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## Report of the Director of City Development

### Development Plan Panel

Date: 6 January 2009

Subject: Leeds LDF Area Action Plans – Progress Report

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**Electoral Wards Affected:** All

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. An integral part of the Leeds LDF Local Development Scheme, is the preparation of Area Action Plans for the City Centre, the West Leeds Gateway, Aire Valley Leeds and East and South East Leeds (Easel). The purpose of these Plans is to provide a land use and spatial planning framework, in managing ‘key areas of change’ within the City. Members will recall that each of these Plans have been subject to “Preferred Options” consultation. The purpose of this report is to update members on overall progress and further technical work underway, to prepare submission documents for independent examination. It should be noted that the timetable for the production of these documents will need to be reviewed, as part of future revisions to the Local Development Scheme.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

1.1 To advise and update Development Plan Panel members on overall progress and further technical work underway, to prepare submission documents for independent examination.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Area Action Plans (AAP's) are being prepared as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Leeds. They are statutory Plans, which will set out the Council's future planning policy within areas of major change. They focus on the implementation of development proposals and provide a mechanism for ensuring development is of an appropriate scale, location, mix and quality.
- 2.2 As statutory plans they are prepared under a process prescribed by national regulations. City Centre, the West Leeds Gateway, Aire Valley Leeds and East & South East Leeds (EASEL) AAP's are being prepared under the following timetable:
- Informal consultation stage (Issues & Alternative Options)
  - Preferred Options stage
  - Submission stage
  - Public Examination
  - Adoption

2.3 Following the successful completion of Issues & Alternative Options and Preferred Options consultation, work is now underway to prepare draft Plans for submission. Taking these Plans forward has been both an opportunity and a challenge. This is due not only to the planning, development and regeneration issues within the individual areas themselves but also as a consequence of changes to national planning guidance and the need for comprehensive technical work necessary to underpin the "soundness" of the Plans under preparation. Within this context, the following section provides a summary of progress to date and next steps.

## **3.0 Progress to Date & Next Steps**

### City Centre AAP

#### Progress to date

3.1 The City Centre Area Action Plan (CCAAP) underwent two years of preparation and informal consultation leading up to publication of Preferred Options in April 2007. As a conclusion to this stage of plan preparation, summaries of responses received were made and placed on the City Council website. Within the context of other priorities across the LDF, resources have been temporarily redeployed to develop the LDF Core Strategy to Preferred Options stage and to project manage the Strategic Housing Land Assessment (SHLAA).

#### Next Steps

3.2 Work is due to recommence on the CCAAP when the Core Strategy has been progressed to Preferred Options and upon completion of the SHLAA or otherwise when staff resources allow. In the meantime, it is expected that a number of policy areas of the CCAAP will have strategic applicability to be 'absorbed' into the Core Strategy. This will leave a number of key policy areas, which are spatially specific to

Leeds city centre to be taken forward through the CCAAP. Central to this work also will be the need to prepare a submission Plan within the context of:

- the City Centre Vision / Prospectus
- the Adopted RSS (May 2008) and Update
- the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Alleviation Scheme
- the need to fully assess city centre transportation & accessibility issues (including the One Way Loop, south of the River Aire)

3.3 At this stage it is envisaged that the “submission” version of the CCAAP will be prepared alongside or after the Core Strategy.

#### West Leeds Gateway

##### Progress to Date

3.4 The AAP has now gone through two key stages of public consultation and good progress is now being made in amending the Plan for a final period of consultation and, following this, its formal submission to the Secretary of State. The AAP will then be subject to independent Examination by a Government appointed Inspector. It is currently anticipated that pre submission consultation on the AAP will be held in spring 2009, with Submission to the Secretary of State in late summer 2009, in accordance with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. However, this timetable is dependant upon satisfactory progress being made in a number of key areas, as explained below.

3.5 Members will recall that at its meeting on 10th June 2008, a progress report was presented to the Panel which summarised the consultation responses to the AAP following publication of the Preferred Options in February 2008. That report explained that refinements to the Plan were required on the following areas:

1. The scale of proposed demolitions to the system-built housing in New Wortley and the related matter of the number of properties to be included in the housing decency programme. This matter is currently being addressed in consultation with West North West Homes.
2. An assessment of the future role of Armley Mills, the home of Leeds Industrial Museum, to determine its potential to accommodate an additional use(s) within the Mill complex. It is intended that any such new use(s) must complement the Museum and boost its potential as a visitor attraction, as well as help strengthen pedestrian links to Kirkstall across the River. This assessment is dependant upon the Council’s museums Service being able to release space and, with this in mind, a full audit of the Museum’s collection is now underway. In addition to this, and as a basis to inform future options, informal (and without prejudice meetings) are to take place in January 2009 with representatives of the development industry, who have a good track record of regenerating historic buildings. This will help the Council to reach a conclusion about development options and the kind of use(s) that would be commercially deliverable but which would also be acceptable in planning and environmental terms.
3. A further key area which requires refinement relates to delivery and implementation. The importance of this is emphasised in the new Development Plans System and it is an area which will be closely examined

at the Plan's submission. This part of the AAP will therefore explain the way in which the proposals will be implemented, providing details on:

- The level and sources of funding needed to support the intended actions
- Lead agency for implementing each policy/proposal
- A timetable for establishing how and when the proposals contained in the Plan will be taken forward successfully
- Refined spatial objectives with clear outputs, outcomes, targets and indicators

A Strategic Delivery and Investment Plan is therefore currently being drawn together with the help of colleagues in the Regeneration Service (Environments & Neighbourhoods) and from the Renaissance Unit.

4. There is a need to review and agree the priorities for investing in the AAP's greenspace following completion of the PPG17 Audit in January 2009.
  5. A further area of work relates to assessing the transport implications of the AAP and, in particular, how the 'barrier' of the gyratory for pedestrian movement can be overcome or ameliorated.
- 3.6 It is intended that these streams of work will be concluded by early February, to enable pre submission consultation to take place in late spring. A report will be presented to Development Plan Panel (and Executive Board) prior to consultation, to allow Members to make any adjustments to it prior to publication.

### Aire Valley Leeds AAP

#### Progress to Date

- 3.7 Preparation of the Aire Valley (AVL) Area Action Plan has been underway since 2005 and moved to "Preferred Options stage in October 2007. In taking forward specific policies and proposals, the LDF process requires a robust evidence base to demonstrate that schemes within it are capable of delivery. Central to this, in terms of the AVL AAP, has been the production of a financial model, to enable testing of a number of development scenarios. The key purpose of this is to establish the full potential of the area and to assist in the development of a funding / delivery plan for key infrastructure.

##### 1. Financial model

Consultants Jacobs were commissioned by the City Council and English Partnerships to establish infrastructure costs, potential developer contributions and to develop a financial model which could be used to establish development land values based on varying infrastructure assumptions and development scenarios. Jacobs engaged Knight Frank to provide input on commercial valuation aspects. Whilst a significant amount of information was amassed on development values, infrastructure costs and related issues, further work has been necessary to refine development assumptions. Consequently, a small working group of officers (City Development, Environment and Neighbourhoods and English Partnerships) with a detailed working knowledge of the area, has been established to assess development costs, land values and to derive realistic estimates of infrastructure requirements and responsibility for their delivery. The main focus of the work has been the development of a new financial model which is able to test different scenarios or mixes of land-uses. The range of scenario's to be tested include the UDP proposals and current planning consents; the proposed uses set out in the

AAP Preferred Options, and a range of other uses based on more recent developer expectations. The model will enable the size of any gap between costs and values to be estimated. In particular, the model can be used to test the impact of introducing higher value uses such as residential development. Subsequent consideration can then be given to how any gaps between costs and development value can be bridged. The model is also being used to indicate how the estimated costs of strategic infrastructure should be allocated between the public and private sectors and the level of public intervention which may be required. Further work will be required to establish land remediation and abnormal site development costs in conjunction with landowners and developers.

## 2. Other Work Themes

- Investigative work has been undertaken as part of a Core Cities initiative to explore the potential for identifying AVL as an Accelerated Development Zone (ADZ). The ADZ concept is designed to tackle the funding gap for enabling infrastructure and could allow Local Authorities more financial freedom to facilitate future growth by using the “growth dividend” in the development in order to fund the required upfront infrastructure.
- The AVL project team was also involved in facilitating the submission of evidence in support of Leeds’ bid for housing growth point status. Whilst this was unsuccessful, officers are now involved in the more recent bid for an “Urban Eco new settlement” based on the (lower) Aire Valley. An initial case has been submitted with three other local authorities (Bradford, Kirklees and York). Work is currently ongoing within the City Region to identify which one of these locations should be fast tracked as a ‘trailblazer’ for a national/ international eco exemplar community. Consultants Grimley’s, have been appointed to assess which of these locations has the greatest prospect for early delivery. They are due to complete their report in late January 2009, and an announcement is anticipated on the Urban Eco settlement in April.
- A transport model has been produced within the AVL project team to help testing scenarios and to assist in negotiations with the Highways Agency and other stakeholders.
- A draft Sequential Test has been carried out to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites in the area with a lower probability of flooding which could be developed instead of those identified. This has been agreed in principle with the Environment Agency, and demonstrates that it is possible to deliver the development identified in the Preferred Options subject to resolution of surface water run off issues at Skelton Moor Farm.
- The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) also has implications for AVL and the project team is providing input to ensure that the scheme respects the overall amenity and potential of the AVL corridor.
- The AVL continues to engage in partnership working, on several fronts including the Aire Valley Investors Forum, meetings with landowners and stakeholders including “Aire Action”, a partnership group all of whom have major interests in the river Aire.
- Regardless of the outcome of the urban eco settlement the potential for this area to be identified as an exemplar for sustainable development is being fully explored. Progress on this and other work themes in connection with delivering

the AVLAAP and will be reviewed by the AVL Project Board to ensure corporate ownership of the AAP proposals.

- Waste Management is also an important theme within the Aire Valley and the Residual Waste Management Project is progressing, following the recent identification of 10 bidders, which need to be reduced to two. The Aire Valley Project team will be instrumental in the new year in the analytical process and evaluation of bids and sites.

### Next Steps

- 3.8 Further work is in hand to refine and confirm the inputs to the financial model. In particular, more information is required on land remediation costs, which are currently based on partial or broad-brush estimates. Any amendments made to the land uses outlined in the preferred options of the AAP must be reliable and credible if the plan is to be judged sound. Discussions with landowners continue and it is intended that the project team will share the results of scenario testing with them. The Investors Forum is clearly a key platform for discussion, along with meetings with individual owners and developers.

When the development options have been reviewed it will be necessary to revise the AAP document. This will include ensuring that the objectives are specific to the Aire Valley and in line with Government Office advice, and reflecting greater emphasis on sustainable development within AVL.

### East & South East Leeds (EASEL)

#### Progress to Date

- 3.9 Formal consultation took place on the EASEL Preferred Options during 2007 and identified a number of key issues for development within the EASEL area. These are summarised briefly as follows:
- Concern regarding the potential scale of demolitions and potential impact on house values,
  - Need for sufficient affordable and social rented housing,
  - Need for improvements and new development before further decline,
  - Improved methods of publicity and consultation,
  - Greenspace improvements,
  - Dealing with flood risk,
  - Improved public transport routes and services,
  - Anti- social behaviour, particularly noise, litter and vandalism.
- 3.10 Progression of the AAP towards deposit stage has required further consideration of how each of these aspects can be dealt with through the AAP and the EASEL Regeneration Initiative in order to develop a satisfactory evidence base for the AAP. Work is ongoing in the following areas:
1. Scale of development and potential demolition
- The AAP Preferred Options outlined proposals for some 7,800 new homes and potentially involved the replacement of up to 2,400 homes through negotiation and acquisition, with additional potential on mixed use sites. Sites were grouped into three potential redevelopment phases as a guide to residents on both the scale and timing of redevelopment. The scale of potential demolition caused immense concern to residents despite assurances that detailed masterplanning would be

carried out to determine site boundaries and that no specific properties were being identified for demolition beyond those already identified within the East North East Leeds Almo Business Plan. There were concerns that the proposals could lead to planning blight and failure to sell property or carry out improvements. Discussions have taken place with Government Office to ascertain the level of detail required in terms of housing numbers and phasing within the AAP. They appreciate the difficulty in identifying longer term development sites, both in terms of lack of certainty regarding development prospects and the understandable concern of residents living within the sites. They are therefore of the view that it is necessary to indicate specific housing sites to cover only the first 10 years of the plan. These will comprise of sites already vacant, cleared or in the process of being cleared. For the longer term (10 - 20 years) it is their informal view that it will only be necessary to indicate broad locations for future regeneration. Consideration now needs to be given to how this will be shown on the submission plans. Furthermore, given the uncertainty regarding the number of houses likely to be built and the need for the AAP to be flexible it has been suggested that the number of properties be expressed as a range of proposed houses within each of the communities.

## 2. EASEL drainage strategy

In recent years parts of East Leeds have suffered major flooding, from watercourses, sewers, highway drains and overland flow; some properties have been affected a number of times. Significant development within the EASEL area is capable of increasing the existing flood risk, however, if sensitively developed, new development could make a major contribution to resolving flooding problems. Consultants Jeremy Benn Associates have been appointed by the City Council to develop a strategic approach to draining the development areas identified in EASEL AAP and further developments which may come forward within these communities. The strategy will also involve identifying the means of attenuating surface water run-off and suitable locations for siting any attenuation devices (tanks, ponds, detention basins etc); identifying safe overland routes for exceedance flows i.e. the additional flows that arise from rainfall events beyond the design standard of the drainage infrastructure, and will provide cost estimates for the measures recommended in the strategy and identify proposed adoption, maintenance and management strategies. It is anticipated that this study will be complete by mid March 2009.

## 3. EASEL Transport Strategy

Consultants Mouchel have been appointed to analyse transport and connectivity issues within with EASEL area and connectivity with the City Centre and Aire Valley Leeds. This includes identifying both opportunities and barriers in delivering a range of improvements which will affect the existing communities and future regeneration plans. The consultants will advise on a preferred transport strategy for improving the sustainability and accessibility of transport and movement in the EASEL area. This involves establishing the growth in travel demand based on a number of development scenarios and reviewing the transport interventions set out in the AAP Preferred Options. The Options will then be adjusted as deemed necessary and will form the basis of a delivery plan. It is envisaged that this will focus on targeted public transport service improvements and improvements in the current cycling network. Completion is anticipated at the end of February 2009.

## 4 .EASEL and Aire Valley Town and Local Centre Assessment

Consultants White Young Green have been appointed to provide an overview of town, local and neighbourhood parades in the EASEL area and communities adjoining Aire Valley Leeds and to advise on a strategy for development of town centre uses within these communities. The strategy will include specific advice on the scope to extend/upgrade Seacroft and Harehills Lane centres, provision of retail

facilities in the vicinity of Great Clothes, York Road, Richmond Hill and advice on the scale and location of new facilities to serve development within the AVL AAP area. Survey work to establish existing shopping patterns and perceptions of centres forms an important part of the study and has involved householder, shopper (on-street) and local business surveys. The householder survey involved 750 households across the catchment area. Within this context, 550 shopper surveys were carried out in Cross Gates, Halton, Harehills Corner, Harehills Lane, Hunslet, Seacroft and a selection of smaller centres. Local business surveys have been carried out for approximately 1,000 businesses within centres in the study area and 430 businesses within the Aire Valley. The results are expected by mid January 2009.

## 5. Improved greenspace

Work is underway to review and agree priorities for greenspace improvements and potential remodeling of greenspace areas following anticipated completion of the PPG17 audit in January 2009.

### Next Steps

- 3.11 Over the course of the next two years Neighbourhood Plans are to be prepared for each of the EASEL communities led by colleagues in Environment and Neighbourhoods, in tandem with preparation of the AAP. This closer working with the community will involve more detailed public consultation and a finer grained assessment of redevelopment opportunities within sites.
- 3.12 Development is underway within two of the allocation sites at Oaktree Drive, Gipton and Parkway Vale, Seacroft, subsequent to the successful redevelopment of Amberton Park in Gipton. Following the establishment of a Joint Venture Company with Bellway in November 2008, further work is now underway to facilitate the transfer of sites to private developers. Affordable housing will be delivered through normal Section 106 arrangements and equity loan schemes.
- 3.13 Further work is now required to establish a delivery and implementation programme for each of the proposals in the AAP. Clearly the Joint Venture with Bellway will be an important aspect of this, however other sources of funding, e.g. PCT, Education Leeds and other sources of private sector and public sector funding will play an important role in delivery of the AAP.
- 3.14 The timetable for the AAP is currently being reviewed. It is anticipated that the majority of work to establish a firm evidence base will be completed by the end of March 2008. The plan will then be reformatted prior to a further round of pre submission consultation in summer 2009. The AAP will be presented to the Development Plan Panel and Executive Board prior to further consultation allowing members to make any adjustments prior to publication.

## **4.0 Legal and resource implications**

- 4.1 Once adopted (following Independent Examination), the Area Action Plans will form part of the Development Plan for these areas. The on going preparation of LDF documents is challenging both in staff resourcing and also the need to prepare technical work to be consistent with changing national and regional guidance.

## **5.0 Implications for council policy and governance**

5.1 None

## **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 This report has provided an overview of progress to date and next steps in relation to the preparation of the LDF Area Action Plans. Whilst good progress is being made the need to meet the ongoing requirements of the evidence base and regulatory requirements of the LDF process remains a challenge. The preparation of detailed Area Action Plans for the above areas has highlighted that their production is a very resource intensive and complex process. Continued work is therefore necessary to complete and where necessary review the work currently underway, to ensure that the emerging Plans are both 'fit for purpose' and sound.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 The Development Plan Panel is asked to note the progress and next steps in relation to the preparation of the LDF Area Action Plans and the next stages in production of the submission drafts.