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## Report of the Director of City Development

### Executive Board

Date: 22 July 2009

Subject: West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan – Pre-Submission Consultation

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley  
Farnley & Wortley

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan (WLGAAAP) forms part of the Local Development Framework for Leeds which, once adopted, will replace the relevant part of the adopted Unitary Development Plan for that part of the city. It has been in preparation since 2005 and has now been through several stages of public consultation. The WLGAAAP has been revised in the light of comments received during last period of public consultation and it now represents what is believed to be the right plan for the area.

2. It is intended to publish the 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, informal consultation took place in May and June in order 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.

4. A copy of the Pre-Submission Area Action Plan is attached and copies of background papers will be available at the meeting for inspection.

#### 1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 To advise Executive Board of the key objectives of the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan and to seek approval to publish the Plan for the purposes of public participation and to formally invite representations between 5<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

1.2 Following this period for representations to be made, approval is also sought to submit the Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

## 2.0 Background and Timetable

2.1 The key stages followed in producing the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan are set out below, with the highlighted area representing the next 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 – February 2010 (regulation 30)
7. Public Examination – Spring 2010 – the stage at which those people/organisations that made formal representations at stage 5 above can put their case to an independent Government Inspector.
8. Receipt of Inspector's Report (which will be binding on the Council) – Summer 2010
9. Adoption of the Area Action Plan – Summer 2010

2.2 Extensive consultation has previously been undertaken during the course of developing the Area Action Plan. The entire 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 This draft 'Pre-Submission Document' reflects the Council's consideration of earlier consultations and, having been refined and amended, it now represents what the Council believes is the right plan for the area. However, it is important to note that publication of the Plan invites formal representations to be made over a six week period. Those people/organisations who make formal representations at this stage, and which cannot be resolved, are able to put their case to an independent Government Inspector, whose decisions will be binding on the Council.

2.4 On this basis, a further period of public consultation on the WLGAAAP which took place in May and 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 the Development Plan Panel on 14<sup>th</sup> July and this Executive Board. The objective was to ensure that those who are most directly affected are made aware of changes to the plan and still had the opportunity to influence it. This informal consultation 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 offices and Armley One Stop Centre.
- Attendance at Planning for Real events in New Wortley, organised by Planning Aid on behalf of the local community.
- A presentation to Armley Forum on 16<sup>th</sup> June
- Discussion of the Plan at the West Leeds Stakeholders Group on 17<sup>th</sup> June
- A presentation to New Wortley residents Association on 13<sup>th</sup> July
- Providing copies of the Plan and Proposals Map across Council departments to ensure that the AAP reflected 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 included the Primary Care Trust, British Waterways, the Environment Agency, Natural England and a

private company, X-Leisure who are the new owners of the Cardigan Fields Leisure complex which adjoins and links into the Industrial Museum.

- Making copies available to Ward members and the local MP's, John Battle and Hilary Benn.

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

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

2.6 The WLGAAP will be published following the approval of this meeting of the Executive Board and Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> September. It will be illustrated with drawings, photographs and diagrams 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 Plans Panel and Ward Members.

### 3.0 THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE WEST LEEDS GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN

3.1 The Area Action Plan is structured 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

3.2 The key objectives have remained fairly constant since work was started on the Plan. 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 ISSUES ARISING FROM THESE OBJECTIVES DURING CONSULTATION

### **New Wortley**

- 4.1 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 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009.
- 4.2 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.

### **Phil May Court, New Wortley**

- 4.3 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.

### **Armley Mills**

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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**

- 4.6 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**

- 4.7 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.

- 4.8 The AAP states that any future development of the British Gas Training Centre site, which adjoins the Gyratory, 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 Gyratory into Holbeck Urban Village should also be considered as part of any planned improvement.
- 4.9 The City Council will therefore work in conjunction with the landowner to guide future alternative uses of the sites should they become available for development in the plan period.

## **5.0 DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 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 will provide 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.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Executive Board is recommended to:
- (i) approve the publication of the West Leeds Gateway Area Action Plan Development Plan Document for the purposes of public participation and to formally invite representations on it between 5<sup>TH</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009.
  - (ii) that following this period for representations to be made, the Executive Board recommends to Council that it approves the Development Plan Document for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **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