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## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 8 March 2018

**Subject: PREAPP/17/00288 - Preapplication presentation for a stepped block of part 11 storeys, part 18 storeys (with roof top plant and lower ground floor) providing student accommodation comprising some 98 units with ground and lower ground floor communal spaces and a landscape scheme around the building at land to the north of Brunswick Point/Q One, Wade Lane, Leeds, LS2 8DS.**

**Developer- Q Property Ltd.**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City & Hunslet**

☐ Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

☐

Community Cohesion

☐

Narrowing the Gap

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**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The Developer will present the details of the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.**

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 This scheme was present to City Plans Panel on 14 December 2017 as a preapplication presentation to inform Members at an early stage of the revised proposals for a residential student housing scheme with ground and lower ground floor communal facilities within the defined boundary of the designated City Centre. The proposal is brought back to City Plans Panel to present the changes to the proposals, to respond to Members comments on the previous preapplication presentation and as the development involves the creation of new student housing, the re-use of brownfield land and a major investment in a significant site within Leeds City Centre.

### 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 2.1 The site is some 0.06 hectares in area and is currently in use as a car park for the adjacent Q One building. The adjacent Q One building is a seven storey building

comprising 84 apartments that is also owned by the Developer and is managed on their behalf by YPP.

- 2.2 The site is located in the north of the city centre and is accessible from the main arterial route of Wade Lane / Lovell Park Road. The site sits above Leeds Inner Ring Road (A64) in a prominent gateway location which is visible from the surrounding area when approaching the city centre. As well as hard standing for parking, the site also includes existing soft/green landscaping, including trees, along its perimeters, two of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Further trees in the grounds of the adjacent Q One are also subject to Tree Preservation Orders. A Public Right of Way runs along the eastern edge of the site, outside its boundary.
- 2.3 The wider area is characterised by a wide variety of retail, entertainment, commercial and residential buildings that are characterised by a dense urban grain and vary in terms of scale and era.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL:**

- 3.1 The previously presented proposed development sought to construct a part 11, 15 and 18 storey building of 99 studio student accommodation.
- 3.2 The proposal now presented is for a student residential development of part 11 and part 18 storeys. The numbers of units had reduced by one and the footprint of the building has been amended allowing it to move to the northern most end of the site. The new position of the block means that all existing trees and greener to this end of the site will be removed and a larger area for landscaping is to be created between the proposed building and the adjacent Q One residential building.
- 3.3 The revised scheme would comprise 98 studio dwellings, for occupation by students, ranging in internal floorspace from 21 sq. metres to 31 sq. metres. These are currently proposed to be set out as follows:  
10 studios of 21 sq metres  
17 studios of 22 sq metres  
37 studios of 23 sq metres  
17 studios of 29 sq metres  
17 studios of 31 sq metres
- 3.4 The proposal would still include a range of high quality communal facilities within the ground and lower ground floor levels of the proposed building, comprising a lounge, reception area with TV, a breakfast room and study rooms/pods. The Developer advises that occupiers would also still be able to make use of the lower ground floor of the existing Q One building, which will provide a cinema room (c. 30 – 40sqm), a games room (c.80sqm), a storage area for students (c. 30-40sqm) and additional cycle stands. In addition the Developer also states that student occupiers would be given free annual membership of the nearby Pure Gym at the Merrion Centre.

### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

- 4.1 Consent was granted and implemented for a Prior Approval determination application for the conversion of B1 (offices) to C3 (dwellings) at the adjacent Q One, Brunswick Point on 18 July 2014, planning reference 14/03303/DPD.
- 4.2 Consent was granted and implemented for a Prior Approval determination application for the change of use from offices (B1) to form 65 flats (C3) at the nearby Zicon House on 17 March 2016, planning reference 16/00767/DPD.

4.3 Planning permission was granted for the erection of a part 7, part 11 and part 18 storey student accommodation building comprising 376 studios at St Albans Place to the south east of the application site on 21 April 2017, planning reference 16/07741/FU. Work has commenced on site.

4.4 Planning permission was granted for the demolition of an existing building and erection of a part 8, part 22 storey 349 bed space student accommodation building, with ancillary areas including reception and amenity spaces at the nearby Symons House site on 22 December 2017, planning reference 17/06605/FU.

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:**

5.1 The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions between the Developers, their Architects, and Local Authority Officers since April 2017. These discussions have focused on scale massing and design, existing and new trees, loss of surface car parking and room space size standards.

5.2 The previous version of the scheme was presented to Members at City Panel on 14 December 2017. Members made the following comments:

- A number of trees would be lost which were covered by a Tree Preservation Orders but it was accepted that replacement planting would be carried out
- The majority of Members expressed the view that this was a small site and the proposal was too large for the site.
- The proposed development was too close to neighbouring properties, in some instances only 5m away
- Members emphasised the need to have further details about the design/appearance of the building
- What was the relationship with the Q1 building?
- The majority of Members were supportive of the principle of the use (Councillors: Campbell and Leadley did not support the principle of the use)
- Subject to further details being provided, the majority of Members considered the internal amenity including communal space was acceptable for student accommodation (Councillor Campbell was of the view that the internal amenity and communal space was inadequate)
- Members were not supportive of the emerging scale, massing and design proposals
- Members were supportive of the approach to tree planting including off-site mitigation
- Further information was required around the approach to transport and access (Would there be a contribution towards public realm?)

5.3 Ward Members were consulted on 21 November 2017.

## **6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

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

6.2 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and paragraph 14 goes on to state that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.3 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out the Core Planning Principles for plan making and decision taking. The 4th principle listed states that planning should always seek

high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

- 6.4 The 6th principle listed states that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future and encourage the use of renewable resources, including the development of renewable energy.
- 6.5 The 8th principle listed states that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.
- 6.6 The Government statement on Energy Efficiency in Buildings of 25 March 2015 states that the energy performance requirements in Building Regulations will be set at a level equivalent to the (outgoing) Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.
- 6.7 The Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:
1. The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
  2. Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan Policies (Reviewed 2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
  3. The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).
  4. Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (Adopted November 2017)
  5. Any Neighbourhood Plan, once made.
- 6.8 Core Strategy
- 6.9 The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. Relevant
- 6.10 Spatial Policy 1: Location of Development states that;
- (i) The majority of new development should be concentrated within urban areas taking advantage of existing services, high levels of accessibility and priorities for urban regeneration and an appropriate balance of brownfield and greenfield land
- 6.11 Policy CC1: City Centre Development  
The City Centre will be planned to accommodate at least the following:
- (iii) 10,200 dwellings.
  - b) Encouraging residential development including new buildings and changes of use of existing providing that it does not prejudice the town centre
- 6.12 Policy EN1: Climate Change – Carbon Dioxide Reduction states that all developments of over 1,000 square metres of floorspace, (including conversion where feasible) whether new-build or conversion, will be required to:
- (i) Reduce total predicted carbon dioxide emissions to achieve 20% less than the Building Regulations Target Emission Rate until 2016 when all development should be zero carbon; and,
  - (ii) Provide a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development from low carbon energy.
- 6.13 Policy EN2: Sustainable Design and Construction requires developments of 1,000 or more square metres or 10 or more dwellings (including conversion where feasible) to meet at least the standard set by BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. A post construction review certificate will be required prior to occupation.

- 6.14 Policy H4: 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.
- 6.15 Policy H6B refers to proposals for purpose built student accommodation. Development will be controlled to take the pressure off the need to use private housing; to avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for families; to avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation; to avoid locations that would lead to detrimental impacts on residential amenity; and to provide satisfactory living accommodation for the students.
- 6.16 Policy P10: Design states that:  
New development for buildings and spaces, and alterations to existing, should be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function.  
New development will be expected to deliver high quality innovative design that has evolved, where appropriate, through community consultation and which respects and enhances the variety of existing landscapes, streets, spaces and buildings according to the particular local distinctiveness and wider setting of the place, contributing positively towards place making and quality of life and be accessible to all.
- 6.17 Policy T1: Transport Management states that support will be given to the following management priorities:  
c) To support wider transport strategy objectives for sustainable travel and to minimise congestion during peak periods.
- 6.18 Policy T2: Accessibility Requirements and New Development states that new development should be located in accessible locations that are adequately served by existing or programmed highways, by public transport and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.
- 6.19 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review Retained Policies  
Policy BD2 (Design and siting of new buildings)  
Policy BD5 (All new buildings and amenity)  
Policy GP5 (All planning considerations)  
Policy LD1 (landscaping schemes)  
Policy N23 (Space around new buildings)
- 6.20 Leeds Natural Resources and Waste DPD 2013  
  
The Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council on 16th January 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 as well as looking at tree loss and replacement via its specific Policy LAND2.
- 6.21 Supplementary Planning Guidance  
Tall Buildings Design Guide (Spring 2010)  
Parking (January 2016)  
Supplementary Planning Document 'Travel Plans' (February 2015)  
Street Design Guide (August 2009)

## 6.22 Other Material Considerations

- 6.23 The Leeds Standard was adopted by the Council's Executive Board on 17th September 2014 to ensure excellent quality in the delivery of new council homes. 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 standard closely reflects the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) which seek to promote a good standard of internal amenity for all housing types and tenures. Whilst neither of these documents has been adopted as formal planning policy and only limited weight can be attached to them, given their evidence base in determining the minimum space requirements, during recent years they have been used to help inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals.
- 6.24 A selective review of the Leeds Core Strategy is presently being undertaken (CSSR). The review includes policies to introduce residential space standards. New policy H9 in the CSSR expressly excludes purpose built student accommodation from the space standard stating:
- 6.25 Development of student accommodation and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will not be subject to the space standards as set out in the Table above. Instead such development should reflect the NDSS with appropriate adjustments to address the particular characteristics of these types of development. They should also meet reasonable standards of general amenity for occupiers to include adequate space, light and ventilation. Further guidance will be provided through a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.26 The CSSR publication draft was considered and endorsed at the Council's Executive Board meeting on 7th February 2018. Therefore, draft policy H9 can be afforded some weight.

## 7.0 **KEY ISSUES**

### 7.1 Principle of the Use

- 7.2 The provision of student housing is specifically considered under Core Strategy Policy H6B. This policy was adopted following the Core Strategy Inspector's rejection of the Council's position that the policy should include a test for need when considering applications for new student housing. Core Strategy paragraph 5.2.26 states that growth in purpose built student accommodation is to be welcomed in order to meet need and to deflect pressure away from private rental houses in areas of over-concentration. Evidence submitted on the Symons House application indicates that there are 38,496 university students in the city presently without access to purpose-built student accommodation suggesting that additional provision is unlikely to result in an over-supply of purpose-built student accommodation in the near future. The proposal is therefore considered against the criteria set out within the adopted policy (identified below in italics):

(i) *To help extend the supply of student accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used.*

The provision of 98 student studios would help to take pressure off the need to use private housing for student accommodation.

(ii) *To avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family accommodation.*

The site is currently a surface car park. The development would therefore not result in the loss of any existing housing that would be suitable for families to live in.

(iv) *To avoid locations which are not easily accessible to the universities.*

- 7.3 The site is located towards the northern edge of the city centre and is well placed with regard to access to Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Arts University and the University of Leeds.
- 7.4 The ground and lower ground floor of the development would be allocated for shared amenity space, including a communal lounge, a reception area, a breakfast room and study rooms/pods for the student residents. These uses would allow the ground and lower ground floors to have active frontages.
- 7.5 The principle of the use and level of internal amenity is therefore supported by planning policy and was supported by City Plans Panel on 14 December 2017.
- 7.6 Amenity
- 7.7 Criteria (iii) of Core Strategy policy H6B aims to *avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities.*
- 7.8 The proposed student accommodation would provide 98 studio dwellings. The area comprises a broad mix of residential, commercial, leisure and retail uses. Part of this residential presence provides existing student accommodation and more is planned including the proposal. However it is considered that the existing amenity of the area would not be adversely affected by the proposed student accommodation given the mixed way in which the area is currently used. The area comprises dense accommodation generating significant leisure, office and retail activity. In many cases new student accommodation has replaced existing office space maintaining vitality and vibrancy in the area. As such the proposal would not undermine the wellbeing and successful functioning of the different types of use in the area, within the context of a busy city centre environment.
- 7.9 Criteria (v) of policy H6B requires *that the proposed accommodation provides satisfactory internal living accommodation in terms of daylight, outlook and juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms.*
- 7.10 During recent years the Leeds Standard and the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) have been used to help inform decisions on the acceptability of development proposals. As noted at 6.24 above, a selective review of the Leeds Core Strategy is presently being undertaken (CSSR). New policy H9 in the CSSR requires development of student accommodation to reflect the Nationally Described Space Standard with appropriate adjustments to address the particular characteristics of these types of development. They should also meet reasonable standards of general amenity for occupiers to include adequate space, light and ventilation. As the CSSR publication draft is now out for public consultation draft policy H9 can be afforded some weight.

- 7.11 Members have visited several student housing schemes to review the level of amenity provided for occupiers. These include the Fresh Student Living at Darley Bank in Derby (April 2014) where the studio was 22sqm; Downing's Cityside, Calverley Street, Leeds (May 2016) where the student showflat was also 22sqm; and Vita Student's Telephone House, Sheffield (September 2016) where the average studio size was 20sqm, supported by a large area of dedicated, internal, amenity space.
- 7.12 Planning permission for Vita's Leeds scheme at St Alban's Place in which the smallest 78% of studios would be just over 20sqm was granted April 2017 (16/07741/FU). In approving the scheme it was recognised that the size of the majority of the studios would be restricted, providing little or no opportunity for socialising, but that each studio would benefit from a good outlook, natural daylighting and suitable noise environment. Critically, the additional "hub" facilities providing dedicated amenity spaces within the building, together with opportunities to use the neighbouring public space was on balance considered to provide acceptable levels of amenity for the occupiers of the development. In addition the recent approval for the Symons House scheme indicated studios with floorspace sizes ranging from 24.34 sq metres up to 44.2 sq metres. As with other similar approved student residential schemes Symons House would have large areas of dedicated communal space.
- 7.13 The current proposal has similarities with some of these other developments that Members have viewed and considered. In this current scheme the studio sizes would range from 21 sq. metres to 31 sq. metres which is comparable with the Fresh Student Living at Darley Bank, the Downing's Cityside and Symons House developments noted above in paragraphs 7.11 and 7.12. In addition, the ground and lower ground floors would be given over to areas of dedicated amenity space to provide the student residents with a range of communal facilities.
- 7.14 Design, Massing, Scale and Layout
- 7.15 The revised proposal remains for a building on a prominent site set above the Inner Ring Road, which would be seen in a number of views both at close quarters and from a number of distance vistas. The building has been shifted northward across the site such that it would fill the northern most triangular point of the site, but would still be seen against a backdrop of other existing buildings in the area, of mixed height, massing and materiality. The building has changed from stepping between 11, 15 and 18 storeys to a more simplified step between 11 and 18 storeys. This would assist the scheme to respond to this surrounding massing and context and reflect positively against the lower level of the adjacent Q One and the St Albans Place buildings and rise to their maximum height where the proposal is positioned closer to taller blocks such as the nearby Opal development.
- 7.16 The revised proposal would respond to the context of the area in the choice of materials and their ratios on the facades. It is proposed to utilise a simple palette of red brick, with black staircore panels and large glazed windows. The level of solid to glazing would reflect the character of the intended use and would give the building visual gravitas and solidity. At the base of the building the aim is still to place communal spaces, within the ground floor and lower ground floor levels. Therefore these areas would have a much higher proportion of glazing to create active frontages at street level.
- 7.17 Generously sized windows would be provided to the principal elevations, giving the studio dwellings good levels of outlook and natural light. The proposed building has



been moved into the northern triangular end of the site and is angled (some 30 degrees) such that the mass of the building is pulled away from the adjacent Q One occupied building. This means that one corner of the new building would be some 5.47 metres from this existing adjacent building, but the main mass of the new block would be at least 9.85 metres away. The angle of the new block to the existing building, plus the positioning of windows to the eastern edge of the facing elevation means that there would be no direct overlooking between the existing and future dwelling. This is an improvement on the previous design in response to Member's comments.

7.18 The Landscape Scheme

7.19 In December 2017 Members accepted the principle of the loss of the trees in return for replacement planting. The proposal has therefore been relocated to the northern end of the existing surface car park would result in the loss and replacement of the majority, if not all, of the soft/green landscape features, including 9 existing trees. The Developer has confirmed that they will comply with the requirements of Policy LAND2 of the Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan. As such there will be a requirement to provide a mixture of on-site and off-site replacement trees, the latter to be in the grounds of other nearby buildings in their ownership to achieve the required 3 for 1 replacement tree ratio. If the full 3 for 1 physical tree replacement cannot be provided on the Applicant's land, any short fall will require a financial contribution via a Section 106 legal agreement for off-site planting in the local area.

7.20 The shifting of the proposed building means that more space is freed to the site frontage allowing for the creation of a more expansive and cohesive planting scheme. This would include tree planting and a more appropriate species and mix of plants. The landscape scheme would therefore be able to create a new green edge to the site as it fronts Lovell Park Road and help to mitigate the impact of the scale of the development at the site frontage.

7.21 Hard surface areas within the site would be laid out in high quality pavers and the Developer has stated that, as part of their proposals, they would like to enhance the existing public footway to the eastern edge of the site (above the Inner Ring Road) to continue the works that will come forward as part of the nearby Vita scheme.

7.22 **Do Members support the revised scale, massing, layout and design of the proposals?**

7.23 Transport and Access

7.24 The revised proposal site remains within walking distance of the City's main University campuses and services of the City Centre including access to the train station, bus station and nearby bus stops. The revised proposal will require a Transport Assessment but aims to promote sustainable transport.

7.25 To improve the setting of the building the developer has requested that the bus stop outside the site on Lovell Park Road be relocated. Highways and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority have advised that they are unable to support this due to the levels of use of this stop, particularly at times when the Arena is in operation.

7.26 The proposal is largely car free with only 3 car parking spaces proposed, to be positioned between the existing and proposed buildings. The Developer has advised that these parking spaces would also be used as a drop off and pick up area and that 20 minute drop off slots on Saturdays and Sundays utilising these car parking

spaces would be the likely arrangements. Four car parking spaces within the lower ground floor of the existing Q One building are also to be retained. At the time of writing this report Highways have stated that more information is required on the lay out of the parking bays, in respect of the ability for vehicles to manoeuvre and with regard to how servicing and delivery vehicles will access the site. Bin and plant room doors need to be amended to prevent them opening in outwards on to areas to be used by vehicles and pedestrians. Members will be updated verbally at Plans Panel on the items which require further information.

7.27 Secure cycle parking and motorcycle parking of numbers to be agreed is also to be provided as part of the development

**7.28 Do Members support the approach to transport and access?**

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.1 The key questions asked in the report above are as following:

**7.22 Do Members support the revised scale, massing, layout and design of the proposals?**

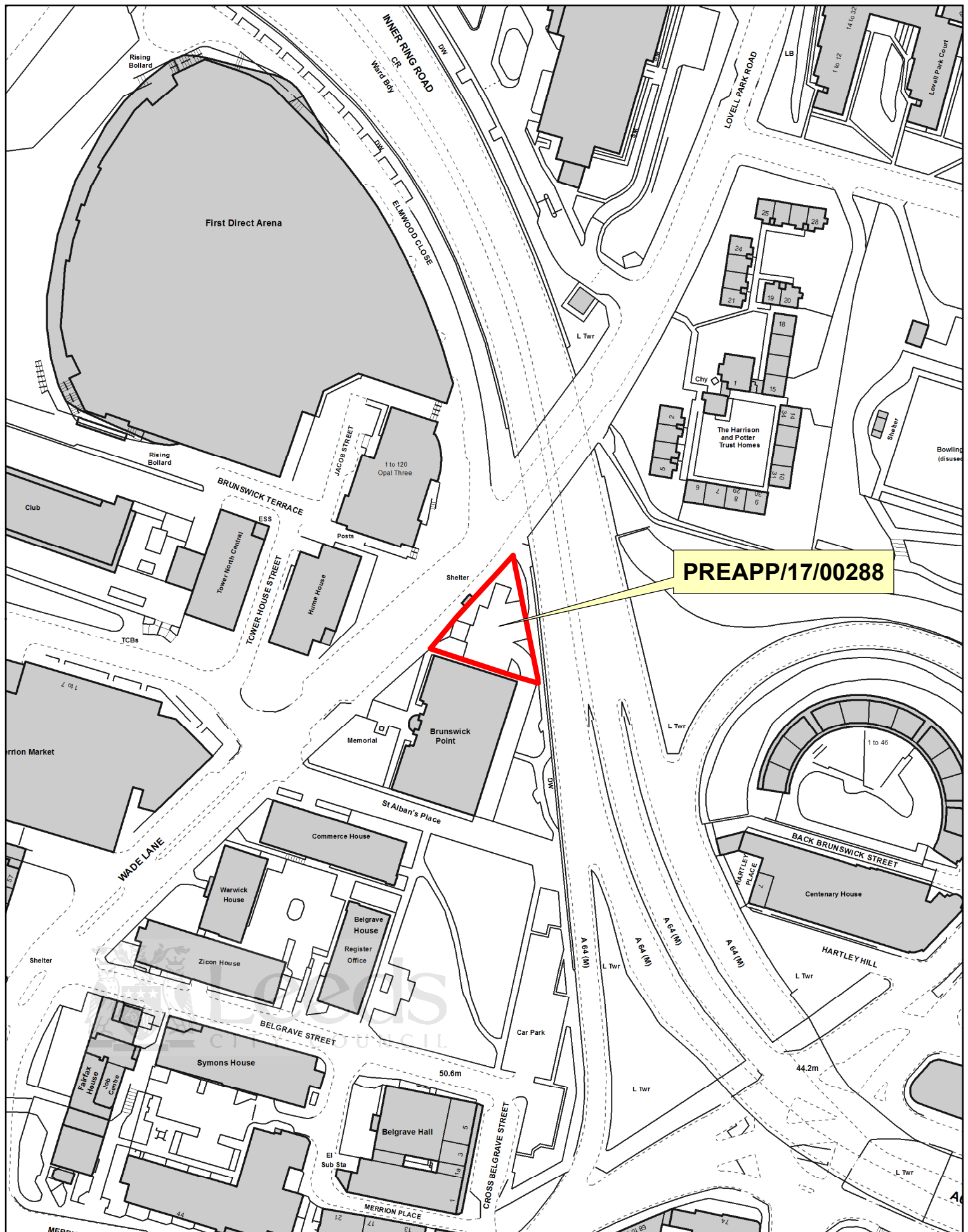
**7.28 Do Members support the approach to transport and access?**

**Background Papers: PREAPP/17/00288**

Row	Date	Details	Drawn by	Checked by
/	12-01-18	Initial Issues for Information	TH	KE
A	12-01-18	Final Fee amended	TH	KE
B	16-01-18	Final Fee amended	TH	KE

[illegible]

Proposed Site Plan  
Scale 1 : 200



# CITY PLANS PANEL

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SCALE : 1/1500

