



Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date:18 December 2007

Subject: Report of Area Action Plans Preferred Options Consultations on City Centre, East and South East Leeds and Aire Valley Leeds.

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Public consultation has taken place on the Preferred Options for the City Centre, East and South East Leeds and Aire Valley Leeds, Area Action Plans (AAP's) in recent months. This report details the significant level of responses received on each of the AAP's and outlines the next steps to be undertaken in moving forward to the publication of submission draft AAP's.

2. Consultation responses will play an important part in developing the submission drafts and a full Report of Consultation will form part of each submission draft AAP. A further period of formal consultation will take place when the draft AAP's are submitted to the Secretary of State; in the intervening time, informal consultation and information sharing will be ongoing.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 To advise Development Plan Panel of responses relating to public consultation undertaken on the Preferred Options for the City Centre, East and South East Leeds (EASEL) and Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plans and proposed next steps.

2.0 Background Information

1.2 Area Action Plans (AAP's) are being prepared as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Leeds. They are statutory plans which will set out the council's future planning policy within areas of major change. They focus on the implementation of development proposals and provide a mechanism for ensuring development is of an appropriate scale, location, mix and quality.

- 2.2 As statutory plans they are prepared under a process prescribed by national regulations. City Centre, EASEL and Aire Valley Leeds AAP's are being prepared under the following timetable:
- Informal consultation stage – (regulation 25) during 2005-06
 - Preferred Options stage (regulation 26) 2007
 - Submission stage (regulation 28) 2008
 - Public Examination – 2009
 - Adoption – 2010
- 2.3 Public consultation took place on each of the AAP's during recent months. LDF regulations and council's Statement of Community Involvement require a 6 week consultation period and notification to be sent to organisations the council considers to be either interested in or affected by the proposals. Documents were made available on the LCC website and in hardcopy at the Leonardo Building, libraries and One Stop Centres within and adjoining the AAP areas, the Central Library and through consultation events. An extensive database has been developed for each of the AAP's which builds upon existing council mailing lists and includes residents, community groups, key consultees, and major landowners, who have commented during the informal consultation stage. They were all notified of the AAP consultation and given the opportunity to make comments.
- 2.4 In addition, each AAP consultation has adopted a tailored approach to further publicity to meet the very differing requirements within each of the AAP areas. Broadly, the approach for the City Centre AAP has been to consult a range of city centre users - those visiting, living or working in the city centre, and residents living close to the city centre. Separate sessions have been held, to consult with young, elderly, disabled, and BME communities. Within EASEL AAP, the primary focus has been residents living within the area. Consultation events were held within each of the EASEL neighbourhoods and attempts were made to contact all residents who could potentially be affected by redevelopment proposals. Residents and groups were contacted by phone to raise awareness with their membership and meetings were held with residents, particularly within BME communities to raise awareness of the consultation events. The approach within the Aire Valley AAP has been to focus on businesses and land owners within the Aire Valley and to raise awareness of the plan through community groups and in consultation events within adjacent communities.
- 2.5 This report summarises the comments received and outlines the next steps for each plan. A more detailed summary of City Centre and EASEL AAP's is attached as appendices 1 and 2. The Aire Valley Leeds AAP consultation summary is still in preparation, however, the short summary attached as Appendix 3 gives a clear indication of comments received.

3.0 Representations received on the Preferred Options

City Centre AAP

- 3.1 During the formal six week consultation period between 16th April and 28th May 2007, 114 individual representations were received. A summary of the headline points is provided in Appendix 1. This will be made available on the Council's website together with the full table of points raised. A very wide range of comments has been received ranging from suggestions to modify text, maps & photos to major strategic issues. Some of the key issues include the following:

- Making the plan more “visionary”
- Housing & hotel development on areas of high flood risk
- The size of the city centre
- Requirements for on-site renewable energy
- Provision of public space
- Adding further Proposal Areas & elaborating upon the existing ones
- Controlling the mix of flats suitable for family occupation
- New public transport infrastructure & route safeguarding
- Extending the loop road to south of the river

3.2 The representations cover a wide spectrum of interests in the city centre. They include residents, landowners, developers, business organisations, special interest groups, other City Council services, young people, older people and statutory bodies.

EASEL AAP

3.3 The formal consultation on EASEL AAP took place between 18th June and 30th July 2007. A summary of the headline points is attached as Appendix 2. This has been sent to each of the 2,200 residents and stakeholders on the EASEL database. The summary is available on the council’s website, together with a full analysis of the representations received.

3.4 In total, 464 people attended the drop-ins, 302 people completed questionnaires and there were 46 letters from residents, agencies, companies and other stakeholders. Petitions were submitted signed by 208 Seacroft residents, 59 Halton Moor residents and 117 Osmondthorpe residents relating to concern regarding potential demolition of property within their neighbourhoods. 583 standardised letters were sent from Gipton residents concerned about proposals for Gipton in response to meetings held by George Mudie MP at the end of the consultation period. 98 people returned a letter distributed by the Leeds Tenants Federation commenting on the housing proposals for the area overall.

3.5 The representations have been grouped into responses to the general themes of the plan, e.g. housing, mixed use, priority improvement areas etc and responses and issues raised within each of the neighbourhoods. The representations will inform the submission draft AAP and the responses to them will be reflected in the Report of Consultation which will accompany the AAP. Although there were many concerns raised about details or particular local proposals, over the EASEL area as a whole all of the eight themes were supported by a majority of people, both residents and stakeholders. Some of the key issues include the following:

- the proposed mixed use area M1 (which includes the Eastdeans) in Seacroft
- possible redevelopment of Rathmell Road in Halton Moor,
- the potential scale of demolitions
- need for improvements and some new development before further decline
- need for sufficient affordable and social rented housing,
- need to improve greenspace in general, and Wykebeck Valley in particular
- need for new greenspace in Harehills
- dealing with flood risk
- potential impact on house values and ability to sell property
- anti- social behaviour, particularly noise, litter and vandalism
- need to improve public transport routes and services
- consultation methods and publicity

Aire Valley Leeds AAP

- 3.6 Formal consultation on Aire Valley Leeds Preferred Options took place between 5th October and 16th November 2007. A short summary of the headline points is attached as Appendix 3. When this is finalised it will be made available on the council's website and copies will be sent to all respondents.
- 3.7 Drop-in sessions or meetings with communities and stakeholders were arranged for venues in and surrounding the Aire Valley at: Hunslet Library, the Skelton Grange Environment Centre, St Hilda's Church, East Leeds Leisure Centre and Belle Isle Family Learning Centre. Leaflets were distributed at all seven of the EASEL "drop-in" sessions, held prior to the start of the AVL consultation period. In addition to making information available on the Council's website over 7,000 postcards were distributed through all the schools in the surrounding areas. Telephone contact was made with representatives of the main community groups and community associations around the AVL area. Officers also provided details of the consultation to local forums and area committees and made presentations to both Inner and Outer East Area Committees and the Aire Valley Leeds Investors Forum during the consultation period.
- 3.8 In total 90 people attended the drop-in sessions, and 59 questionnaires and letters were returned. Significant effort was made to engage residents in surrounding communities to raise awareness of the proposals and a high proportion of those attending were residents or representatives of community groups (71 residents and community groups and 19 businesses). A further 20 land owners / developers attended the Aire Valley Investors Forum. As a result 95% of landowners/developers of the proposal sites either attended one of the exhibitions and/or submitted a representation.
- 3.9 There has been a general level of support for all of the themes, with the exception of one respondent objecting to all housing in Aire Valley Leeds on the basis of developer interests in north Leeds. The Highways Agency has made comments related to the potential to widen the motorway. The Environment Agency refer to the need to sequentially test housing allocations in high flood risk areas and have advised that new development should contribute to the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme. Government Office has suggested that the city council may need to review the balance of development and consider additional housing to meet Leeds' overall housing requirements. However, the majority of proposed changes and comments seek to amend the detailed allocations in each of the Character Areas, rather than addressing the main themes. A brief summary of the main responses relating to the character areas is set out in Appendix 3.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The representations received on the Preferred Options will play an important part in informing each of the submission draft AAP's. Responses to the representations will be reflected in the Report of Consultation which will accompany the AAP's. Progression of the AAP's and changes to proposals will be charted through their accompanying Sustainability Appraisals. There will be a further 6 week statutory consultation allowing opportunity for comments when the draft AAP's are submitted to the Secretary Of State, however, informal consultation is seen as a continuous process. It will take some time to decide how to take each of the AAP's forward particularly where questions to be resolved have strategic implications for a range of service divisions within the Council. Many issues are interrelated, for example the

balance of between housing land supply and employment land supply; or provision of public space through pedestrianisation of streets and the ability to re-route highways. A number of specific issues relating to the three AAP's are detailed below.

City Centre AAP

4.2 Within the context of the wider renaissance and regeneration of the city centre, City Development plans to produce a "City Centre Vision". The impetus for this emerged in the spring of 2007, midway through the preparation process for the CCAAP but is timely given the emphasis of some of the CCAAP consultation responses regarding making the plan more visionary. It will be important, however, to ensure that the City Centre Vision and the CCAAP are complementary. This may mean adjusting the CCAAP timetable until the nature of the City Centre Vision is clear. If the City Centre Vision introduces any major new plans or departures from the CCAAP, it may be necessary for the Preferred Options stage of the CCAAP to be repeated. The CCAAP would be considered unsound if the Submission Plan introduced major new elements which had not been subject to earlier consultation.

4.3 EASEL

The AAP evidence base continues to be developed to provide strategies for greenspace, drainage, retail and local services and public transport in order to deliver sustainable communities across the EASEL area. There is considerable sensitivity around the identification of sites for development given the current uncertainty regarding the number of properties to be cleared. There are as yet unsubstantiated fears, that by identifying sites as "potential development areas" this could result in blight by making it difficult for residents to sell property or cause uncertainty regarding improvements. In the face of these concerns during the next few weeks careful consideration will need to be given to the way in which proposals for new development are shown on the AAP and how this message is conveyed to residents, estate agents and solicitors. Working in conjunction with colleagues in Environment and Neighbourhoods a regular series of newsletters is planned to provide clear information to residents. A series of Neighbourhood Plans are to be prepared through the EASEL Initiative to provide greater detail on how developments will be progressed both to clarify the proposals for residents and inform the position regarding clearance.

4.4 Aire Valley Leeds

Responses will continue to be analysed. The main changes put forward by respondents will be used by consultants to test alternative development scenarios. This modeling work will assist in providing a delivery plan which will form part of the AAP evidence base. It will add more certainty to the ability to deliver the plan proposals taking account of alternative uses and building in infrastructure requirements. We will continue to develop the evidence base and work in partnership with stakeholders, major landowners and Yorkshire Forward to drive forward the next and important phase of the Plan.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 This report provides a brief overview of responses on the Preferred Options consultation for the City Centre, EASEL and Aire Valley Leeds AAP's and shows that considerable efforts have been made to ensure widespread engagement. While substantial progress has been made as section 4 indicates there are still many issues to be resolved.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Development Plan Panel is asked to note the comments made on the AAP Preferred Options for the City Centre, EASEL and Aire Valley Leeds and the next stages in production of the submission drafts.