5.6.3 **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.

5.6.4 **The Leeds Standard**

The Leeds Standard was adopted by the Council’s Executive Board on 17 September 2014. The aim of the Leeds Standard is 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.

8.3 **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 development process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Governments 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.
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.

The NPPF states that LPA's should recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres (para 23). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 49).

The NPPF states that local authorities should deliver a wide choice of homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (para 50).

Section 7 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important that design is inclusive and of high quality. Key principles include:

- Establishing a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history;
- Reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 9.1 Principle of use
- 9.2 Design
- 9.3 Landscaping, public realm/open space and biodiversity
- 9.4 Amenity of future residents
- 9.5 Highways and transportation
- 9.6 Flood risk
- 9.7 Sustainability
- 9.8 Planning obligations

10.0 APPRAISAL

10.1 Principle of use

- 10.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, the Leeds Core Strategy, and the emerging Aire Valley Area Action Plan would support a residential development in this edge of City Centre location, as a major contribution to housing in the Aire Valley.
- 10.1.2 Policy EC3 safeguards existing employment land and industrial areas unless specific criteria are met. As the site is allocated for employment, the criteria set out in Part A of the policy would need to be addressed. This is not a site where office development would be specifically encouraged as it is not in a designated centre. This would leave

industrial/warehousing development as the only potential alternative use for the site. Given the number of planning permissions / allocations for employment in the wider Aire Valley Urban Eco-Settlement area on large sites, this site is not considered necessary to meeting the overall employment targets, but can make a valuable contribution to meeting housing targets in the Aire Valley. The site is not in an area of employment shortfall so part B of the policy does not apply. The overall benefits of a sustainable housing development at this site are considered to outweigh employment land policy provisions in this case.

10.1.3 Core Strategy Policy H4 requires residential development to provide a mix of unit types including one, two and three-bed accommodation to meet housing needs over the long term. The application proposes 52% flats and 48% houses which falls slightly below the minimum of 50% houses set out in Table H4. However, taking into account the site location on the edge of the city centre and the fact that 10% of the site area lies within the city centre boundary (where a mix of house/flats types is not required), it is considered that the proposed mix of houses and flats is appropriate. In terms of dwelling size the proposed mix is as follows: 1 bed (15%); 2 bed (37%); 3 bed (33%); 4+ bed (15%). These proportions all fall within the minimum and maximum proportions of each dwelling size specified in Table H4.

10.1.4 Do Members agree that the proposed use of the site for a residential scheme is appropriate?

10.1.5 Do Members agree that, on balance, the proposed mix of units is appropriate for this edge of City Centre location?

10.2 Design

10.2.1 The topography of the site and the varied storey heights would also allow daylight and sunlight into the courtyards in varying degrees throughout the year, to a level that is considered appropriate to this urban City Centre context, taking account of the heights of nearby buildings and spaces between them and the proposal. The townhouses would be three storeys along the riverside, rising to four storeys within the site. The tallest elements of the proposal would be the apartment blocks along East Street at 7, 8 and 9 storeys respectively. Given the wide road infrastructure between the site and the scale of the nearby 14 storey Echo flats, the scale and distribution of heights around the proposed development is considered appropriate at this road gateway and riverside location.

10.2.2 The spaces between the buildings and the scale of the inner courtyard terraces are comparable to the spatial qualities of typical City Centre streets:

- Park Row is 15m wide with building to space width ratio of 1:1.06-2.4 (4-9 storeys)
- St Pauls Street is 10m wide with a building to space width ratio of 1:1.2-2.8 (3-7 storeys)
- York Place is 10m wide with a building space to width ratio of 1:1.2-1.6 (3-4 storeys)
- King Edward Street is 10m wide with a building space to width ratio of 1:1.6-1.2 (3-4 Storeys)
- Commercial Street is 10m wide with building to space width ratio of 1:0.8-1.2 (2-4 storeys)
- Kirkgate is 14m wide with building to space width ratio of 1:0.86-1.14 (3-5 storeys)
- Brewery Walk is 9m wide with building to space width ratio of 5-9 storeys 1:1.88-4.22

The 10m wide Low Fold courtyards at 3-4 storeys with a building height to street width ratio of 1:1-1.2 would be in keeping with typical City Centre urban grain. Given the pedestrianised qualities of the spaces and overall high landscape quality this is considered appropriate for a housing scheme in this location.

10.2.3 Passivhaus principles including maximising solar gain and natural light lead to the modern form and appearance of the proposed buildings. The buildings would feature a simple and ordered architecture, with crisp detailing, such as large historic mill-scale windows with deep reveals, and shutters which provide shade and add visual interest. The proposed buildings feature a range of materials with a variety of different textures from solid and perforated black or red metal cladding systems, grey Eternit cement cladding, and black or natural timber products.

10.2.4 The roadside elevation of the flats blocks would feature a framework which would support appropriate climbing plants. This would provide a distinctive softening and contrasting feature to the grey/black cladding. The scale of the roadside elevation would also be broken up by open slots through the building. These features would also add visual interest to the façade.

10.2.5 It is considered that the proposed building design and materials would complement the changing industrial character of the area, with the timber elements providing a contrast to the grey, black and dark red of the anodised metal and Eternit cladding. Overall, it is considered that the proposed buildings would create a unique sense of place and identity for the site, and offers a distinctive new character to the area.

10.2.6 Do Members agree that the proposed layout, heights, form and architectural treatment and materials are acceptable?

10.3 Landscaping, open space and biodiversity

10.3.1 The name “Low Fold” derives from the shape of land, a *fold* being a significant geological feature at this site. At its steepest, the level change from the east of the site along South Accommodation Road to the west (River Aire) is 12m in total, made up of a steep slope, shallower sloping plateau and then a further 2-3m drop at the river’s edge. The proposal would respond to existing landform of the area to create a hierarchy of amenity spaces:

- Public accessibility to the greened public realm around the site including the riverside at ground level
- Communal courtyard spaces between the groups of terrace houses, creating attractive and social spaces for residents
- The houses would benefit from private roof gardens and the flats would benefit from communal roof gardens.

10.3.2 Tree planting will comprise a mixture of native and ornamental tree species throughout the site. The public realm benefits of the scheme are a landscaped buffer including tree planting to South Accommodation Road along the full length of the site frontage. The landscaping proposal would combine bold swathes of ornamental herbaceous perennial planting, native and prairie grasses, and shrub planting with sweeping bands of pathway and street furniture would animate and give interest to the different character areas of the scheme. The riverside would retain a naturalised and varied river edge providing a meandering and sloped set of terraces.

10.3.3 The sculptural ‘Fold’ feature, a high quality cast concrete undulation weaves its way through planting and paving. The feature is a seat and a visual connector linking

different character spaces throughout the landscaped public realm. The 'Fold' varies in height from 750mm to ground level and its bold line would be continued by planting and matching gravel bands. A lighting scheme to highlight features, routes and tree canopies would give an attractive and safe environment at night. Exact details of the lighting scheme would be controlled by condition.

- 10.3.4 In terms of movement & accessibility, the site features a steep level change and all public realm areas would be compliant with British Standard 8300:2009 +A1:2010. Ramps and steps would be provided in accordance with the British Standard and level access routes would be provided to all buildings and to the riverside. Circular level walking routes have been provided where possible given the topography of the site, and there is also 2 informal play areas, a 400m running/circuit training route, sprint lawn and trim trail equipment. Low maintenance vandal resistant seating is proposed, combining linear hardwood beam benches on steel supports (including backrest and arms where required) with the high quality concrete 'Fold Feature for informal seating.
- 10.3.5 An integral part of the proposed landscape strategy would be the promotion of biodiversity and mitigation of any adverse effects from the development. The landscape strategy proposes to enhance the ecological value of the site through the introduction and management of a diversity of habitats within the roof gardens, public realm and the riverside embankment. The scheme proposal would enhance the biodiversity opportunities for the River Aire Corridor, a habitat for riparian flora and fauna including retained existing trees, local native wildflowers and herbaceous planting. The riverside would be re-profiled reducing the river wall in places to allow for a sloped set of terraces retained by Willow hurdles in accordance with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust proposals for the River Aire Corridor. The embankment would be allowed to colonise naturally in some areas with new areas of wildflower and marginal plug planting mixed with areas of native riparian shrubs and grasses to create a variety of habitats for flora and fauna to develop and soften the hard edge of the edge of city centre site. Items such as colourful bird boxes fixed to proposed trees and other biodiversity enhancements such as the plug planting of local species of importance would be undertaken. An area to the south of the riverside would be fenced with timber and stock proof wire to prevent public access and allow the habitat to continue to develop naturally and would have potential for an artificial otter holt if appropriate in the future. It is considered that the scheme would make appropriate provision for biodiversity enhancement in a riverside corridor location.
- 10.3.6 The paving material for the site will be of an appropriate quality for an important public realm with high quality concrete/stone aggregate finishes to the ground plane and highlights of hardwood and stone to the terraces. The materials would be used to define a legible hierarchy of surfaces and tie together the different character areas of the Fold landscape with sweeping paths. Elongated planks of high quality concrete aggregate sett paving would enhance the public realm and roof terraces providing a continuous visual reference at all landscape amenity levels.
- 10.3.7 Through the provision of a broad landscaped riverside walkway for the full length of this site, there is potential for onward connection subject to the future redevelopment of the adjoining sites and respective landowners' agreement. The scheme would therefore meet Core Strategy Spatial Policy 13 – Strategic Green Infrastructure – The River Aire corridor is part of the Green Infrastructure network described in the policy. The proposals therefore address the requirements set out in Policy G1 (green infrastructure) and G9 (biodiversity).
- 10.3.8 Core Strategy Policy G4 requires on site provision of green space of 80 square metres per residential unit for development sites of 10 or more dwellings that are

outside the City Centre. The site is located within 720 metres of a community park (Bow Street Recreation Ground) but there are deficiencies in provision of all green space types (except children's equipped play) in City and Hunslet Ward, and therefore on-site provision is required. Policy G5 applies within the City Centre with a requirement for open space provision equivalent to 0.41 hectares per 1,000 population. . Approximately 10% of the red line boundary of this site is located within the City Centre boundary. If the Policy G4 requirements are applied to the site the on-site green space requirement would be 2.5 hectares. If the Policy G5 requirements are applied it would be 0.22 hectares. Applying the requirements pro-rata based on 90% of the site area lying outside the City Centre and 10% within, the green space on-site requirement is calculated to be 2.27 hectares. Proposed provision would be in excess of the requirement based solely on Policy G5 but well below the requirement based on Policy G4 or the pro-rata figure based on the area of site within and outside the City Centre. However, even the pro-rata requirement amounts to about 80% of the red line site area which is undeliverable on this site based on a development of the type of density proposed. The overall nature, density and housing type of the scheme is considered appropriate given the site characteristics and location on the edge of the City Centre. In this case the public space provided would exceed the requirement that would be asked for if the proposals were assessed under Policy G5, on the basis that it would be impractical to use Policy G4 for this particular scheme.

10.3.9 The overall approach to landscaping, amenity space and public realm would offer a good standard of landscape amenity for residents, make use of sustainable drainage techniques, enhance the biodiversity value of the River Aire corridor, provide an appropriate level of landscaped publicly accessible open space, and contribute positively to the overall distinctive sense of place at the site.

10.3.10 Do Members agree that the proposal would provide appropriate high quality landscaped public realm, a good standard of private amenity space, biodiversity opportunities and appropriate landscaped riverside setting?

10.4 Amenity of future residents

10.4.1 In the context of the recent Executive Board adoption of the "Leeds Standard" for the Council's own housing schemes, it is strongly encouraged that private developers also meet our aspirations for high quality, liveable homes in the City, particularly in relation to design quality, space standards and energy efficiency standards. This includes meeting the minimum Government and Homes and Community Agency (HCA) internal space standards. Although the applicant does not intend to seek accreditation under Code for Sustainable Homes this scheme would exceed the minimum space and energy efficiency requirements encouraged by the Council under the Leeds Standard.

10.4.2 The townhouses would be built above a concealed undercroft parking deck built into the change in levels across the site. Habitable accommodation would be at street level to give outlook, activity and surveillance to pedestrian routes. The townhouses would be single aspect, with private 5-8m long glazed covered courtyards to the rear, and a rooftop terrace. The covered glazed roofs to the rear of the properties would allow light into the rear of the dwellings and provide private all-weather amenity space, in addition to private outdoor space on the roof of each house. Although the townhouses are single aspect, they would each have access to a covered glazed atrium and a private external rooftop garden. It is considered that this arrangement along with the mix of 10m gaps to the main street aspect or open views across the river, combined with the proposed good internal space standards, would provide

acceptable amenities for future occupiers. There are 8 instances where there is a gap of 4m between buildings. In these cases, the windows would be arranged so that overlooking would be minimised. For example, where Block A faces Block B at such a distance, Block B features no windows. Where Block D faces Block E, the windows in the facing elevation of Block D would be to the staircase only, with the open aspects to the side along the courtyard. This arrangement also increases natural surveillance obliquely along the courtyards. The open layouts of the houses mean that light would not be blocked (unless the resident wishes). The narrowing points have been designed to create a series of intimate courtyards rather than one long street. It is considered that this feature contributes positively to the character of the spaces, and on balance, given the edge of City Centre context, and the unique type of high density family housing being provided, it is considered that the accommodation would have appropriate size, outlook, level of privacy and natural light.

10.4.3 With regard to the distances between the site and its neighbours, at the eastern flank of Block T the boundary would be some 20m away from primary aspect windows. There are no aspects towards the boundaries on Blocks B and O to avoid any prejudice to future neighbouring development. At the site's south-eastern edge, Block P would feature living room and bedroom windows looking south and east across the site boundary onto the road over the redundant highway land to the south east. It is considered that in the more densely built character of an edge of City Centre location, the proposal would give appropriate space between buildings, and not have significantly adverse effects on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

10.4.4 Do Members agree on balance that in the context of a densely built edge of City Centre location, the proposal would give appropriate space between buildings, and that the new dwellings would feature an appropriate level of amenities in terms of daylight and sunlight, outlook and privacy?

10.4.5 Noise /industrial odour/air quality - the site lies close to the inner ring road and heavy industry at Allied Glass, which have the potential to cause noise, odour and air quality issues for any nearby residential uses – at the time of writing we are awaiting comments from Environmental Health on additional information submitted in response to officer clarification regarding the submitted reports. Members will be provided with a verbal update at Panel.

10.5 Highways and transportation

10.5.1 The scheme proposes one car parking space per house and 60% parking provision for the flat units. Car parking spaces would be rented rather than purchased, so residents could have more than one space if they require. The developer also proposes travel plan measures in order to encourage future residents to rely less on private car use, such as providing real-time public transport information and car sharing apps for each household to access. Secure cycle storage would be provided for each dwelling in a secure room in the basement.

10.5.2 The nearest primary school is Richmond Hill (10 minute walk) and the closest secondary schools are Mount St. Mary's (10 minute walk) and the Co-operative Academy in Burmantofts. The proposed Ruth Gorse Academy would be an 18 minute walk without a bridge, but around 10 minutes if accessibility were improved by a new pedestrian bridge over the River Aire to the South Bank. Local shops and services including sandwich shops, pharmacy and medical centre (Richmond Hill Medical Centre) are located at the junction of Ellerby Lane/Dial Street around 10 minutes walk to the northeast. Local play and park facilities are located off Bow Street at a 10

minute walk. Leeds Dock including a Tesco Express Store, restaurants, café, and a gym is situated south of the River Aire and can be accessed via an existing footbridge at Neptune Street via a 20 minute walk or an approximate 13 minute walk via South Accommodation Road and Clarence Road. Leeds city bus station and city centre retail and leisure facilities are approximately 1 mile (20 minutes walk) from the lower part of the access road. There are also frequent bus services along Hunslet Road within a 10 minute walk. Local bus facilities exist on Easy Road (10 mins walk) and South Accommodation Road (close to the site frontage) to the City Centre and beyond, but at lower frequency times than the Core Strategy recommends. Links to local shops, primary schools, secondary schools, parks and employment locations are important, and a river bridge would provide a much quicker link to the South Bank including the local shopping facilities at Leeds Dock, the proposed secondary school at Black Bull Street and the future City Centre Park.

- 10.5.3 Highways Officers have stated that the bridge is necessary to make the development acceptable (more than desirable) in terms of achieving accessibility to local facilities and public transport within a 5 minute walk time (Core Strategy Policy T2 appendix 3 – Table 2). However Members should note the availability of local services and facilities across East Street and the frequent bus services along Hunslet Road. Although the nature of the pedestrian journey to these facilities needs to be taken into account (across major highway infrastructure), it is considered that their availability questions the position that the river bridge is essential to make the development acceptable in accessibility terms. This matter is still being considered.

Highways have also expressed concern/comment regarding the lack of on-site visitor parking, the adequacy of the travel plan, the details of the design and stopping-up of the access road, delivery management and disabled accessibility around the site. At the time of writing officers are considering the applicant's responses to these issues, and Members will be provided with a verbal update at Panel.

10.6 Sustainability

- 10.6.1 The proposed buildings would be constructed to the highest building sustainability levels in and around Leeds City Centre. The scheme would not achieve all elements of the formally accredited standard set out in the adopted policy by meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 (CSH4), but in many areas the proposal would exceed the CSH4 and the Council's objectives for minimising energy use, and on-site renewable energy generation through photovoltaic cells.
- 10.6.2 The scheme has been designed along Passivhaus principles. The buildings have been designed to optimise solar gain and natural light into homes, for example the triple height lightwell angled southwards from the rooftop of each house. A Passivhaus is a building where the right temperature can be achieved solely by post-heating or post-cooling incoming fresh air, in order to achieve appropriate indoor air quality conditions without the need for additional recirculation of air. Passivhaus is a specific energy performance standard that delivers very high levels of energy efficiency, whilst the CSH and BREEAM are overarching sustainability assessment ratings which address a large number of environmental issues. These standards are not mutually exclusive - sub sections within these sustainability standards account for Energy and Carbon Dioxide emissions which are the most heavily weighted and most difficult to achieve. By adopting the Passivhaus 'fabric first' approach the scheme would be able to reduce the level of renewable energy interventions needed to deliver the higher level targets.

- 10.6.3 Policy EN1 requires new homes to be built to energy performance set out in CSH level 4. CSH level 4 requires improvement of 25% above building regulations requirements. The Fabric Energy Efficiency (FEE) requirement under CSH level 4 for a terrace house (that closest reflects the majority of dwellings at Low Fold) is $55\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{yr}$. The FEE requirement of levels 5 and 6 of CSH is $38\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{yr}$. The FEE at Low Fold houses is $20.8\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{yr}$ for type A, $27.3\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{yr}$ for type B and $29.9\text{kWh/m}^2/\text{yr}$ for type C. This represents a 62%, 50% and 46% improvement on CSH level 4 (the Council's minimum policy requirement).
- 10.6.4 The construction methodology as currently modelled minimises the space heating load. The district heat network heat load for the development would be met by a combination of solar photovoltaic cell and passive heat sources. This construction model takes into consideration the merits of air tightness and thermal insulation to achieve the appropriate u-values for floors, walls and roofs. Further, the junction details have been fully modelled to prevent heat loss and leakage at all interfaces. The result would be extremely thermally efficient buildings, which have an inherent lower energy demand. The applicant has experience of delivering thermally efficient, air tight buildings through delivery of the Greenhouse scheme in Leeds and the Little Kelham development in Sheffield. Thermal imaging testing and air tightness testing is deployed throughout construction stages to ensure design details are achieved during construction. This approach will far exceed current and 2016 proposed minimum building regulations, and reflect the requirements of Policy EN1 and 2 to reduce carbon emissions and achieve sustainable design at the proposed new development.
- 10.6.5 Reduction in onsite potable water use would be addressed through a variety of measures. Water efficient appliances would be specified as standard, with rainwater harvesting systems used where the relative water savings would be weighted against the energy load for pumping.
- 10.6.6 The proposal would incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) techniques. Surface profiles, porous paving, planting channels and the areas of biodiverse (intensive) green roofs would slow down the rate of surface water run-off from parts of the site. An investigation into the filtration rate of the site is underway and may present further opportunities. Exact details of the SUDS would be sought by planning condition.
- 10.6.7 The applicant is not seeking formal Code for Sustainable Homes or Passivhaus accreditation for Low Fold, however, an appropriately worded condition would control key headline indicators to ensure that the sustainability benefits are delivered. In addition, the overall development would also enable the delivery of new dwellings on a longstanding brownfield cleared site, representing efficient use of urban land in a sustainable location, make use of grey-water recycling and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), and employ measures to reduce reliance on the private car.
- 10.6.8 Do Members agree that the proposal represents a highly sustainable development in terms of its wider environmental benefits, in particular its energy efficient construction and ability to generate on-site renewable energy?**

10.7 Flood risk

- 10.7.1 The application site lies in Flood Risk Zones 1, 2 and 3. The proposed residential use is classed as 'more vulnerable' according to the flood risk vulnerability classification table set out in the NPPF technical guidance on flood risk. Therefore in accordance with the requirements set out in the NPPF (para 100) a flood risk sequential tests has

been submitted on behalf of the applicant and is considered acceptable. This demonstrates that no sequentially preferable sites within a lower flood risk are available to deliver this project on a site that is within the Aire Valley area as defined by the Core Strategy. Given housing development is proposed in Flood Zone 3, the exception test should also be applied in accordance with Table 3: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'compatibility' of the NPPG. Part A of the exception test requires demonstration that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk. The site is considered sustainable given its location on a brownfield site, within an identified regeneration area, built to high sustainability standards, accessible to pedestrians and cyclists and close to public transport links, the site is previously developed land, and subject to the agreement of an acceptable flood risk assessment by the Environment Agency, the proposal would adequately safeguard against potential flooding impact. These wider sustainability benefits are therefore considered to outweigh potential flood risk matters in this case.

10.8 Section 106 obligations

- 10.8.1 The pedestrian bridge over the River Aire does not form part of the formal planning application. Highway Officers have advised that the river bridge is considered essential to provide an acceptable standard of accessibility to the site. This matter is being considered further. Members should note that its delivery would enhance the connection of the site to facilities on the south side of the river so that it achieves the minimum accessibility standards set out by policy T2 of the Core Strategy. It would also have a wider connectivity and regeneration benefit in linking across the southern and eastern edge of the City Centre from Richmond Hill and Cross Green to the South Bank and Hunslet. These are material planning considerations. Spatial Policy 11 – Transport Investment Priorities includes a priority relating to improved facilities for pedestrians to promote safety and accessibility, particularly connectivity between the City Centre and its fringes. Policy CC3: Improving connectivity between the city centre and neighbouring communities requires development to provide and improve routes connecting the city centre with adjoining neighbourhoods to improve access and make walking and cycling easier. However these potential enhancements and the policy guidance need to be balanced against the availability of existing shops, facilities, play spaces and services within a 10 minute walking distance in Richmond Hill to the north and west of the site and the availability of frequent bus services on Hunslet Road, 10 minutes walk to the south of the site, before determining whether the river bridge connection (and its related significant costs) is an essential and reasonable requirement to make the proposal acceptable in accessibility terms in this case.
- 10.8.2 With regard to Policy H5, the site lies within Affordable Housing Zone 4 on Map 12 of the Core Strategy. According to the policy, the affordable housing requirement is 5% of units, 40% of these for households on lower quartile earnings and 60% for households on lower decile earnings. This would equate to 16 affordable housing units in total on this site. On the basis of the submitted offer, the applicant proposes to build 8 affordable housing units equivalent to 2.5% plus the delivery of a pedestrian/cycle bridge. The applicant has estimated that the delivery of the bridge would cost the equivalent of 2.5% affordable housing at this site. The applicant is therefore prepared to fund the delivery of the river bridge subject to a reduction in the normal affordable housing requirement. The applicant has submitted a feasibility study regarding the provision of a bridge which assesses the costs of providing 2.5% (8 units) on-site affordable housing and a bridge across the River Aire. According to their feasibility study the provision of the bridge would be equivalent to the cost of 2.5% (8 units) affordable housing on-site. Officers have taken advice from the Council's Bridges team and they have stated that the cost estimate for the bridge may be on the low side because there are unknown costs associated with the need for

third party landowner agreement, other consents and site investigations. Officers have instructed the Council's Asset Management service to independently assess the figures, and they are currently assessing whether the applicant's projected valuations are reasonable. Their assessment of the projected sales figures used in making the cost comparison will be updated verbally. The applicant has not provided an open book appraisal of profit generated by the scheme so it has not been possible to assess whether the developer could provide both a bridge and the appropriate level of affordable housing. If Members agree with the Highway Officers advise that the river bridge is considered essential to provide an acceptable standard of accessibility to the site then it is considered that a full viability assessment is required to demonstrate that the scheme cannot be delivered with the full amount of affordable housing and a river bridge.

10.8.6 Subject to the above considerations, the proposal would be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Council's adopted policies would result in the following necessary Section 106 matters:

- Affordable Housing – the provision of 5% affordable housing
- the provision of a publicly accessible pedestrian bridge across the River Aire
- Travel plan monitoring fee £3560
- Provision of 2 car club bays and £25, 000 car club trial provision
- Public access throughout the site
- Cooperation with local jobs and skills initiatives

10.8.7 Do Members agree that a bridge is necessary in planning terms and that a full viability appraisal would be required to demonstrate that the bridge and the full amount of affordable housing cannot be viably delivered as part of the scheme proposal?

11.0 CONCLUSION

Members are asked to consider the following matters in particular:

11.1 Do Members agree that a residential scheme is appropriate for this edge of City Centre brownfield site?

11.2 Do Members agree that the proposed mix of house and flat units is appropriate for this edge of City Centre location?

11.3 Do Members consider that the proposed layout, heights, design and architectural treatment and materials are acceptable?

11.4 Do Members agree that the proposal would provide appropriate high quality landscaped public realm, a good standard of private amenity space, biodiversity opportunities and appropriate landscaped riverside setting?

11.5 Do Members agree on balance that in the context of a densely built edge of City Centre location, the proposal would give appropriate space between buildings, and that the new dwellings would feature an appropriate level of amenities in terms of daylight and sunlight, outlook and privacy?

11.6 Do Members agree that the proposal represents a highly sustainable development in terms of its wider environmental benefits, in particular its energy efficient construction and ability to generate on-site renewable energy?

11.7 Do Members agree that a river bridge is necessary to make the proposal acceptable and that a full viability appraisal would be required to demonstrate that the bridge and the full amount of affordable housing cannot be delivered as part of the scheme proposal?

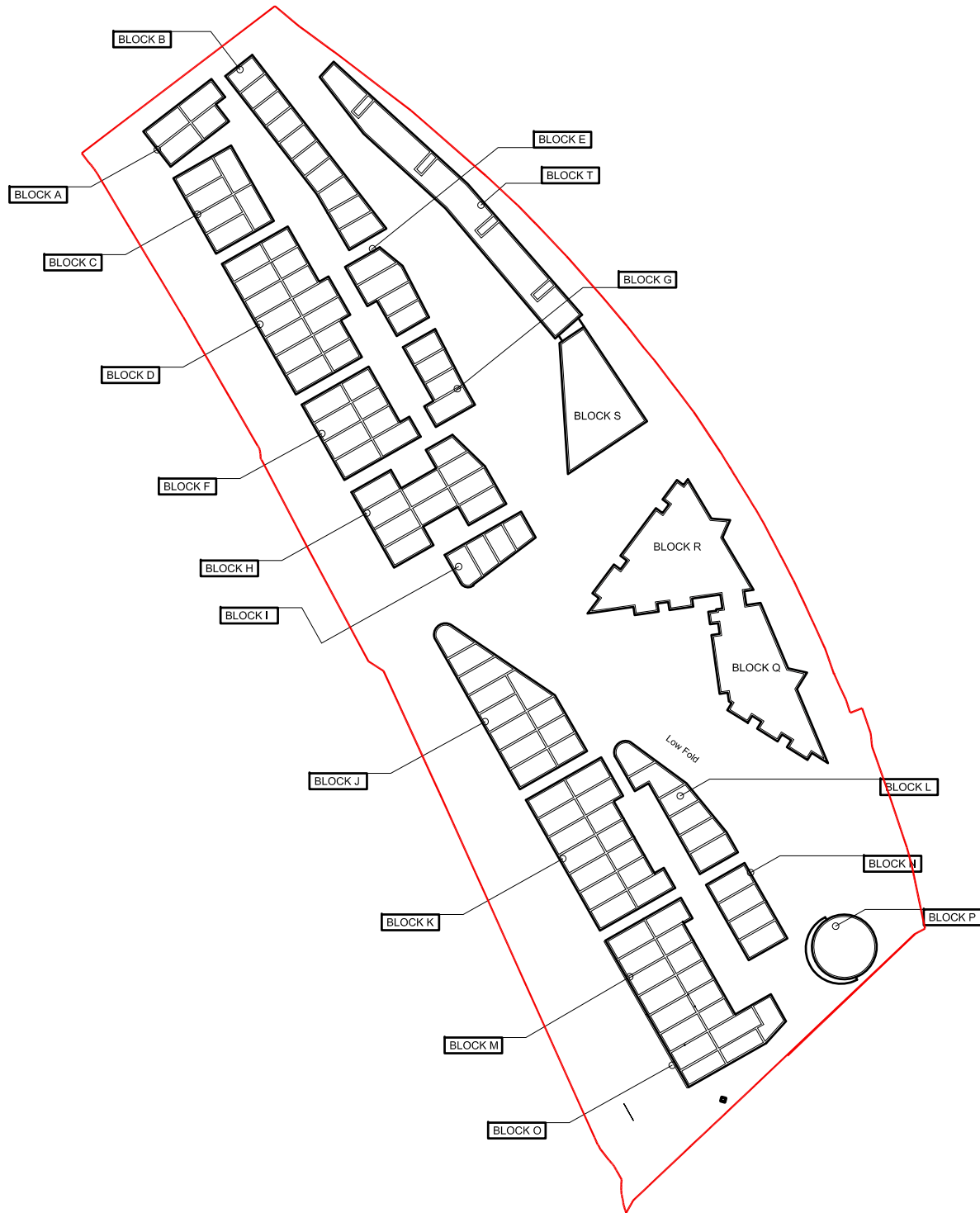
11.8 In summary, the following outstanding issues are also required to be resolved prior to an officer recommendation being brought back to Panel:

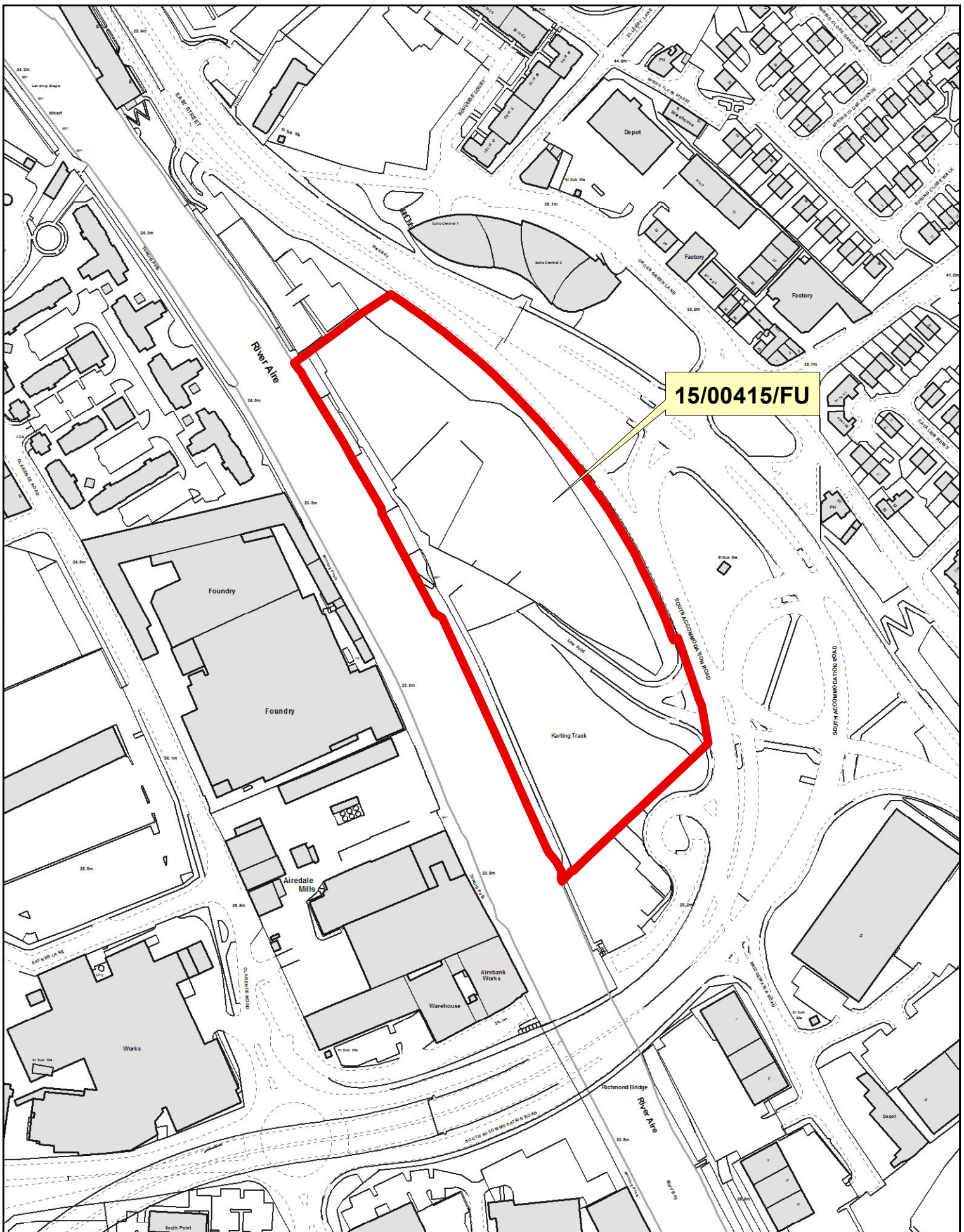
- Travel plan and measures
- Bridge provision
- Accessibility around the site
- Visitor parking
- Deliveries/drop-off management
- Noise
- Odour
- Air quality
- Flood risk
- Level of affordable housing required

Background Papers:

Application file 15/00415/FU

Appendix 1 Proposed site layout





15/00415/FU

CITY PLANS PANEL

