



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 25th October 2007

Subject: Leeds Bradford Corridor Regeneration

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Armley Bramley and Stanningley</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

- The purpose of this report is to update the Inner West Area Committee about joint work taking place between partners of Leeds City Council and Bradford MDC on the Leeds Bradford Corridor. This work aims to develop a framework for the future joint working in the areas of west Leeds and east Bradford. The work comes in three strands:
 - A regeneration study for the area has been commissioned by Leeds City Council and Bradford MDC to develop a programme of joint work to deliver a 10 year vision for this area.
 - A joint bid has been submitted to the Northern Housing Challenge Programme looking at innovative housing proposals for the area.
 - METRO have commissioned a Transport Study looking at connectivity between the two cities.
- As well as the Leeds-Bradford corridor work, there are ongoing discussions with Bradford about other areas of joint working, particularly relating to the economy, tourism and transport at the sub-regional and city-region levels.

Recommendations

The Inner West Area Committee are asked to note the content of this report and support continued joint working with Bradford MDC.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to appraise the Inner West Area Committee about joint work taking place between the Leeds City Council and Bradford MDC on the Leeds Bradford Corridor. This work aims to develop a framework for joint work between the two authorities to regenerate this important corridor within West Leeds and East Bradford. The work comes in a number of strands.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Leeds/Bradford Commuter Corridor is an area of potential major economic importance connecting the cities of Leeds and Bradford and has been identified as area of potential growth in the Leeds City Region Development Plan (Yorkshire and Humber Plan Draft December 2005 p 82)
- 2.2 Currently, economic conditions in the corridor are not as strong as they could be; transport connections could be significantly improved and housing provision is in need of refurbishment and remodelling in places and may not be of a range and quality sufficient to support future economic growth. There are significant areas of disadvantage in the Commuter Corridor area, for example in Bowling, Thornbury and Laisterdyke within East Bradford, and in parts of Armley and Bramley within West Leeds.
- 2.3 A Leeds Bradford Corridor Group, comprising elected members and representatives from both local authorities and other interested agencies, has been established to develop a co-ordinated and integrated strategy to identify and deliver opportunities to improve the quality of life, develop economic prosperity for the area, improve transportation and connectivity, achieve sustainable improvements to housing and the environment and create cohesive communities within the corridor area.
- 2.4 The groups aim is to take forward the economic growth and physical regeneration identified in the Northern Way and the Leeds City Region Development Programme and hopes to use as its basis the unique proximity of Leeds and Bradford (the 3rd and 6th largest cities in the UK).
- 2.5 This study is seen as one in a number of ways by which the two cities potential can be harnessed to create a sustainable economic powerhouse. The work will respond to the clear direction given by Government and Regional Agencies to encourage greater links and cooperation between Leeds and Bradford and will build on the strong political and officer support for collaboration that now exists.
- 2.6 One reason for the study is that it will articulate a vision and rationale that will attract additional public and private investment in new businesses and inward investment, improved transport provision and infrastructure, new housing provision and the improvement of housing in poor condition or in need of renovation. The fruits of this are already apparent in the Northern Housing Challenge bid described below.
- 2.7 In order to provide the impetus for this joint regeneration programme, it was proposed that some targeted consultancy be commissioned to meet the aspirations outlined above. To this end, White Young Green were appointed in October 2006 to take this work forward.
- 2.8 Along side the commissioning of a regeneration study for the area, two other opportunities for joint working within the area have arisen. Firstly, there has been an opportunity to submit a joint bid to the Northern Housing Challenge Programme, seeking funding to support innovative housing proposals. Secondly there is the

development of a transport study of the Leeds Bradford Corridor by METRO that is concurrent with the Regeneration Framework Study.

2.9 Each of these strands is outlined below.

3.0 Main Elements of the Leeds Bradford Corridor Work

3.1 White Young Green Regeneration Study

3.1.1 White Young Green were appointed by the Leeds-Bradford Corridor Group to undertake a study of the area and produce a framework for the development of future joint working.

3.1.2 The purpose of this work is firstly to advise the Leeds-Bradford Corridor Group (Leeds City Council, City of Bradford MDC, West Leeds Homes, Bradford Community Housing Trust, West Yorkshire Metro and other regeneration partners) upon:

- the feasibility of developing a combined approach between interested stakeholders in Leeds and Bradford.
- A vision for the future of the wider study area
- Identify a small number of specific joint projects in a defined “implementation area” to be considered by the partners

3.1.3 The study for the Leeds Bradford Corridor programme was focused around four key themes:

- *Enhancing economic development and employment opportunities* that would support existing businesses and encourage new employers to the area.
- *Enhancing and improving Transport quality and connectivity* in order to improve the quality of transport between the two city centres and enable better connectivity to employment and business opportunities
- *Improving housing quality and choice* that is available for local people, that will attract new households, respond to changing demand for housing and that will support any future economic growth.
- *Improving the image and appearance of the Leeds-Bradford Corridor.*

3.1.4 The Framework also advises on possible Governance arrangements for any interventions that are identified.

3.1.5 Work on the study by White Young Green was completed in July 2007.

3.1.6 Consultation with the two local authorities has led to the identification of six possible areas for possible joint work:

- better local connectivity links
- development around transport nodes (e.g. New Pudsey and Thornbury)
- proposals on future housing growth and affordability.
- new employment sites
- a Leeds Bradford “Boulevard”.
- specialist labour market / training / skills strategy and resourcing bids for the corridor.

3.2 Northern Housing Challenge Bid

- 3.2.1 This is a pioneering proposal that is designed to secure a lasting, working partnership between the Leeds and Bradford Districts to secure funding to develop affordable housing in East Bradford and West Leeds. The whole scheme will build 1000 new homes either for sale or rent as well as creating 50 permanent jobs and 50 training places and raising aspirations for employment amongst local people, particularly through jobs the construction industry.
- 3.2.2 The bid is being led by Firebird JVC in partnership with Bradford Community Housing Trust and Leeds West and North West Homes supported by the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Leeds City Council.
- 3.2.3 It is intended that this proposal will act as a blueprint which can be replicated copied both on a sub regional and national basis to demonstrate the value of shared best practice resulting in multiple benefits for neighbouring local authorities using innovation to stimulate commercial growth.
- 3.2.4 The proposals for the joint Northern Housing Challenge bid would amount to an investment of £28,000,000 between 2008 and 2013. The target area in West Leeds is the Fairfield Estate in Bramley, which falls within the most deprived 3% of neighbourhoods in the country. The intention is for building work to commence in 2008/9 and would run through to 2012/13
- 3.2.5 This proposal was submitted in September 2006. The Government and the Housing Corporation agreed in February 2007 to include the bid in the 2008 Housing Corporation Affordable Housing programme to be worked up into a full scale proposal. A final decision is expected in September 2007. Key issues identified in terms of developing an overarching strategic framework document were:
- Worklessness - how does the project build upon the work that is being undertaken by both local authorities in terms of tackling this issue? Where the schemes are located, do they fall within the existing priority areas as identified nationally or do they have contributory factors or individual aspects which mean the interventions will be of assistance.
 - Working in Partnership with Secondary Schools - With the increase in school leaving age coming shortly it was felt important that we work closely with local secondary schools within their respective areas to see how we could create employment opportunities in conjunction with the successful development partners and contractor to offer learning links and then employment opportunities.
 - How do the Housing Partners support employment opportunities - with a range of existing housing providers who provide services to tenants and residents, what opportunities will they provide in terms of job opportunities, work experience and extracurricular learning that will allow people the opportunity to gain meaningful employment and supporting sustainable communities?

3.3 METRO Transport Study

- 3.3.1 The report "A Transport Vision for West Yorkshire" (March 2006) recognised that innovative thinking would be required outside the Local Transport Plan process to develop the longer term transport network in West Yorkshire to support the economic growth aspirations over the next 10-15 years. The Leeds Bradford corridor was recognised in that report as vital to regional connectivity.

- 3.3.2 A workshop was held on 17th July 2006 at Metro's offices in Leeds to discuss issues around transport connectivity between Leeds and Bradford. The workshop involved officers from Metro, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Leeds City Council and representatives from other organisations with an interest in connectivity between the two cities. The workshop had a transport focus but also covered wider issues such as housing, employment and regeneration.
- 3.3.3 The purpose of the workshop was to identify some of the existing problems and issues related to connectivity between Leeds and Bradford and to begin to consider potential opportunities for improvement.
- 3.3.4 In addition the workshop provided stakeholders with further information about a piece of work that Metro intended to commission on Leeds-Bradford connectivity issues within the wider context of the Leeds City Region. This would provide a more detailed study to develop a package of measures to improve connectivity between the two cities in the future.
- 3.3.5 In November 2006, Arup were commissioned by METRO to undertake this more detailed study. The aims of this study are:
- To identify existing problems/opportunities/constraints.
 - To identify a shortlist of scheme options.
 - To identify an overarching strategy for improving connectivity
 - To create a framework for moving forward with schemes.
- 3.3.6 This study is due to be completed shortly and its findings will be fed into the broader work looking at the regeneration of the area.

3.4 Wider Collaboration with Bradford MDC

- 3.4.1. As well as the Leeds-Bradford corridor work, there are ongoing discussions with Bradford about other areas of joint working, particularly relating to the economy. The potential for collaboration to grow the health and medical sector is being explored and sharing of best practice regarding the local enterprise growth initiative is underway.
- 3.4.2. Leeds and Bradford are of course also collaborating at the sub-regional and city-region levels. For example, as part of the West Yorkshire Tourism partnership, it has been agreed that Leeds will provide a Conference Desk service covering the whole of West Yorkshire, whilst Bradford is leading on sub-regional leisure tourism developments.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 With the receipt of the Final Report on the Leeds Bradford Corridor Study by White Young Green, it is clear that consideration needs to be given to the priorities for the project and the next steps in implementation.
- 4.2 The study has identified a number of potential projects to take the work on the corridor forward. Although there is further work to be done on the detailed costs and timescales of these projects, it is clear that there will be resource implications for partners and that these will need to be considered as part of any future planning.
- 4.3 As part of taking these projects forward, discussions are being held with partners to determine priorities and how they can contribute to the implementation of each project.

Working Groups

4.4 At the last meeting of the Leeds Bradford Corridor Group it was agreed to set up five Officer Sub Groups to take forward the work on the projects identified within the report. These groups will focus on:

- Employment and Economic Development (focus on Employment Land)
- Transport Nodes & Boulevard
- Environment & Connectivity
- Housing
- Skills

Governance

4.5 There has been agreement at Chief Executive level that the work should form part of the developing joint working relationship between the two cities. Report is due to go to the Executive Board of both authorities in November

An Officer Co ordination group, consisting of officers from both Authorities, to take a strategic oversight of the work within the Leeds Bradford Corridor. A member Executive would meet quarterly to give political direction to the work

Project Proposals

The White Young Green study put forward six proposed projects for taking forward the work on the Leeds Bradford Corridor. The six project proposals were:

4.6 *Employment Land*

The employment land project should assemble a database of the supply and demand for sites and premises within the Corridor, including key information of landownership, development constraints and development requirements. Comprehensive and consistent information on employment site development opportunities can help to reduce developer risks and accelerate private sector investment.

The project will identify new potential strategic employment locations, focused on defined 'investment hubs', with an emphasis on links to existing district centres rather than road corridors. Other strategic locations should also be identified for activities that cannot be accommodated close to centres, but where development is controlled so as to complement rather than compete with the main city centres.

In addition, the project will identify opportunities for change of use of redundant or under-utilised employment sites to support housing growth. This will help to inform the policy challenge facing the area with respect to the lack of development opportunities within the corridor and the tensions being created through the need to balance new housing growth against employment growth/diversification. It could therefore assist with specific LDF allocations in the emerging Leeds and Bradford Council's LDF.

4.7 *Development of Transport Nodes*

This project is the identification of opportunities for new mixed use development around existing transport nodes. From the team's understanding of the study area New Pudsey and Thornbury are considered the most appropriate locations for these

as they are existing nodes which can be intensified through well designed development schemes.

The land uses which should be encouraged / allowed in these locations should be complementary to one another and should include:

- high density housing
- offices and specialist businesses
- complementary retail of a scale commensurate to the node

4.8 *“The Boulevard”*

Investment in the Leeds-Bradford Corridor will improve the image and perceptions of the corridor as a place to live, visit work and invest. These improvements could be linked to new housing developments along the corridor which may help to fund the new boulevard improvements through Section 106 agreements.

This route is an important link for a number of significant movements between Leeds and Bradford and it is not the intention of this project to impact on the capacity of the road to the detriment of its role as a strategic link.

The project is an iconic urban boulevard stretching between the two city centre with a cohesive approach to environmental enhancement to unify the various character areas and regeneration zones. This will become an image defining icon for the two cities and the communities and countryside that separate them.

4.9 *Connectivity Improvement Schemes*

This project seeks to promote links between the housing areas within the Corridor to their local leisure and employment opportunities. It also aims to promote and encourage access to the green space in the area. In achieving this, this potential project links with the Connectivity, Regional Park, and Housing Growth Strategic Themes.

4.10 *Housing Area Improvement Project*

The project will serve to complement housing interventions planned and underway within the neighbourhoods through decent homes improvements, private sector interventions and the Firebird JVC initiative the partnership between Leeds and Bradford Districts with a focus on delivering housing market renewal and neighbourhood regeneration. A major aim is to raise house values, create more balanced housing neighbourhoods in terms of tenure and attract and retain high income earners into the area by addressing the range of issues and challenges facing the inner city areas including crime and unemployment. The JVC Initiative is a genuine partnership between Leeds and Bradford Districts and this project will only serve to add value to this pioneering initiative and other investments going forward helping through improved image and marketing.

4.11 *Skills*

The current skills profile of the Corridor communities requires significant enhancement if sustainable growth in higher value economic activities is to be achieved. The baseline data has confirmed that the corridor profile is dominated by no or low level qualifications and low level training qualifications. The development of a skills strategy for the Corridor, including support for basic and higher level skills in key sectors will provide a critical mechanisms for supporting business and economic growth in the

area. A well skilled and flexible supply of labour is essential to attracting and retaining businesses into an area, particularly in those high value added sectors identified within the corridor leading to increased competitiveness. In addition, improving the employment prospects of the local disadvantaged communities will generate increased household income and improving access to higher quality housing. The private sector housing market will respond through more new housing in the area, improving the property ladder.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

5.1 Work on the Leeds Bradford Corridor Area impacts on a number of national, regional and citywide policies. These include the Northern Way; Leeds City Region; The Draft Regional and Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber; both the Leeds and Bradford UDPs; the Leeds Development Framework; the Vision For Leeds; Bradford 2020 Vision.

5.2 The joint work on this corridor will help determine how this unique area between the 3rd and 6th largest cities in the UK can help implement these policies and improve the quality of life and economic conditions within the area.

5.3 A joint report for both Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Leeds City Council Executive Boards is currently being prepared authority to proceed with joint actions within the area.

6.0 Legal And Resource Implications

6.1 £75,000 has already been committed (£30,000 from Leeds City Council, £30,000 from Bradford MDC and £15,000 from Yorkshire Housing Partnership) to commission the study by White Young Green and the study was received in July 2007.

6.2 One of the tasks of this framework will be to identify future legal and resource implications. Although the final details of cost and resource implications are not fully developed around the Leeds Bradford Corridor Study, it is clear that implementing any of the proposals that it outlines will have resource implications.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The regeneration of the Leeds-Bradford commuter corridor will form an important part of the regeneration programme for West Leeds and will complement the work on the West Leeds Gateway. The work will benefit both Leeds and Bradford and will help promote stronger links between the two cities.

7.2 It also fits with broader regional and national policies and is a good first step at developing collaborative working between the two cities.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 The Inner West Area Committee is asked to note the content of this report and support continued joint working with Bradford MDC and METRO.