



Report of : CITY DEVELOPMENT

Executive Board

Date: 8 February 2008

Subject: WEST END PARTNERSHIP PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Electoral Wards Affected:
City & Hunslet

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

yes

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The collaboration between LCC and 6 private developers seeks to co-ordinate the successful implementation of high quality public realm and the promotion of the West End vision.
2. The underpinning mechanism for this dialogue is the Memorandum of Understanding for which this report sets the context, and recommends its operation.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval by Executive Board to the Council entering into the Memorandum of Understanding with the six companies comprising the West End Partnership.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The West End Partnership has been created by MEPC, HBG Properties Limited, George Wimpey City Limited, K W Linfoot Plc, Bruntwood Limited and Town Centre Securities Limited in conjunction with the Council and is a pioneering initiative established to transform the West End of Leeds. This area is bounded to the north by Wellington Street, to the south by the railway beyond the river and to the west by the inner ring road. A plan has been attached indicating both boundaries of the overall area and the land ownerships of key members.
- 2.2 By working in partnership with these developers the Council potentially stands to gain greater quality of design, materials and facilities in the public realm than could be achieved through a purely regulatory planning approach alone. A Memorandum of Understanding provides a mechanism to underpin the commitment by the respective parties to work together in a consistent and coherent way to achieve these aims.
- 2.3 There has already been considerable investment and progress by the individual parties to develop this aim. Progress with planning applications is summarized below to help illustrate developments scheduled for the area. (see also attached plan)

MEPC Outline application has been to Plans Panel with principal to approve; subject to completion of legal agreement – imminent.
Phase 1 detailed application also taken to Plans Panel and also subject to the completion of the legal agreement

HBG Planning consent now issued for outline scheme, and detailed consent for phase 1 of office development. On site.

Wimpey Full permission granted for mixed scheme development but dominated by residential. Developer has placed work on hold due to market pressures.

K W Linfoot Full permission granted; conditions being discharged. Site preparation works continuing and site start on 17.12.07.

TCS Outline permission for the whole site received; 2 buildings received full permission and now completed on site (residential by new bridge and Whitehall Riverside offices)
Bridge completed and opened.
Also full or reserved matters permissions given to 3 other office buildings.
Applications for 2 further plots awaited

Bruntwood Applications awaited.

- 2.4 Taken together these developments will deliver:-

- 3.8 million sq ft of office space
- 180,000 sq ft of retail space
- a sandless riverside beach stepped from upper hard landscaping to grass to riverside reeds
- a winter-garden / atrium to the “Lumiere” development on Wellington Street

- an elevated pedestrian route on the currently disused viaduct
- retail opportunities within the viaduct arches
- a new public space and setting for the listed historic lifting tower
- improved permeability, legibility and pedestrian linkages
- new river / canal crossings

2.5 Similarly, taken together the plans for the West End will support the regeneration of the city based on the principles set out in the Council's Renaissance Framework to generate a distinctive quality driven public realm. These principles are listed below:-

1. Connection – making clear routes for transport, cycles and pedestrians
2. Reconnection – linking the communities and the city centre
3. Skyline Leeds – shaping the city roof scene
4. Green Leeds - linking and enhancing the green spaces
5. Covered Leeds – continuing the historic legacy of undercover spaces
6. Waterfront – making the most of the river asset
7. Cultural – providing spaces and activities that encourage culture
8. Viaduct - dealing with the issues of road, rail and river infrastructures

The project as a whole is likely to take at least a decade to complete.

2.6 The members of the partnership have agreed to pursue the following Vision and Strategic Objectives:-

- To deliver a new internationally recognised business district for Leeds
- To develop West End Leeds as a sustainable community where people can live work and play
- To collectively promote West End Leeds using the benefits of a sustainable community to improve the offer to international residents and tenants
- To work in partnership with the Council to ensure that the wider needs of the city are supported by the development of West End Leeds
- To deliver an effective forum for consultation, discussion and debate on all the issues influencing the growth of Leeds as an international business centre with particular focus on West End Leeds
- To identify, and meet the needs of Leeds, including residential, retail and commercial requirements

The MoU will reflect the Partnership's formal commitment to work together to pursue these aims. Moreover it sets out a framework of arrangements through which they will co-operate. An organisational diagram is attached. A meeting with ward members is being planned and regular consultations will be provided to the Chair of the City Centre Partnership Board of the progress of the West End Partnership. The MoU includes the following main heads of terms/provisions

- Commencement on 1 March 2008 with a term of two years, to be reviewed after a minimum of 12 months.
- A Board consisting of a nominated Chair, Developer representatives (6) and LCC representatives (2), non-voting invitees and Development Team project Managers
- Meetings at such intervals as agreed with agenda of issues for discussion.
- Decision making arrangements involving a quorum of representatives [Developers (3) and LCC (1)] which provides for majority votes but with a Council veto.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Matters to be considered at each meeting.

A budget for the period 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008 has been agreed between the Developers with details set out in the Appendix to the Memorandum for the initial 12 months. The Council will provide a co-ordination role with input by staff within Planning, Highways and other departments / sections as and when required.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 The total value of planned development in the West End is estimated at £3 billion delivered through 6 separate developments. Whilst the planning system can protect standards for the public realm and encourage developers to take account of neighbouring development more could be achieved by proactively working with developers to invest even more than is required through the mechanism of agreements pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 3.2 The Council is strategically placed to act in a co-ordination role bringing together the various internal and external parties across the wide scope of this complex and long-term project. This co-ordination involves not only deployment of technical planning and highways advice but includes also support on marketing (in conjunction with Marketing Leeds and Council work to achieve linkages with local communities). The Partnership has already developed a working relationship with Construction Leeds to ensure construction jobs and training are made available to local people.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 This project will contribute to the **City Centre Strategic Plan** (which was approved by the City Centre Partnership Board) in giving support to the sustainable economic viability of the city centre through encouraging and facilitating new investment and additional activities. (Objective 1) It will also encourage and facilitate improvements to the environment and public realm. (Objective 2). The project will also address aspects of the other 6 Objectives of the City Centre Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 This project will also contribute to the emerging **City Centre Area Action Plan** in respect of PPS6 which sees city centres as the focus for activity – employment, shopping, services and entertainment – with good accessibility and interaction between uses helping to create healthy, vibrant centres and reducing reliance on car use.
- 4.3 Similarly the project responds to Objective A1 of the 2007 draft SPD **Sustainability Assessment of the Leeds Local Development Framework** - maintain or improve good quality employment opportunities and reduce the disparities in the Leeds labour market. It also supports Objective A2 – to maintain or improve the conditions which have enabled business success, economic growth and investment and Objective A10 – to increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace, amongst other Objectives.
- 4.4 Perhaps the most significant benefit arising from partnership working based on a Memorandum of Understanding is the opportunity for the Council to actively pursue, with partners, options for further enhancing design quality standards as set out in the 10 Design Principles approved by Executive Board in January 2005.
- 4.5 The cohesive development of the area will therefore provide a broader outcome that will contribute to the Core Council aims of Going up a League, Narrowing the Gap and becoming a regional capital.
- 4.6 This MoU will help to develop the working model for such arrangements which can also be used in other partnerships city-wide.
- 4.7 Finally by encouraging close working between public and private sectors the MoU will provide a powerful marketing tool to attract other potential investors to the City.

5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Memorandum of Understanding will not be a legally-binding document (except the single provision regarding confidentiality of information). Its importance lies more in the commitment to meet regularly to promote on a consistent basis the priority issues which arise in securing quality investment in the public realm and to make the overall regeneration successful.
- 5.2 Whilst the Private Sector Partners have separately committed to defined financial contributions, the Council's contribution is to provide a co-ordination role using existing staff time. The MoU does not contain any conditions requiring the Council to make a financial contribution to the cost of the Partnership's programme.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The use of a MoU will give the Partnership's work to regenerate this area added strength through clear communication, understanding of respective positions, clarity on design issues and a strong public realm.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Executive Board give their authority to the Council entering into the Memorandum of Understanding with the six companies comprising the West End Partnership.

That the Executive Board give their agreement to the general terms of the Memorandum as outlined in 2.6 above. The details to be agreed by the Director of Development and Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) as appropriate.