



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE

Date: 27 October 2011

Subject: Update on the South Bank, Sovereign Street, and Lower Kirkgate Planning Statements – Officer presentation for information only.

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

x

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

Presentation for information only on three recently adopted Planning Statements relating to sites in the City Centre.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 Three site specific Planning Statements - the Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement, the Sovereign Street Planning Statement, and the South Bank Planning Statement - have recently been adopted by the Council to guide development in three key locations in the City Centre. All three documents form site-specific informal planning guidance, adopted for development management purposes, and are supplementary to the adopted Development Plan.
- 1.2 Black and white copies of the Planning Statements are attached to this report for information. Colour copies of the Planning Statements can be obtained from the Clerk, or from the Council's website www.leeds.gov.uk or from the Development Enquiry Centre, Leonardo Building, 2 Rossington Street, Leeds LS2 8HD Telephone 0113 2224409

2.0 Planning Statement Summaries

2.1 Sovereign Street Planning Statement

- (a) The Council-owned Sovereign Street site is a high profile development opportunity in the City Centre. The Planning Statement sets out development potential and design principles for new buildings, streets, connections and green open space, in order to form a distinctive place at the heart of Leeds City Centre, close to the railway station and the riverside.
- (b) The Planning Statement follows guidance set out in the Unitary Development Plan Review (UDP) Proposal Area Statement Area 21, which forms part of the designated Riverside Area, and states that the site should be principally developed for office use, with scope for ancillary retail, food and drink and leisure uses. Hotel and residential uses would also be acceptable in the Riverside Area. Under UDP Policy CC28, a mix of complementary city centre uses which would serve to ensure life and vitality throughout the day is promoted. Public car parking for shoppers and visitors, to support the vitality and viability of the office, prime shopping and riverside quarters of the City Centre, would also be encouraged by UDP Proposal Area Statement 21. This policy highlights the need for north-south pedestrian routes through the site, with a central public space, and a prestige office frontage visible from Neville Street.
- (c) Indicative building plots A, B, and C have been identified in the Planning Statement, as well as an area of greenspace, and connective route to be enhanced. The building plots have been sited in order to balance objectives to enhance the key views into the site from the Conservation Area in the east, from Neville Street in the west, take account of existing and potential future pedestrian connections from east to west and north to south, and the requirement to deliver and maintain a significant viable greenspace and pedestrian/cycle improvements to connect to the South Bank. The Planning Statement highlights the importance of achieving architectural and landscape design coherence between all three buildings and the greenspace, including special regard to the design of taller elements of the site (potentially Plot B).
- (d) The Planning Statement also states that pedestrian linkages from the riverside to the Prime Shopping Quarter should be improved via the provision of an additional pedestrian link across the river. In order to ensure that any greenspace developed at Sovereign Street enhances connectivity south of the River Aire, it is proposed to explore the potential to provide a pedestrian/cycle footbridge across the River Aire. The success of a chain of well-connected greenspace starting at Sovereign Street, crossing the River Aire, and continuing on the South Bank, depends on the provision of a new pedestrian/cycle connection at this location. The aspirations of this Planning Statement and the South Bank Planning Statement are integrated, and require an improvement in connections between the traditional prime office and shopping quarters to the north, and a future sustainable business and residential community on the South Bank (as part of the Aire Valley Urban Eco-Settlement).
- (e) The Planning Statement also states that development should integrate building and greenspace design in order to adapt to the challenges of flood risk and climate change, and implement other sustainability measures in relation to energy, biodiversity, and waste management.

- (f) Following a consultation period in February/March 2011 (including Ward Members and Plans Panel presentation), the Sovereign Street Planning Statement was adopted by Executive Board in July 2011.

2.2 South Bank Planning Statement

- (a) The area covered by this Planning Statement consists of four City Centre sites: the former Tetley Brewery, New Lane, Bridge End, and Asda House. The area is a vital link between the traditional City Centre core and the Riverside to the north, Holbeck Urban Village to the west, the Aire Valley to the east, and residential communities of Beeston Hill and Holbeck to the south. The area defined in the document as the South Bank is likely to change significantly in the next few years, particularly as a result of the recent closure of the Carlsberg Tetley Brewery.
- (c) The South Bank Planning Statement aims to provide clarity for developers in terms of development expectations, aspirations and scale of planning obligations and common infrastructure, and for the Council in achieving its aspirations for promoting the City Centre Park - both as a destination in its own right, and as a catalyst for the reconnection of the South Bank to the City Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. The Statement proposes an overall vision for the area, with the aim:

To transform the South Bank of Leeds City Centre into a distinctive, vibrant, well connected and sustainable business and a residential community which has at its heart a new City Centre Park. The new park will act as a catalyst for the regeneration and place-shaping of the South Bank of Leeds City Centre, by creating a transformational, vibrant and outward-facing public space that also defines the context for the broader redevelopment of the area, and connects to the surrounding communities in the Aire Valley, Hunslet, Richmond Hill, Beeston Hill and Holbeck.

- (d) The Planning Statement provides guidance on:
- Appropriate land uses to promote homes, employment and supporting uses including active ground floor uses and cultural uses
 - Connectivity and movement, including aspirations to change the highway network to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity and increase greenspace provision
 - The area will aim to be an exemplar in sustainable development practice, as part of a wider Aire Valley Urban Eco-Settlement
 - Indicative urban design principles including the City Centre Park, and potential for green connections around it, and development plates, identified as zones for built development, threaded with routes between building to increase pedestrian and cycle permeability through the area.
- (e) The South Bank Planning Statement also sets out the Council's aspirations for change in the area in the shorter term, to promote activity, greenspace and new pedestrian routes through the temporary use of cleared sites awaiting development, with the aims of avoiding empty land and buildings and creating a place to visit now, and throughout its gradual transition towards achieving the above Vision.

- (f) Following a consultation period in September/October 2010 (including Ward Members and Plans Panel presentation), the South Bank Planning Statement was adopted by Executive Board in October 2011.

2.3 Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement

- (a) Lower Kirkgate lies at a strategically crucial point in the City Centre in a north-south chain of attractions between Eastgate/Harewood Quarter, Kirkgate Market and the Riverside area. Despite its central location and historic character, it has not benefited from the recent success of the rest of the City Centre, and now has a number of vacant units. It has however retained a unique independent character that has huge potential to kick start a revitalisation that could have wider benefits for the City.
- (b) The Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement has been prepared by Leeds City Council following a number of years of discussion with majority landowners, English Heritage, and Leeds Civic Trust, with the vision of securing the future of the historic fabric of Kirkgate, in particular the repair and re-use of the First White Cloth Hall, which is widely recognised as one of Leeds' most historically significant buildings. A Planning Statement is considered to be an appropriate way of agreeing basic objectives and parameters for the sensitive regeneration and restoration of this area.
- (c) The Planning Statement examines the local historical context, identifies key buildings of architectural and historic interest, and aims to promote:
- Sensitive conservation, restoration and regeneration of heritage assets including the Grade II* Listed First White Cloth Hall
 - Land use planning - promote independent retail and supporting activity to the streets and spaces around it
 - Urban design - preserve and enhance the strong character and sense of place and history of Lower Kirkgate
 - Connectivity and movement - open historic ginnels and new routes, promote safe and well-designed servicing arrangements
 - Public realm - promotion of access for all, natural paving materials, soft landscaping, tree planting and public art
 - Sustainability - re-use of existing building fabric, retro-fitting, and ensuring new build meets the highest sustainability standards to reduce the effects of climate change.
- (d) The Planning Statement therefore suggests the following vision for Lower Kirkgate :
- To work collaboratively with key stakeholders and involving the local community;
 - Reinforce, preserving and enhancing the strong identity, character and distinctiveness of the area and its buildings;
 - Investing effectively in good sustainable design;
 - Re-connect and restore confidence in Kirkgate as a place at the heart of City Centre activity;
 - Act as a catalyst to close the gap between neighbouring areas within the City Centre, and also to those on its edge.

- (e) Following consultation periods in September/October 2009 (including Ward Members, and Plans Panel presentation) and April/May/June 2011 (including Ward Members and Plans Panel Members), the Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement was adopted under delegated powers by the Chief Planning Officer at Planning Board in August 2011. The document will provide informal guidance for developers and land owners, and should form the starting point for pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority. The Statement is also being used to inform a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for assistance in achieving the conservation-led regeneration of the area, including the restoration of the First White Cloth Hall.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the aspirations of the Planning Statements as non-statutory planning guidance for development management purposes. The documents will be used to guide developers in their preparation of proposals for sites in these three important locations in Leeds City Centre. Plans Panel will be kept informed of the progress of any major proposals that have been prepared by developers at these sites.

Background Papers:

Sovereign Street Planning Statement July 2011

South Bank Planning Statement October 2011

Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement August 2011