



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

NORTH AND EAST PLANS PANEL

Date: 21st March 2013

Subject: Planning Application 13/00459/FU (POSITION STATEMENT) – New Fire Station with associated access, car parking and landscaping on land adjacent to York Road (including the former petrol filling station site), Leeds, LS14

APPLICANT

West Yorkshire Fire and
Rescue Authority

DATE VALID

4th February 2013

TARGET DATE

6th May 2013

Electoral Wards Affected:

Killingbeck and Seacroft

Yes

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: For Members to note the content of the Position Statement and to provide feedback on the questions posed at section 11.0 of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 This full planning application is presented to Plans Panel as the proposals represent a significant departure from the adopted development plan. The application site (excluding the site of a former petrol filling station) is allocated as greenspace under Policy N1 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review 2006. Leeds City Council is also the current land owner.

1.2 In common with other public services, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to implement efficiency measures, a key component of the Authority's Community Risk Management Strategy 2011-15. This considers staffing, relocation of resources, flexible working patterns, improved ways of working and improvements in resilience. Following the production of an integrated risk management plan, the recommendations include the closure of ten stations across West Yorkshire and the construction of five new ones. The Gipton and Stanks business case indicates that

'the existing stations at Gipton and Stanks are just 3.7 miles apart and consolidating resources at a new fire station which is at a central location is an economic, effective and efficient way of providing fire and rescue services for these areas'. The provision of two front-line fire appliances constantly crewed by whole-time fire fighters is deemed appropriate for this area. The report also highlights the need to preserve the Young Fire Fighters Scheme which offers a variety of courses to engage Year 10 school children who are referred through the Leeds Probation Services and Signpost. The courses have a strong focus on the consequences of anti-social behaviour and are understood to be well regarded.

- 1.3 The submitted documents indicate that the Gipton and Stanks fire stations are both dated in terms of physical appearance and functionality and are not situated within the best locations to serve the catchment area. Subject to planning permission being granted, the fire service are aiming to occupy the new station by August 2015. The existing stations at Gipton and Stanks will remain in use until the new station is available. Currently, it is understood that the plan is to dispose of the existing stations once they are vacant, but at this stage nothing else has been decided. It is also understood that there is currently a listing application with English Heritage for the Gipton fire station.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 This is a full planning application proposing the erection of a new fire station with associated access, car parking and landscaping. The proposed development will provide for a new three bay operational fire station plus accommodation to provide for the Young Firefighter Scheme. The fire station will be a two-storey building which will provide all of the necessary operational accommodation for the fire service personnel and associated vehicles. The accommodation will comprise of a three bay vehicle (fire tender) garage, offices, sleeping facilities and rest and recreation areas. Ancillary to the building will be a service yard / training area to the rear and side. Car parking for staff and visitors is also to be provided within the site. A training tower is also to be located towards the western end of the site, to a height of 13.89m.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The application site lies to the north of York Road (A64), at its junction with Moresdale Lane, to the east of Killingbeck Police Station. Approximately one third of the application site comprises the site of a former petrol filling station, although all that remains are areas of hardstanding, small areas of walling and self seeded vegetation. The other two thirds of the site are comprised of grassed areas of public open space, including a gas governor unit surrounded by palisade fencing. York Road, to the south, is in an elevated position and the site slopes downwards in a northerly direction. The maximum fall across the site is approximately 3.5m difference in levels. The greenspace also contains two public rights of way which are hard surfaced and lit. One is a definitive right of way linking York Road to Studfold View, straddling the boundary with the Police Station. The other is a claimed right of way which runs in front of the houses to the north of the greenspace and links Moresdale Lane to Studfold View.
- 3.2 Killingbeck Police Station is located to the west of the site and comprises commercial two-storey office buildings of a significant scale. The Police Station site is bounded by railings and includes soft landscaped areas containing trees and shrubs. The area to the north of the application site is predominantly residential in nature with two short terraces of two-storey dwellings, Skelwith View, located immediately to the north of the greenspace. An arrangement appears to exist whereby occupiers of these properties park on the area of greenspace immediately in front of their properties due to the addition of a grass-crete surface. These properties do not otherwise have

anywhere to park and access this area from Studfold View. The area to the east of the site and to the east of Moresdale Lane comprises residential areas, with a swathe of open greenspace along the York Road frontage. The area to the south of the site and to the south of York Road comprises a mixture of residential properties and commercial premises.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

4.1 No relevant planning applications.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

5.1 Pre-application discussions have taken place between the applicant, Ward Members and Officers regarding the principle of development and the location of the new fire station.

5.2 The applicant has subsequently submitted this full planning application. Officers have held an initial meeting with Killingbeck and Seacroft Ward Members (Cllrs Graham Hyde, Veronica Morgan and Brian Selby). Ward Members were generally comfortable with the proposed use, layout and design. However, key issues for them included ensuring that there was a satisfactory level of soft landscaping, including colourful shrubs and trees, in order to mitigate the visual impact of the proposals when viewed from the properties to the north. Members were also concerned that full cognisance is taken of the impact that the existing traffic lights may have on the ability for fire service vehicles attending emergency call outs. It was requested that highways officers seek advice from Urban Traffic Control (UTC).

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

6.1 5 site notices have been displayed, posted 15th February 2013. The application has also been advertised in a local newspaper, published 21st February 2013. The formal consultation period expired on the 14th March and at the time of writing, no letters of representation have been received.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

7.1 Statutory:

Highways: - No objections in principle, although further advice has been sought from UTC on the acceptability of the proposed traffic signals and central reservation crossing facility outside the site on York Road. Detailed technical issues are now being considered by the applicant's highway consultant. There is no requirement for a Travel Plan in this instance.

7.2 Non-statutory:

Flood Risk Management Team: - No objections, conditions are recommended. It is noted that a number of sewers cross the site and these will need to be diverted, including a surface water culvert which will require a separate consent from Flood Risk Management.

Public Rights of Way: - The proposed development is in close proximity to a definitive and a claimed right of way which run along the western and northern sides of the greenspace. No objections are raised as the proposals do not affect these routes.

Environmental Studies Team: - No objection in relation to air quality issues.

Contaminated Land: - Given the proposed end use, no objections are raised and conditions are recommended.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

8.1 The development plan comprises the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP) along with relevant supplementary planning guidance and documents. The Local Development Framework will eventually replace the UDP but at the moment this is still undergoing production with the Core Strategy still being at the draft stage.

8.2 Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review:

Part of the application site relates to an area of land allocated as greenspace under Policy N1 which states that:

Development of land identified on the proposals map and city centre inset map II as protected greenspace, will not be permitted for purposes other than outdoor recreation, unless the need in the locality for greenspace is already met and a suitable alternative site can be identified and laid out as greenspace in an area of identified shortfall.

Other relevant policies include:

SA1: Secure the highest possible quality of environment.

GP5: General planning considerations.

N38b: Flood Risk Assessments.

N39a: Sustainable drainage.

T2: New development and highways considerations.

T2C: New development and Travel Plans.

T2D: Public transport contributions.

T5: Safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

T24: Car parking provision.

BD5: General amenity issues.

LD1: Landscape schemes.

8.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents:

SPG10 Sustainable Development Design Guide (adopted).

SPG22 Sustainable Urban Drainage (adopted).

SPD Sustainable Design and Construction (adopted).

8.4 National Planning Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework.

8.5 Emerging Policy

The Publication Draft of the Core Strategy was issued for public consultation on 28th February 2012 and the consultation period closed on 12th April 2012. 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. On 14th November 2012 Full Council resolved to approve the Publication Draft Core Strategy and the sustainability report for the purpose of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Full Council also resolved on 14th November 2012 that a further period for representation be provided on pre-submission changes and any further representations received be submitted to the Secretary of State at the time the Publication Draft Core Strategy is submitted for independent examination.

- 8.6 As the Council have resolved to move the Publication Draft Core Strategy to the next stage of independent examination some weight can now be attached to the document and its contents recognising that the weight to be attached may be limited by outstanding representations which have been made which will be considered at the future examination.

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development
2. Highway issues
3. Design
4. Landscape design and visual impact
5. Drainage and flood risk
6. Impact on residential amenity

10.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of development

- 10.1 Part of the application site is on land allocated as N1 greenspace in the Leeds (UDP) Review 2006. As per the wording of the policy set out in section 8.2 of this report, development of greenspace is not normally permitted for purposes other than outdoor recreation, unless the need in the locality has already been met and a suitable alternative site can be laid out as greenspace in an area of identified shortfall.
- 10.2 In considering the above, officers have sought to assess the quality of the greenspace area affected by the development and importantly the role it performs, both individually and also collectively due to the existence of other similar spaces in the area. Individually, the space is essentially given over to grass and provides a generous, open aspect for the occupiers of Skelwith Walk but does not perform any specific sporting function or have a high recreational value. With respect to its relationship to other greenspace areas, these can be found to both the east and west and when combined provide a green corridor between the historic centre of Seacroft to the east and Killingbeck Fields to the west which forms part of the Wyke Beck Valley. With this in mind, it is important that the green corridor function of the site remains. The fire station's siting towards the York Road frontage achieves this.
- 10.3 Whilst the proposal will clearly reduce the actual greenspace area available, the scheme does offer the opportunity to remove and remediate the former petrol filling station area. Furthermore, the wider area is not deficient in greenspace provision. Having considered all these factors including the need for the replacement fire station and the specific access requirements which it has, officers are of the opinion the development can be supported in principle providing the loss of the greenspace area is adequately mitigated. Officers are still in negotiations about the extent of mitigation required and what form this could take although any improvements sought will clearly be directed towards the local area.

- 10.4 **Do Members have any views on the loss of greenspace and/or the principle of development?**

Highway issues

- 10.5 The proposals include an entrance and egress from the site onto York Road for the purposes of fire tenders leaving the site to answer emergency call outs and return. The fire tender entrance also includes three car parking spaces as part of the Young Fire Fighters drop off zone. A further general access is proposed from Moresdale Lane, leading to a staff car park containing space for 14 cars and cycle parking in the form a 5 secure cyclepods. A separate visitor's car park proposes 9 car parking

spaces, including one disabled space. It is understood that the level of car parking provision reflects the experiences of the Fire Authority on other operational sites of a similar size. Highways Officers do not raise objections to the principle of development, but have stated that the application should not be approved at this stage until further clarification has been sought from UTC regarding the acceptability of the proposed traffic signals and central reservation crossing facility on York Road. The technical feedback received from UTC to date has been fed back to the applicant's highway consultant for a response.

Design

- 10.6 The layout of the development is dictated by the operational requirements of the fire station. Specifically, these dictate that fire tenders must re-enter the site at the rear (via the westernmost access to the site from York Road) thus allowing them to drive forward into the vehicle bays within the building. The vehicles will then be in the required location and in the correct orientation for the next emergency turn out.
- 10.7 Broadly speaking, the fire tender garage and Young Fire Fighters accommodation are provided for in the single-storey element of the building, whilst the offices, recreational areas, sleeping accommodation and other requirements are housed within the two-storey element. The overall maximum height of the fire station building, over the two-storey element, is approximately 9.2m (to the highest part of the roof slope).
- 10.8 In terms of materials, the external walls are to be constructed of clay facing brickwork (mid red multi) with some areas of silver Trespa wall cladding. The roof is to be finished with light grey colour coated standing seam composite roof panels. Windows and doors will be colour coated aluminium construction (mid grey), interspersed with coloured infill panels to add an element of visual interest. It is recognised that some aspects of the building such as the colour and design of the fire tender access / egress doors are a fundamental requirement and are typical of a fire station.
- 10.9 **Do Members have any comments on the layout and/or design of the proposals?**

Landscape design and visual impact

- 10.10 A small amount of new soft landscaping will be provided along the boundary with York Road and is proposed to be low rise and low maintenance. There is a need to avoid vegetation that could impact on visibility splays for the various vehicular egress points. The exact specification of the soft landscaping is currently unknown, but could otherwise reasonably be secured through a planning condition.
- 10.11 In terms of boundary treatments, it is accepted that the rear of the fire station must be secure, but it is also important that the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on nearby properties by way of noise. Accordingly, a 2.5m high acoustic fence is proposed to contain the site from the fire tender access, all the way around the western side and rear of the site to a point level with the eastern end of the building. This would then contain the noisy activities associated with service yard, vehicle washing and training areas. The staff car parking area at the eastern end of the site would be bounded by a 2.4m high weldmesh security fence and security gate.
- 10.12 It is acknowledged that, if approved, the proposed development would result in a significant change in outlook from the front aspect of the residential properties to the north, particularly given the elevated plateau on which the development would sit. It is therefore considered necessary that soft landscaping is introduced to help mitigate the visual impact of both the acoustic fence and the building beyond. This is a point which is also an area of concern for Ward Members, who have specifically requested robust tree and shrub planting. The acoustic fence around the western end of the site

would also be prominent in the streetscene of York Road, particularly when travelling east along the A64, a key route into and out of the city. It is therefore considered that further soft landscaping around this area is important in order to create an acceptable setting for the development.

10.13 Do Members have any comments on the landscaping proposals and boundary treatments?

Drainage and flood risk

10.14 Following consultation with the Flood Risk Management Team, no objections are raised to the proposals subject to the imposition of drainage conditions. It is noted that three sewers currently cross the site, east to west, which will therefore require diversion. The applicant is aware of this and has submitted plans showing diversions around the north of the site boundary, but still within the remainder of the greenspace. At the time of writing, a consultation response is still awaited from Yorkshire Water.

10.15 Do Members have any comments in relation to drainage?

Impact on residential amenity

10.16 The application has been submitted with drawings showing detailed sections and relationships between the proposed development and the existing houses to the north of the site. The nearest property, No. 2 Skelwith Walk, is sited 25m away from the two-storey element of the building, at its nearest point and accordingly no issues regarding loss of privacy are considered to exist. The outlook from the fronts of these properties will be to the remainder of the greenspace and banking (to be soft landscaped as described earlier in the report) in the first instance and then the 2.4m high acoustic fence (approximately 23.5m away) followed by the remainder of the building above. Officers consider this level of separation combined with the introduction of soft landscaping on the newly created banking to be reasonable. Given the change in levels and the fact that the new development must sit on a flat plateau, approximately 3m higher than the houses, the proposed building will be roughly one storey higher. As such, any landscaping at the boundary will be essential to help filter views of the station, its boundary treatment and also its overall visual impact.

10.17 Do Members have any views on the relationships between the existing properties and the proposed development?

11.0 CONCLUSION

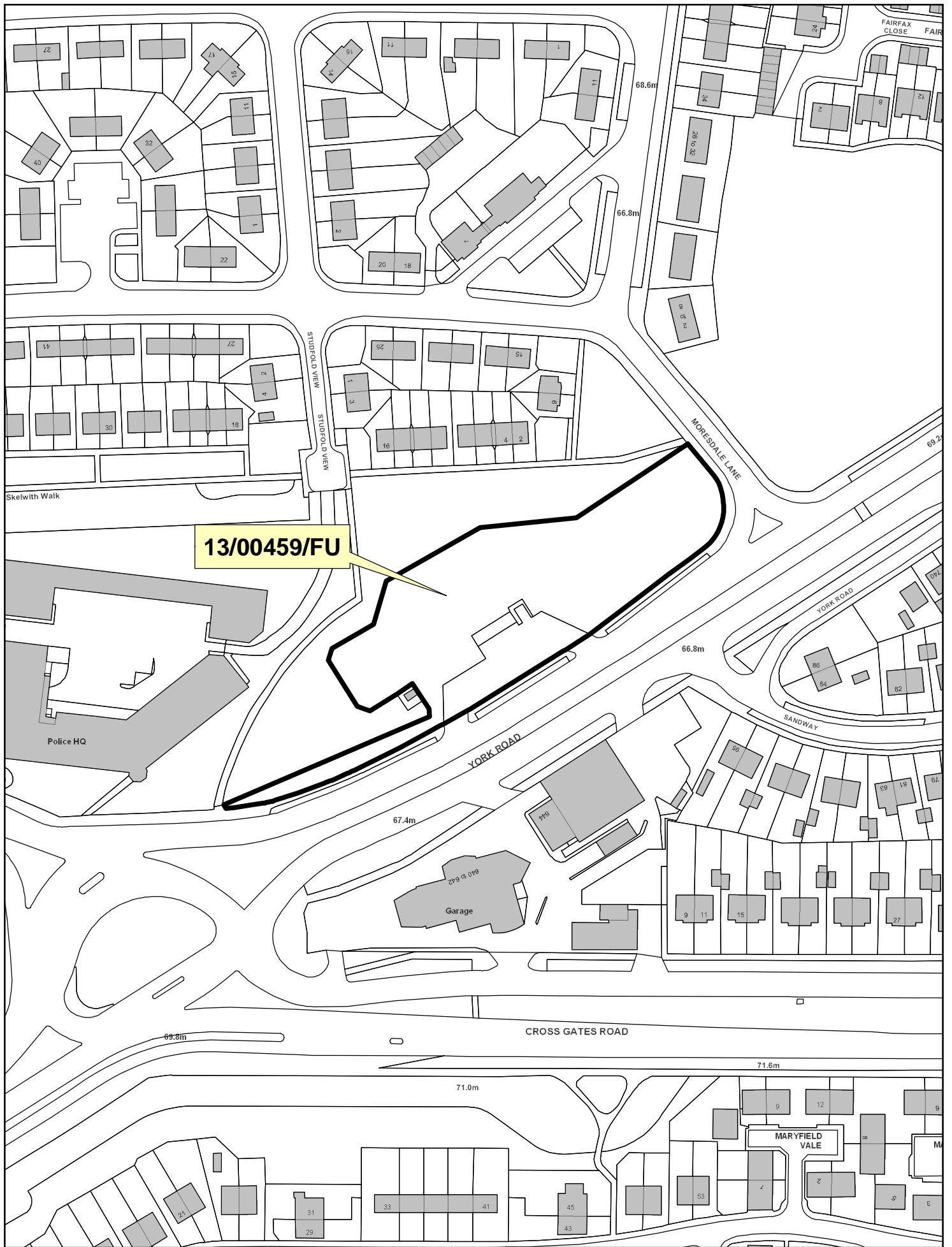
11.1 Members are requested to consider all the matters raised within this report in order to provide officers with appropriate comments and / or advice on the proposal. Specifically, feedback is requested from Members on:

- 1. Do Members have any views on the loss of greenspace and/or the principle of development?**
- 2. Do Members have any comments on the layout and/or design of the proposals?**
- 3. Do Members have any comments on the landscaping proposals and boundary treatments?**
- 4. Do Members have any comments in relation to drainage?**
- 5. Do Members have any views on the relationships between the existing properties and the proposed development?**
- 6. Are there any other comments that Members wish to make?**

11.2 **In the event Panel Members are broadly comfortable with the proposals as presented and any outstanding issues can be adequately addressed by officers, are Members happy to agree the application in principle and defer and delegate approval to the Chief Planning Officer?**

12.0 Background Papers:

- 12.1 Application and history files.
- Notice served on Leeds City Council.



13/00459/FU

NORTH AND EAST PLANS PANEL

