

Report of the Chief Planning Officer

Report to Development Plan Panel

Date: 20th May 2015

Subject: Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP) – Publication Draft Plan

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, City & Hunslet, Garforth & Swillington, Middleton Park, Temple Newsam.		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

- Members will recall that reports were tabled at the 16th December 2014 13th and 6th January 2015 Development Plan Panels (DPP), which specified that, the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP) will form part of the Development Plan for Leeds: the Local Development Framework (LDF) (or 'local plan'). The scope of the AVLAAP was established by the Executive Board in May 2005 to provide the future planning framework to guide the regeneration of an area of the Lower Aire Valley. Aire Valley Leeds (AVL) extends from Leeds City Centre south east to the M1 and beyond. This is a key strategic location for Leeds and the City Region as the location of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone (LEREZ) and includes a range of major development opportunities including the South Bank of the City Centre. The area contains over 400 hectares of development land which can help meet Leeds' need for housing and provide new jobs.
- Within this overall context, Spatial Policy 5 of the Core Strategy sets a minimum target to identify land for 6,500 new homes and 250 hectares of employment land. Consequently, the focus of the AAP is to deliver these priorities as part of an integrated framework. This also includes a focus upon the establishment of a safe, resilient, connected, low carbon and attractive environment, which together seek to enhance the unique character and strategic location of AVL.

3. Following consideration by the Development Plan Panel, Executive Board on the 11th February agreed the proposed site allocations for the Site Allocations Plan (SAP) and the AVLAAP, as a basis to prepare draft Publications Plans. The purpose of this report is to present the draft AVLAAP Publication Plan, consistent with the overall requirements of the Core Strategy and the scope of the AAP.

Recommendation

4. Development Plan Panel is invited to consider the AVLAAP Publication draft Plan and to recommend to the Executive Board, that the Plan is taken forward for Publication consultation.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 Following consideration by the Development Plan Panel, Executive Board on the 11th February agreed the proposed site allocations for the Site Allocations Plan (SAP) and the AVLAAP, as a basis to prepare draft Publications Plans. The purpose of this report is to present the AVLAAP Publication draft Plan, consistent with the overall requirements of the Core Strategy and the scope of the AAP. Members are therefore invited to consider the draft Plan and to recommend that this is taken forward for consultation in due course. The Publication draft AAP is attached to this report, together with a saved UDP Policies schedule (indicating what the Plan will replace), the draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Policies and site assessments, together with accompanying Plans (Strategic Plan, Thematic Plans, Area Plans, Hunslet Town Centre Boundary and the Policies Map [Map 13. Showing all designations and allocations applying in AVL, including NRWLP, saved UDP Policies & AAP Proposals, Map 14 – showing changes proposed in the AAP e.g. site allocations, green space, green infrastructure and transport proposals])

2.0 Background Information

Context

- 2.1 Members will recall that reports were tabled at the 16th December 2014, 13th and 6th January 2015 Development Plan Panels (DPP), which noted that, the AVLAAP will form part of the Development Plan for Leeds: the Local Development Framework (LDF) (or 'local plan'). The scope of the AVLAAP was established by the Executive Board in May 2005 to provide the future planning framework to guide the regeneration of an area of the Lower Aire Valley.
- 2.2 Following consideration of the proposed allocations at Executive Board on 11th February, there have been some changes to sites within the Plan area. This is a consequence of further work and additional information being received and these changes relate in the main to site capacities, 'allocations' to 'identified' sites, new sites with planning permission and the incorporation of housing within mix use sites.
- 2.3 A number of areas of technical and background work are currently being completed in support of the AAP. This includes the Sustainability Appraisal, the Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening and further information regarding site requirements. Consideration will also need to be given to the inclusion of sites within the AVLAAP for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people, subject to members consideration of the issue, in a separate report to DPP. This work will need to be completed prior to Publication consultation and any necessary adjustments made to the draft AAP, for consideration by Executive Board.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Spatial Policy 5 of the Core Strategy sets a target to identify land for a minimum of 6,500 new homes and 250 hectares of employment land. In seeking to deliver these priorities, the AVLAAP identifies site allocations for new homes and jobs, as part of an integrated framework, which incorporates:

- An overall Vision and objectives
- A Spatial Strategy and Plan wide Policies,
- Area Plans and Placemaking
- An infrastructure Delivery Plan.

A local and strategic opportunity for Leeds and the Leeds City Region

3.2 A key focus of the Plan is the delivery of a transformational vision for the area, linked to the Core Strategy and Best Council Plan, including Policies for economic growth, job creation & skills and training, new housing, the community infrastructure, transport connections and health. The basis of these principles is to provide an overall framework for thematic and Plan-wide Policies (Economy & Jobs, Homes, Healthy Communities, Transport & Connections, Green Infrastructure and Low Carbon Energy).

3.3 In taking this overall Policy framework forward, the AAP includes 5 Area Plans to underpin delivery at a local level. These areas are:

- South Bank
- East Bank, Richmond Hill & Cross Green
- Hunslet
- Central Aire Valley
- Skelton Gate

3.4 The purpose of this approach is to recognise the identities of existing communities, their unique characteristics and future opportunities, within the overall framework of AVL. The Plan identifies a range of challenges and opportunities for each area, as a basis to present a series of proposals (and site specific requirements) to tackle key issues. The focus of this is to ensure that common themes such as connectivity and placemaking are addressed and that as a whole these, component parts all contribute to the role and destination of AVL as an 'Urban Eco-Settlement'.

Planning for new Jobs & Homes (Sections 3.2 & 3.3 of the AAP)

3.5 In delivering economic growth and opportunities for job creation, a key focus of the Plan is the support (and to provide a wide planning framework for) the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone (LCREZ). Located within Central Aire Valley the ambition of the LCREZ is to provide 7,000 new jobs by 2025, focused upon the economic sectors of Health, Advanced Manufacturing, Low Carbon, Energy and Logistics. The zone is a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider Aire Valley, using the uplift generated, to support £550m of additional economic output by 2025. The LCREZ comprises of four large sites covering 142 ha. These are Newmarket Lane, Logic Leeds (Skelton Moor Farm), Temple Green and Thornes Farm. The AAP embraces these opportunities as part of the Plan as a whole and promotes improved public

transport, Park & Ride, walking & cycling, improved connectivity and wider integration through Green Infrastructure links.

- 3.6 In promoting other key opportunities for economic development and job growth within AVL, the Plan also incorporates site specific and area based proposals. These include Leeds South Bank (a major regeneration and development opportunity & new City Park at the heart of the City Centre), a series of identified sites for Office (including as part of mixed use sites) and General Employment (Tables 1 & 2, Section 3.2 of the AAP document), a number of allocated sites for Office (including as part of mixed use allocations) and General Employment (Tables 3 & 4, Section 3.2). Overall, through identified sites and allocations the Plan sets aside 255.6 ha of land for employment uses, which is above the 250 ha target set out in the Core Strategy. Within the context of these identified sites and allocations, through Policy AVL5 the Plan also seeks to improve the physical connectivity between communities and the location of job opportunities (through improved pedestrian, cycle links and public transport services) and via local employment agreements.
- 3.7 AVL is currently home to over 13,000 people, with the aim for an additional 6,500 (minimum) new homes over the Plan period (to 2028). The approach of the Plan to delivering opportunities for housing regeneration and growth, is through Identified sites and new allocations. Existing housing (and mixed use sites including housing) which have existing or recently expired planning permission (See Table 4, Section 3.3) are identified in the Plan. These sites include Hunslet Mills (AV42) and Yarn Street (AV43). In total Identified sites have potential to provide 1,842 dwellings.
- 3.8 In addition to identified sites, new housing development in AVL is focussed on five broad locations. Each of these is strategically important to delivering the overall housing requirement and to support Plan wide regeneration aspirations. The main locations for new housing development are as follows:
- The **South Bank** area (part of the wider proposed mixed use area to transform this key location in the City Centre, which also includes a new City Park),
 - **East Bank** area (along East Street from Marsh Lane to South Accommodation Road),
 - **Cross Green** (residential area, focussed on the redevelopment of the Copperfields College site),
 - **Hunslet Riverside** (south of the Inner Ring Road, on a number of brownfield sites, centred upon the listed Hunslet Mills),
 - **Skelton Gate** (the creation of a new sustainable community on the eastern edge of AVL, east of the M1, between the Temple Newsam Estate and the River Aire).
- 3.9 Based on identified housing sites and the capacity of housing and mixed use allocations (which incorporate housing), the total estimated capacity for the AAP is 7,830 dwellings against the minimum requirement of 6,500 dwellings. It should be noted that this figure is higher than the totals previously

presented to DPP and as a consequence of the view of members to identify further opportunities for housing where possible. This overall total and approach provides a degree of flexibility towards meeting the housing requirement (within the AVLAAP and across Leeds through the SAP). Table 5 (Section 3.3 of the AAP document), sets out the overall total and broad distribution within AVL. For cross reference, Table 6 identifies the number of new homes by HMCA, which make up the AVL area (City Centre, Inner Area and East Leeds).

- 3.10 Development Plans Panel (19th May 2015) considered a report on the need for the Site Allocations Plan (SAP) and Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP) to identify sites appropriate for older or disabled people. Without pre-empting the methodology of showing appropriate sites, the AVLAAP provides text on the provision of independent living but does not indicate the sites on the current set of plans. The plans will be updated, subject to agreement, for purposes of Executive Board and consultation.

Transport & Connections (Section 3.5 of the AAP)

- 3.11 The location of AVL in relation to the strategic transport network, supports the ambition to deliver large scale economic development. Within the context of the priorities set out in the West Yorkshire Transport Plan (LTP3) and the Core Strategy SP11, the transport strategy for AVL is guided by a number of key principles. These include: the need to deliver the transport network and infrastructure to support regeneration and growth, to minimise the need to travel by car, to connect communities in east and south Leeds to the job opportunities within AVL (by reducing barriers and creating pedestrian/cycle links), to plan the area to integrate key national and City Region transport proposals (including HS2 and the NGT Trolley bus system, to make better use of the rail and waterways network as a mode of transport for freight and enhance the role of the waterways network for leisure. Policy AV12 sets out proposals for Strategic Infrastructure and individual Area Plans incorporate local measures, to reflect the principles outlined above.

Green space & Green Infrastructure (Section 3.6 of the AAP)

- 3.12 The AAP provides a major opportunity to provide a connected network of spaces and places, which link the heart of the City to open countryside and the range of visitor attractions which lie along the waterways corridor. These multifunctional green spaces form an overall network of Green Infrastructure. Within this context, the focus of the Plan is to apply the principles set out in Policy G1 of the Core Strategy to the AVL area (See AAP Policy AVL13). An important consideration of this approach has been to ensure that the Green Infrastructure network helps to reinforce and establish local identity, incorporates both strategic and local connections and enhances development opportunities, rather than being a constraint.

Environment & Healthy and Thriving Communities (Sections 3.7 & 3.4 of the AAP)

- 3.13 The Plan encourages investment in maintaining and enhancing an attractive environment, through the effective management of waste (and the links to the adopted Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan) and the desire to establish

a network for District Heating (consistent with the principles set out in the Core Strategy EN4) set out in AAP Policy AVL17.

- 3.14 An integral component of the Plan, through the planning process, is the desire to tackle issues relating to Public Health. Green space provision and 'affordable warmth' have a key role to play, as well as the need to secure opportunities to delivering new jobs (and access to them) and homes, promoting 'Child Friendly Development', encouraging physical exercise, promoting food growing and improving community facilities. In reflecting these priorities, Policy AVL8 sets out the proposals which seek to improve public health.

Area Plans and Place making (Section 4 of the AAP)

- 3.15 As outlined in para. 3.4 above, in presenting the overall Core Strategy and AAP requirements at a local level, the Plan has been subdivided into 5 distinct Area Plans. These are included within Section 4 of the Plan. For each area a Spatial Vision, Aims and Objectives and a description of the area is provided. This is followed by Area-Specific Policies and Proposals, within each area. Incorporated within this approach are site requirements to underpin proposals and in some Area Plans a number of 'Opportunity Areas' have been identified (such as Hunslet Riverside – Hunslet Area Plan). The purpose of identifying such opportunities is to reflect wider aspirations for local areas, in association with specific proposals, whilst recognising that existing uses and activities are operating within these locations. This approach builds upon the approach previously taken in the UDP, for example the identification of Marsh Lane as a 'Prestige Development Area and Hunslet Riverside as a 'Strategic Site'.

Planning for Infrastructure (Section 5 of the AAP)

- 3.16 An important dimension of the Plan, is the need for infrastructure to support the aspirations for regeneration and growth. Where appropriate, specific proposals (and infrastructure) have been incorporated into Policy and site requirements. Where relevant, existing infrastructure commitments and priorities (such as Strategic Transport interventions) are reflected in the Plan. Given the uncertainties associated with the availability, scale and timing of funding, work will be needed to the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure that this remains fit for purpose.

4.0 Other considerations

Sustainability Appraisal & (SA) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

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

undertaken for housing and employment and changes to green space designations and Town Centre boundaries. In informing the scope of the Plan and the preparation of specific Policies, an SA of the Policies and site assessments has been completed (a draft of this material is appended to this report). The SA is subject to on going technical work (including updating the baseline information) and will be finalised and consolidated, prior to Publication consultation.

- 4.3 In reflecting the requirements of Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, a Screening Assessment has been carried out to determine if the Policies of the Leeds Site Allocations Plan (SAP) and Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (AVLAAP). Document require an Appropriate Assessment, under the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, SI no. 2010/490). In complying with this requirement a draft Screening Assessment has been prepared and at the time of preparing this response, a response from Natural England was awaited. Members will be updated at the meeting, subject to a response being received.

Duty to Co-operate

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

5.0 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

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

5.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

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

5.3. Council Policies and City Priorities

5.3.1 The Core Strategy, the emerging SAP and AVLAAP, play a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of the Vision for Leeds and the aspiration to the 'the best city in the UK'. Related to this overarching approach and in addressing a range of social, environmental and economic objectives, these Plans seek to implement key City Council priorities. These include the Best Council Plan (2013-17) (in particular Objective 2: to 'promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth') and Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013-2015).

5.4 Resources and value for money

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

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

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 The AVLAAP will follow the statutory Development Plan process (Local Development Framework). The report is not eligible for call in as no decision is being taken.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 Without a current allocations plan for this geographical area, aspects of the existing UDP allocations will become out of date and will not reflect or deliver the Core Strategy policies and proposals (including District wide requirements for Housing and General Employment Land). Early delivery is therefore essential, alongside the SAP, to enable the Council to demonstrate that sufficient land will be available when needed to meet the Core Strategy targets. Without an up to date plan the presumption in favour of sustainable development by the Government means that any development or Neighbourhood Plan in conformity with national policy will be acceptable, regardless of any previous positions of the authority. The more the work progresses, the more material weight can be given to it.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The AVLAAP has been prepared within the overall context of the adopted Core Strategy, emerging SAP and City Council priorities set out in the Best Council Plan. The draft Publication Plan seeks to reflect these commitments through the AVLAAP. The Plan is both visionary and aspirational, whilst minded to deliver a positive but realistic framework for regeneration and growth over the Plan period.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 Development Plan Panel is invited to consider the draft AVLAAP Publication Plan and to recommend to the Executive Board, that the Plan is taken forward for Publication.