Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE

Date: 18th JUNE 2009

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF LEEDS ARENA BY LEEDS CITY COUNCIL AT SITE BOUNDED BY CLAY PIT LANE / INNER RING ROAD / WADE LANE / JACOB STREET / BRUNSWICK TERRACE, LEEDS. PRE-APPLICATION REFERENCE 09/00008

Electoral Wards Affected:
City and Hunslet, Hyde Park and Woodhouse

Specific Implications For:
Equality and Diversity
Community Cohesion
Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Panel for information. The Developer will be asked to present the initial details of scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the scheme.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 On 5th November 2008 Executive Board agreed to approve Clay Pit Lane as the preferred site for the development of a 12,500 seat multi purpose arena for the city. Since that time the design team has been engaged in preliminary, though detailed, work with a view to submitting an outline planning application in October 2009.

1.2 This presentation is intended to introduce Members to the scheme, including details of background to the project and the composition of the design team, the methodology proposed to deliver the necessary planning permission, and the timetable for the project.

1.3 A further presentation is proposed prior to submission of the application to explain in greater detail what will be coming in for determination by Panel and to address comments made by Members at the current presentation.
2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

2.1 The application site is bounded by Clay Pit Lane to the west, the Inner Ring Road to the north, Wade Lane to the east, and Jacob Street and Brunswick Terrace to the south. The site also abuts Yorkshire Bank offices on the south-western boundary. Elmwood Road currently dissects the site. In total the area extends to approximately 2 hectares.

2.2 The western fringe of the site is located at a local highpoint with ground levels falling towards the north, the city centre and across the site towards the east. The Inner Ring Road sits approximately 12 metres lower than the site beyond a retaining wall.

2.3 Much of the site has been used for surface car parking for a considerable period. There is additional on-street parking on Elmwood Road. The former Leeds Metropolitan University Brunswick Building situated on the south-western quarter of the site is currently being demolished. There are rows of trees on the site boundary fronting Clay Pit Lane and Brunswick Terrace, and along Elmwood Road.

2.4 The surrounding area is characterised by a number of large scale buildings, several of which have been recently completed. Most recently, the 37 storey Plaza tower on the west side of Clay Pit Lane and the 25 storey Opal Tower at the eastern end of the site, both contain student accommodation. Tower House and Merrion House on Merrion Way, and Hepworth House on Clay Pit Lane are earlier blocks containing office and educational uses. To the south of the site, Yorkshire Bank, and to the north, the HBOS building are other notable large buildings.

2.5 To the north/north-east of the site the areas of Little London and Lovell Park contain significant areas of housing including accommodation ranging from single storey and low-density buildings to 17 storey tower blocks. There are also areas of open space, including Lovell Park itself.

2.6 Queen Square Conservation Area is situated on the west side of Clay Pit Lane.

3.0 BRIEF LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Within the Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR) the site is located within the City Centre boundary. It entirely falls within a Prestige Development Area where large scale developments, including leisure and entertainment facilities, are encouraged. The site is also partly located in Proposal Area 14 where uses including leisure are identified as being appropriate. The UDPR also identifies the aspiration for proposed public space and enhanced pedestrian routes within and through the site. In accordance with CC10 a minimum of 20 per cent of the site area should be provided as public space.

3.2 The Elmwood Road-Brunswick Terrace Planning and Development Brief was adopted in 2005. The brief outlines general development principles which should be addressed in any planning application. These include:

- Improve connectivity to east, west and city centre.
- Integration of buildings and spaces into existing built form and enhancement of settings.
- Provision of landscaped belt to Inner Ring Road.
- Creation of active frontages to buildings.
- Opportunity to connect site to Hepworth House site.
• Closure of Elmwood Road.
• The potential to introduce tall buildings to partner existing tall buildings.

4.0 DEVELOPER APPOINTMENTS

4.1 The Chief Officer, Major Projects, is the scheme promoter for the delivery of the arena.

4.2 SMG Europe were appointed as the preferred operator for the arena in May 2008. SMG is the largest operator of sports and entertainment venues in Europe, including Manchester Evening News Arena and Bridgewater Hall, the Odyssey Arena, Belfast, and Oslo Spektrum in its portfolio. SMG has considerable industry knowledge and has largely defined the optimum internal design of the arena.

4.3 Leeds City Council appointed its strategic design partner, Jacobs, to take on the role of developing the design for the venue. Subsequently, Jacobs appointed Populous to provide the design team with the specialist architectural expertise for the arena design. Populous have a track record of delivering high profile and complex developments including Wembley and the Arsenal Emirates stadiums, the O2 arenas in London, Dublin and Berlin, and Wimbledon Centre Court.

4.4 Recently, Arups, a global firm of designers, engineers, planners and business consultants, have been appointed to act as external planning agent to ensure transparency between the roles of the Council as developer and as the Local Planning Authority.

5.0 PROPOSAL

5.1 The development is likely to consist of a 12,500 seat entertainment focused, multi use arena with ancillary commercial uses located around the perimeter of the building. The arena is expected to have a super theatre format as opposed to the more traditional bowl or horse-shoe seating arrangement historically used by most arenas in the United Kingdom. The external footprint of the building would be approximately 9,500m$^2$. The anticipated maximum height of the building would be approximately 35 metres, falling to its lowest point of approximately 25 metres above the stage and service area.

5.2 Initial indications are that the “back of house” service yard would be adjacent to the Inner Ring Road, both accessed and egressed onto Wade Lane. It will be necessary to identify a suitable off-site location for a layover area for the storage of heavy goods vehicles waiting to unload or load event equipment.

5.3 There are no proposals to provide any public or operational car parking on the site. It is intended that visitors not using public transport would utilise existing parking facilities around the city centre, in particular Woodhouse Lane and the Merrion Centre car park, which have capacity during evening periods. Coach drop-off and disabled persons parking proposals will also need to be identified.

5.4 Whereas the scale and location of the arena have not been set principal areas of public realm are likely to be laid out to the south and west of the building towards Brunswick Terrace and Clay Pit Lane. Pedestrian connections towards the city centre, especially public transport interchanges, will need to be considered. There is also the opportunity to improve connections between the site, which sits at the northern fringe of the city centre, with disadvantaged communities beyond.
5.5 The venue would host approximately 120, primarily music, events per year whereas ancillary uses would be open all year. Events would typically operate between 1900-2300 hours with the event change-over occurring from 2300 hours onwards.

5.6 It is envisaged that the scheme requirements will not utilise the full capacity of the site. Once the layout has been more clearly established it is anticipated that a potential development plot will be identified on remaining land. This would be the subject of a future planning application.

6.0 PLANNING PROCESS

6.1 A further pre-application presentation is proposed following today’s initial presentation and site visit. A Planning Performance Agreement has been drafted to help guide the planning process.

6.2 A two stage application process is proposed. This would comprise:

(i) An outline application with details of use, means of access, siting and layout, together with details identifying scale parameters. The application would be accompanied by an Environmental Statement together with a full range of supporting documents including a transport assessment and travel plan, a noise and air quality assessment, a Design and Access statement, an economic impact statement and a Statement of Community Involvement. Indicative details of building form would also be provided.

(ii) A Reserved Matters application confirming the appearance of the external skin of the building and landscaping of the public realm.

6.3 The two stage process enables the arena’s internal scheme design, off site works and site abnormals to be established at a relatively early stage whilst enabling focus on the external design of the building at the Reserved Matters stage. The format also enables the developer, in parallel, to review in more detail the relative benefits of different contractor procurement options whilst retaining project momentum.

6.4 Applications for associated works required to support the scheme would be encouraged at an early stage in the process.

7.0 TIMESCALES

7.1 Whilst timescales are typically subject to some variation the Planning Performance Agreement will endeavour to ensure that the scheme is considered in a timely and effective way.

7.2 Prior to the submission of the application there will be a period of public and stakeholder consultation the nature and extent of which is shortly to identified by the applicants. The outline planning application will subsequently be submitted in October. Following a period of consultation officers will bring a position statement to Panel in December 2009 / January 2010. At this time it may also be possible to present Members emerging details of the external design of the building to be submitted later at Reserved Matters stage. It is intended that the outline application is considered by Panel in April 2010.

7.3 The Reserved Matters application is due to be submitted in June 2010 and determined in September 2010.
7.4 Construction is planned for a two year period between October 2010 and October 2012.

8.0 ISSUES

Members are asked to:

(i) Note the report.
(ii) Note the composition of the developer’s team.
(iii) Note the suitability of the site for the proposed arena.
(iv) Note the approach and methodology for the two stage planning application process and associated timescales.
(v) Identify issues that should be addressed as part of the planning application.
(vi) Suggest any community groups who should be consulted in the forthcoming full and inclusive pre-application consultation process.