

# Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD adoption

Date: 30 October 2023

Report of: Regeneration and Policy & Plans

Report to: Chief Planning Officer

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

- This report provides a summary of the development of the Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) Supplementary Planning Document including how the document has been amended and updated in response to public consultation.
- The Innovation Arc (North) is a 132 hectare area in the west of the city centre, encompassing the city centre estates of the University of Leeds, Leeds Arts University, Leeds Beckett University, the Leeds General Infirmary, significant civic assets and the major employment concentration of the West End
- The Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a non-statutory document which expands upon existing policies in the Adopted Core Strategy and explains how policies in the Local Plan are to be implemented in the context of the SPD area. It will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications which fall within the area of the SPD.
- The SPD was informed through economic and spatial analysis and responds to the challenges and opportunities presented across the area, as well as reflecting the priorities in the Inclusive Growth Strategy relating to stimulating innovation, maximising the potential of our city centre, promoting Leeds, and investing in our places and transport to create a sustainable economy and greener future.
- Two stages of public consultation and engagement were undertaken to inform the development of the Supplementary Planning Document. The response to the document's proposals and key principles was positive with support from the public and private sectors and community groups to the Document's vision and content.
- The SPD has now been finalised for adoption by the Council.

## Recommendations

The Chief Planning Officer is asked to:

- A. Note the public consultation and engagement that has been undertaken and the positive response to the principles and proposals contained in the Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD
- B. Note the key comments received during public consultation and the updates and amendments made to the document in response to these comments
- C. Formally adopt the Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD.

### **What is this report about?**

This report relates to the adoption of a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) area of the city.

The SPD provides additional guidance for development, as well as setting out proposals for improvements to public realm, infrastructure and the integration of public transport in this area of the city. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications which fall within the plan boundary.

This document has been produced over a two year period and responds to the city's Inclusive Growth Strategy ambitions, in particular relating to the role of the city centre and stimulating the innovation economy. The document has been informed by an economic evidence base and detailed spatial analysis and aligns with the Council's wider Plans and Policies, amplifying key policies in the Core Strategy and referencing the wider framework of planning guidance and strategic documents including the Accessible Leeds SPD 2016, Leeds Transport SPD, Leeds Best City Ambition 2020-2025, and guidance for adjoining areas including the Leeds South Bank SPD (2018) and Leeds Holbeck and South Bank SPD (2016).

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

The Innovation Arc brings together the City's anchor institutions – Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Arts University, Leeds City Council – with one of the UK's strongest and most dynamic networks of private sector businesses. The area is home to some of Leeds's most important and recognisable buildings and heritage assets, its civic core, and a wealth of cultural facilities. It is the access point to the city from the surrounding residential areas to the west and north and has the potential to connect directly with regeneration underway at the South Bank.

These characteristics place the area at the heart of Leeds's economic success and a focal point for innovation-led growth in the City Region. The success of the Innovation Arc is critical to unlocking the city's inclusive growth ambition and a route to creating opportunities for all, by putting people at the heart of innovation to improve health, wealth and tackle inequalities across our communities.

The Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD sets a clear vision for the future of this important part of the city, including a vision, key principles and proposals that will support the city to deliver 4.4 hectares of new green space, 220,000 square metres of new and enhanced public

realm, 100,000 square metres of new innovation space and the restoration and refurbishment of major heritage sites.

The purpose of the document is to:

- Define the vision and development principles for future development in the area through positive interventions to address climate change, inclusive growth, and health and wellbeing.
- Define what innovation in the area looks like.
- Reflect and expand upon existing Local Plan policies to provide development guidance and identify specific opportunities and interventions within three neighbourhoods that make up the area: Woodhouse Gateway (anchored by the City's major universities); Great George Street (anchored by the hospital campus); and the West End (anchored by major private sector occupiers).
- Be used for development management purposes as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications which fall within the area of the SPD.
- Provide a guide to investors and developers on their proposals for development and growth in the area.
- Provide a regeneration tool and internal Council document to coordinate non-planning matters which have an impact on the area.
- To inform future delivery plans for the area and support funding bids and decisions.

The Document contains Development Guidance and sets out the vision and opportunities for each of three distinct and connected neighbourhoods across the Innovation Arc. The supporting plans demonstrate how the design and development principles manifest in the innovation neighbourhoods across around 40 separate proposals. These include proposals to create two new city parks capping the A58 Inner Ring Road, and 'linear' parks which connect these new spaces into the wider city fabric. Across the area proposals are set out to improve the quality of public realm and to re-balance roads and spaces to improve the setting of key buildings and support spill out activity and gathering spaces. Cultural uses and creative animation of public spaces and routes is encouraged, including through creative corridors connecting neighbourhoods. The restoration and positive re-use of important heritage buildings is also promoted in the document, as key anchors to wider regeneration.

It is anticipated that the proposals set out in the SPD will be brought forward over time. The Innovation Arc will be delivered collectively between the public and private sectors in Leeds. Given the scale of the opportunity collaboration will be key to success and the Council will continue to work closely with partners to co-ordinate both spatial delivery and the broader economic development ambitions that underpin our shared vision for the area. The Council requires developers to incorporate the guiding principles detailed in this SPD, and to consider the wider context and collective value of their proposals, in order to enhance the long-term quality of the City's built environment.

(The Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD is appended to this report)

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

The SPD amplifies Core Strategy policies in particular Spatial Policy 3 (Role of Leeds City Centre), Policy CC1 (City Centre Development), Policy CC3 (Improving Connectivity between the City Centre and Neighbouring Communities) and P11 (Conservation). The SPD also amplifies a number

of the Nine Big Ideas in the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy including: investing in our places and transport to create a sustainable economy and greener future, maximising the potential of our city centre and local high streets, and stimulating innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future.

In amplifying these existing policies and strategies the SPD provides clear guidance on how these ambitions may be delivered including proposals for spatial delivery. This includes proposals focused on the delivery of new green space, biodiversity enhancements and projects supporting sustainability, proposals focused on re-stitching the area to neighbouring communities, celebrating and enhancing the area's identity and character, and improving the provision of public realm, walking and cycling connectivity and sustainable public transport in the area.

The Document contains five key principles:

#### Inclusive

Breaking through the barrier of the A58 and stitching the area into its surrounding neighbourhoods will be integral to this. Opportunities should be sought to engage with existing communities and involve them in the process.

#### Resilient

Leeds Innovation Arc should be adaptable and resilient in its broadest sense, an area that is able to flex and respond to the ever-changing scope and demands of the innovation industry and to the climate emergency.

#### Liveable

As well as being a vibrant place to visit, full of buzz and excitement, Leeds Innovation Arc should be a desirable place to live with a strong community offer that exists beyond office hours and student term times.

#### Rooted

Heritage-led innovation lies at the heart of Leeds Innovation Arc. With a number of significant heritage and cultural assets, the area is rooted in its distinct, yet diverse identity.

#### Healthy

Leeds Innovation Arc is a world-class hub for research and innovation in health and medical technologies. Leeds Innovation Arc will be a driver for economic prosperity but it has the opportunity to create a quality, truly sustainable place with health and well-being at its core.

These principles amplify the ambitions set out across the Council's three pillars, enabling the Council to deliver against Net Zero, Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth objectives.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Two phases of public consultation and engagement have taken place. Phase one of public consultation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document took place for a seven-week period between 24 October and 12 December 2022 and 44 consultation responses were received in total. Following this, phase 2 of consultation took place between 26 June and 27 July 2023 again

seeking the views of residents, landowners, businesses, and other key stakeholders on a draft final SPD. In total, 20 formal consultation responses were received in phase 2 which reflect a wide span of perspectives from a range of stakeholders including landowners, businesses and community-based groups. The SPD was well received and many of the responses were supportive of both the vision and of specific proposals.

Following these two phases of consultation the Document has been finalised ahead of adoption in October 2023.

Details of the consultation including all responses received and how they have been addressed is set out in the Adoption Statement and Stage 1 Consultation Report (appended).

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

### **What are the resource implications?**

There are no resource implications arising directly from this SPD. The Document will be a material consideration for planning applications in the area along with wider Policies and Plans.

As proposals come forward over time resource implications may arise on individual schemes and this will be assessed at the time.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- a. The Document may not be sufficiently understood or developers and landowners may not be familiar with this supplementary guidance. In order to manage this risk the Document has been widely promoted through consultation and wider Regeneration activities (including through engagement with landowners and developers). Following adoption the Document will be published on the Council's website.
- b. The Document may not be supported by relevant stakeholders. In order to manage this risk the Council have undertaken broad and deep engagement and consultation, including through public drop-in events, direct engagement with key groups, and through a survey. The Document has been amended in response to representations received.
- c. The proposals set out in the Document may be challenging to deliver due to technical or funding constraints. This risk will be managed on an ongoing basis and will be subject to the detail of schemes being developed. The Council will continue to work collaboratively with landowners and developers, and with the wider community, to develop proposals. The Council will also, as appropriate, consider opportunities to secure funding for project proposals in order to deliver against the vision set out in the Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD.

### **What are the legal implications?**

The document has been prepared in line with the statutory requirements for the development and content of supplementary planning documents. This includes compliance with statutory requirements for consultation and representations.

A person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt this SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision, and that application must be made promptly and in any event no later than three months after the date on which this SPD is adopted.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

Leeds City Council officers considered a range of approaches to developing spatial guidance for this area of the city. This included:

- More tightly bound and specific guidance at site level. This may have been adopted as a Planning Brief focused on the Leeds Teaching Hospitals General Infirmary site. This would have not provided the same benefits as the SPD in enabling the knitting-together of sites across the area, or setting out ambitious proposals outside of single site boundaries.
- A 'Regeneration Framework' or similar strategic document which could have provided an economic narrative and a set of proposals for the regeneration of the area. This could have set out proposals beyond existing Policy but on this basis would not have carried the same weight in planning and would not have formed a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- Proposals could have been developed in isolation and over a period of time with no single document capturing all proposals. This would not have enabled a coherent and cohesive approach.

### **How will success be measured?**

Delivery and implementation is closely linked to monitoring. The Council will measure the performance of the SPD by assessing how effective its proposals are in delivering its vision and objectives. Existing monitoring of the Core Strategy policies (outlined in Section 4.1) is undertaken through the production of an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which local authorities are required to produce every year. The indicators, policies to which they relate, targets, triggers and interventions are set out in a summary in Appendix 4 of the Core Strategy. The AMR also identifies actions that need to be taken to rectify any issues raised, i.e. if the objectives and vision are not being met. This could include adjusting the implementation of the Policies, or might even identify a need for a partial or full review of one of the Development Plan Documents. There are also a range of other processes including other Council Directorates monitoring systems, national indicators, resident surveys, and City Region work which will help to ensure that the SPD is monitored and implemented accordingly

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

The SPD will be adopted following the 14 October 2023. Implementation will take place over time and as development proposals come forward in the area.

## **Appendices**

1. Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD
2. Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD Adoption Statement
3. Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Inclusion Screening

#### 4. Leeds City Centre West Innovation Arc (North) SPD Consultation Report