



Report of the Head of Planning and Economic Policy

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 7th December 2006

Subject: Leeds Local Development Framework

Electoral Wards Affected: ALL	Specific Implications For: Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/> Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/> Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>
Council Function <input type="checkbox"/>	Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

Following the introduction of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, Leeds City Council is required to produce a new style of Development Plan that will eventually replace the Unitary Development Plan.

This report outlines the vision for the new plan's core strategy and highlights five interconnected themes that will form the basis of the strategy. Members are asked to consider the suggestions outlined in the report and provide feedback which will inform the development of the final plan.

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 This report raises awareness of the Leeds Local Development Framework (LDF) and invites specific comments on initial Core Strategy issues and options and scenarios.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Following the introduction of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, Leeds City Council is required to produce a new style of Development Plan (the Local Development Framework).

2.2 The purpose of this is to set out a land use and spatial planning strategy for Leeds for the next 15 to 20 years. Rather than a single plan, the LDF takes the form of a series

of planning documents prepared in parallel. Once adopted, these planning documents will eventually replace the current Unitary Development Plan.

- 2.3 To date, good progress has been made in the preparation of a number of Area Action Plans for the City Centre, Aire Valley Leeds and East and South East Leeds (EASEL), together with a Statement of Community Involvement and a number of Supplementary Planning Documents on particular planning policy issues.
- 2.4 As part of the LDF, a Core Strategy is intended to provide an overall strategic planning framework, which should be linked to the Vision for Leeds and the Regional Spatial Strategy, the overall Development Plan for the Region.
- 2.5 In taking the Core Strategy process forward, some early work has been undertaken to prepare initial issues, and potential ways of dealing with these as a basis to open wider discussion about the Core Strategy. The issues cover four broad themes, these are: the environment; development and regeneration; transport; and planning for communities. It is envisaged that the Core Strategy will be adopted as a formal plan by the beginning of 2010.
- 2.6 The purpose of this early phase of consultation is to get informal thoughts, suggestions and comments on these ideas, prior to further consultation on the Core Strategy early in 2007.

3.0 The vision for the Core Strategy

- 3.1 The vision for the Core Strategy is to promote future planning, regeneration and development of Leeds in order to:-
 - Protect, enhance and manage the environment;
 - Promote economic success, with a high quality of life for all;
 - Narrow the gap between disadvantaged communities and the rest of Leeds;
 - Promote and develop Leeds' role as the regional capital and a competitive European city.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy reflects the geographical and spatial elements of the Vision for Leeds II. In order to take the vision for the Core Strategy forward, the issues have been structured into five interconnected themes. These themes are considered in more detail in the following sections and key questions and issues are raised under each theme.

4.0 The Environment

Key questions:

- How should Leeds respond to and manage climate change?
- How should economic growth be balanced with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment?
- How should the built environment be protected and enhanced whilst promoting regeneration of urban areas?
- How can the consumption of non-renewable resources be reduced?
- What approach should be taken to waste management in Leeds (both household and commercial waste)?

Climate change

- 4.1 The need to adapt to the consequences of climate change in the short, medium, and longer term raises major issues for Leeds. The design of buildings and places, infrastructure provision, the level of economic growth and related development patterns all impact on climate change. However, the promotion of innovation is a key aspect in developing a competitive economy, consistent with the role of Leeds as a Core City at the heart of the Leeds City Region. Within this context there are opportunities for Leeds to promote new technologies and ways of working to assist in combating climate change.
- 4.2 The promotion of renewable energy targets have been identified at a national, regional and local level, as a means of managing the demand for energy from fossil fuels in order to combat climate change. It is within this context that Leeds must address the impact of development on climate change and the environment.

The natural environment

- 4.3 The protection, management and enhancement of environmental resources, including air, land, water, biodiversity and landscape character, are fundamental to the quality of life in Leeds. The delivery of long term economic growth must have regard to environmental carrying capacities and “tipping points”.
- 4.4 Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 has established a new statutory regime for the identification and cleaning up of contaminated land. This legislation is aimed at dealing with historical contamination and involves the implementation of Leeds City Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy.
- 4.5 The Water Directive Framework places a requirement on local authorities to improve good ecological and chemical status of surface waters. This can be done by tackling practices in urban and rural areas which lead to water pollution, exercising control over the physical shape of water bodies, and controls over changes in the rates of volumes of flow.

The built environment

- 4.6 The Metropolitan District of Leeds is characterised by a wide range of villages, towns, suburbs, neighbourhoods and communities. In some areas there are concentrations of historic townscapes, whilst in other areas there are opportunities for major urban regeneration and renaissance. The protection and enhancement of local distinctiveness, together with creative urban design, has a key role to play in providing successful places.

Minerals

- 4.7 Development cannot proceed without the supply of minerals. Mineral working also makes an important contribution to the local economy through employment. Minerals are a non-renewable resource, once worked they no longer exist in their original form. It is therefore important to encourage the sustainable husbandry of mineral resources and encourage use of alternatives to primary mineral resources.

Resource and waste management

- 4.8 Waste management is a key strategic issue. It relates not only to the aspiration to minimise waste generation and the need to break the link between economic growth and waste generation, but also the need to make provision for an appropriate network of waste facilities and infrastructure for both domestic and commercial waste.

The generation of waste provides opportunities to develop new products, services and employment opportunities linked to waste recycling technologies.

4.9 Potential options:

- Develop and implement policies on sustainable design and construction;
- Protect and enhance natural habitats, greenspace and the Green Belt;
- Conserve Leeds' urban and rural heritage and landscape;
- Encourage the use of alternatives to primary mineral resources;
- Develop an integrated approach to the management of domestic and commercial waste.

5.0 **New Development**

Key questions:

- What will be the consequences of higher rates of house building in Leeds?
- Should Leeds continue to give priority to new housing on brownfield sites, even if this means increased densities?
- Are a sufficient range of housing types and sizes being built in Leeds?
- How should the city respond to the changing economy to ensure that the city's economy is diverse and robust in the long term?
- How should Leeds balance the competing demands for housing and employment land?

Meeting housing requirements

5.1 The provision of a sufficient housing supply for Leeds is linked to the longer term economic development of the city and the creation of mixed sustainable communities. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for Yorkshire and the Humber requires Leeds to plan for a provision of 1,930 dwellings per annum. However, the current review of the RSS is likely to set the requirement for Leeds at a much higher level.

5.2 As a basis to plan for future long term housing requirements, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Review identifies a series of Protected Areas of Search. These sites are located on the edge of towns and villages and whilst they cannot be developed now, they are held in reserve for future development so that Green Belt land does not have to be used. The strategic role of these sites needs to be considered within the context of RSS requirements.

Housing location

5.3 Over recent years the preferred location for new house building in Leeds has followed national planning policy and has concentrated on brownfield sites within the urban areas. Leeds' legacy of industrial land has ensured that house building rates have not only been maintained, but they have increased. In most cases the redevelopment of sites for housing has brought welcome transformation to vacant and underused sites. However, there have been cases where major increases in residential development have put existing levels of infrastructure under severe pressure.

5.4 The nature of housing in different neighbourhoods across Leeds is varied. Some parts of Leeds have significant economic, social and environmental problems, which present major challenges and opportunities for regeneration and housing renewal.

Housing size, quality and type

5.5 Attractive neighbourhoods, characterised by a range of housing, is essential to a strong economy. With regard to the type and size of dwellings, recent trends have

seen a greater percentage of flats being built than houses. This reverses the trend of the 1980s and 1990s where the building of houses exceeded the building of flats. However, there is still a predominance of houses in the overall housing stock and approximately four fifths of new households in Leeds are forecast to be single person households, which will also have an impact on services and facilities required.

- 5.6 Leeds has a large legacy of Victorian and Edwardian houses, which have become extremely popular amongst young professionals and wealthy families. Municipal tower blocks have also begun to undergo a renaissance in popularity recently.
- 5.7 In Leeds a large proportion of housing stock is the wrong size and of poor standard and consequently needs to be improved, or where appropriate replaced, to meet housing decency standards. Many homes in Leeds are poorly insulated and expensive to heat, resulting in areas of 'fuel poverty' across the city. Such issues therefore need to be addressed as part of housing renewal and regeneration programmes, in order to provide warm and affordable homes.
- 5.8 Adapting to the consequences of climate change means that opportunities need to be taken to ensure the provision of high quality homes, to meet the needs of both current communities and future generations.
- 5.9 Housing is an integral part of wider community needs across the city. The promotion and development of sustainable communities also requires that housing provision is supported by an appropriate range of community facilities, including greenspace, sports facilities, shops, health care provision and schools.

Economic growth and competition

- 5.10 The Leeds economy is of crucial importance not only to the Leeds City Region, but to the wider Yorkshire and Humberside area. Leeds needs to continue to adapt to industrial restructuring to ensure its continued economic competitiveness and retain its status as Core City within the City Region.
- 5.11 Leeds is a major UK and aspiring European and International city, which needs to be supported by the necessary physical infrastructure to help support business growth. In securing sustained economic growth and as a basis to share the benefits of economic success to regenerate the city, it is important that local social enterprise and innovation are promoted.
- 5.12 Housing has a key role to play in supporting the long term economic growth and development of Leeds. This presents both opportunities and challenges in securing regeneration objectives and in managing the physical growth of Leeds.

Land and premises

- 5.13 In meeting economic development objectives, there is a need to ensure a sufficient supply of land and premises for business needs and to ensure an appropriate spatial distribution and location of employment opportunities.
- 5.14 Linked to the City Growth Strategy and the role of Leeds as a Core City at the centre of the Leeds City Region, there is a continued need to promote economic growth areas, including financial services, media, and health.

Jobs and training

- 5.15 To support the continued economic development of Leeds, there is a need to not only retain the existing employment base, but to provide labour market opportunities in new employment growth areas, such as the 'knowledge based economy' as part of a prosperous and diverse economy.
- 5.16 There is a need to improve access opportunities to employment in order to reduce levels of worklessness and unemployment. Linked to the development planning process, it is important that training, education and workforce development are secured

Potential options:

- Identify a location criteria for new residential development, linked to urban capacity, 'nodal points', corridors and infrastructure requirements;
- Determine housing densities based on local context;
- Accept the redevelopment or refurbishment of sub standard housing, in order to improve decency standards;
- Develop a criteria for how new housing and employment development can best be Integrated;
- Consider a criteria for the retention of business premises and employment Allocations;
- Explore the further use of Section 106 agreements for the provision of training, education and workforce development.

6.0 Regeneration

Key questions:

- How can the city ensure that all sectors of the community benefit from regeneration?
- Where should regeneration be focused in the city?
- How can the city ensure that there is sufficient local facilities and infrastructure to support new development?

Regeneration and renaissance

- 6.1 A key objective within existing strategies for Leeds, including the UDP Review and the Vision for Leeds, is the longer term regeneration and renaissance of the city. It is important that the Core Strategy sets out the spatial context of this objective in terms of social, economic and environmental considerations.
- 6.2 The work undertaken to date in the city has concentrated on housing and design led activities. The Core Strategy should widen this discussion to consider the comprehensive requirements of regeneration and renaissance, including jobs, transport and the environment, thereby delivering mixed and sustainable communities.

Regeneration and infrastructure

- 6.3 The City Council is currently promoting a number of regeneration projects across Leeds. Given that new development, particularly residential development, places increased pressure on local services it is important that the planning of these projects includes an assessment of infrastructure requirements, including access to transport, jobs, education, and local services.

The role of the city centre and town and district centres

- 6.4 The Leeds District includes Leeds City Centre and a number of other designated Town and District Centres. However, this hierarchy of centres currently does not reflect their different roles and the relative accessibility of each centre. The Core Strategy may seek to further explore this hierarchy as well as identifying and designating new Local Centres to complete this hierarchy.
- 6.5 As part of the expanding Leeds economy, future retail requirements of the City Centre and Town/District Centres should be considered, including whether additional floorspace should be provided. Priority should lie with accommodating additional retail floorspace in designated centres.
- 6.6 Furthermore, there is a need to consider the level of accessibility of existing centres and facilities to the communities they serve. The accessibility of existing centres to people's homes and places of work should be an important consideration in assessing the role and potential future growth of centres.

Potential options:

- Deliver balanced and sustainable regeneration, which meets local needs and Circumstances;
- Concentrate development on transport corridors and accessible locations;
- Review and establish a 'hierarchy of centres'.

7.0 A Well Connected City

Key questions:

- Can the current transport infrastructure network in Leeds continue to support the scale and pace of development in Leeds?
- How can people in Leeds be encouraged to use alternative forms of transport to the private car?

Integrating transport and spatial planning

- 7.1 It is crucial that the relationship between development and transport is considered in a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to ensure Leeds' continued economic success.
- 7.2 Within the context of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2 and the Leeds City Region Transport Vision, there is a need to secure the promotion and delivery of a fully integrated public transport system for Leeds. This should not only address the issues caused by the cancellation of the Leeds Supertram but ensure that the three main aims for the Vision for Leeds (Going up a league, Narrowing the gap and Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital) are realised.

Access to (and links between) homes and jobs

- 7.3 To ensure Leeds' long term competitiveness, management of environmental resources and the promotion of quality of life there is a need to secure sustainable forms of transport and minimise the need to travel by ensuring the appropriate location and layout of housing, employment and other uses. In making the most efficient use of land within urban areas, a key issue is the need to promote appropriate forms of high density development, in particular intensive employment uses in areas of highest accessibility to ensure that as many people as possible have access to jobs.

7.4 In terms of access to jobs, there is also a need to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are enjoyed by the City's most disadvantaged inhabitants through adequate education and training and through improving connectivity between the City Centre, other Town and District Centres and these communities.

Potential options:

- Develop policies and measures consistent with the Local Transport Plan;
- Identify employment opportunities, linked to infrastructure provision, within easy access of deprived communities;
- Develop and promote job guarantee schemes linked to planning.

8.0 Providing for communities

Key questions:

- How can the city provide for the housing needs of all sections of the community?
- How can planning promote improved community safety?
- How can the city ensure that all neighbourhoods have access to quality greenspace and cultural facilities?
- How should the city ensure that new and existing facilities for health and education are accessible and well served by public transport?

Housing for all

8.1 House prices rose dramatically between 2000 and 2006, which means that home ownership is out of reach to many low to middle income households. However, at the same time the availability of former council housing stock has been reduced as a result of "right to buy" acquisitions. Housing has become expensive to buy and rent privately, even in the lowest priced areas and the Core Strategy needs to address how local people on lower incomes can access housing.

8.2 Furthermore, there is a need for the Core Strategy to address the need for potential new gypsy and traveller accommodation across Leeds.

Community safety and cohesion

8.3 Improved community safety should be promoted to ensure that people are confident to enjoy their home and living environment without the fear of crime or personal injury. Improved living environments are also required to encourage people to take a full and active role in their community and to feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

Greenspace and forestry

8.4 The creation of a green infrastructure would ensure that Leeds maintains and enhances its attractive green environment. This would consist of a network of greenspaces that can be used for a variety of uses. Such spaces would help to improve health, fitness and access to nature as well as provide a quality context for the built environment. The green infrastructure should respect landscape character and diversity, protect ecological and cultural heritage, and promote local distinctiveness.

8.5 The Leeds Green Belt has a key role in maintaining environmental quality. The geographical extent, location, or boundaries of the Green Belt should not be altered, but there may be a need to strengthen its function so that it can contribute to sustainable development.

8.6 Furthermore, the Leeds Forest Strategy aims to make Leeds Europe's cleanest and greenest city by 2020 and the Core Strategy should take account of this and assist in achieving this aspiration.

Cultural facilities

8.7 Consistent with the role of Leeds as a Core City there is a need to ensure equality of access to a wide range of cultural facilities, including entertainment, art galleries, museums, music, and sporting venues.

8.8 Integral to the district is the need to promote and enhance the architectural and historic built environment and where appropriate create distinctive and diverse places.

8.9 The important role that tourism plays in Leeds needs to be recognised and supported with appropriate levels of infrastructure.

Health and education

8.10 The provision of appropriate levels of health and education are integral to healthy, mixed and sustainable communities. The Core Strategy should seek to ensure good access to education and health provision for all ages. Healthy lifestyles can be promoted through access to quality greenspace, allotments, green links and recreational facilities. Linked to this, opportunities need to be taken to encourage walking and cycling through the provision of safe and attractive routes.

Potential options:

- Negotiate a percentage of dwellings as part of new housing developments to be affordable and allocate sites for affordable housing only;
- Identify broad areas of Leeds that would be favoured for Gypsy and Traveller site Development;
- Identify priorities for regeneration and new development;
- Develop a Green Infrastructure Framework, which would include identifying areas that need enhancement and pinpoint where existing green infrastructure can be linked;
- Protect and enhance the quality of the built heritage, townscape and landscape;
- Concentrate health and education facilities where they are at their most accessible.

9.0 Implementation and monitoring

9.1 Crucial to the delivery of development is the provision of necessary infrastructure to support new development. To ensure that adequate physical infrastructure, public transport, local services and greenspace exist to uphold the high level of growth that is envisaged for the city, the following planning obligations will be sought from developers:

- Affordable housing
- Greenspace
- Public transport
- Flood risk mitigation
- Education and training
- Renewable energy
- Public realm contributions for the City Centre

- 9.2 A clear policy will be provided giving details of the maximum contributions that the Council may wish to seek.

10. Scenarios

- 10.1 The issues and options raised in the previous sections have informed three different scenarios which illustrate how Leeds may look in the future. These scenarios are only early ideas and provide a basis for discussion. It is expected that through consultation these scenarios and possibly additional or alternative scenarios will emerge. Diagrams which illustrate these scenarios are appended to this document.

Scenario 1: Business as usual

- 10.2 This is the business as usual approach and sets out changes and allocations which are currently agreed by the Council. Development is absorbed in the existing urban areas through the development of brownfield land and by increasing development densities. Regeneration is focused in the Area Action Plan areas – the Aire Valley Leeds, East and South East Leeds (EASEL) and the West Leeds Gateway which provide a high level of additional capacity through the redevelopment of low density sites to higher densities. The City Centre rim is also subject to intense development pressures.
- 10.3 New land take up is minimised and the Green Belt remains protected under this scenario. The Protected Areas of Search, identified in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), remain undeveloped.
- 10.4 Transport is largely as currently proposed since the fairly dispersed nature of development does not allow for focused investment into new transport infrastructure. Other urban infrastructure is also subject to a lack of investment, due to a lack of focus.

Scenario 2: Focused regeneration and growth

- 10.5 Under this scenario, development pressure is focused on the City Centre and Town Centres, particularly those with rail links to the City Centre or where the nature of the centre lends itself to large scale intervention, for example centres where there is reasonable capacity and no conservation interest. In these locations extremely high densities are sought, coupled with investment in infrastructure, transport and the provision of a wide range of facilities at these ‘growth nodes’.
- 10.6 Existing urban areas are subject to reduced development pressures and medium densities are sought on new, redeveloped and brownfield sites. The City Centre rim is also the subject of a less intense level of development pressure. Regeneration continues in the Area Action Plan areas which provide a medium level of capacity through the redevelopment of low density sites to medium densities.
- 10.7 Transport provision is greatly improved at the growth nodes as focused development allows resources to be better targeted. Other infrastructure is also improved at these points for the same reason.

Scenario 3: Urban regeneration and dispersed expansion

- 10.8 The pattern of development under this scenario is more dispersed. The sites identified as Protected Areas of Search in the UDP Review are developed as part of a phased approach and growth nodes of development are focused on the East Leeds rail line at Cross Gates, Garforth and Micklefield.

- 10.9 Existing urban areas are subject to reduced development pressure and low densities are sought on new, redeveloped and brownfield sites. The City Centre (including the rim), along with designated Town and District Centres are subject to a reduced level of development pressure and the regeneration of Area Action Plan areas will provide a low level of additional capacity, through the low density redevelopment of sites.
- 10.10 Under this scenario rail services are improved on the East Leeds line to serve new development. Elsewhere the dispersed nature of development sites will make it difficult to ensure that transport is improved or that the general urban infrastructure receives much investment due to the lack of development focus.

11.0 Recommendations

- 11.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and will inform the development of issues and options.