



Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 21st April 2021

Subject: Proposed Grey to Green Projects, Progress Update

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Hunslet and Riverside	
Has consultation been carried out?	<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
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	

Summary

1. Main issues

- In August 2020 the Government announced a £900 million Getting Building Fund (GBF) to deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure across the country. The investment was targeted in areas facing the biggest economic challenges as a result of the pandemic and supports the delivery of shovel ready infrastructure projects to boost economic growth, and fuel local recovery and jobs.
- Identified by the Our Spaces Strategy, the South Bank Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and linked to the ongoing delivery of the Leeds Public Transport Infrastructure Programme; The Council's Asset Management and Regeneration Service, identified four infrastructure projects to form the basis of the 'Grey to Green' programme, that were sufficiently mature to meet the Government's 'shovel ready' criteria for inclusion in a bid to the GBF.
- The 'Grey to Green' programme is focussed on people and climate change outcomes which will stimulate new regeneration and growth, whilst enhancing the climate resilience and transformation of Leeds City Centre post COVID-19 through a series of integrated green spaces and green infrastructure.

- The regeneration of the South Bank, guided by the South Bank Regeneration Framework, will effectively double the size and economic impact of Leeds City Centre, creating a distinctive mixed use district providing over 35,000 jobs and over 8,000 homes. The Grey to Green projects that are the subject of this report support the Framework's aspirations to transform the South Bank into a well-connected sustainable business and residential community that will help to improve connections to the surrounding communities in the Aire Valley, Hunslet, Richmond Hill, Beeston Hill and Holbeck whilst also providing vibrant and outward facing public spaces.
- The Grey to Green projects identified are:-
 - The Corn Exchange Public Realm
 - Meadow Lane Green Space
 - Sovereign Street Bridge
 - Crown Point Road calming and greening
- The projects will contribute to the delivery of the Leeds Economic Recovery Framework through boosting economic growth, job creation, helping to tackle climate change, increasing biodiversity and providing access to green space for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing.
- In September 2020, it was announced that Leeds's bid successfully secured £8.6m of match funding from the Getting Building Fund which when combined with the Council's funding of £3.6m provides a total budget of £12.2m for the delivery of the four projects . The final business case was subsequently submitted to WYCA in November 2020 and was approved at WYCA Investment Committee in February 2021.
- When combined, these four interrelated investments shall make Leeds City Centre greener and more attractive; helping to unlock major commercial and residential development across South Bank and the centre of Leeds, as well as the delivery of private sector investment into the Aire Park; the largest new city centre green space in the region, whilst supplementing and accelerating multi-modal transport benefits committed through Connecting Leeds for the Corn Exchange Gateway.
- The Grey to Green projects are also complementary to the proposals outlined for City Square in a separate report on the agenda for this meeting. Both programmes of work fulfil the ambition to link recent and developing high quality projects together to form an accessible and coherent network to facilitate active travel around the city that provides improved infrastructure and spaces for pedestrians.
- In total, Grey to Green will deliver 6,700 sqm of new public realm; create new green space; increase connectivity to blue infrastructure for communities in areas of high deprivation and improve the quality of city centre living for current and future residents. In addition, it will help to unlock the delivery of Aire Park – with a further 3 hectares of green space to be delivered by the private sector.
- The Corn Exchange Grey to Green project was the subject of a February 2021 Executive Board (Corn Exchange Public Realm Design Cost Report). The February

2021 Executive Board approved authority to spend of up to £1,546,655 on the Corn Exchange Public Realm scheme. The Corn Exchange is therefore not subject to recommendations or approvals made within this report.

- The Getting Build Fund is time constrained and eligibility for funding requires that the projects are completed by the end of March 2022.

2. Best Council Plan implications (see the [latest version of the Best Council Plan](#))

- Contributing to inclusive growth
- Reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
- Delivering sustainable infrastructure
- Making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
- Making Leeds the best city to grow old in
- Supporting housing delivery
- Providing inclusive spaces for communities
- Improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities

3. Resource implications

- The Getting Building Fund will provide a total of £8.6m of funding to the Grey to Green programme which is £12.2m expenditure in total. There is £3.6m of match funding identified by the Council to enable the delivery of these schemes. This report provides further detail on the funding and delivery arrangements for Meadow Lane Green Space, Sovereign Street Bridge and Crown Point Road calming and greening.
- Meadow Lane Green Space will be constructed by the delivery partner for the Connecting Leeds (LPTIP) gateways. Sovereign Street Bridge will be constructed by the delivery partner for the Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS2) and Crown Point Road calming and greening will be constructed by a contractor procured from the proposed Minor Highway Works Framework, currently being established by the City Council.
- The approach of using existing frameworks and construction partners provides a number of benefits including the ability to minimise costs across the delivery programmes through efficient delivery of existing contractual arrangements and minimising disruption and impact in the city centre.
- The funding allocations for the Grey to Green projects that form the basis of this report is as follows:-

Meadow Lane Green Space	£3,250,000
Sovereign Street bridge	£3,700,000
Crown Point Road calming	£3,750,000
Total	£10,700,000

- The allocations are split between £8.2m GBF and £2.5m Council funding including S106 and capital receipt funding. Due to the tight timescale and speed of scheme development, the detailed design for the schemes are still being progressed. As such, finalised project costs are to be submitted for approval to WYCA at different stages during 2021 to secure the GBF funding ensure that the schemes are delivered successfully to programme and budget.

4. Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to:-

- a) Note the progress made to date with the development of the Grey to Green programme following the successful bid to the Getting Building Fund and the development of the three projects: Meadow Lane Greenspace; Sovereign Street Bridge and Crown Point Road calming and greening.
- b) Approve the design proposals developed for the creation of Meadow Lane Green Space as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to the development of green infrastructure in the city centre to support the implementation of the Our Spaces Strategy and the South Bank Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document and give approval to the progression of the scheme presented into the next phase of detailed and technical design.
- c) Approve the design proposals developed to date for Sovereign Street Bridge and the submission of a planning application for the bridge to enable the continued progression of the scheme.
- d) Approve the indicative layout proposals developed to date for the Crown Point Road calming and greening scheme and give approval to the progression of the scheme into the next phase of design.
- e) Note that the Director of City Development will be responsible for the implementation of the decisions outlined in this report.

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Executive Board on the progress of the Grey to Green infrastructure projects following the successful Getting Building Fund submission in September 2020 and the subsequent Full Business Case approval at WYCA investment Committee in February 2021, notably the Meadow Lane Greenspace, Sovereign Street Bridge and Crown Point Road calming and greening.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval of the designs developed to date for each scheme and their progression into the detailed design and planning submission phase and the Authority to Spend the allocated funding identified for each scheme as detailed within the report.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The Our Spaces Strategy is the first time that the city has brought together and articulated the importance of our spaces and the role it plays in positioning Leeds as the Best City now and in the future. The strategy has identified a number of proposed interventions to meet our vision for the creation of world class, inclusive and vibrant spaces. The Our Spaces Strategy identified a number of interconnected and complementary strategies and work programmes including: Connecting Leeds (LPTIP); South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD which incorporates Aire Park; Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan and HS2; the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Climate Emergency, that brought forward considerations for a transformational work programme of public realm schemes.
- 2.2 The March 2020 Executive Board Report 'City Centre Park Delivery' advised that Executive Board had previously approved the masterplan for the transformation of Meadow Lane as green space as part of the wider South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD at Executive Board February 2020. It also gave approval to the proposed funding package to transform the highways infrastructure at Meadow Lane into a new development plot and green space, utilising the receipt realised from the development plot as the Council's match funding towards the capital costs of the delivery of the new green space. Delegated Authority is required from the Chief Highways Officer to approve the highway design.
- 2.3 The March 2020 Executive Board Report 'City Centre Park Delivery' also advised that there was an allowance within the capital programme of £4.2m to fund the delivery of the proposed Sovereign Street bridge and that a detailed design would be reported to Executive Board for approval prior to the submission of a Planning application.
- 2.4 The context of the Grey to Green schemes identified in this report and their relationship to City Park is shown in Appendix 1 - Grey 2 Green Context.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 To secure the Get Building Fund, the three projects that are the subject of this report should be completed by March 2022. This represents a challenging programme.
- 3.2 **Meadow Lane Green Space**
 - 3.2.1 Meadow Lane is currently a four lane adopted highway that is adjacent to the North West boundary of the former Carlsberg Tetley site with the Asda Head Office located immediately to the west. For over a decade, through the South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD, the Council in partnership with the adjoining landowners (Asda and Carlsberg Tetley now Vastint) have promoted a collective vision for the repurposing of the Meadow Lane highway infrastructure into what will be part of Leeds's City Park (Aire Park). The creation of Aire Park by Vastint is now progressing into its delivery phase and is expected to see construction commence later this year.

- 3.2.2 Meadow Lane has continued to be developed as part of this wider green infrastructure ambition as part of the Connecting Leeds programme, in alignment with the Leeds Transport Strategy. The scheme proposals will re-prioritise Meadow Lane from a four-lane highway, into a north-south two-lane traffic route through the western edge of the park with cycle ways and walking routes (and Sovereign Street Bridge) connecting the city centre to Aire Park and vice-versa.
- 3.2.3 The project will utilise the release of the council land holding at and between Meadow Lane and Hunslet Lane surface car park to contribute to the delivery of Meadow Lane Greenspace. In addition the release of land also creates the opportunity to bring forward the proposals for the creation of a development plot to be marketed, thereby generating a capital receipt to form part of the Council's match funding contribution to the Grey to Green programme.
- 3.2.4 The disposal of the development plot is part of the approved capital receipts and is to contribute £2m to the delivery of the project.
- 3.2.5 Meadow Lane Green space design ambition is as follows:-
- Continuum - Meadow Lane and Aire Park should have a continued landscape narrative to ensure the space is read as one;
 - Coherence - A coherent series of spaces is established from Leeds Train Station to Aire Park. Meadow Lane is a key linking site between the new City Park and the train station, including any future HS2 connections.
 - Formal / Informal - A formal route along the northern boundary adjacent to the Development Plot should be explored, with an informal biodiverse route flowing to the south.
- 3.2.6 The Meadow Lane green space has been divided into distinct zones to meet different design ambitions across the space and also to make allowance for the proposed development plot and access/servicing requirements for adjacent buildings. The zones are:-
- Meadow Lane Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing Point - This allows the creation of the pedestrian connection between Aire Park and the future Sovereign Bridge minimising the interaction with traffic between the city centre and Aire Park.
 - Future Development Plot - The space to the north of the Meadow Lane public realm is earmarked by LCC as a space for a future landmark building which would provide the match funding required to deliver the green space.
 - The Civic Plaza - The plaza towards the north of the scheme and the Development Plot offers an open, hard landscaped, civic space for gatherings, socialising, public art and small events. This space could be curated to provide food or drinks trucks, pop up stalls, temporary public artworks or sculpture, a South Bank Christmas tree and external spill out space for the new proposed building to the north.
 - The Central Lawns - The centre of the public realm offers an open recreational area, with two lawn spaces positioned to make full use of the southern aspect. Trees and shrub planting is arranged to the edges of the lawns, allowing for flexible uses in the middle. The south facing aspect exploits full sun for picnics, socialising, or relaxing and reading, whilst larger

trees positioned towards the edges would provide spaces to relax in the shade.

- Biodiverse Area - The Biodiverse Area is a space for visitors to wander slowly through, pausing to enjoy the scent or texture of a plant, to enjoy the dappled light throwing shadow through the tree canopies, or to sit and enjoy the trees and planting surrounding them. This space allows for a tangible connection to nature, with the narrower discovery paths allowing both children and adults to explore the textures, sounds, and smells of the planting. A number of rain gardens in this area connect to the wider SuDS strategy, celebrating the management of water at the surface.
- Yorkshire Water Pumping Station Access - An open area of hard landscape is provided along the eastern boundary to allow for Yorkshire Water to access their pumping station. This space is required for the manoeuvring of the vehicles needed as well as refuse vehicles that service Salem Chapel.

3.2.7 The tree proposals include the planting of 19 no. new trees of a variety of native tree species including river birch for the rain gardens, two species of cherry tree for early and late flowering, honey locust for their climate resilience and a holm oak to add evergreen species. The planting proposals include shrubs adjacent to the road that are pollution tolerant, a wide variety of flowering shrubs to attract pollinators, a drought and water resistant mix of shrubs for the rain gardens and grass mixes to provide benefits to both biodiversity and people using the space.

3.2.8 The hard landscaping proposals have been developed to ensure that the paving materials being utilised for Aire Park are complementary, using the same or similar materials where they blend across the scheme to meet other spaces. The seating approach has followed BS 8300 to ensure that all of the seating elements and all elements of the scheme are designed for equality and inclusion.

3.2.9 In addition to the distinctive zones identified above, the ambition for the scheme is that it is sustainable and climate change resilient. As such the scheme has been designed with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in mind with the ambition that the Meadow Lane green space on an annual basis will achieve a measurable level of carbon sequestration as follows:-

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| • Carbon absorbed by amenity lawns per annum | 180.5 Kg of CO2 |
| • Carbon absorbed by young trees per annum | 41.3 Kg of CO2 |
| • Carbon absorbed by 10 yr old trees per annum | 264 Kg of CO2 |
| • Carbon absorbed by retained trees per annum | 110 Kg of CO2 |
| • Carbon absorbed by planting | 32.37 Kg of CO2 |

3.2.10 Meadow Lane Green Space has now completed preliminary design and it is essential that the scheme continues to progress to meet the requirements of the challenging delivery programme of the Getting Building Fund. To that end it is proposed to move forward from preliminary design to detailed design following the recommendation to the approvals sought in this report. The Meadow Lane Greenspace Proposals are shown at Appendix 2 and the scheme visualisation is shown at Appendix 3.

3.3 Sovereign Street Bridge

- 3.3.1 The Sovereign Street Bridge has long been an ambition of the Council and its stakeholders in both the South Bank and at the newly constructed Sovereign Square. It was incorporated in both the Sovereign Street and South Bank informal planning statements as a key component of the public realm and wider connectivity for this area of the City Centre. It has the potential to link South Bank with its ambition to create 8,000 new homes and 35,000 new jobs from the new Aire Park to back into the city centre via Sovereign Square green space, into the proposed Leeds Integrated Station and HS2, transforming the South Bank of Leeds City Centre into a vibrant, well-connected and sustainable business and residential community.
- 3.3.2 The primary objective of the new bridge is to provide a traffic free route across the river Aire and improve connectivity to and from the City Centre and South Bank, improving access to jobs, homes, leisure opportunities and transport links, particularly the Rail Station. It will improve access by foot and cycle for the residents of the surrounding communities to the employment and leisure opportunities generated by the redevelopment of the South Bank, Sovereign Street and Holbeck, encouraging investment in the heart of the city. It will have a direct market-making and value uplift impact on the phase 1 Vastint scheme as a result of the enhanced connectivity it will provide to the City Centre and new station area. The new bridge will encourage a modal shift from motorised modes of transport to walking and cycling, by reducing journey times and creating a safer, stronger link between the City Centre and the south of the river. Furthermore, the introduction of a new bridge will make a positive contribution to the urban public realm in the area by encouraging local area movement and legible, high quality public spaces.
- 3.3.3 The Sovereign Street Bridge proposals consist of the following key elements:-
- A short access ramp from the north bank on to the main bridge structure, with a 1:20 minimum incline to ensure DDA compliance to the river crossing point.
 - An arched bridge which is 4.5m wide with a thin bridge deck to minimise the ramp heights and will be a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - The bridge truss (the over water bridge structure) which leans outwards at an angle to give the bridge a more open visual appearance.
 - Glass partitions across the main bridge deck which will be etched and lit to enhance the key design detailing of the etching.
 - Stainless steel handrail along both the bridge structure and ramps with down lighting to enhance visibility.
 - A bespoke LED lighting scheme across the main bridge structure that can be lit up in either block colour or a 'rainbow effect' to mark civic occasions.
 - A longer access ramp on the southern side of the bridge as consequence of ground level changes from the north to the south bank, which also includes a resting/seating area.
- 3.3.4 Sovereign Street bridge has now completed preliminary design and it is essential that the scheme continues to progress to meet the requirements of the challenging delivery programme of the Getting Building Fund. To that end it is proposed to move forward from preliminary design to detailed design following the recommendation to the approvals sought in this report, specifically around the

recommendation to approve the submission of a planning application. The scheme proposals are shown in Appendix 4a – Sovereign Street Bridge and Appendix 4b – Sovereign Street Bridge Night time visual.

- 3.3.5 The project requires land to be made available from two landowners to facilitate the delivery of the bridge. The conversations with landowners are advanced but as of the reporting date the final agreements have not been concluded, but are expected to be finalised very shortly.

3.4 Crown Point Road greening scheme

- 3.4.1 The Crown Point Road greening scheme will reduce the current highway alignment to a single lane carriageway with new two directional cycle lane and to deliver associated high quality public realm and place making works but it will remain open for traffic.
- 3.4.2 Two eastbound lanes will be retained over Crown Point Bridge on the approach to the stop-line at the junction with East Street on the north side of the river.
- 3.4.3 The scheme reallocates the former carriageway space to provide wider footways across most of the length of Crown Point Road and a separated bi-directional cycleway.
- 3.4.4 The wider footways will contribute to making the pedestrian environment more attractive, comfortable and accessible.
- 3.4.5 An additional signalised pedestrian crossing is proposed and the existing signalised crossing is retained. The crossing distance is significantly reduced due to the narrower carriageway. Raised tables are proposed at the signalised crossing points to further reduce vehicle speeds.
- 3.4.6 The narrower carriageway will reduce vehicle speeds which will reduce vehicle noise and foster a safer pedestrian environment.
- 3.4.7 Zebra crossings will be provided at regular intervals for pedestrians to cross the cycleway. Further, the cycleway is separated from the footway with an upstand and the colour of the cycleway will contrast with the surrounding footway, so that it is detectable visually impaired users. Shared space has been avoided to further minimise conflicts between cycle user and pedestrians.
- 3.4.8 The cycleway connects with protected cycling infrastructure on Great Wilson Street (currently under construction as part of the A61(S) LPTIP scheme) and proposed cycling infrastructure on Crown Point Bridge, Black Bull Street and Bowman Lane. Thus the scheme contributes to the creation of a safe, accessible, legible and comprehensive city centre cycling network.
- 3.4.9 Almost 30 buses per hour use Crown Point Road, but since these services all terminate at either the bus station or the city centre, the existing bus stops are primarily used for alighting.
- 3.4.10 The two existing bus stops on Crown Point Road (which serve almost identical services) are consolidated into a single bus stop, which will sit in a lay-by. The lay-by is designed to a more generous standard than the standard developed by LPTIP for city centre bus stops to ensure that there is adequate space for two buses to wait in the stop simultaneously. This reduces the risk of delays to bus users and general traffic.
- 3.4.11 A new, high-quality bus shelter will be provided to the standard developed for the LPTIP city centre schemes.

- 3.4.12 A bus stop by-pass arrangement has been designed to minimise conflicts between cycle users and bus users at the bus stop. The follows recent guidance in LTN 1/20.
- 3.4.13 Loading bays are provided at intervals along Crown Point Road for adjacent businesses.
- 3.4.14 The wider footways create opportunities for extensive tree planting and the provision of soft landscaping (with precise proposals to be determined at detailed design following surveys).
- 3.4.15 The narrower carriageway will result in a less vehicle-dominated environment in the vicinity of Aire Park and the Tetley Brewer development, which will ultimately straddle both sides of Crown Point Road. This will enhance the setting of the park and residential and commercial development.
- 3.4.16 These works are a necessity to unlock phase 2 of Aire Park in accordance with the SPD. Crown Point Road currently dissects the proposed new Aire Park and is a busy “rat run” route that is dominated by cars and needs to be calmed to align with the surrounding redevelopment and green space aspirations of the SPD and live planning applications for the Vastint site. Promoting Crown Point Road as a “Strategic Green Link” is a key component of the South Bank SPD Masterplan.
- 3.4.17 The Crown Point Road calming and greening scheme is now close to the end of preliminary design and is required to be considered and approved from a technical point of view by Highways Board. However subject to a positive outcome from Highways Board, the scheme, it is proposed, will move forward into the next phase of detailed design, the approval to which forms part of the recommendations contained within this report. The indicative preliminary design scheme layout is attached at Appendix 6 – Crown Point Road.

3.5 Contribution to the City Vision

- 3.5.1 The Grey to Green projects support the Best Council Plan by supporting the city’s Inclusive Growth Strategy, Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Climate Emergency.
- 3.5.2 These contributions can be viewed in isolation but more importantly the Grey To Green projects start to ‘knit together’ these strategies through coherent projects that allow these strategies to be enacted.
- 3.5.3 The contribution to Health and Wellbeing is about supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles. This is achieved by the provision of additional green space at Meadow Lane and the connection to this green space and Aire Park via the Sovereign Street Bridge and the Crown Point Rd greening and calming.
- 3.5.4 Supporting growth and investment and helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential and helping people into work and into better jobs is facilitated by the active transport links that Sovereign Street Bridge and the Crown Point Road greening and calming will bring. The connection to the South Bank allows easier access to the opportunities of the city and allows this movement to be done in an active a sustainable way.
- 3.5.5 The contribution to Climate Emergency and ensuring that Leeds works towards a net zero carbon city by 2030 are the contributions to active transport and the carbon sequestration the greening the schemes provide.

3.5.6 The Grey to Green developments are not undertaken in isolation and are complementary to the City Square proposals which are subject to a separate Executive Board report as part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

3.6 Funding

3.6.1 As part of the GBF there is a requirement to submit each individual business case for all of the schemes to WYCA for approval once design freeze has been reached. The allocations below show the proposed match funding sources identified by the Council to support the delivery of each element of the Grey to Green programme, mainly S106 and capital receipt allocations.

	Meadow Lane	Sov Bridge	Crown Point Rd	Total
LCC	£2,000,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000,000.00
LCC Via S106	£0.00	£500,000.00	£0.00	£500,000.00
WYCA GBB	£1,250,000.00	£3,200,000.00	£3,750,000.00	£8,200,000.00
Total	£3,250,000.00	£3,700,000.00	£3,750,000.00	£10,700,000.00

3.6.2 The February 2018 Executive Board considered and agreed the creation of a development plot at Meadow Lane and to hypothecate income from the disposal of the development plot to fund the delivery of Meadow Lane Green Space City Park. This hypothecation is the £2,000,000 LCC contribution within table 3.5.1.

3.7 Programme

	Meadow Lane	Sov Bridge	Crown Point Rd
Preliminary Design Complete	02/03/2021	12/03/2021	12/04/2021
Detail Design Complete	04/05/2021	17/09/2021	15/05/2021
Construction Start	05/07/2021	04/10/2021	28/06/2021
Construction Completion	07/03/2022	18/03/2022	07/02/2022

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Public engagement on the Our Spaces strategy, building on the South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD ambitions, commenced in November 2018, concluding in April 2019. The strategy is the Council's strategic document setting out the vision and ambition for the development of public realm within the City Centre to be vibrant, inclusive and world class and to be our greatest cultural asset. Feedback was used to inform a revised strategy document which defines the ambition and principles for the design of Leeds City Centre public realm and has been used to develop and support the Connecting Leeds proposals being developed as part of the Corn Exchange Gateway which has been extensively consulted over the last 2 years.

4.1.2 Key findings of the consultations were:

- Lack of connectedness and signage
- Green space and more trees (Leeds described as a grey city)

- More toilets, accessible toilets and seating
- Walking- safe green corridors, more guided walks and trails
- Fun – Leeds was described as a city that lacked fun & activities for children
- Not a destination. Leeds needs to have something to draw people in
- Street cafes – areas where it doesn't have to be about alcohol
- Tackling begging and homelessness

4.1.3 The Connecting Leeds Corn Exchange Gateway consultation (of which Meadow Lane and Crown Point Road are an integral part) on Transforming Your City Centre opened to the public via the online portal, Commonplace, on 7 October 2019. The consultation was open to the public until 4 November 2019. Outreach drop-in events were held throughout October at the Corn Exchange, Kirkgate Market and Leeds Bus Station. On-street outreach with the public in the area with the distribution of 9000 leaflets, cards and posters. E newsletters were also distributed and all materials were available online.

4.1.4 The scheme was presented in six sections, four sections of highway and public realm changes and two sections regarding use of the streets:

- The Corn Exchange and Call Lane;
- Boar Lane and Lower Briggate;
- Meadow Lane and Bridge End;
- Kirkgate, New York Street and York Street;
- Bus Priority, access and loading; and
- Bus route changes.

4.1.5 During that time, 6700 people visited the online portal to read more, and had the opportunity to leave comments or agree with statements. In total, 2264 contributions were received from over 500 people. An analysis of the feedback online has been undertaken, suggesting that there is a high rate of positive feeling about the proposals. From 1187 surveys received across all sections, 75% of responses were positive or very positive, with the majority, 51%, very positive. Responses were positive for all sections, ranging from 60% to 80% positive. This compares very favourably to Connecting Leeds corridor schemes for which the rate of positive responses was much lower.

4.1.6 Looking at the open, free text comments received online the outstanding opinion appears to be that the proposals offer a positive impact on the surrounding area for places in need of improvement. There is specific support for:

- Limiting access to the city centre by private car, including for environmental reasons; and
- Improved public realm and greenery.
- Particular concerns were raised around:
- Greater pedestrianisation leading to those with disabilities or mobility issues needing to walk further.
- Cycling infrastructure, its extent, and conflict with pedestrians. There is a call for more dedicated infrastructure for cycling but also safety concerns for around conflicts between cycles and pedestrians are raised.

- Businesses and some individuals regarding access and loading restrictions.

4.1.7 Consultation has taken place on the City Park through the South Bank Regeneration Framework in 2016, South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD in 2017 and through ongoing consultation from Vastint. The consultation engaged with residents, businesses, landowners and city stakeholders, this included a high number of responses on the City Centre Park, including public support for the park as follows:

- To be part of a wider green network of spaces;
- Feature expanses of green, with mature trees, gardens, water features and seating
- A 'destination' in its own right benefiting workers and residents and wider communities too, not just a space used during office hours
- Include something for everyone, including families, young children and young people. For example play space and sports facilities helping to address a lack of provision in the city centre
- Provide a flexible space to include areas which can be used for specific events as well as general public use
- Include facilities like toilets, cafes and covered spaces to ensure the park can be used in all weathers
- Feature public art and sculpture which is integrated with the landscape as well as accommodating temporary art works and trails
- Increase biodiversity by creating new habitats for wildlife and pollinator resources.

4.1.8 With regard to Meadow Lane the Executive Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development has been regularly consulted on the emerging proposals as they have been brought forward. Ward Members were consulted on 28th October 2020 and 8th March 2021 and are supportive of the proposals. Consultation and ongoing engagement is taking place with Vastint and the surrounding landowners were consulted on the proposals in November 2020.

4.1.9 Sovereign Street Bridge has undergone consultation with Ward Members, Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust, Sustrans, Cycle Forum Sub-Group/HS2/Access and Use-Ability Group and has received broad support.

4.1.10 Through engagement with the Leeds Civic Trust they have highlighted a number of suggested design enhancements. These comments have been incorporated into the design where practical and affordable to include a more sympathetic colour scheme, improved lighting and materials. The Civic Trust have also suggested that the Council does not progress with the bridge at this time and delivers a temporary proposals pending more funding being available. The Council's view is that there is no funding to deliver a temporary proposal at this time and it would have to return the existing funding secured if the proposed scheme was not progressed.

4.1.11 Crown Point Road has undergone consultation with engagement with the Emergency Services, adjacent businesses, Educational establishments, Bus Operators, WYCA and the Access and Use-Ability Group again it has received broad support.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening form has been completed at Appendix 7 and proper consideration has been given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration throughout the design process.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The delivery of new public realm and the easy access to public realm via the Bridge will support the ambitions and a number of the priorities set out in the Inclusive Growth strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Economic Recovery Framework and the Best Council Plan as reflected earlier in this report. The schemes support the Best Council Plan 2020-2025 priorities on:

- contributing to inclusive growth by providing sustainable infrastructure and boosting the economy
- reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles by providing access to greenspace and facilitating active travel
- delivering sustainable infrastructure that supports the Council's climate and biodiversity ambitions
- making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in by providing child and young people friendly spaces
- making Leeds the best city to grow old in by providing inclusive and accessible spaces and improved bus waiting environs
- supporting housing delivery by improving the city centre environment for residents and therefore making it attractive for future investment
- providing inclusive spaces for communities
- improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities

4.3.2 Climate Emergency

4.3.3 Full Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019, with the stated ambition of working towards a net zero carbon city by 2030.

4.3.4 An urgent priority for the city is reducing carbon emissions to restrict global warming and green infrastructure, such as the projects presented in this report, can play a key role in contributing to this agenda. Urban trees are hugely important, in addition to locking up carbon they also mitigate air pollution and along with other planting, cool urban heat island temperatures, contribute to flood risk management and improve biodiversity.

4.3.5 More trees and planting in our spaces will attract new animal and plant species, delivering biodiversity net gains at a time when many species are at risk, and also supporting the creation of green corridors across the city.

4.3.6 The Council has a commitment through the West Yorkshire Transport Plan to a series of initiatives which are designed to cut carbon emissions by a quarter over the next decade. It is the council's aim to be city where you don't need to use a car. The measures include:

- Doubling bus patronage
- A 75% increase in rail
- A 10% increase in walking
- A 300% increase in cycling
- A 15% decrease in car usage

4.3.7 To support and encourage the use of public and active transport, the Our Spaces strategy aims to support and deliver the creation of high quality public realm that makes journeys across the city centre safe and enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists. The Corn Exchange scheme clearly integrates 'Active Transit' opportunities, including walking and cycling, into the design.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

	Meadow Lane	Sov Bridge	Crown Point Rd	Total
LCC	£2,000,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000,000.00
LCC Via S106	£0.00	£500,000.00	£0.00	£500,000.00
WYCA GBB	£1,250,000.00	£3,200,000.00	£3,750,000.00	£8,200,000.00
Total	£3,250,000.00	£3,700,000.00	£3,750,000.00	£10,700,000.00

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 This report is eligible for call-in.

4.5.2 None of the contents of this report are exempt or confidential under the access to information rules detailed in the constitution.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 Risk is to be managed through application of 'best practice' project management tools and techniques via the City Council's 'PM Lite' risk methodology. Experienced Project Management resource has been allocated from within City Development.

4.6.2 A risk management strategy has been produced for the grey to green programme and a risk register. Risk is reported to the Grey to Green Board on a monthly basis.

4.6.3 For the three Grey to Green projects that are the subject of this report, a priced risk log has/will be produced by the contractor with Employer and Contractor risk budgets allocated accordingly.

4.6.4 Funding from the Get Building Fund are dependent on the projects being completed by March 2022.

4.6.5 There is a risk that the Sovereign Bridge project will not be constructed if the landownership agreements required to land the bridge cannot be concluded.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 August 2020 the Government announced a £900 million Getting Building Fund (GBF) to deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure across the country. The investment was targeted in areas facing the biggest economic challenges as a result of the pandemic and supports the delivery of shovel ready infrastructure projects to boost economic growth, and fuel local recovery and jobs.
- 5.2 Identified by the Our Spaces Strategy, the South Bank Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and linked to the ongoing delivery of the Leeds Public Transport Infrastructure Programme; The Council's Asset Management and Regeneration Service, identified four infrastructure projects to form the basis of the 'Grey to Green' programme, that were sufficiently mature to meet the Government's 'shovel ready' criteria for inclusion in a bid to the GBF.
- 5.3 The 'Grey to Green' programme is focussed on people and climate change outcomes which will stimulate new regeneration and growth, whilst enhancing the climate resilience and transformation of Leeds City Centre post COVID-19 through a series of integrated green spaces and green infrastructure.
- 5.4 The regeneration of the South Bank, guided by the South Bank Regeneration Framework, will effectively double the size and economic impact of Leeds City Centre, creating a distinctive mixed use district providing over 35,000 jobs and over 8,000 homes. The Grey to Green projects that are the subject of this report support the Framework's aspirations to transform the South Bank into a well-connected sustainable business and residential community that will help to improve connections to the surrounding communities in the Aire Valley, Hunslet, Richmond Hill, Beeston Hill and Holbeck whilst also providing vibrant and outward facing public spaces.
- 5.5 The Grey to Green projects identified are:-
- The Corn Exchange Public Realm
 - Meadow Lane Green Space
 - Sovereign Street Bridge
 - Crown Point Road calming and greening
- 5.6 The projects will contribute to the delivery of the Leeds Economic Recovery Framework through boosting economic growth, job creation, helping to tackle climate change, increasing biodiversity and providing access to green space for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing.
- 5.7 In September 2020, it was announced that Leeds's bid successfully secured £8.6m of match funding from the Getting Building Fund which when combined with the Council's funding of £3.6m provides a total budget of £12.2m for the delivery of the four projects . The final business case was subsequently submitted to WYCA in November 2020 and was approved at WYCA Investment Committee in February 2021.
- 5.8 When combined, these four interrelated investments shall make Leeds City Centre greener and more attractive; helping to unlock major commercial and residential development across South Bank and the centre of Leeds, as well as the delivery of private sector investment into the Aire Park; the largest new city centre green space

in the region, whilst supplementing and accelerating multi-modal transport benefits committed through Connecting Leeds for the Corn Exchange Gateway.

5.9 In total, Grey to Green will deliver 6,700 sqm of new public realm; create new green space; increase connectivity to blue infrastructure for communities in areas of high deprivation and improve the quality of city centre living for current and future residents. In addition, it will help to unlock the delivery of Aire Park – with a further 3 hectares of green space to be delivered by the private sector.

5.10 The Getting Build Fund is time constrained and eligibility for funding requires that the projects are completed by the end of March 2022.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is requested to:-

- a) Note the progress made to date with the development of the Grey to Green programme following the successful bid to the Getting Building Fund and the development of the three projects: Meadow Lane Greenspace; Sovereign Street Bridge and Crown Point Road calming and greening.
- b) Approve the design proposals developed for the creation of Meadow Lane Green Space as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to the development of green infrastructure in the city centre to support the implementation of the Our Spaces Strategy and the South Bank Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document and give approval to the progression of the scheme presented into the next phase of detailed and technical design.
- c) Approve the design proposals developed to date for Sovereign Street Bridge and the submission of a planning application for the bridge to enable the continued progression of the scheme.
- d) Approve the indicative layout proposals developed to date for the Crown Point Road calming and greening scheme and give approval to the progression of the scheme into the next phase of design.
- e) Note that the Director of City Development will be responsible for the implementation of the decisions outlined in this report.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

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.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Grey 2 Green Context
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Meadow Lane Green space Proposals
- 8.3 Appendix 3 - Meadow Lane Visual
- 8.4 Appendix 4a - Sovereign Street Bridge
- 8.5 Appendix 4b - Sovereign Street Bridge Night time visual
- 8.6 Appendix 5 - Scheme Connectivity and Context
- 8.7 Appendix 6 - Crown Point Road.
- 8.8 Appendix 7 - EDCI Grey to Green