



## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### *PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE*

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012

**Subject: The Application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 for the Leeds Southern Station Entrance**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
City & Hunslet

Yes (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. Members are requested to note the details and progress of the Transport and Works Act Order for the Leeds Southern Station Entrance**

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 In October 2009, a planning application for the Leeds Station Southern Entrance (LSSE) project (reference:09/04625/FU) was submitted to Leeds City Council (LCC) and permission was granted in May 2010, subject to a number of planning conditions.
- 1.2 In June 2011, the Department for Transport confirmed that in order to authorise the construction and maintenance of the scheme, an application could be submitted for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA Order). Accordingly, an application was submitted in May 2012 to the Secretary of State for Transport for an order under sections 1 and 3 of the 1992 Act. The application proposal is almost identical to the proposals that were granted planning permission in May 2010. The main changes relate to the pedestrianisation of Little Neville Street and the creation of a barge loading/unloading compound at Water Lane.
- 1.3 An order is required under the 1992 Act to authorise:-
  - a) the construction and maintenance of a new station entrance at Leeds Railway Station;

b) the carrying out of works in the Aire and Calder Navigation adjacent to the southern boundary of Leeds Railway Station and associated with a) above;

c) the carrying out of other works and the exercise of powers required in connection with or ancillary to the matters set out in items a) and b) above; and

d) the acquisition of land and rights over land required in connection with items a), b) and c) above.

- 1.4 The application is being promoted jointly by Metro and Network Rail Infrastructure Limited. In addition, a request for a direction for deemed planning permission has also been submitted to the Secretary of State under section 90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and an application for conservation area consent has been submitted in respect of works proposed to be undertaken at Water Lane, Leeds as part of the overall scheme (reference 12/02185/CA).
- 1.5 LCC only has the role of consultee in this process. All applications will be determined by the Secretary of State for Transport. The promoters of the applications have consulted Ward Members and Lead Officers of LCC in the preparation of the applications and LCC have confirmed their support for the proposals to the Secretary of State (see attached letter). The public consultation period on the applications expired on 28 June 2012.
- 1.6 If there are substantive objections to the applications then the Secretary of State is likely to hold a Public Inquiry which is estimated to take place in November 2012 with a decision likely to be made by mid 2013. Assuming approval of the applications construction works are likely to start in mid 2013 and be completed by late 2014.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

- 2.1 The Dark Arches are an extensive brick railway viaduct which straddles the River Aire and which transects much of the City centre in the local vicinity. The River Aire is a predominant feature of the site, which flows in an approximately north-south direction beneath the site and under the Dark Arches. Beyond the viaduct the waterway becomes the Aire and Calder Navigation and flows in an easterly direction. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal joins the Aire and Calder Navigation to the south of the proposed site.
- 2.2 Cutting through the Dark Arches north of the site is Dark Neville Street, the westerly section of which is used for parking. Watermans Place, a modern 15 storey residential block partially fronting the river is situated to the west of the site and forms part of Granary Wharf (the ISIS development) - a mixed development with shops, hotels and restaurants.
- 2.3 The Blue Apartments are located on the eastern bank of the river, to the rear of which is Little Neville Street and the Hilton Hotel. The Blue Apartments are a 16 storey high residential block, with a ground floor retail use that has been fitted out as a golf shop and virtual driving range. This includes a private deck which cantilevers over the east river wall.
- 2.4 Both sets of residential apartments are within 4m of the river wall and there is no public footpath on the eastern bank. The ground floor deck to the Blue Apartments removes the possibility of a future walkway along the east bank of the River Aire. On the western bank there is a footpath which also provides service access to plant rooms and refuse stores.

- 2.5 The Water Lane site to be used for loading/unloading barges, is bounded to the north and west by the Aire and Calder Navigation, to the south by a multi-storey and surface car park and to the east by former warehouse buildings and Meadow Lane. The site includes an area of car parking, a stone arch and low wall remaining from a previous warehouse building, scrub land over the remains of basements and a canal tow path.
- 2.6 The site for the station entrance lies within the setting of a number of listed buildings. The grade II listed Leeds-Liverpool Canal Wharf, basin lock, cranes and docks, the Victoria Bridge and the grade II\* listed River Lock and retaining walls, and No. 27 Canal Wharf warehouse building. The site also lies within the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDP) designated Riverside Quarter and Holbeck Urban Village Planning Framework areas, and within the Central Area - Canal Wharf Conservation Area.
- 2.7 The Water Lane site for the barge loading compound lies within the City Centre Conservation Area and City Centre Riverside Quarter as defined by the UDP. The site is close to the setting of two listed buildings, the Red Lion Public House, Meadow Lane, and the adjacent 2 Water Lane.

### **3.0 HISTORY OF CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 A series of consultation exercises were held in relation to the planning application for the LSSE project (reference 09/04625/FU) submitted to LCC in October 2009. These sought to ensure that the widest possible audience was consulted and encouraged to provide feedback on the proposals.
- 3.2 The response to the proposals in 2009 was overwhelmingly favourable with over 96% of the 215 respondents being supportive of the proposals. Of these 28% were positive but had some concerns. Positive comments were received regarding the beneficial economic impact of the Scheme, the architectural merits of the proposals, journey time savings and reduced congestion around existing concourses. Main concerns focused on the design and colour of the cladding. However twice as many respondents were positive about the design than were not.
- 3.3 Concerns raised by Members at the May 2010 Plans Panel meeting were addressed by further explanation of the proposals at the April 2010 Plans Panel meeting and by conditions attached to the permission. These allowed for further cycle storage and a contribution towards maintenance of Granary Wharf public realm, in the event that this was found to be needed.
- 3.4 Metro has produced a further Statement of Consultation to support the current applications for the TWA Order.
- 3.5 The consultation has covered a wide area affected by the proposals and has included a consultation hotline, a leaflet and three exhibitions in December 2011. Again comments from the respondents who attended the exhibitions were generally highly favourable. 89% of 375 respondents supported the proposals - the main reasons being journey time savings, reduced congestion at existing concourses and a positive impact on businesses and residents in south Leeds. Lack of support (11%) centred on cost, better uses for the money and the architectural design.

- 3.6 Targeted consultation was carried out with the owners and occupants of the Blue Apartments, Watermans Place and Candle House; also the Promoters have attended residents' association meetings. In addition local businesses were contacted. Following consultation Metro and Network Rail are working with local residents and businesses to identify their issues with the construction and operation of the scheme and to identify measures to mitigate their concerns. Chief concerns in this case centred on:
- noise vibration and dust during construction;
  - hours of construction;
  - overnight working;
  - reduction in the quality of residents' lives;
  - impact on local businesses;
  - increasing footfall in the area and resulting safety implications; and
  - concern about being overlooked by the LSSE.
- 3.7 As a result of these comments, the Promoters have reviewed the design to ensure that the Scheme is the minimum size and shape commensurate with its use, that the elevations are "broken up" to reduce visual impact and that there will be no direct overlooking of nearby properties. CCTV surveillance is to be introduced to assist with safety concerns.
- 3.8 Regarding disruption from construction, the Construction Management Plan (CMP) will seek to reduce impact on residents and local businesses as far as is possible and to keep them informed as to what is happening. The delivery of materials direct to the site by barge from Water Lane, down stream of the site, will be a major benefit in this respect.
- 3.9 In addition to the above regular liaison has taken place with LCC Ward Members, Hillary Benn (the local MP) and with Officers from various departments in the Council. Meetings have been held with statutory consultees, including the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England; and with key interests such as the British Water Waterways Board. As a result, the Scheme has been reviewed to help ensure that all concerns have been addressed. Comments made have also resulted in the proposals for the pedestrianisation of Little Neville Street.

## **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The LSSE Scheme is situated directly south of the Leeds City Station viaduct (known locally as the Dark Arches) which spans the River Aire. Leeds City Station is one of Network Rail's busiest stations, serving the City Centre of Leeds in West Yorkshire, with local, regional and inter-city rail services. The Dark Arches form a barrier to movement in this vicinity which means that all passengers currently have to enter the station from the north. The Scheme will provide an access to the station from the south and in doing so contribute to the on-going regeneration of south Leeds. At the same time it will ease current passenger movement to and within the station.
- 4.2 The objectives of the LSSE project are as follows:
- To improve access to Leeds City Centre by sustainable means;
  - To maximise growth of the Leeds economy by enhancing its competitive position and facilitating its future employment and population growth;
  - To support and facilitate the sustainable growth of Leeds, in particular to the south, recognising the importance of its city centre to the future economy of the Leeds City Region;

- To minimise journey times accessing Leeds Station to/from the south;
- To meet existing and future passenger flow requirements to the south of Leeds Station; and
- To ensure the current passenger flows within the station are maintained or improved.

- 4.3 The LSSE Scheme will include a concourse comprising three levels located over the river within a visually iconic enclosed building. Open link span bridges will provide direct stepped access to the lower concourse level from the east and west banks of the River Aire. The lower concourse also extends back through the span of the station viaduct to a further open footbridge running parallel to Dark Neville Street. The difference in levels between the footway in Dark Neville Street and the bridges will be accommodated by ramps as well as steps. There is also a balcony at ground level to be used for maintenance.
- 4.4 Access to upper levels is provided by stairs, two escalators and two lifts. The first level of the concourse provides potential emergency access to platforms. The upper level links to the existing western footbridge which crosses platforms 15, 16 and 17 and is to be widened to accommodate ticketing facilities.
- 4.5 The main enclosure takes the form of an arched canopy clad with gold coloured roofing, framing a glazed panel on the south elevation. The canopy rises but also tapers to a point at its northern end, where it joins the existing roof of the station. In addition to the glazed southern façade, the eastern elevation steps back to allow for a glazed lift shaft facing south. There is a narrower slot facing north on the western façade and glazed slots on either side of the structure, adjacent to the arches.
- 4.6 With regard to vehicular traffic, the general approach is to create an entrance aimed primarily at pedestrians and not to encourage a new vehicular drop-off point, which would affect the wider traffic flow in the centre of Leeds. The LSSE location is set away from main access roads and there are no specific measures to provide vehicular access.
- 4.7 To this end it is proposed to pedestrianise Little Neville Street except for necessary access for local vehicles, by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This will prevent the street being used as a drop off point for the station with attendant problems of turning in this relatively tight space, which would also be intimidating for pedestrians. Moreover queuing vehicles could also block legitimate access for residents and the Hilton hotel. It should be noted that an alternative drop off point from vehicles exists on the north side of the station and this is only a few minutes away for vehicles travelling from the south.
- 4.8 A demarcated 3m wide pedestrian route /safe route is proposed along the south side of Little Neville Street. Although not part of the scheme it is suggested that this route could eventually be extended through the viaduct along the south side of Dark Neville Street to where it joins Neville Street. Further safety measures will include additional lighting, signage, tactile paving for assisting blind and visually impaired users.
- 4.9 It is intended to use a mix of highly quality surfacing including natural stone and to reuse existing basalt setts laid in a diagonal pattern. Existing bollards will be maintained in the southern portion of Little Neville Street to protect cellars. In addition there would be high quality signage, street lighting and street furniture with some planting in the widened area to the north of the street. An at grade crossing is proposed at the exit of the Little Neville Street.

- 4.10 It is anticipated that construction will take around 62 weeks and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, construction can only take place between 07:30hrs to 19:00hrs Monday to Friday and 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs on Saturday. Construction will not normally take place overnight, on Sundays, Bank Holidays, Christmas Day or Good Friday; unless it is necessary to do so for reasons of safety to personnel or in order to satisfy the operational requirements of Leeds Station (the proposed conditions to the request for deemed planning permission are attached for information).
- 4.11 The site has a number of constraints affecting construction. In addition to working over water, there is limited storage space for materials around the site and immediate access is via minor roads (Little Neville Street or Granary Wharf) close to relatively tall apartment blocks and hotels.
- 4.12 Therefore the primary route to the site for materials will be along the Aire and Calder Navigation by barge from the loading/unloading area on Water Lane, to the east of the main site. The barges will be moored adjacent to the banks for unloading by crane or fixed into position in the river itself. The barge loading site is derelict in appearance but does contain the remnants of a 19<sup>th</sup> century building which is considered to contribute to the historic character of the area due in part to its similar appearance to the adjacent listed building at 2 Water Lane. The site also currently provides access along the riverside to Bridge End.
- 4.13 The use of the site as a loading compound requires that the existing structural remains have to be removed and the ground levelled. However to preserve the heritage value of the site it has been agreed to carefully remove the remnant structures and rebuild them after the construction works. The full details will be controlled by condition. LCC have also requested the Secretary of State to attach conditions requiring agreement of the details of the re-instatement of the whole site (in order to improve upon its current appearance) and to maintain a pedestrian access route between the Asda riverside and Bridge End during the construction works.
- 4.14 An Environmental Impact Assessment Statement (EIA) of the Scheme has been submitted in accordance with the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006.

This covers the following topics:

- Air Quality;
- Ecology;
- Geology and Soils;
- Historic Environment;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Townscape and Visual Amenity;
- Traffic and Access; and
- Water Resources.

In addition other supporting documents include:

- Design and Access Statement ;
- Statement of Community Involvement ;
- Constructability Review ;
- Scheme Location and Design Rationale ;
- Traffic Access and Urban Realm report;
- Climate Change Management Assessment;
- Energy Demand Assessment ;
- Code of Construction Practice ;

- Sustainability Appraisal ;
- Heritage Statement ; and
- Transport Statement .

## **5.0 THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The railway viaduct (Dark Arches) in the centre of Leeds impedes traffic and pedestrian circulation into the City centre, the only significant road link in the vicinity of the station being Neville Street. The existing main station entrances are located to the north of the viaduct, primarily feeding City Square and the City Centre beyond. Passengers wanting to access or exit the station from the south of the railway currently have no alternative to the existing indirect route through the Neville Street underpass beneath the station and up to the main station entrance on New Station Street via the 'Rotunda' steps. If they cannot use steps they must take an even more circuitous route around the front of the station.
- 5.2 Current connections are inadequate and inappropriate for the high volume of pedestrian journeys made along Neville Street every day. Although the refurbishment of the underpass on Neville Street has tried to improve the quality of the experience it is considered that a direct southern access to the station will reduce travel time and considerably increase connectivity.
- 5.3 Leeds station is used by around 100,000 passengers per day, with this figure expected to continue growing by around 6% over the next decade and by over 60% over the next twenty years. Much of this growth is expected to come from the south of the City. With many new developments and regenerated areas completed (and others planned) to the south of the railway, especially the Holbeck Urban Village and South Bank planning Framework areas, there is an urgent need to develop a new entrance which encompasses the approaches from the southern area of the city directly into the station.
- 5.4 As passenger growth is projected to continue, future enhancements to the passenger through flow capacity will be required. The proposed southern entrance will route passengers away from the existing main entrance/exit and directly to their destinations to the south of the station. This will not only save time for the users of the new entrance, but will relieve some of the peak hour congestion at the existing entrance/exit to the north.
- 5.5 A Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) was submitted to the Department for Transport in November 2009 and successfully gained Programme Entry status for LSSE. The scheme was re-endorsed as a regional priority on 23 October 2009 by the Yorkshire and Humber Joint Regional Board. Further evidence was presented in an updated business case in mid 2010 as part of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review process, and revised funding confirmed in February 2011 allowing the scheme to progress. As outlined in the MSBC, implementing the LSSE proposals will contribute towards the objectives of local, regional and Central Government.
- 5.6 In particular the promoters of the application emphasise the following key benefits of the scheme:
- A new, pedestrian entrance to the station, which incorporates lifts, escalators and stairs to provide passenger access to the current western footbridge within the station from ground level either side of the River Aire. The proposals also include CCTV, help points, ticket machines and passenger information screens;

- It is estimated that 22-24% of passengers (approximately 20,000 passengers per day) using Leeds station would use the proposed southern entrance;
- Recent work undertaken as part of the 'Transport for Leeds' programme of studies has estimated that jobs in the City Centre as a whole will increase from around 102,000 in 2009 to 108,000 (+8%) in 2018 and 118,000 (+16%) in 2030. Most new jobs are likely to be located in the expanding southern part of the city centre
- The proposed LSSE will also be of benefit to businesses in the south of the City centre, assisting visitors and helping to attract staff. This is likely to improve their ability to attract the best workforce.
- It will provide encouragement for new businesses to set up in the area
- modal shift from car to rail is estimated to result in a reduction in car driver trips equal to 26% of the additional generated trips (approximately 130 car driver trips per day). This modal shift would contribute towards a reduction in road traffic accidents, improvements in local air quality and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

5.7 The principle of the proposed southern entrance has already been established by the grant of planning application 09/04625/FU, which was approved by LCC in May 2010. This considered the implications of the southern entrance in terms of its design, impact on adjoining residential amenities, and the potential impact on the surrounding public realm and access arrangements. On balance it was considered that the merits of the proposals for improving public transport connections to the south of the city centre and to supporting the regeneration of the south bank outweighed the potential limited adverse implications for existing amenity. The key additional aspects of the TWA Order are the proposed pedestrianisation works to Little Neville Street and the proposed barge loading/unloading area at Water Lane.

5.8 The works to Little Neville Street are considered to enhance the pedestrian environment whilst still maintaining necessary access for servicing to adjoining properties. The necessary demolition of the structural remains at Water Lane are also considered acceptable on balance since the loss of the limited heritage value will only be temporary and the location of the construction compound at this site will help to significantly reduce disturbance during the construction works on local residents and businesses.

5.9 The LSSE scheme is critical to the continuing regeneration of the south of the City centre and the proposed scheme will support local and regional planning policies to strengthen the Leeds economy and promote public transport.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 A TWA Order is to be sought for the LSSE Scheme. This follows the granting of planning permission by LCC in May 2010, for an almost identical proposal. The LSSE Scheme is situated directly south of the Dark Arches which span the River Aire and support Leeds City Station. This is one of Network Rail's busiest stations, serving the City centre of Leeds in West Yorkshire, with local, regional and inter-city rail services.

6.2 The Dark Arches form a barrier to movement in this vicinity which means that all passengers currently have to enter the station from the north. Current connections are inadequate for the high volume of pedestrian journeys made along Neville Street every day.

6.3 Both regional and local policy seeks to develop Leeds' role as a regional city by accommodating significant growth in jobs, homes and related services. A key plank of this aim is the expansion of the City Centre, specifically in areas designated for regeneration to the south of the station. The proposed LSSE will not only serve



existing residents and businesses to the south of the City centre, but also assist in encouraging new development in this vicinity. It will also relieve current passenger congestion in the station at peak times and in so doing contribute more widely to ongoing development.

**Background Papers**

Application reference 09/04625/FU

Application reference 12/02185/CA

The Leeds Railway Station (Southern Entrance) Order May 2012