



Report to: Development Plan Panel

Date: 14th July 2009

Subject: West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley
Farnley & Wortley

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan has been in preparation since 2005 and has now been through several stages of public consultation. The Plan has been revised in the light of comments received during consultation on the Preferred Options (February - April 2008) and it now represents what is believed to be the right plan for the area. This report sets out how the Plan has been revised following the last consultation.

2. It is intended to publish the Area Action Plan in October 2009 and to invite representations prior to it being formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination early in 2010. However, before this stage is finally reached, a period of informal consultation took place in May/June to give everyone with an interest in the Plan a further opportunity to comment on it.

3. The report also sets out an updated timetable for moving the Plan towards adoption.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- to advise Development Plan Panel of the changes to the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan following consultation at the Preferred Options stage and;
- to obtain its support for a recommendation to be made to the Executive Board that the Plan be published and to formally invite representations in October/November 2009 prior to it being formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination early in 2010.

2.0 Background and Timetable

2.1 The key stages followed in producing the Area Action Plan are set out below, with the highlighted area representing the next key stage:

1. Early Issues for Consultation stage – Summer 2005
2. Issues and Alternative Options – Autumn 2006 (regulation 25)
3. Preferred Options stage – Feb. to April 2008 (regulation 26)
4. Informal Consultation on the final Plan – May/June 2009

5. **Publication of the Plan to enable formal representations to be made – October/November 2009 (regulation 28)**
6. Submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State – January 2010 (regulation 30)
7. Public Examination – Spring 2010
8. Receipt of Inspector's Report – Summer 2010
9. Adoption of the Area Action Plan – Summer 2010

2.2 The entire public consultation process and outcomes (including changes made to the Plan) will be drawn together in a "Consultation Statement" which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Submission Draft Area Action Plan. The City Council needs to demonstrate that the consultation process has allowed for effective engagement of all interested parties and accords with the Council's own "Statement of Community Involvement."

2.3 The draft 'Pre-Submission Document' reflects the Council's consideration of these earlier consultations and, having been refined and amended, it now represents what is considered to be the right plan for the area. However, given that publication of the Plan in October will invite formal representations to be made, any further consultation has to take place prior to this.

2.4 On this basis, a period of informal consultation on the AAP started in May and continued through June to ensure that all those with an interest in the Plan had a further opportunity to see how it has been revised and to comment on it prior to it being finalised for presentation to this Panel and the Executive Board on 22nd July. A key objective of this has been to ensure that those who are most directly affected are made aware of changes to the plan and still have the opportunity to influence it. This informal consultation has involved:

- Writing to everyone who had commented on the Plan at an earlier stage, summarising the key changes and making the Plan available at the Council's Development Enquiry Centre and Armley One Stop Centre.
- Attendance at Planning for Real events in New Wortley, organised by Planning Aid on behalf of the local community. This work has culminated in a broad-based and resident-led 'Community Plan' for New Wortley which includes spatial elements of relevance to the emerging Area Action Plan. The Community Plan will therefore be treated as a supporting document to the AAP.
- Presentation to Armley Forum on 16th June
- Discussion of the Plan at the West Leeds Stakeholders Group on 17th June
- Presentation to New Wortley Community Association – scheduled for 16th July
- Providing copies of the Plan and Proposals Map to key Council departments to ensure that the AAP reflects their spatial needs and priorities for action.
- Providing copies of the Plan to selected external agencies to ensure that the AAP meets broader regeneration objectives in West Leeds. This has included the Primary Care Trust, British Waterways, the Environment Agency, Natural England and a private company, X-Leisure who are the owners of the Cardigan Fields Leisure complex which adjoins the Industrial Museum at Armley Mills.
- Making copies available to Ward members and the local MP's, John Battle and Hilary Benn. Briefings have been offered to each of these.

2.5 When the AAP is submitted to the Secretary of State, it will be accompanied by:

- The Sustainability Appraisal
- The adopted Statement of Community Involvement (adopted on 21st February 2007)
- A statement setting out how the Council has complied with the regulations on participation in producing the Area Action Plan (the "Consultation Statement").

2.6 The AAP will be **published** following Executive Board and Full Council approval. It will be presented in an attractive readable format and be illustrated with drawings, photographs and maps to improve its overall presentation and make it easier to understand what the Plan is aiming to achieve. Copies of the published version will be made available to the Development Plan Panel and Ward Members.

3.0 Key Objectives of the Area Action Plan

3.1 The key objectives of the AAP have remained fairly constant. These are:

- To strengthen Armley Town Centre for shopping & other services, improving its general attractiveness, car parking, signage and the pedestrian environment.
- To make West Leeds a place to be proud of, celebrating its industrial heritage and townscape and architectural quality
- To help breathe new life into the Industrial Museum at Armley Mills and improve its physical link with the Cardigan Fields Leisure Complex to mutual benefit
- To improve access to the river and canal corridor and develop this as a key 'unifying' feature which other green links will connect into
- To improve the quality of greenspaces, making them more attractive for people to use, adding to the attractiveness of the area generally and improving people's sense of well-being.
- To make it easier and safer for people to move around the area on foot and by cycle, including for those members of the community who are less physically able,
- To promote better links between the AAP area and adjoining neighbourhoods, including the City Centre, Holbeck Urban Village and the Kirkstall Road area
- To secure the future of New Wortley as a vibrant community
- To protect employment areas which provide local jobs, e.g. along Armley Road, Stanningley Road and Tong Road
- To improve the quality and choice of housing for local people
- To promote a more sustainable approach to development
- To de-clutter the area of disfiguring adverts and introduce better coordinated signage to give the area an improved appearance & identity.

4.0 Key revisions to the Area Action Plan following public consultation at the Preferred Options stage

Structure of the Plan

4.1 The structure of the Area Action Plan has changed significantly. Previously, it was structured around 7 themes for action and then broken down into proposals for 7 Neighbourhoods. Upon reflection, this structure was considered to be unnecessarily complex and made it difficult to understand how one policy/proposal affected others. The report structure has now been simplified and is now organised under 5 cross-cutting themes, as follows:

- **West Leeds** – A Place to be proud of
- **A Green & Healthy West Leeds** - delivering better quality greenspaces and promoting healthier lifestyles and a sense of well-being
- **A Well Connected Area** – achieving better links to neighbouring areas and promoting more sustainable transport choices
- **A Vibrant Town Centre and Local Centres** - making Armley a successful focus for local services
- **An Attractive Place to Live and Work** – creating a strong sense of place

New Wortley

4.2 The level of demolition which is judged to be needed within the estate has been a key issue. In an earlier version of the Plan, between 80 to 100 dwellings were proposed for demolition. In response to community concerns, this has been re-assessed by the ALMO (Leeds West NW Homes) and Environment and Neighbourhoods and it is now proposed to demolish only 36 of the worst properties. The majority of properties on the New Wortley estate are to be improved as part of the Housing Decency Programme. The properties proposed for demolition is a concentrated area around Holdforth Place and consist of 5 (of the 6) T-blocks plus 6 adjoining houses. The decision to go ahead with the clearance of these properties was taken at the Housing Panel on 26th March 2009.

4.3 The decision to demolish has been made in light of a history of housing management, stock condition and energy efficiency issues that have blighted these properties. The T-blocks have traditionally been unpopular with a high number of voids and high tenant turnover. Due to their construction, the properties are not energy efficient, are costly to heat and suffer from condensation and dampness. The layout of the properties has also meant that anti-social behaviour and vandalism has been a major problem. The demolition of the T-blocks provides an opportunity to bring a wider range of affordable property types and styles to the area and allows other environmental improvements to be considered, including open space enhancements and better connectivity to areas beyond the estate. It also presents an opportunity to create a stronger neighbourhood focus. However, some members of the local community remain opposed to the principle of demolition. **Policies WL 33 and 36 in the revised plan apply to this area.**

Phil May Court, New Wortley

4.4 Land at Phil May Court in New Wortley was proposed for housing in the earlier version of the Plan. The revised Plan now protects this as greenspace in the light of comments received from local people. It is being safeguarded and improved as a play area for children as, being overlooked from Holdforth Green, it is considered to be a safer environment than other local sites. **Policy WL5 (xv) in the revised Area Action Plan now protects this site as greenspace.**

Armley Mills

4.5 The potential of the Museum to accommodate ancillary and supporting uses to strengthen it as a visitor attraction is expanded upon in the revised Area Action Plan. The proposed policy (Policy WL4) has been drawn up with the assistance of the Museums Service and outlines the aspiration for a revitalised museum complex which will be delivered through a detailed planning brief. The policy also introduces a desire to explore the utilisation of low or zero carbon energy sources at the Mill complex.

4.6 It is also clear from earlier consultation that Dunkirk Hill, an area of greenspace adjacent to Armley Mills, needs to be made safer, more attractive to use and more accessible, linked to an improved entrance feature and car parking for visitors to the Museum. **This has been addressed in the Area Action Plan under Policies WL4 and WL6.**

Accessibility

4.7 Previous consultation revealed that policies should acknowledge the difficulties faced in moving around the area by those people who are less physically able. This has now been acknowledged and policies amended to ensure that this is taken into account in delivering access improvements throughout the plan area. **Policies WL4, WL13, WL14, and WL16 of the Area Action Plan now cover this.**

Armley Gyrotory

4.8 The 'barrier' of the Armley gyrotory to pedestrians and cyclists, wishing to get to the City Centre was a key issue in earlier consultation. It is acknowledged that the gyrotory needs significant improvements as presently it is a very unattractive and unsafe route for people to use. The gyrotory is therefore identified in **Policy WL14** as a 'Primary Link' for people to move through the area to key facilities and where improvements are to be sought within the plan period in consultation with Highways.

4.9 The AAP states that any future development of the British Gas Training Centre site, which adjoins the Gyrotory, would have to address these issues with the objective of finding a more efficient highway layout that improves connectivity between New Wortley and the City Centre and provides a convenient, accessible and safe route for pedestrians and cyclists. The opportunity to connect into the planned 'green viaduct' which runs from the eastern side of the Gyrotory into Holbeck Urban Village should also be considered as part of any planned improvement. **Policy WL38 applies.**

Central Armley

- 4.10 In recognition that quality improvements are needed to improve the appearance of the retail units on Town Street, particularly the units built in the 1970's, the policy to support this has been strengthened. **Policy WL21 applies.**

Greenspace/Links/Transport

- 4.11 There was widespread support from local people for the protection and improvement of greenspace. However, the basis or justification for the selection of priority sites for investment needed to be set out. **Policy WL6 and accompanying text highlights how priority sites have been chosen.**

5.0 Summary of comments made during informal consultation in May/June 2009

- 5.1 A total of 16 written comments have been submitted which are summarised in the form of a schedule in Appendix 1. Whilst there are a small number of specific objections, most of the submissions requested minor changes or updates in information which it has been possible to incorporate into the revised text.

6.0 Delivery and Implementation

- 6.1 The Area Action Plan will be accompanied by a 'Strategic Delivery and Implementation Plan' (SDIP) which is being prepared in partnership with the Regeneration Service of Environment & Neighbourhoods. This is a key document which provides details on:
- The sources of funding to support the intended action.
 - Lead agency for implementing each policy and proposal
 - A timetable establishing how and when the proposals contained within the AAP will be taken forward successfully.
 - Refined spatial objectives with clear outputs, targets and indicators to ensure deliverability.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Development Plan Panel is requested to:
- (i) Comment on the pre-submission draft West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan and;
 - (ii) That, subject to the above comments, the Development Plan Panel recommends to the Executive Board that it makes a recommendation to Council to approve the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan Development Plan Document for submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.
 - (iii) That prior to submission to the Secretary of State, the Development Plan Panel recommends to Executive Board that the Area Action Plan be published in October 2009 and that Executive Board invites formal representations on the Plan over a 6 week period.

Background Papers:

1. West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan – Preferred Options, February 2008
2. West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan – Sustainability Appraisal
3. West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan – Strategic Delivery & Implementation Plan

Appendix 1

Record of Informal Consultation – May/June 2009

Response from	Comments	Action
Education Leeds	Minor change needed to refer to Proposed Swallow Hill Community College on the site of Wortley High School	Agreed – incorporated into revised text
Holbeck Land (representing X-Leisure at Cardigan Fields)	Support for proposals at Armley Mills and improved links to adjoining areas	n/a
Diocese of Ripon & Leeds	Objection to proposal to protect allotments (currently dis-used) at Cedar Close, St. Bartholomew's. Owner Propose residential in order to help regenerate the area and facilitate the construction of a new multi-purpose community centre attached to the church.	Do not agree. Pre-application discussions have taken place about the prospect of development but to-date, a satisfactory PPG17 Study has not been carried out to demonstrate that the land is not needed for allotment or open space use.
National Grid Ltd.	Request modifications to text relating to a future re-use of the Centrica site (British Gas Training Centre)	Accept minor revision to wording but do not agree with request to include offices (a town centre use) as part of a potential mixed use scheme
Environment Agency	Request for clearer reference to be made to the objective of minimizing flood risk in the area around Armley Mills and refer to the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme. Also need to make it clear those potential developments alongside or close to the river corridor will be subject to a sequential test and a comprehensive flood risk assessment.	Agreed – incorporated into revised text
Coal Authority	<p>Request that the Council obliges developers of housing sites in West Leeds to undertake prior extraction of coal before any development takes place.</p> <p>Request inclusion of a paragraph which refers to potential public safety hazards associated with a former mining area</p>	<p>Reject as unworkable and inappropriate in such a densely developed area where issues of residential amenity are paramount.</p> <p>Do not agree. It is many years since any mining activity took place in this area and there is no evidence of subsidence/environmental issues arising from previous mining activity. The inclusion of such a statement is unwarranted and misleading and could undermine confidence in the area and the</p>

		Council's regeneration objectives
LCC – Highways Policy	Suggest minor revisions to wording to reflect up to date position of transport proposals, make reference to Leeds Core Cycle Network and the potential to provide for cyclists in improved links between the Armley Mills complex and Cardigan Fields.	Agreed – incorporated into revised text
Asset Management	Request changing policy affecting former red-gra pitch at New Wortley High School from 'greenspace' to 'protected playing pitch'. Request deletion of 'protected playing pitch' designation at Whingate Primary School and to leave unallocated as this forms the School's hard surface break time play area which is not accessible to the public.	Agreed – incorporated into revised text Agreed
Local Government for Yorkshire & The Humber	Welcome references in the AAP to the RSS. Requests that the Plan highlights Policy YH4 of the RSS (Leeds as a Regional City) as a context to West Leeds. Refers to Table 12.1 of RSS (the Leeds Housing target of 4,300 dwgs p.a.) and suggests that the AAP makes it clear that the housing proposals in the AAP contribute to that overall target.	Agreed – incorporated into revised text Agreed – incorporated into revised text
Theatres Trust	Acknowledgement of consultation but make no comments	n/a
Yorkshire Forward	Acknowledgement of consultation but make no comments	n/a
Corporate Property Management	In the context of the desire to link the Museum at Armley Mills with the Cardigan Fields Leisure Complex, request that security issues for the Museum are taken into account	Agreed. This will be dealt with in the proposed Planning Brief for the Armlet Mills complex
Mr. & Mrs. Hemsley	Object to any demolitions taking place on the New Wortley estate in a situation of housing shortage	Do not agree. This issue has been comprehensively addressed by the ALMO and Environments & Neighbourhoods and the preferred way forward is expressed in the Draft AAP
English Heritage	Express support for the	Noted and amended references

	<p>improving the character and appearance of Armley Conservation Area, the proposals for Armley Mills, especially improvements to improve access to the Mills and the area around Dunkirk Hill. Also support expressed for detailed justification for greenspace improvements (Policy WL6) and request that attention is drawn to the Armley Conservation Area Appraisal which states that Armley Moor is the most important open space in the Conservation Area which requires investment to restore it to its former glory.</p>	made to Armley Moor
West Yorkshire PTE	<p>Expressed support for earlier revisions to the plan and request a minor change to the Glossary - in explaining 'Quality Bus Corridor' replace 'bus priority signal arrangement' with 'Traffic Light Priority.'</p>	Agreed
Leeds Primary Care Trust	<p>Support for the emphasis on the theme a 'Green & Healthy West Leeds', improvements in the quality of greenspaces and promotion of walking and cycling</p>	Noted