

Plans Panel and Development Plan Panel Annual Report 2019-20



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth annual report describing the work of the Leeds City Council Plans Panels and Development Plan Panel during 2019-20. This report provides the opportunity to highlight and review last year's activity and describe some of the key achievements in helping deliver the Best City ambitions for Leeds. This year the report will look ahead to 2020-21 and describe some of the key work and challenges coming forward.

During 2019-20 the Panels continued to deal with some large and strategically important schemes, particularly for housing sites delivering the homes that are needed for our local communities. There have been a number of proposals for sensitive housing sites this year, and Plans Panels have had to consider carefully that the right homes are delivered at the right time and to ensure that the quality of those homes is of the standard we expect for Leeds. In the context of the adopted Site Allocations Plan, the Council should now be able to defend its position against speculative sites coming forward and be able to concentrate on getting the best provision from allocated sites rather than considering the principle of those sites.

For the Development Plans Panel it has also been a significant year with the progression of plan production in a number of significant areas, not least with respect to our commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency, amending and strengthening policies to require developers to submit applications which accord with our Climate Emergency ambitions. It is acknowledged there are frustrations about the pace of change and in seeing those positive changes in submitted applications, but work is progressing, the direction of travel is clear and work will continue in 2020-21.

Whilst the lockdown is outside of the reporting period, it would be remiss not to mention the significant impact this has had on the service in terms of workloads, how it has operated and the introduction of remote Panels which have been put in place to ensure that members and communities can still participate in the planning process, enabling essential development and economic activity to continue in the city.

Going forward, there are challenges heralded in the Planning White Paper, *Planning for the Future* and particularly due to the Council's budget position. We need therefore to be mindful of the increasing demands placed on Planning and Sustainable Development Services which will be reflected in the work of the Plans Panels, who already have a difficult role balancing the needs of the city, delivering the inclusive growth needed, whilst still taking account of local communities. However, there are also some opportunities arising from the Planning White Paper in terms of front loading the planning process and making the planning system less opaque which may be welcomed. It's clear nevertheless that these two drivers will change development management as we know it now and the challenge will be to ensure a sustained high quality, timely delivery of service within this context.

To sum up, 2019-20 has been a particularly challenging year filled with delivery of the Site Allocations Plan, permissions for new homes, commercial and industrial schemes helping to maintain a strong economy in Leeds and the commitment of members and officers of the Council to respond to both the immediate health crisis and develop new policies to respond to the global Climate Emergency.



Cllr Lisa Mulherin

Executive Board Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development

Plans Panel activity during 2019-20



36 Plans Panel meetings and seven Development Plan Panel meetings



100 applications considered



95 decisions made



10 position statements and update reports



26 pre-application presentations



The Panels determined 23 schemes with S106 obligations, funding the infrastructure requirements arising from developments



Panels determined 22 residential schemes, including 100% affordable housing and housing for older people



Gave permission for just over 2,500 new homes



Applications determined by the Plans Panels will generate c£15m in Community Infrastructure Levy

Significant schemes considered by the Plans Panels

Full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the development of a care community village comprising 172 units of accommodation with associated communal facilities

The application involved the restoration and bringing back into use of a listed building and the redevelopment of a brownfield land site in the Green Belt, a Special Landscape Area and the



Scarcroft Conservation Area. The site was allocated for residential development in the recently adopted Site Allocations Plan. In addition to providing a range of community and leisure facilities on the site to meet the day needs of the residents the development

also delivered a new car park and other improvements to the Scarcroft Cricket Club ground.

Residential development of 153 No. dwellings and associated works at Land off Beckhill Approach and Potternewton Lane

This application proposed 24 apartments and 129 dwellings on land allocated for residential



development in two parcels in the Site Allocations Plan. Part of the site was formerly occupied school and residential buildings and the remainder is green field in nature. The scheme delivered, and in some instances exceeded, the requirements of the council's planning policies in respect of sustainability (carbon emissions), accessible housing, space standards, housing mix, affordable housing and on site greenspace provision. The latter included a multi-use games area. There was some tree loss but

overall there was a significant net gain in new tree planting that accorded with our policy of three for one replacement.

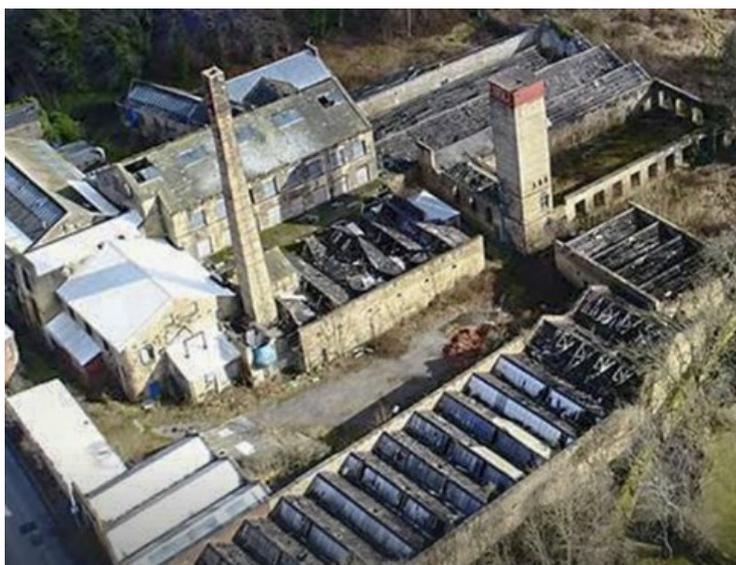
Demolition of Bramham House, retention of front facade and redevelopment to form care home, with 8 close-care dwellings, 6 close-care apartments and 10 detached houses, laying out of access road and new vehicle access to Freely Lane at Bramham House, land between Bowcliffe Road and Freely Lane, Bramham.

The site is located on the edge of the village and is allocated for residential development in the development plan and is located within a conservation area. The site had been vacant for many years and had fallen into a dilapidated state. The site was owned by the city council and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service National Health Trust. The city council had sought to bring the site forward for development over many years. The site presented a number of significant challenges due to, amongst other matters, the heavy tree cover, the sloping topography and that Bramham House is a significant heritage asset but was in a very poor state of repair. These factors had combined to make it difficult to bring forward a viable and sensitive form of redevelopment. These proposals were for a mixed residential scheme comprising a 60 bed care home and 14 close-care dwellings and 10 detached houses. The care home utilised and retained the front façade of Bramham House with main body of the accommodation set behind and to the side of the façade.



Stonebridge Mills, Wortley

The approved application was for the conversion of 9 existing buildings into 30 units, and 82 new build properties. The layout also includes an area of 7,453 sq m of open green space. Stonebridge Mills consists of a complex of traditional industrial buildings located on the south east side of Stonebridge Lane/ Silver Royd Hill, which has been vacant for a number of decades. The Listed



Buildings are on the Leeds City Council's own 'Buildings at Risk' register 2018. The site has several constraints, which restrict the developable area of the site. Scheme had viability issues, which posed issues for the requirement of the quantum of the new build element without adversely affected the setting of the Listed Buildings. The main constraints included restricted vehicular access, TPO Tree belts through the site, Part of the land within the site is within the Flood Plain, Derelict Listed Buildings in need of repair, Landmark Mill chimney

is need of repair and the existence of a large mill pond, which is integral to the setting of the Listed Buildings

Construction of a two-platform railway station, including two station buildings, new vehicular and pedestrian access, associated infrastructure, landscaping and public rights of way improvements Land Adjacent To White Rose Office Park And Millshaw Industrial Park Millshaw Park Lane Beeston Leeds



The application related to a parcel of land that spans across the Leeds – Huddersfield Line to the south of Elland Road, and to the west of the White Rose Office Park (WROP). The application proposed to construct a new railway station and access roads, together with various improvements to existing public rights of ways on a parcel of land measuring approximately 4.08 hectares. The proposed rail station was sought to improve

accessibility to a major employment and retail destination, which includes the WROP, White Rose Shopping Centre (WRSC) and the wider Millshaw Industrial Park. The improvements would connect this employment area with Morley and the City Centre.

New community sports hub and construction of four 3G artificial grass football pitches

The application proposed to redevelop a 2.98 hectare parcel of land sited to the west of Elland Road football ground. The proposal sought permission to include the construction of a pavilion/ community hub and four 3G artificial grass football pitches (AGP's), one of which is to be covered

by an air dome. The supporting pavilion building is to be sited to the front of the site and will comprise of a changing facilities, a gym, a GP surgery and pharmacy. The premises will be open to the public, however, the covered pitch to the rear of the site is to also be used at various times for training purposes by Leeds United Football Club (LUFC).

The proposal also included a section to the northeast of the site, behind the covered playing pitch, designated for coach parking for use by LUFC away fans. The area is next to another small section of the site that is proposed to be used on match days as a TV compound now LUFC are in the premiership. The proposal also includes the provision of a covered pedestrian walkway on the western side of Elland Road stadium linking the coach parking with the stadium.

Tower Works site, Globe Road

Tower Works will provide two new residential buildings with 1, 2 and 3-bedroom build to rent apartments and duplexes to the south of the railway station. As well as creating new homes, the approved plans include ground floor commercial uses and extensive new areas of public realm



which will create a pedestrian route through from the city centre to the Holbeck Urban Village neighbourhood. Leeds City Council is also planning to redevelop the Grade II listed Engine House at Tower Works as a post-production facility following Channel 4's move to the city. Tower Works has a rich industrial history

Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Street Wellington Place



The proposals include construction of a new adults' hospital, with theatres for day case procedures and added critical care facilities, and a new Leeds Children's Hospital, purpose-built for the needs of children and young people. In total, about 990,000 square feet of healthcare space

will be provided in a building of up to 15 storeys in height. A new ten-storey car park providing about 650 spaces is also proposed. The former nurse's home and other buildings on the site would be demolished to make way for the new facilities.

Land bounded by Wellington Street / Grove Street, Cropper Gate, Skinner Street and Lisbon Street

Planning application for redevelopment to provide offices with a flexible range of supporting uses with new access to double basement with cycle and car parking, high level terraces and improvements to the public realm.

Land off Kirkstall Hill, Kirkstall

Demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the site for a mixed-use



development comprising up to 263 residential units and flexible commercial floor space together with associated vehicular access, car and cycle parking spaces, bin stores, plant, landscaping, amenity space and associated infrastructure and engineering works.

Leeds College of Technology student accommodation



Demolition of the Leeds City College Technology Campus and erection of a multi-level student accommodation building and flexible commercial space. A total of 465 bedrooms would be provided, with a mix of clusters and studios. Three flexible commercial units would also be created on the ground floor. Improvements would also be made to the public realm.

Development Plan Panel



The main focus of activity for the Development Plan Panel this year has been on progressing several key areas of work:

- Local Plan Update to focus on planning policies on carbon reduction, mitigation and adaptation in response to the Climate Emergency
- Site Allocations Plan (SAP), leading to its adoption in July 2019
- Core Strategy Selective Review resulting in full plan coverage across Leeds to focus and direct development. The Core Strategy now has an adopted lower housing requirement up to 2033, as well as including updated policies including on affordable housing and green space
- Update on the Review of the Site Allocations Plan housing allocations (needed now the Core Strategy has agreed a lower housing requirement)
- Consideration of supplementary planning documents and guidance following an audit investigation, checking for consistency against national guidance
- Updates and timescales have been considered on A Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and a Transport SPD which will replace four previous documents: Street Design Guide, Travel Plans, Parking and Public Transport and Developer Contributions.
- Scoping document for updating the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how and who will be consulted with in preparing planning documents and on planning applications
- Development Plan Panel Members took part in a climate emergency and place-making workshop in February, followed by an initial discussion on the scope of the Local Plan Update in July. As part of this Members made clear their preference that the focus for the LPU should be the creation of a clear planning policy framework for helping to address the climate emergency.

Reflecting on the year

Member training

A comprehensive programme of member training was offered in 2019-20 covering topics including:

- Design
- Student housing
- Planning obligations
- Trees and planting
- Access and inclusion

Further sessions had been planned for 2020-21 however these were cancelled due to COVID-19, but it is hoped to relaunch member training in 2021 as more robust online platforms are now available for live sessions.

Joint Plans Panel

The Joint Plans Panel met twice in 2019-20 and considered the following items:

- Development Management and Enforcement performance
- Public Speaking and pre application protocols
- An update on the Site Allocated Plans and Core Strategy Selective Review
- Planning for wellbeing and health
- Buildings at Risk

...and looking ahead

Planning for the Future

The Planning White Paper, *Planning for the Future* published in August 2020 sets out the most radical overhaul of the planning system in decades. The Paper describes an archaic planning service and seeks to overhaul the whole system by developing a simpler framework which would better support a more competitive market with a greater diversity of developers and by introducing a system which is rule based rather than discretionary, where applications are determined by clear rules for what can and cannot be done. The Government proposes a number of methods to achieve this through quicker adoption of much simplified a local plan with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage, rather than the application stage, creation of design codes, use of digital technology to facilitate greater transparency and accessibility.

There is much in the White Paper which echoes the ambition of the service particularly around the increasing use of digital technology, however the Government's desire to reform planning is ambitious and we await the results of the consultation in due course.

Budget challenge

The service responded to the Council's budget challenge through two independent external service reviews in summer 2020, one for Development Management looking at *improving the planning application decision-making process for citizens of Leeds at a reduced cost base* and one in Policy

and Plans which looked at *how can Leeds City Council can deliver a statutory and non-statutory policy framework at a reduced base cost, ensuring that citizen, developer and members views are considered as part of that process*. Both service reviews made a number of recommendations which will result in amending service business processes, looking Plans Panel systems and structures and considering areas of priority work to align resources and capacity. Additionally the service has lost a number of experienced members of staff through the Early Leavers Initiative which had created an immediate resource challenge for the service; this has resulted in a realignment of the staffing establishment and consideration of how it operates. These service review proposals and establishment changes are currently being worked through as well as investigating ways to enhance digital opportunities to drive a more efficient and cost effective service. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the efficient and expeditious determination of applications and development of plans, but it is clear that the service, going forward, will look significantly different to how it has in the past.

Climate emergency

The Council's declaration of a climate emergency will be a key focus for the Local Plan Update (LPU) moving forwards, which will continue to support the Council's objectives, including for health and wellbeing, as well as finalising the SAP in respect of the legal challenge. In November 2020, a paper was presented to DPP detailing policy options on a range of climate related topics, including carbon emissions from buildings, sustainable construction, renewable energy generation and storage, tree planting, biodiversity and place making. This is intended to be the first tranche of a 2-part document with other issues relating to infrastructure and flood risk being presented to Panel in January 2021 as part of the draft documentation for the first stage of consultation (regulation 18 scoping) on the LPU, due to go out in Spring 2021.

Additionally, opportunities created through Environment Bill sets out provisions relating to protections of habitats, nature and biodiversity. The provisions include a condition whereby a development cannot commence unless a biodiversity net gain plan is submitted and approved by the relevant local planning authority. The planning authority can only approve the plan if it is satisfied that key matters are as specified in the plan, and that the biodiversity gain objective is met. The mandatory requirement for developers is to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain in respect of any new development that result in loss or degradation of habitat. It is anticipated that it will not always be possible to deliver this quantum of gain on-site and there are several options available to meeting this need elsewhere. The Public Committee reporting deadline is 1 December 2020 and the outcome is awaited.