

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 27 June 2018

Subject: Waterfront Charter for Leeds City Centre

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Hunslet and Riverside, Holbeck and Beeston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy sets out 12 big ideas, two of which are 'maximising the benefits of culture' and '21st century infrastructure: co-ordinating plans and leveraging investment to improve infrastructure'. Further, the Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 sets out a number of aims and objectives including: a) for the culture sector to grow and increase its contribution to Leeds' economy, by placing culture at the heart of the city's narrative; b) ensuring that culture is celebrated, runs through our DNA and is inextricably linked to who are we and what we do and c) for the city to value and prioritise cultural activity, utilising it as a means of improving the quality of life experienced by every person and every community in Leeds.
2. As part of the Culture Strategy Delivery Plan (2018-2023) which is currently in development, there is a focus on celebrating the diverse and distinctive identities that create our communities and supporting place-making, and a commitment to changing attitudes, opening up venues and assets and rethinking spaces to enable culture to thrive. Leeds is also one of only 20 international cities to be part of the Pilot Cities Programme, exploring how culture is embedded across daily life from economic development and social inclusion to urban regeneration.
3. City wide conversations on the city centre and specifically South Bank revealed a strong appetite to ensure that culture was placed at the heart of plans for the area celebrating both the existing cultures of the area and its neighbours, whilst providing new opportunities for culture to take centre stage and play a key role in bringing together communities, animating spaces, and creating safe and welcoming environments.

4. One of the major feedback points through the consultations on South Bank has been on the Waterfront. There is consensus that, overall, the waterfront acts as a barrier for pedestrians but also the opportunity and major potential for the waterfront to be transformed. There is a consensus that vitality, vibrancy and animation at and for the waterfront can contribute to both the city's cultural and economic growth.
5. There are over 40 land interests at the waterfront in Leeds City Centre, a number of sites are poorly maintained, have poor access and, whilst there are some events at the waterfront, there is not a sustained programme of activity. There is potential for much enhanced access and to promote a greater celebration of Leeds' culture as well as child and family friendly activities.
6. The work on city centre growth and the culture strategy has sought to harness greater co-production with partners on activity. Accordingly, the Chamber of Commerce has proactively led a city wide piece of work to consider how such challenges can be overcome and for the waterfront to achieve its cultural and economic potential. It has developed with partners a Waterfront Charter (see appendix 1), as a basis for partners to work together to find solutions to challenges in an open and collaborative way. It is envisaged that the Charter is something that landowners along the waterfront will sign up to as a sign of commitment to delivering change. The charter looks both North and South of the river and canal in Leeds City Centre, and sets out aspirations to enhance the vibrancy of the waterfront across three themes:
 - 1) **Accessibility**, improving movement across, around and along the waterfront.
 - 2) **Attraction**, addressing environmental, public safety and cleanliness issues.
 - 3) **Activity**, which animates both the waterfront and waterway, and makes it a place where people want to be.
7. This paper seeks Executive Board support for the Council to 'sign up' to the Charter, commence collaboration with landowners and major businesses to help to develop a more co-ordinated approach to the delivery of maintenance, vitality and vibrancy across the waterfront.
8. Agreement is also sought to establish a Waterfront Investment Fund – of up to £100,000 - as a competitive grant fund funded from existing South Bank capital programmes. This would seek to facilitate third parties delivering immediate and additional improvements along the waterfront with any bids for funding requiring any support from the Council to be at least match funded by and bidders, with a bidder covering all revenue costs. The fund would fund activities that enhance the accessibility, attraction and activity at the waterfront in support of broader Culture Strategy aims. It is proposed that decisions on grant would be administered in partnership with stakeholders and with young people having influence in the decision making procedures on what priorities are funded.
9. The fund can help to support delivery of the inclusive growth strategy's objectives, stimulate economic growth, support collaboration that could provide a platform for activities leading to 2023, and will deliver on the Culture Strategy ambition to ensure that the city's public spaces become its greatest cultural asset.

10. The fund will also complement work that the Council has facilitated and delivered through the award winning Flood Alleviation Scheme, as well as the emerging proposals for a footbridge at Sovereign Square.

10 Recommendations

10.1 Executive Board is asked to:

- i) Support the Waterfront Charter attached at appendix 1 and in doing so
 - a. Approve the formation of a Waterfront Investment Fund as per the principles outlined at 3.3.6 and provide authority to spend up to £100,000 from capital programme 32672 for this purpose.
 - b. Agree that the Council works with partners to establish an owner/occupier forum comprising parties with an interest in the waterfront to help to deliver the charter.
- ii) Note that the Director of City Development is responsible for the implementation of the recommendations

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approvals to develop work with partners to deliver transformation at the waterfront in support of the city's cultural and economic aspirations.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Over the course of the last 24 months, there has been substantial city wide collaboration to develop the Culture Strategy, and proposals for South Bank, Leeds as part of aspirations to double the size of Leeds' economy.
- 2.2 The waterfront has been a key focus of the city wide engagement and consultation, and the waterfront can play a key role in supporting the city's cultural and economic growth.
- 2.3 The Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 has five stated aims and seven objectives of which the following have direct relevance to the development of the waterfront in Leeds City Centre:
 - i) Ensure that culture is celebrated, runs through our DNA and is inextricably linked to who are we and what we do.
 - ii) Value and respect artists and creativity considering both vital to the growth and prosperity of Leeds and ensuring that they are promoted as part of our diverse economy.
 - iii) For the city to value and prioritise cultural activity, utilising it as a means of improving the quality of life experienced by every person and every community in Leeds.
 - iv) For the culture sector to grow and increase its contribution to Leeds' economy, by placing culture at the heart of the city's narrative.
- 2.4 As part of the Culture Strategy Delivery Plan (2018-2023) which is currently in development there is a focus on celebrating the diverse and distinctive identities that create our communities and supporting place-making, and a commitment to changing attitudes, opening up venues and assets and rethinking spaces to enable culture to thrive. Within this lies an ambition for the city's public spaces, including green and blue infrastructure, to become its greatest cultural assets.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the waterfront provides access to a number of businesses, cultural attractions and is an important consideration for the city's economy.

3 Main issues

3.1 Waterfront Consultation and Work Done to Date

- 3.1.1 One of the major feedback points through the consultations on South Bank has been on the Waterfront. There was consensus through the consultation that the waterfront:
 - acts as a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists

- does not always feel safe
- does not offer enough child and family friendly activity
- divides the city centre
- is poorly maintained in some instances
- offers great potential for successful regeneration
- suffers from a lack of funding/ resource to deliver short term changes
- could be a major contributor to the delivery of the city's Culture Strategy and plans for its year-long celebration of culture in 2023, creating the opportunity for events, public art, and educational activities linked to the waterfront and Leeds' heritage.

3.1.2 There are examples of the positive change at the waterfront that support the growth of the economy and cultural vibrancy. This includes:

- The work of Eye on the Aire; a collaboration of over 30 partners and organisations to improve the riverside environment – at and near the waterfront –
- The investments by Allied London at Leeds Dock – including the Water Taxi service and a host of events held at Leeds Dock over the past four years.
- The award winning regeneration at Granary Wharf.
- The regeneration and accessibility offered by Brewery Wharf.
- On site works to restore Hunslet Mill next to the River Aire – a listed building that has been derelict for over two decades until works started on site in 2017.
- Works starting on site at Citu's Climate Innovation District, including plans for a new footbridge linking to the city's district heating network.
- The delivery of new greenspace at Sovereign Square, with detailed proposals for a new footbridge linking the space to the proposed city park, under way
- Enhancements made by the Flood Alleviation Scheme to the urban environment where new infrastructure was delivered. The £50m scheme has won multiple national design awards and has seen enhancements to tow paths, landscaping works and visual improvements to structures along the River Aire to better integrate with regeneration aspirations. Proposals for a second phase of the scheme will also be complementary to the themes set out in the Charter.
- The Leeds Waterfront Festival – an annual programme of events across the Waterfront delivered by volunteers.

3.1.3 Shaped by the consultation feedback received, the draft South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD sets a strong ambition for the waterfront: with ambitions for the waterfront to become the known centre of Leeds City Centre, and a 24/7 destination for culture, leisure, fun, playfulness, with enhanced pedestrian activity and programme of events and activities. The waterfront's inclusion in the draft South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD will encourage development to achieve the principles of the Charter in the next 15-20 years and is envisaged to deliver major and comprehensive change.

- 3.1.4 However, there are over 40 different land interests across the waterfront, with diverse interests and aspirations. Many sites are not earmarked as development sites and some sites are not maintained. Whilst the examples noted above are positive, the change is at risk of being delivered piecemeal and there remains a number of immediate challenges at the waterfront, in particular its accessibility, safety and contribution to the city's cultural and child friendly offer.
- 3.1.5 There remains much that could be done to deliver change in the immediate short and medium term that fall outside of the remit and influence of the Planning system. It is therefore proposed that action is required in addition to Planning based activity to secure change and enhancements along the waterfront in support of our cultural and economic ambitions.
- 3.1.6 The approach to delivering change through both the culture strategy and South Bank plans has been to promote greater collaboration and achieve further co-production of plans and outcomes between partners,

3.2 Chamber: Property Forum: The Waterfront Charter

- 3.2.1 To tackle these challenges and drive forward solutions on the waterfront, the Leeds Chamber Property Forum initiated work with city partners including the BID, The Canal and River Trust and Leeds Civic Trust. The Chamber subsequently published in March 2017 a report entitled '*Leeds: A Waterfront City?*'
- 3.2.2 Whilst the boundary for such works is not fixed, it principally looks at the stretch of waterfront from Whitehall Road through to Hunslet Mill.
- 3.2.3 The report sets out the challenges that the waterfront faces and seeks to act as a rallying call for all parties to come together and work towards a shared vision. In order to bring new life to the waterfront and realise its full potential, the Chamber report called on a focus over three key areas, namely:
- 1) **Accessibility**, improving movement across, around and along the waterfront.
 - 2) **Attraction**, addressing environmental, public safety and cleanliness issues.
 - 3) **Activity**, which animates both the waterfront and waterway, and makes it a place where people want to be.
- 3.2.4 The report acknowledges the challenge of multiple landowners in the area, and also stresses the importance of short to medium term actions, including at priority locations, to deliver change alongside longer term investments.
- 3.2.5 Subsequent to the publication, the Chamber and partners have developed a 'Leeds Waterfront Charter' (see appendix 1). The aim of the Leeds Waterfront Charter is to set out the city's commitment and intent to create a world class waterfront for Leeds.
- 3.2.6 It is envisaged that the Charter is something that landowners along the waterfront will sign up to as a sign of commitment to delivering change, and as a basis for

partners to work together to find solutions to challenges in an open and collaborative way.

3.2.7 It is considered that the proposals contained within the Charter are fully complementary to the vision for the waterfront contained within the Culture Strategy and draft South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD – and provide practical steps to deliver on the city’s aspirations. It is therefore proposed that the Council ‘signs up to’ and endorses the Waterfront Charter and encourages other partners to sign up also.

3.3 Waterfront Investment Fund

3.3.1 To further support the delivery of the Waterfront Charter, it is proposed that the Council establishes a Waterfront Investment Fund. The fund will help the Council and partners:

- Deliver short term change through the provision of events, activities, artwork, and other projects that encourage people to spend time at, and experience, the waterfront.
- Contribute to the delivery of the Leeds Culture Strategy for 2017-2030, through support to small scale arts and public realm projects that will help open up, celebrate and animate the waterfront.
- Facilitate the long term strategy for the area through the reactivation of the waterfront and reimagining of the city centre with the River Aire at its heart, meeting a key principle of the South Bank Regeneration Framework and the principles of the wider Core Strategy.
- Address the feedback received of there being a lack of resources available to deliver immediate change at the waterfront, allowing work with city partners at the waterfront to come forward at an accelerated pace.

3.3.2 Using existing and uncommitted capital budget provisions allocated for South Bank regeneration activity, it is proposed that the Council establishes this fund as a competitive grant programme, with up to £100,000 allocated to it.

3.3.3 Should Executive Board approve this, it is proposed that the aims, objectives and values of the Culture Strategy will inform the criteria and themes of the Waterfront Investment Fund. It would be deployed to deliver solutions to physical issues or blockages relating to the realisation of the waterfront charter, improvements to public realm and public art projects.

3.3.4 Revenue projects such as one off events, temporary installations, meanwhile and pop up uses, could not in themselves be funded but applicants would be encouraged to bring forward proposals that would work with the events and activities programme across the waterfront, in line with the broader definition of culture set by the Culture Strategy. It is not envisaged that the grant would be used to fund cleansing or operationally orientated activities that are the responsibility of landowners, or fund activities not directly at or around the waterfront.

- 3.3.5 The scheme will be capital funded and therefore will not fund day-to-day operational costs of activities currently on or near the waterfront; rather, the grant will bring forward projects which contribute to both the reactivation of the waterfront as a focal point for activity in the city centre. The grant scheme will only contribute to projects for which the ongoing revenue implications associated with maintenance and sustainability are covered in totality by the recipient. Work will take place to ensure that landowners meet their responsibilities to maintain spaces next to the waterfront outside of the funding programme.
- 3.3.6 It is proposed that grants will be provided to external organisations on the basis that:
- i) Any grant payable is at least match funded in whole by the applicant (thus, it will leverage at least £100,000 of third party investment).
 - ii) Activity supports the delivery of additional works or interventions, not existing, activities and initiatives. Proposals should be innovative and celebrate the distinctive cultures of the local area.
 - iii) The intervention is deliverable and directly contributes to the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Culture Strategy for Leeds (2017-2030), the Waterfront Charter and draft South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD
- 3.3.7 In terms of the fund and its management, it is proposed that the Council would administer the grant programme, but govern the fund in a collaborative way working across Council services and with city partners.
- 3.3.8 The Council's commitment to the Waterfront Charter should be joined up, and there will need to be strong cross council working to enable the successful delivery of projects at the waterfront. Given the importance of creating a cultural destination for people of all ages to enjoy, it is also proposed that young people play a proactive and integral role in determining funding priorities and projects that are funded by the grant. Accordingly, work is proposed to consider how best to develop an inclusive management regime for the fund.
- 3.3.9 It is proposed another area where the Council can support positive change is working with the Chamber to engage proactively with landowners and occupiers of buildings, to support their understanding and support of the charter. It is proposed that Council support is provided for establishment and co-ordination of a forum for waterfront landowners and occupiers. Such forum would harness collaboration, and seek to gain commitments from these parties to the Charter and a shared action plan.
- 3.3.10 The forum can encourage continued investment and good behaviour habits, whilst suggesting action plans to deal with issues including degradation, neglect and litter, all within a collaborative working environment that city partners have a voice in. It is envisaged that the grant scheme could be accessed by landowners where it could assist in leveraging investment and meeting charter objectives. It is proposed that all landowners and businesses located along the waterfront are encouraged to sign

up to the charter and commit to delivering change to meet its ambitions, where appropriate through participation in the forum.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 There has been extensive consultation and partnership led by the Chamber and along the waterfront, in the development of the Waterfront Charter. Consultation has taken place with the Executive Member for Economy and Culture, and Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning with regards to the recommendations in this paper. There has been consultation with the chamber and South Bank landowners with regards to the proposals for an investment fund and the Council's support to the Charter.
- 4.1.2 Extensive consultation has taken place on the priority areas outlined in this report through the South Bank Regeneration Framework in 2016 and the draft South Bank Leeds Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document in 2017. Over 32,000 points of data were collected in the 2016 consultation with 2,209 people and 32 organisations taking part. Responses to the 2017 consultation are being collated and considered and will be used to shape the updated document.
- 4.1.3 Both consultations revealed aspirations for the River Aire to be utilised and accentuated as a focal point and central place of activity for the city centre. In addition to the waterfront, there was strong desire for South Bank to give culture a central focus in the development of the area and have a strong cultural offer that recognises, values and encourages existing culture whilst allowing new cultural opportunities to flourish. The number of responses which focused on culture were such that it has now become the tenth Key Move in the document, ensuring culture is considered in all development in the area once the document is adopted as planning policy. Proposals contained in this paper respond directly to the feedback received by residents, developers, landowners businesses and other city partners.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The consultations on the South Bank were specifically designed to ensure that the views captured were representative of the whole population of Leeds. Emphasis when planning consultation events was placed on direct engagement with equality groups. In 2016, direct consultation was taken with 9 equality groups and a range of education institutions. In 2017, equality groups were engaged through direct invitation to respond to the consultation and attendance at the annual Equalities Assembly Conference.
- 4.2.2 The proposals in this paper correspond to actions set out in the South Bank, Leeds Equality and Diversity, cohesion and integration equality impact assessment, which was approved in 2017. In particular, the proposals have the potential to support positive change across a number of equality characteristics, particularly due to the enhanced accessibility proposals could initiate.

4.3 Council policies and the best council plan

- 4.3.1 The priority projects for the South Bank regeneration initiative proposed in this report are closely aligned with and will contribute to a number of Best Council Plan priorities such as: Inclusive Growth; Child-Friendly City and Health & Wellbeing.
- 4.3.2 The proposed priorities will also contribute to the following breakthrough projects: World class events and a vibrant city centre, and; Strong communities benefiting from a strong city.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The proposed funding of the Waterfront Investment Fund will be fully funded from existing budget provision within the Capital programme (South Bank scheme) and will not require additional funding. The proposal to seek at least match funding for any proposals through a competitive procedure, will help to achieve value for money – every effort will be made to leverage third party funding and investments.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information and call-in

- 4.5.1 All information in relation to the South Bank programme is being held and managed in accordance with the access to information policies and procedures. This report is subject to call in. Subject to EB agreeing the proposals set out in this report, further work will be undertaken in order to establish the terms of the fund and ensuring that any such applications for grant properly meet the objectives and are appraised transparently and fairly

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There is a risk that, without a more co-ordinated approach, the waterfront will continue to be inaccessible and not reach its physical and cultural potential. In terms of the proposals, there are risks that landowners and businesses will not sign up to the charter or contribute to its delivery. This will be mitigated through close partnership between parties involved in the formation of the charter and through governance that may be established.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The waterfront is a major asset for the city, its cultural offer and economic growth. Throughout the conversations on South Bank and wider city centre, it continues to be highlighted as a major priority for investment and change by both partners and the public. Whilst there are examples of positive change, it is considered that there remains a need for short term actions to be the stimulus for improvements that support a range of cultural and economic ambitions.
- 5.2 The Chamber of Commerce has, with partners, produced a Waterfront Charter to be a catalyst for bringing about collaboration and immediate changes at the waterfront. It is proposed that the Council signing up for this, and encouraging others to do so, can help to tackle some of the issues that the waterfront faces.
- 5.3 The city recently approved a new Culture Strategy for Leeds (2017-2030) with a stated ambition of ensuring that our public spaces become one of our greatest

cultural assets. Improvements to Leeds Waterfront and cultural interventions in this area would help to support this ambition.

- 5.4 Accordingly, it is also proposed that the Council establishes a Waterfront Investment Fund, using existing budgets allocated to South Bank, as a basis for leveraging third party funds to fund a range of interventions along the waterfront to accelerate the delivery of events, projects and activities. A new landowners and occupiers forum would also provide a route through which the charter could be promoted and support offered to key waterfront property stakeholders.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is asked to

- i) Support the Waterfront Charter attached at appendix 1 and in doing so
 - a. Approve the formation of a Waterfront Investment Fund as per the principles outlined at 3.3.6 and provide authority to spend up to £100,000 from capital programme 32672 for this purpose.
 - b. Agree that the Council works with partners to establish an owner/occupier forum comprising parties with an interest in the waterfront to help to deliver the charter.
- ii) Note that the Director of City Development is responsible for the implementation of the recommendations

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ ¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.