



## Report of the Director of Development

### *Development Plan Panel*

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007

### Subject: City Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options

<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b> All	<b>Specific Implications For:</b> Equality and Diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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## Executive Summary

The Preferred Options part of the City Centre Area Action Plan has been drawn up following over 18 months of informal public consultation and engagement. The Preferred Options offer a range of policy proposals to guide the future development of the city centre into the next decade and beyond. A formal 6 week period of consultation is required and responses received will inform preparation of the City Centre Area Action Plan for submission to Government. The Development Plan Panel is asked to recommend the Executive Board to approve the Preferred Options for public consultation.

### 1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to obtain approval of the Development Plan Panel for the City Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options and for Development Plan Panel to recommend approval to the Executive Board.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Essentially, preparation of Development Plan Documents such as the City Centre Area Action Plan divides into 3 main stages:
  - Issues and Options (Regulation 25)
  - Preferred Options (Regulation 26)
  - Submission of Draft Plan and Public Inquiry (Regulation 28)
- 2.2. Preparation of the CCAAP commenced in January 2005 with approval by the Development Plan Panel in May 2005 for informal consultation on Issues & Options. This involved a two part process of initially raising awareness and scoping the issues and secondly setting out a set of alternative options for public comment. A chronology of consultation activity is set out in Appendix 3 of this report.
- 2.3. The alternative options were published in April-May 2006 as questions and choices in ten themed papers. The consultation responses received were appraised along with the

conclusions of the Sustainability Appraisal to help determine the nature of the Preferred Options. The analysis is set out in Appendix 2 of this Report.

### 3. THE PREFERRED OPTIONS

3.1. Formal consultation is proposed during a 6 week period (16/4/07 – 28/5/07) on the Preferred Options. The Preferred Options will be set out in full in a main document and the key elements will be set out in a summary document. There will also be a number of supporting documents to help people to understand the genesis and reasoning for the City Council choosing the Preferred Options:

- Preferred Options Full Report – Appendix 1.
- Preferred Options Summary (to be drafted).
- Preferred Options Analysis of Responses Report – Appendix 2.
- Preferred Options Interim Consultation Report – Appendix 3.
- Preferred Options Consultation Strategy – Appendix 4.
- Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report Summary – Appendix 5.

3.2. The Preferred Options Full Report is divided into six main sections:

- Meeting the land use needs of the city & region
- Attractions and services
- An attractive, sustainable, safe and healthy city centre
- Sustainable transport
- Extending the success of the city centre to adjoining neighbourhoods
- Proposal area statements

3.3. The key elements include the following:

- i. Encouraging provision of residential development whilst ensuring that this does not undermine the commercial success of the city centre. The city centre provides 125,000 jobs has been a growth area for financial and business services. It contains two universities and a large hospital. As the city centre evolves and the residential market expands, the Preferred Options seek to ensure that sufficient land and development opportunities are safeguarded for office development. This will be achieved by ensuring that new development in the very accessible core areas around the train station and that appropriate Proposals Areas incorporate office space. Also that the city centre boundary be extended.
- ii. Ensuring that residential development in appropriate fringe areas of the city centre includes an element of housing suitable for family occupation, for example large flats with private amenity space.
- iii. Maintaining the Prime Shopping Quarter as the regional shopping centre and designating a number of “service centres” for convenience shopping and local services, as well as accepting inclusion of “corner shops” within major new residential developments.
- iv. Promoting the city centre as the location of an Arena and cultural uses in a number of Proposals Areas and protecting existing cultural uses such as cinemas, theatres and public houses
- v. Acknowledging that the form and character of the city centre is rich and varied and that new development needs to be carefully designed to suit its individual context, including supplementary advice on tall buildings
- vi. That new building needs to address climate change by incorporating appropriate waste storage, renewable energy and sustainable design technology
- vii. Accepting residential development on areas of flood risk providing that suitable mitigation measures are taken such as raised floor levels, raised access and egress, extra provision of public space and that the PPS25 exception test is passed
- viii. Ensuring new development is easily accessible to all and promotes natural surveillance
- ix. Promoting provision of public greenspace as part of major new development.
- x. Introducing new transportation concepts including

- bus interchanges that allow busses to terminate on the edge of the Prime Shopping Quarter, and easy transfer to other services
  - promotion of Bus Rapid Transit and Tram-Train routes
  - extension of the Loop Road south of the river
- xi. Positive encouragement for short-stay visitor car parking, but a tightening in the amount of commuter car parking allowed with new development including greater restriction when Park & Ride schemes become operable
- xii. Promoting employment and training agreements to help link development opportunities with local unemployed and unskilled people.

3.4. Through the earlier stages of plan preparation, consultation has taken place with a wide range of interests, including “rarely heard groups” and adjoining communities (see Appendix 3). As a result, the Preferred Options has particular emphasis on improving community cohesion by seeking provision of public spaces and identifying routes to better connect the city centre with adjoining neighbourhoods, as well as promoting employment and training agreements.

#### 4. SUMMARY DOCUMENT

4.1. Officers have sought to keep the Preferred Options (Appendix 1) as concise as possible, with most background analysis set out in the Appraisal of Responses Report (Appendix 2). Nevertheless, the Preferred Options still runs to more than 50 pages, and even when desk-top-published with maps and photographs, this is likely to be inaccessible to many ordinary people. Hence, there is a need for a shorter document with wider appeal.

4.2. It is proposed that a Summary Document will be prepared by Officers for public consultation following approval of the Preferred Options. The Summary Document should focus on the main issues as set out in paragraph 3.3 of this report rather than attempting to summarize everything. The Summary Document should make clear that it offers only a selection of the proposals and the full set of proposals is available in the main document.

#### 5. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

5.1 It is a requirement of the new planning system that Development Plan Documents are subjected to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The purpose of this is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the proposals from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with the objectives of sustainable development. The SA also needs to comply with the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which requires that the significant effects that the Plan is likely to have on the environment are identified.

5.2 Sustainability Appraisal was carried out on the initial Issues and Options and a commentary on the results was provided to accompany the Issues and Options Consultation. This meant that people could use the results of the SA to inform them of the sustainability of the choices. Further SA has been carried out on the Preferred Options to help refine them and identify ways that their positive impacts can be enhanced. Sometimes this may mean subtle word changes and in other cases it may question the whole ethos of an option.

5.3 The whole SA process will be written up and presented in a Sustainability Appraisal Report which will be sent out for 6 week consultation along with the Preferred Options Report. A summary of the results of the SA is attached with this Report as Appendix 5.

#### 6. CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

6.1. National regulations governing the preparation of LDF plans requires a minimum consultation period of 6 weeks and that notification should be sent to those organizations who the Council considers will be interested in or affected by the proposals. It is also required that the documents be made available at public places and on the internet.

- 6.2. The proposed consultation for the CCAAP exceeds the minimum requirements of the regulations and complies with the City Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Details of the consultation programme are set out in Appendix 4. Essentially, the formal period for responses will last from 16<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> May. Documents will be made available on the LCC website and in hardcopy at the Leonardo Building and Central Library (as well as on request). Organizations and individuals will be notified and invited to attend events and to comment by letter, posters, advertisement, leaflets, websites and press-release. There will be "drop-in-sessions", a "walkabout" and presentations organized in the city centre. There will be outreach work to engage some of the rarely heard groups identified in the Statement of Community Involvement and particular groups such as residents, businesses and workers.

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The Preferred Options present a significant step toward adoption of the City Centre Area Action Plan and offer a range of proposals to guide the future development of the city centre into the next decade and beyond. It is important that the public consultation is thorough and effective in attracting a good quantity of responses from a wide range of people and organizations affected.

## 8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. The Development Plan Panel is recommended to:
- i. note the outcome of the informal consultation undertaken as part of the preparation of the preferred options (as set out in Appendix 2) and
  - ii. recommend to the Executive Board that it approves the City Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options for publication along with its Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents and formally invites representations between April 16<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007.