



REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

EAST PLANS PANEL

Date: 12th July 2012

Subject: PREAPP/10/00302 AND PREAPP/10/00303 - LEEDS (RIVER AIRE) FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME (FAS), LEEDS STATION TO KNOSTROP WEIR.

Electoral Wards Affected:
City & Hunslet.
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

No Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Panel for information. The applicant, Leeds City Council, will be asked to present the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 There are currently no formal flood defences along the River Aire in Leeds. Informal defences are discontinuous and many are likely to fail in severe flood conditions. In June 2007 and January 2008 the city came very close to experiencing major flooding. It has been estimated by the Environment Agency (EA) that over 4,500 properties are at risk and approximately £400 million of direct damage would be caused by a major flood in Leeds. LCC are currently working with other organisations such as the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and British Waterways in developing a flood defence scheme for the City Centre area.
- 1.2 Members have previously received presentations regarding flood defences to provide a 1 in 200 year standard of protection for a much larger area from Newlay Bridge in Horsforth to Swllington Bridge at Woodlesford. Due to funding difficulties relating to the 1 in 200 year scheme, Executive Board have agreed to take the lead role on a phased project that initially seeks delivery of a 1 in 75 year standard of protection for the City Centre from Leeds Station to Knostrop Cut by 2015. Future phases that increase the area covered and standard of protection to 1 in 200 years

will be considered at a later date. The proposed works for the initial phase are identified in section 4 below.

- 1.3 A pre-application presentation has been given to City Centre Panel on 21st June. A planning application and associated listed building applications are expected at the end of August.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 2.1 The proposed works will be carried out between Leeds station and Knostrop Cut. Works will be carried out on both sides of the river, at Crown Point Weir (Leeds Dam) and Knostrop Cut. Crown Point Weir is a grade II listed structure built in stone. The listing description for Crown Point weir states the weir is medieval in origin and probably rebuilt in mid 19th Century during the building of the Clarence Dock area.
- 2.2 The works will be carried out within the City Centre and Eastern Riverside Conservation Areas and affect a number of listed buildings.

3.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND FUTURE PANEL PROCESS

- 3.1 A flood defence scheme has been under consideration since 2008 with the process previously being led by the EA. Due to funding difficulties it was agreed at Executive Board in February 2012 that LCC would take the lead role in delivering the phased scheme that initially provides a 1 in 75 year standard of protection for the City Centre area. Following the Executive Board resolution funding streams have been identified that have in turn influenced the planning process and the need to submit planning applications and obtain approvals to accord with the timescales set out by the funding bodies.
- 3.2 Council officers in Planning, Flood Risk Management, Conservation and Highways have been involved in the pre-application process as have other bodies including English Heritage. English Heritage and the Council's Conservation Officer raise no objection to the removal of the listed Crown Point weir.
- 3.3 Planning and listed building applications will be submitted at the end of August with determination sought by the end of the year. As the proposals extend across areas covered by both City Centre and East Panels, the proposals will be presented to both Panels. The majority of the scheme directly impacts on the area considered by the City Centre Panel, East Panel will be requested to agree the scheme before City Centre Panel formally determine the planning application.
- 3.4 City Centre Panel received a pre-application presentation on 12th July. The Members welcomed the proposals and a summary of their comments and the responses from the applicant/agent are provided below.
- Previous proposals included works in Kirkstall, are these still being considered? *Response: As agreed by Executive Board, due to funding constraints, the first phase of the scheme provides a 1 in 75 year standard of protection for Leeds City Centre. Later phases will seek a 1 in 75 year standard of protection for the wider Aire valley including Kirkstall before a 1 in 200 standard of protection is sought.*
 - Why is Knostrop Cut proposed to be removed? *Response: This allows for significant attenuation and lowers the height of the flood defences (walls) by*

between 400-700mm. The removal of the cut would also reduce flooding downstream by holding more water for longer periods.

- Walking and cycling connections should be retained and enhanced. *Response: The scheme will endeavour to enhance walking and cycling routes.*
- What is the downstream impact? *Response: The removal of the cut will provide further attenuation and therefore increase storage. The proposed works would not cause harm downstream and this will be clearly set out in the application submission. The works are part of a wider strategic scheme being carried out by the Environment Agency for the whole region therefore this scheme is a small part of major proposals to reduce flooding in the region.*

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The scheme will include the provision of flood defences (walls, embankments, terracing), the removal of both Crown Point and Knostrop Weirs and replacement with moveable weirs plus an option to remove Knostrop Cut to merge the canal and River Aire. The exact details of the flood defences are still being worked up therefore indicative details will be presented to Members.
- 4.2 Any defences will be designed in accordance with the Design Guide and Vision previously presented to Members and adopted for planning purposes. The Design Guide and Vision identifies the appropriate design of various defences to ensure walls are kept to a minimum and the visual impact is acceptable. Walls would be constructed to permit their height being increased when raising the standard of protection in later phases.
- 4.3 To allow the flow of the river to be controlled at times of flooding, the existing weirs at Crown Point and Knostrop will be removed and replaced with moveable weirs that can be lowered when necessary. The moveable weirs would be lowered to maintain the regular water height when flood waters pass through the City Centre.
- 4.4 The planning submission will also include an option for the removal of Knostrop Cut. This area between the River Aire and canal could be difficult to achieve by 2015 therefore a scheme both with and without the cut will be considered. The heights of the defences are much lower with Knostrop Cut removed.
- 4.5 Pumping stations may be required to ensure that there are no flooding issues caused by the walls. These pumping stations will form part of Yorkshire Water's infrastructure and they will fund and operate them. The pumping stations will not form part of the current planning proposals.

5.0 ISSUES

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the emerging proposals and comment on any issues with the outline proposals and process at this stage.