

## **Plans Panel (City Centre)**

**Monday, 22nd March, 2010**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Hamilton in the Chair

Councillors Mrs R Feldman, T Hanley,  
G Latty, T Leadley, J McKenna,  
J Monaghan and N Taggart

### **71 Chair's opening remarks**

The Chair welcomed everyone to this additional Plans Panel City Centre meeting and asked Members and Officers to introduce themselves

### **72 Late Items**

Whilst there were no formal late items, the Panel was in receipt of a supplementary report of the Chief Planning Officer which had been tabled at the meeting together with some revised conditions to be attached to an approval (minute 75 refers)

Officers stated that the revised conditions would be highlighted in the presentation, for Members' information

### **73 Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared personal/prejudicial interests for the purposes of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor Hanley and Councillor Monaghan declared personal interests through being members of Leeds Civic Trust which had commented on the application

Councillor Leadley declared a personal interest as a member of West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority as Metro had commented on the application (minute 75 refers)

### **74 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Blackburn and Councillor E Nash

Councillors Leadley and Taggart were welcomed as substitutes and it was confirmed that both Members had received briefings from Officers and had visited the site in order to participate fully in the meeting

### **75 Application 09/04815/OT - Site bounded by Clay Pit Lane/Inner Ring Road/ Wade Lane/Jacob Street/Brunswick Terrace LS2**

Further to minute 60 of the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 where Panel received a position statement on proposals for an arena, Members considered the formal application. A copy of the minute from that meeting was included in the submitted report and plans and charts detailing the highway arrangements and car parking provision were appended to the report

Officers presented the report which sought outline planning permission for the development of an arena in a Prestige Development Area on land bounded by Clay Pit Lane, Inner Ring Road, Wade Lane, Jacob Street and Brunswick Terrace; the location being endorsed by Panel at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Plans, drawings, graphics and photographs were displayed at the meeting. A Panel Members site visit had taken place on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and pre-application presentations to Members had taken place together with a workshop

Members were informed that the proposals accorded with the Regional Spatial Strategy and recent national guidance in PPS4 and would deliver significant benefits for the city

The main issues concerning site context, building parameters and highways were outlined and the following information was provided:

#### Noise nuisance

- that in terms of noise nuisance for residents, that the arena would be constructed to the highest standards to prevent noise breakout. Although service vehicles would run close to the student accommodation in Opal 3, there would be a 'just in time' system employed when vehicles were ready to park up and on leaving they would be routed south. Most events would end between 10.00-11.00pm and through the provision of a management plan, there should be a managed, rapid system for patrons leaving events

#### Sustainability

- that an increase in the amount of low carbon energy delivered by the scheme from 8% to 11% would be provided through the use of air source heat pumps

#### Highways issues

- that a robust transport assessment had been undertaken using figures of 80% of patrons arriving by car for an evening event and 86% for a matinee. Three scenarios had been considered, these being a major event with 90% capacity; a typical event of 50% capacity and a Saturday matinee. The analysis of the junction modelling had shown that apart from the 90% event the network has capacity and that for the major event, it would be necessary to alter some signal timings around the network
- the proposals had been considered by the NGT Team who report that although the worst case event had potential to cause delay at two junctions for NGT vehicles, due to the infrequency of the event and the robustness of the traffic generation assumptions, they did not object to the proposals

- coach parking on Wade Lane – that for the majority of events 5-10 coaches would be expected and provision for 15 would be in place. The operators had indicated that occasionally an event could generate up to 30 coaches and for these events a drop off and pick up point further along Lovell Park Road would be considered as would a coach layover further afield
- regarding taxis and Members' comments regarding the need for adequate taxi provision for people in wheelchairs; that half of the city's taxis were capable of carrying wheelchairs although it had yet to be decided if a separate space should be provided for wheelchair access to vehicles, and Officers wished to reserve this matter to ensure the best solution was achieved for everyone
- for those people with disabilities who would arrive in a charity mini-bus, as long as one passenger had a blue badge, the bus could park in either disabled bays or the coach bays on Wade Lane, but two disabled parking spaces on the access road would be made larger to accommodate these vehicles. Furthermore, wherever there were Pay and Display spaces in the area, these would be converted to disabled parking spaces in order to maximise the number of spaces close to the arena
- pedestrian routes – a separate study had been undertaken to improve pedestrian access around Woodhouse Lane car park. The arena project would provide improvements to the footway near the Coburg Public House, a new crossing across Clay Pit Lane, improvements to Merrion Way and improved signage from key locations around the city centre
- cycling – continuous inbound and outbound cycle lanes were proposed on Clay Pit Lane with facilities such as showers, lockers and stands being provided within and around the arena
- car parking capacity – there is substantially more car parking available across the city centre than is required for arena events. For a major event - ie 90% capacity,- most car parking demand could be accommodated in the nearby car parks, however some parking would spread into car parks at the market or other areas of the city. For a Saturday matinee, there would be a similar need to look further afield for car parking. For a typical event, parking could mostly be accommodated within the Woodhouse Lane and Merrion Centre car parks
- on-street car parking – possible areas where parking would be likely to occur in residential areas would be considered prior to the arena being opened and traffic regulation orders amended as necessary to ensure no gaps existed. It was likely the Inner Ring Road would provide a barrier, to some areas being readily accessible from the arena. The incidence of on-street parking would be regularly reviewed within the first two years of the life of the arena

### Site context

The Civic Architect, Mr Thorp, provided information on the following matters:

- that an outline application had been submitted to provide flexibility in the design process whilst retaining the momentum of the project. Whilst CABE did not support this approach they were the only party to express this view
- that the building would fit well into the site and nestle into its surroundings
- that details of the shape of the building were at an advanced stage
- that the scale of the Yorkshire Bank building would set the parameters for the scale of any development on the two plots adjacent to the site
- details of the proposed temporary landscaping on the two development plots

Members were referred to the revised conditions which had been circulated and the following changes were highlighted:

- condition 5, which would now become conditions 5a and 5b and relate to the amount of retail floor space and event space
- condition 17 and 23 relating to hours of construction and delivery

Officers referred to letters of support for the proposals which had been received by the Council as opposed to the Local Planning Authority, with these being from:

Yorkshire Bank  
 Marketing Leeds  
 Leeds University  
 Leeds Financial Services  
 Harrogate Borough Council  
 Leeds Metropolitan University  
 Wakefield Metropolitan District Council  
 Kirklees Council  
 Calderdale Borough Council  
 City of Bradford Council  
 Town Centre Securities

Officers restated that the scheme was in accordance with the UDPR; that the highways issues had been fully considered; that the development would lead to improvements for pedestrian access and would deliver significant economic benefits for Leeds

The Chair thanked the Officers for the work which had been carried out to reach this point and reminded the Panel that it was the outline application which was being considered and that detailed design issues would be dealt with at a later stage if the outline application was approved

Members commented on the following matters:

#### Traffic and parking issues

- the need for mini-buses for people with disabilities to have a distance of 8ft at the rear to unload wheelchairs and whether this had been factored in
- the need for good signage and clear routing, with this being regarded as crucial, particularly for those people who were unaccustomed to the city and its road network

- whether parking provision for outside broadcast vehicles had been included
- whether the road for the taxi drop off/pick up point could accommodate a turning head for coaches
- whether an underground drop off/pick up point could be considered
- the need for the taxi pick up points to be properly managed otherwise this could deter some people from visiting the arena
- that some car parks closed early and whether negotiations had taken place to ensure these would be open for events
- whether the traffic flow on Claypit Lane would impact on people attending concerts at the Town Hall
- that access for emergency vehicles had to be ensured
- that some, limited bus parking on Woodhouse Moor could be considered without unduly impinging on that area
- that it was not uncommon for parts of the Inner Ring Road to be closed for maintenance work and the impact of any closures when an event was taking place
- the need for good bus links from the North East and North West of the city; that more buses should be encouraged along Clay Pit Lane but the need to deal with this carefully to avoid blockages
- concerns about on-street parking in the North Street/Regent Street area and that this would be reviewed after the arena had opened
- whether a nominal charge could be levied for on-street parking in this area to act as a deterrent

#### Pedestrian access

- whether modelling had been carried out on pedestrians leaving the arena after an event
- that signalled control crossings would be needed
- that the Merrion Centre was currently closed at 8pm and whether this important pedestrian route would be made fully accessible
- that Lovell Park was not being considered within the proposals; that the area was unsafe at night and that this key pedestrian route to the arena should be considered
- the widening of the footpath around the Coburg Public House and whether the railings, which also contributed to the narrowness of the pavement, could be removed
- the need to avoid zig-zagged pedestrian crossings as these were not effective
- the need to ensure people dispersed safely after events

#### Other matters

- that the site demanded a building of high quality which would command attention and respect and would be identifiable as the Leeds Arena
- that Members must be involved at an early stage in discussions on detailed design issues
- that the existing landscaping was harsh and dated and the need to ensure that the replacement scheme was softer and modern
- the projected number of events per year being 142; the basis for this figure and to appreciate that on these figures major events would not be taking place regularly

- the need for further details on the changing places toilet
- whether the size of the proposed restaurant in the piazza area was viable at 300sqm
- whether the existing cycle route was well used
- whether acoustic flooring would be used in the service areas
- the possibility of trees being planted in front of the sheltered accommodation which would help screen the arena and possibly provide additional noise mitigation
- that the application was an important one and if approved, would provide the boost which Leeds needed
- that rather than undermining similar facilities in Harrogate and Sheffield, that a Leeds arena would fill a gap
- that the two adjacent development plots should be incorporated within the red line boundary of the site
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Officers provided the following responses:

- that the disabled parking spaces for minibuses would provide the required length to unload a wheelchair; other spaces at the end of rows also allowed for this
- that signs would be introduced for motorists and pedestrians advertising when events were occurring as well as details of access and parking arrangements in a range of types including free text, static and VMS signs and a comprehensive pedestrian signage package
- that space for outside broadcast vehicles had been taken into account
- that the turning head on the access would not be large enough for coaches when taxis were present and this would need to be given further consideration as part of the reserved matters application
- that an underground car park would require deep excavation into rock and concrete and this had not been pursued
- that there was an agreement with Town Centre Securities to use the Merrion Centre car park and it was felt that other car park operators in the city centre would see the commercial opportunities in opening later to provide car parking for concert goers
- that possible conflict with events at the Town Hall, City Varieties and Grand Theatre had not been assessed in any detail
- that emergency vehicles could use their sirens to gain access through the traffic
- that factoring events into programmed maintenance and unexpected closure on the Inner Ring Road could be considered
- that computer modelling of pedestrian disbursement had not been carried out, but that some work on this had been undertaken. An Urban Traffic Control signal plan would need to be implemented to take into account increased pedestrian activity that would assist in giving pedestrians the correct priorities at crossings
- that there was little advice available on how wide a footpath needed to be to accommodate a large number of people, but Officers were of the view that widening of the footway by the Coburg Public House would be an improvement to pedestrian access

- that Town Centre Securities were keen to discuss proposals for improvements to the Merrion Centre on the back of this development. Members welcomed this news
- that work was being undertaken on the routes through Lovell Park
- that there was a requirement for the operators to have in place a management plan for pedestrian movement both before and after events, and SMG, the operators had these in place at their other venues
- that if approved in outline, there would be opportunities for the Panel to consider the detailed design of the building, with the Reserved Matters application anticipated to be presented for determination in Autumn 2010
- that the number of events likely to take place in a year had been derived from numbers provided by the operators, based on their experience in other parts of the country
- that a changing places toilet was a manned, well equipped facility for a person with a disability who needed to be accompanied to the toilet by their carer and was important in enabling people who might previously have been prevented from accessing such events to enjoy the facilities which the arena would offer
- the proposed size of the restaurant; the view that the operators would have considered this and that 300sqm would be adequate and would be supplemented by 600sqm of other food outlets
- that the existing cycle route was well used as far as it went, but that the proposals would extend that
- that the service yard would be subject to detailed design consideration and that it would be fully enclosed and constructed of acoustic material
- that tree planting in front of the sheltered houses was outside of the application but that discussions could be held with the owners to see if that was something they wished to provide
- that it was not possible for the two development sites adjacent to the arena site to be included in the red line boundary, but that the comments of the Civic Architect regarding heights of any future development in these locations should give some comfort to Members on this matter

The Chair referred to the significance of the application before Members in terms of the schemes which had come to Panel; the regeneration benefits the arena would bring including local jobs both in the construction and post construction phases and the stimulus it would provide for the local economy

Like other Members the Chair voiced his concerns at aspects of the proposals, ie pedestrian flow, the surge of people in the area after an event and the need to establish links with the Lovell Park area

The Chief Planning Officer who was in attendance stated that the site was at the northern entrance to the city centre; that it anchored this part of the city and that detailed design was essential to create a gateway at this point. In terms of regeneration, the proposals had already resulted in enquiries from developers keen to consider schemes on the back of the arena, if approved

Members were informed that it was important for a decision to be made on the outline application at the meeting to enable work on the next phase to begin

To address concerns regarding pedestrian flow and possible on-street parking, the Head of Planning Services suggested some minor amendments to conditions 25 and 27, to require the submission and approval of a pedestrian access strategy and a scheme for dealing with possible on-street parking through amended parking restrictions prior to the arena being brought into use, with these being accepted by the Panel

**RESOLVED** - That the application be granted subject to the conditions set out in the supplementary report, amendments to conditions 25 and 27 as stated, and any others which the Chief Planning Officer might consider appropriate

**76 Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 at 1.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds