



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE

Date: 8th March 2012

Subject: **First White Cloth Hall**

Electoral Wards Affected:

City & Holbeck



Ward Members consulted
(refer to Executive Board report
Report, Appendix 1)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

City Centre Plans Panel is asked to note the contents of this report, in particular that work is progressing towards repairing the First White Cloth Hall. A further report will be brought to Panel in July/August 2012.

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 To inform City Centre Plans Panel of progress in restoring the First White Cloth Hall (FWCH). It follows the update that was given in November 2011.

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2010 the City Council developed and submitted a Stage 1 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to support the physical regeneration of Lower Kirkgate. A Stage 1 pass was granted by the HLF in May 2010. As a result the HLF awarded £1.005m to Leeds, a sum which has to be matched by £668k in LCC funding. In September 2011 a revised Stage 1 bid seeking an additional £500k to support the restoration of the FWCH was submitted to the HLF who have now confirmed that they are minded to approve the additional funding subject to a successful Stage 2 bid.

2.2 To complement the bid development process, a number of parallel studies have been carried out including an options appraisal looking at a range of options for delivering the FWCH should the commercial solution outlined in the masterplan not

be tenable. There is also a need to look at the wider context, in particular the lack of physical and perceptual linkages between Kirkgate and the rest of the City Centre that have gradually choked off investment to Leeds' First Street.

3.0 FWCH Proposals

3.1 The FWCH appraisal has identified a full restoration of the FWCH with a rebuilt west wing in keeping with what remains of the east and south wings. In this option the 19th century gable of the extant east wing would be retained (mirrored on the rebuilt west wing), the re-opened courtyard would see the archway details restored and the south elevation of the south wing facing the car park (mostly 19th century fabric combined with two and half bays of the 1711 cloth hall) would be repaired and restored. Recent discussions with the Civic Trust and English Heritage suggest they are comfortable with this option.

3.2 However, it is also the most expensive option and all parties have acknowledged that in the value engineering phases some compromises may have to be made. The assumption is that the building would be refurbished for retail/leisure a use that would yield the highest rental and also require fewer interventions than alternative uses. Appraisals of different development options for the FWCH suggest that there is a significant deficit and value engineering work is being undertaken over the next few weeks to attempt to address this. The funding from the HLF combined with other possible grant sources will not be sufficient and the majority of the initial capital outlay will have to be met by borrowing and cross subsidy from the development gain arising from the owner's other landholdings. To this end the majority landowner has commissioned a development masterplan for the area (see map 2). The proposal is at an early stage at the moment but incorporates the following elements:

- a. A fully refurbished FWCH with limited servicing reflecting the potential to accommodate a basic retail operation similar to its initial purpose. To maximise the use of available internal floorspace, servicing would be external to the main building and a glazed roof may be installed over the courtyard to increase available tradable space.
- b. Several new build elements comprising a building fronting onto Kirkgate to replace the demolished 101 Kirkgate and 103 Kirkgate (currently Hill's Furnishings) and a larger two-storey retail development to the SW of the FWCH occupying 2/3 of the site on the site of the current car park to the rear of the Kirkgate frontages. This new retail block will be set off Waterloo House on the southern edge of the site which allows the potential for a new arcade with a glazed roof which will allow circulation from Crown Street through the railway viaduct arches to Chancellors Court.
- c. A narrow ginnel has been proposed west of the FWCH to encourage pedestrian footfall through the site exploiting desire lines between Kirkgate Market, the Corn Exchange, Call Lane and the Vicar Lane bus station. It would also afford glimpses of the Corn Exchange roofscape from Lower Kirkgate. However, whilst in townscape terms this solution would be attractive a better commercial solution might be to use this as part of the new build development at 101/103 Kirkgate and use the FWCH as the main route through the site. It is also proposed to improve circulation within the site by re-opening Pine Court at the bottom of Kirkgate and by breaking through one of the shopfronts in the middle of the parade to create a new pedestrian walkway which will link into the arcade.

3.3 Once the general massing of the building is agreed a development appraisal will be undertaken to re-assess the funding position of the primary commercial option for the refurbishment of the FWCH. Alternative delivery mechanisms are also being explored, including the setting up of a charitable trust which would carry out the refurbishment and management of the FWCH.

4.0 Training

4.1 Training and education is central to the achievement of the THI's aims and objectives. As a consequence a budget of £50,000 has been allocated for training, education and learning initiatives which have been designed to primarily engage the residents of Richmond Hill and other nearby communities. A training plan is being prepared in partnership with Construction Yorkshire and, Employment Leeds that seeks to:

- To provide unemployed graduates with experience in heritage management.
- To improve the skills and knowledge of individuals employed in the local construction sector including contractors/subcontractors.
- To provide training for NEETS and the unemployed generally who are interested in developing a career in heritage construction in addition to work experience.
- To encourage property owners and individuals to consider the use of sustainable products and services and to introduce energy efficient methods.
- To increase knowledge and awareness of the heritage of the Kirkgate area and to promote opportunities for the understanding and the enjoyment heritage in Kirkgate and the surrounding area.

5.0 Timescales

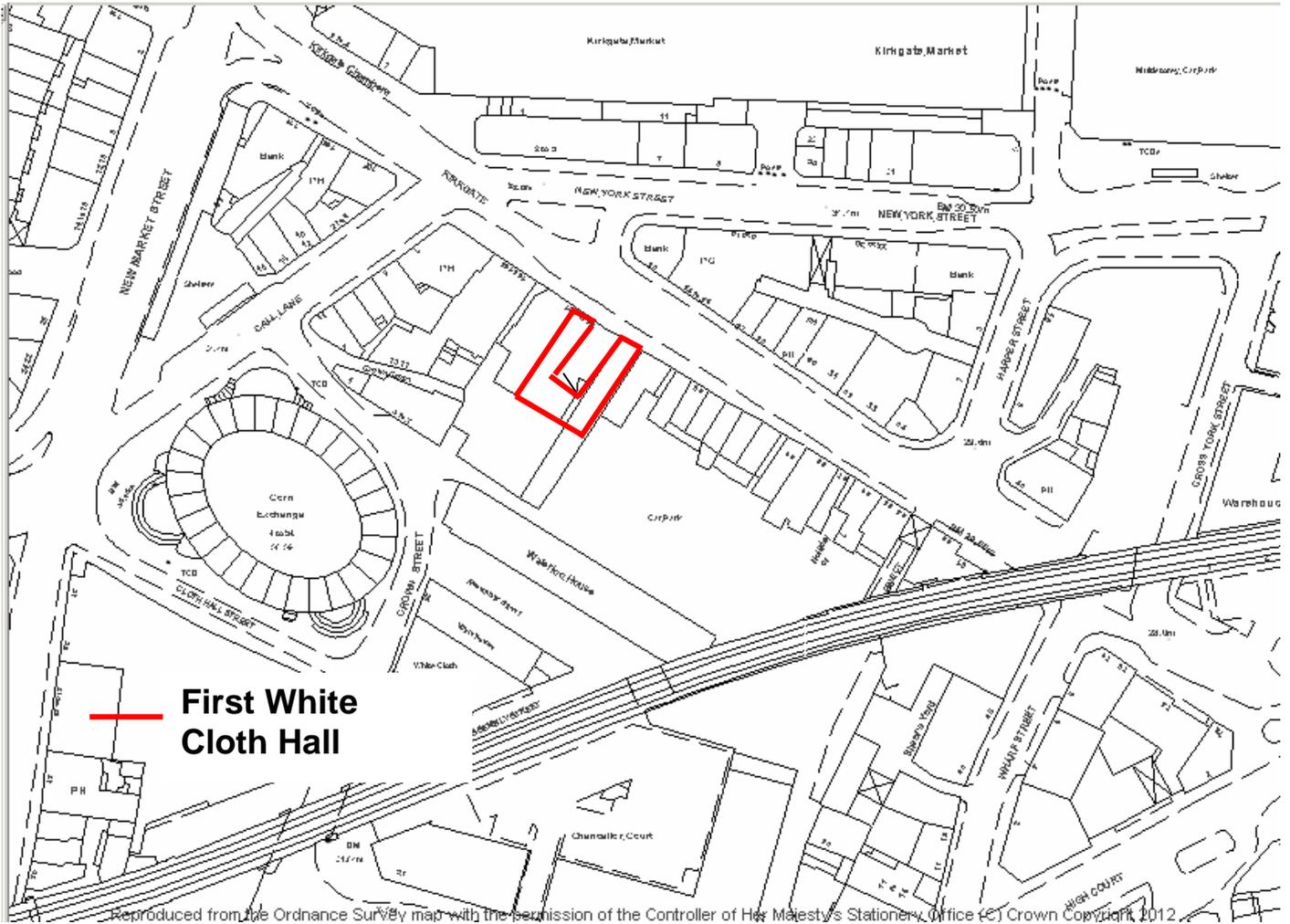
5.1 The key stages in developing the options for delivery of the FWCH and the submission of the stage 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative are as follows:

Executive Board to consider the stage 2 (preceded by SIB)*	April 2012
Submission of stage 2 bid to HLF	April 2012
HLF decision on stage 2	June 2012
Further report to City Centre plans Panel	July/August 2012
Scheme Delivery Starts	October 2012
Scheme Ends	October 2017

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The Council is working with the owner and other funders and stakeholders, including the Heritage Lottery fund, to find a viable option for the restoration of the First White Cloth Hall. A further progress report should be submitted to City Centre Plans Panel in July/August 2012 following a decision by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

MAP 1: location plan



MAP 2: draft masterplan

