

Development Plan Panel 7th August – Matters Arising

25. **Policy H6 – Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Student Accommodation and Flat Conversions**

At the previous Development Plans Panel meeting (7th August) three further comments were raised relating to Policy H6. These have been considered by Officers and are listed below.

Student housing is in a state of over supply. Given there is a surplus of bed spaces further provision of student housing should not be supported.

The increase in purpose built student accommodation combined with other factors, including the increase in tuition fees has resulted in a surplus of student accommodation in the Headingley area. The policy makes reference to changing student demand, but it is not the role of planning to intervene on demand and supply within the market. This should only be considered when there is harm and H6 has been structured to do this. However, the policy could be made clearer regarding student numbers and how these are likely to change over the lifetime of the plan. On this basis paragraph 5.2.19 of the policy has been amended to show this.

Reference should be made to vacant properties.

The policy makes reference to vacant properties in paragraph 5.5.22b. A prolonged period of vacancy is undesirable for any property type and if this can be shown it could be a reason to allow a change of use. The policy does not state a time period for a prolonged period as this could vary widely based on local circumstance.

*Clarification was sought on part of the policy relating to flat conversions:
C v) Sufficient easily accessible and appropriately located off and on street car and cycle parking is incorporated.*

Further details of factors that could be taken into account when assessing parking have been added to paragraph 5.2.23.

Houses in Multiple Occupation, Student Accommodation, and Flat Conversions

5.2.18a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are an increasingly popular part of the housing market within Leeds. As rooms can be rented individually they provide affordable accommodation used primarily by students, young people and those on lower incomes. Whilst the need for this type of accommodation is not in dispute, HMOs tend to be grouped together in certain inner city areas, becoming the dominant type of housing which can lead to social and environmental problems for local communities.

5.2.18b As a city with two universities and a number of specialist colleges, According to figures published by Unipol, Leeds had 43,500 students in 2010/11 of which approximately 30,500 sought accommodation through the private rented sector. *The City's Universities and specialist colleges are an important part of the Leeds economy, but* significant growth in student numbers in the past has led to high concentrations of student housing in areas of Headingley, Hyde Park and Woodhouse. This generated concerns about loss of amenity to long term residents *as well as wider concerns about the loss of housing suitable for families.*

5.2.19 Leeds' SHMA 2010 suggests a levelling off in growth in student numbers in the early years of the Plan which raises question marks over the future of approximately 4000 surplus student bed-spaces. ~~However, demand is expected to continue for many students wanting to live in shared private residential houses, which are now classed as HMOs.~~ *Demand for student accommodation is variable and is expected to fluctuate over the plan period. Although there is always expected to be a significant demand from many students wanting to live in shared private residential houses which are now classed as HMOs.*

5.2.20 The SHMA 2010 anticipates growth in the need for HMOs in the early years of the Plan to accommodate young people reliant on housing benefit and because of strong demand for private rented accommodation from working people unable to buy. This could affect all areas of Leeds, but is likely to be focussed on the inner areas popular for rented property.

5.2.21 Changes in occupation of houses from dwelling-house (class C3 of the use class order) to *small* shared houses (class C4) will require planning permission in the area affected by the HMO Article 4 Direction. This includes all of inner Leeds and the adjoining suburbs. *Changes of occupation to large shared houses (sui generis) already require planning permission in every part of the city. The government has recognised that high concentrations of HMOs in an area can lead to the following impacts:*

- *Increased anti-social behaviour, noise and nuisance*
- *Imbalanced and unsustainable communities*
- *Negative Impacts on the physical environment and streetscape*
- *Pressures upon parking provision*
- *Increased crime*

- *Growth in the private sector at the expense of owner-occupation*
- *Pressure on local community facilities*
- *Restructuring of retail, commercial services and recreational facilities to suit the lifestyles of the predominant population.*

5.2.22a Core Strategy policy needs to balance the need for growth in HMOs with the need to avoid ~~over~~ *high* concentrations which cause loss of amenity and undermine the health and stability of communities. *Ease of access to work and universities without needing a car also need to be considered. New HMOs should be located in sustainable locations which allow ease of access to work and education by means of sustainable transport, whilst reducing the need to use the private car. Proposals for new HMOs should look to address detailed local amenity issues as discussed in paragraph 5.2.21, including local parking pressures and impacts on neighbours.*

5.2.22b *Leeds has a diverse housing stock ranging from large Victorian terraces to modern city centre flats. Some houses tend to be more suitable for families and when these are in areas with high concentrations of HMOs they should remain available for occupation by families. Factors to consider include the size of the dwelling, the amount of garden and private amenity space available, location of the property and any prolonged period of vacancy.*

5.2.22c The decade 2001 – 2010 witnessed considerable development of new purpose built student accommodation particularly in and around the north west sector of the City Centre. Growth in this accommodation is to be welcomed in order to meet need and to deflect pressure away from private rented houses in areas of over-concentration. Nevertheless, care is needed to ensure that purpose built accommodation continues to be located with good access to the universities and does not itself become over-concentrated.

Conversion of houses into flats will be one of the means of meeting need for smaller households. However, this has to be reconciled with the importance of protecting local amenity and creating good standard dwellings with sufficient parking space and security. *Factors to take into account when assessing sufficiency of parking include:*

- *The amount of parking available on and off site*
- *Existing parking pressures*
- *The number of units proposed*

'Deconversion' of previously converted flats back into dwelling houses is sometimes sought in order to cater for large families. This will usually be considered acceptable and, if involving only two units to one, does not normally need planning permission.

POLICY H6: HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOs), STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, AND FLAT CONVERSIONS

- A) Within the area of Leeds covered by the Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), development proposals for new HMOs will be determined:
- i) To ensure that a sufficient supply of HMOs is maintained in Leeds,
 - ii) To ensure that HMOs are distributed in areas well connected to employment and educational destinations associated with HMO occupants,
 - iii) To avoid detrimental impacts through high concentrations of HMOs, which would undermine the balance and health of communities.
 - iv) *To ensure that proposals for new HMOs address relevant amenity and parking concerns.*
 - v) *To avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family occupation in areas of existing high concentrations of HMOs.*

~~Additional policy may be needed in the future to deliver the strategic aims of Policy H6. Based on these criteria, supplementary planning advice will set ceilings for the proportion of HMOs desirable in different geographies of Leeds.~~

- B) Development proposals for purpose built student accommodation will be controlled:
- i) To help extend the supply of student accommodation taking pressure off the need for private housing to be used,
 - ii) To avoid the loss of existing housing suitable for family occupation,
 - iii) To avoid excessive concentrations of student accommodation (in a single development or in combination with existing accommodation) which would undermine the balance and wellbeing of communities,
 - iv) To avoid locations which are not easily accessible to the Universities by foot or public transport or which would generate excessive footfall through residential areas *which may lead to detrimental impacts on residential amenity.*
- C) Development proposals for conversion of existing houses into flats will be accepted where all the following criteria apply:
- i) The property is not a back-to-back dwelling;
 - ii) The property is of sufficient size (min. 100m sq gross) and the internal layout is shown to be suitable for the number of units proposed;
 - iii) The impact on neighbouring dwellings is not likely to be detrimental to the amenity of their occupants by virtue of the conversion alone or cumulatively with a concentration of converted dwellings, HMOs, or residential institutions;
 - iv) Where there is a demand for family sized accommodation and the property has (or has the potential for provision of) good access to suitable space for private recreation, provision is normally made for at least one family sized unit in the proposed mix of flats;
 - v) Sufficient easily accessible and appropriately located off and on street car and cycle parking is incorporated;
 - vi) The proposed dwellings provide satisfactory internal living accommodation in terms of daylight, outlook and juxtaposition of living rooms and bedrooms;
 - vii) Each dwelling has safe and secure (and where possible, level) access from the street and any parking areas and suitable accessible enclosures are provided for refuse storage.

Sufficiency of supply' is to be measured with reference to the SHMA, Unipol Data, University Admission Forecasts and the effects of Housing Benefit rule changes

27. Cemeteries & Burial Grounds

5.5xx *The city accommodates three crematoria and 22 cemeteries. Several of these, particularly in the south and north west of the city, are either full or near capacity. Provision of new cemeteries and burial space will be required during the plan period. This will be in the form of extensions to existing cemeteries combined with new smaller, based sites close to the community.*

POLICY XX: CEMETERIES AND BURIAL SPACE

Development proposals for cemetery and burial facilities will be permitted where they can demonstrate:

- *easy access by public transport, walking and cycling;*
- *easy and safe access to people with disabilities;*
- *there would not be demonstrably harmful impact on the character of the surrounding area and the amenities of nearby residential properties and other uses; and the scale is appropriate to identified local need.*

Updates: Energy and Natural Resources

b) Energy and Natural Resources

Climate Change

5.5.30 The Climate Change Act 2008 established a new approach to managing and responding to climate change in the UK. The Act created a legally binding target to reduce the UK's emissions of greenhouse gases to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. This is delivered through a series of five year 'carbon budgets', designed to ensure that the Council make steady progress towards this long term target. A carbon budget is a cap on the total quantity of greenhouse gas emissions emitted in the UK over a specified time. Under a system of carbon budgets, every tonne of greenhouse gas emitted between now and 2050 will count. Where emissions rise in one sector, corresponding falls in another sector will have to be achieved.

5.5.31 In May 2009, the Government introduced legislation creating the first three legally binding carbon budgets. The budgets are 2008-2012 (22% reduction in CO₂ emissions below 1990 levels), 2013-2017 (28% reduction) and 2018-2022 (34% reduction).

5.5.32 These carbon budgets, whilst owned and delivered at a national level, will have a profound effect on all activities at a local level. Policy tools and financial incentives have been put in place to drive down emissions from transport, housing and business across the country. Building Regulations have introduced tighter CO₂ targets and a trajectory has been put in place to reduce emissions from new housing to zero by 2016, and from non-domestic development to zero by 2019. As Leeds is forecast to grow both in terms of housing numbers and new business premises, it is particularly important to

ensure that these are as close to zero emission as possible, as soon as possible, to avoid the need for deeper cuts in other sectors.

5.5.33 The Leeds Climate Change Strategy (2009) was developed through the Leeds Initiative in partnership with the public, private and third sector. This contains a target to reduce emissions from Leeds by 80% between 1990 and 2050. In 2010, the Council adopted a further target to reduce emissions by 40% between 2005 and 2020. In the four years to 2009, the city reduced emissions by 14.4%, requiring a *further* reduction of approximately 2.5% per year until 2020. *Leeds is a growing city and all new development that is not carbon neutral adds to total emissions from Leeds (both on site emissions and emissions associated with transport). Therefore, the policy imperative to constrain emissions from all development as soon as possible.*

5.5.34 The Core Strategy climate change policies are designed so that new development contributes to our ambitious carbon reduction targets. However, the Council aim to do this in a flexible way that supports developers to achieve carbon reductions at lowest cost and in a way that benefits future building occupants. Building Regulations set a minimum energy efficiency standard applicable to all buildings, and in order to keep on track to achieve the 2050 target, the Government will increase this standard over the next decade. Developers currently have to demonstrate that proposed developments are within the Target Emissions Rate. However, because of the need to maintain a decent standard of living in the face of significant growth, the Council is seeking a 20% CO₂ reduction beyond the Building Regulation standard. Energy efficient buildings also reduce household fuel bills (and support initiatives for 'affordable warmth'), improve business competitiveness and create jobs in the energy service sectors. Economies of scale mean that energy efficiency measures are less costly on larger developments, and the policies are, therefore, only applied to 'major development.' *It is important to note that policy EN1(i) is highly flexible, allowing developers to choose the most appropriate and cost effective carbon reduction solution for their site. We would expect developers to take a 'fabric first' approach and, over time, supplement this with increasing levels of on-site district heating and low/zero carbon technologies. It must be remembered that the cost implications of installing carbon reduction measures are much lower when included in a new building than when they are retrofitted.*

POLICY EN1: CLIMATE CHANGE – CARBON DIOXIDE REDUCTION

All developments of 10 dwellings or more, or over 1,000 square metres of floorspace, *(including conversion where feasible)* whether new-build or conversion, will be required to:

- (i) Reduce total predicted carbon dioxide emissions to achieve 20% less than the Building Regulations Target Emission Rate until 2016 when all development should be zero carbon; and,
- (ii) Provide a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the development from low carbon energy.

Carbon dioxide reductions achieved *through* in-meeting criteria ~~(i)-(ii)~~ will contribute to meeting criteria ~~(ii)~~ *(i)*.

Criteria (ii) will be calculated against the emissions rate predicted by criteria (i) so reducing overall energy demand by taking a fabric first approach will reduce the amount of renewable capacity required.

If it can be demonstrated that decentralised renewable or low carbon energy generation is not practical on or near the proposed development, it may be acceptable to provide a contribution equivalent to the cost of providing the 10%, which the council will use towards an off-site low carbon scheme. The opportunity to aggregate contributions to deliver larger scale low carbon projects would be implemented independent of the development. Wherever possible, the low carbon projects would be linked with local projects that would bring local benefits.

It is likely that the approach of pooling off-site contributions through planning obligations will be replaced by CIL in April 2014.

Applicants will be required to submit an Energy Assessment with their application *based on expected end user requirements* to demonstrate compliance with this Policy. *Where end user requirements change significantly, an updated EA should be submitted prior to construction.*

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 5.5.35 The Vision for Leeds (2011–2030), City Priority Plan (2011–2015) and Council Business Plan (2011-2015), commit the city as a whole and the Council specifically, to make Leeds a lower carbon city. *Within this overall context and through the City Council's Carbon & Water Management Plan (March 2011), BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is an aspiration but essential in any new build and Very Good in major refurbishment projects. City carbon reduction targets are to reduce CO₂ emissions by 40% between 2005 and 2020. At the same time climate change adaptation needs to be addressed systematically and progressively in regard to the built environment and development across the city. To ensure there is a consistent approach to development improvements the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) approach has been identified as an independent and systematic methodology based on a robust environmental weighting system that covers a wide range of sustainable construction issues yet allows flexibility in relation to site and developer options.*

5.5.36 For residential development, the relevant standard is the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' (CfSH). For non residential development, the relevant standard is the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). The Council aims to make increasingly higher levels of the Code a requirement for major development in the district. will require developers to apply these assessments to major development in the district (see Policy EN2 table) as the additional costs of attaining improved sustainable construction outcomes are best met by economies of scale. In cases involving conversions, refitting, refurbishment, and historic buildings, a pragmatic approach will be taken with the expectation that the BRE methodology will still be applied, with agreed areas of lower achievement if shown to be appropriate. The BRE methodology allows for flexibility across a wide range of environmental areas, and consistently improves key environmental issues, covering improvements to; energy and CO₂ emissions, water use, materials, surface water run off, waste, pollution, health and well being, management and ecological value.

5.5.37 To take account of the Government's recommended increases in the code over time, a gradually increasing target for the Code and BREEAM requirement is proposed for Leeds. This is shown in the table within Policy EN2, and it is for developers to decide how they meet the standard in conjunction with addressing Policy EN1 (carbon emissions reduction and on-site Low and Zero Carbon (LTZ) energy targets) (apart from the carbon emissions reduction requirement). The energy efficiency requirement is explained in Policy EN1. The targets for CO₂ reductions in Policy EN1 are challenging, being higher than those currently proposed in the code, but this is considered necessary longer term in Leeds to help tackle climate change. The dates are effective at the time of submission of a planning application, although in cases with delayed implementation, or delayed phases, there is an expectation that those parts of the development will be built to the higher sustainable construction standards of the later date. Further guidance, information and advice on sustainable construction in Leeds is set out in 'Building for Tomorrow for Today: Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document' which covers: site appraisal, design considerations, energy & CO₂ emissions, water use, materials use, surface water run-off, waste, pollution, health & wellbeing, management of the site, and ecology. Developers should also follow the guidance in the Sustainable Development Design Guide and adopt where possible the Secure by Design code.

POLICY EN2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

To require developments of 1,000 or more square metres or 10 or more dwellings (including conversion where feasible) to meet at least the standard set by BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes as shown in the table below. A post construction review certificate will be required prior to occupation.

	2012	2013	2016
Leeds Code for Sustainable Homes requirement	Code level 3	Code level 4	Code level 6
Leeds BREEAM standard for non-residential buildings requirement	Very Good	Excellent	Excellent

Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

5.5.38 The Council aims to achieve a grid-connected renewable energy target of 75 MW by 2021. A breakdown of how this target could be achieved from different sources of renewable energy is included in the Natural Resources and Waste DPD. Potential exists for a number of sources of renewable energy within Leeds, including electricity from wind power, water power (hydro-power), solar energy (active solar), landfill gas, electricity and heat from biomass treatment and waste plants, and combined heat and power (CHP). Heat network distribution is expected to be extensively progressed during the plan period. As well as larger, more commercial projects for renewable energy (0.5 MW and above), potential also exists for smaller, community based projects where the benefits are fed back into the local area. *For clarity, policy EN3 is specifically designed to encourage commercial scale electricity generation. Policies EN1 and EN4 also support low carbon heating and cooling technologies.*

Wind Power

5.5.39 Beyond the urban area there are opportunities for large-scale wind energy generation in areas of higher wind speeds. The average wind speed at 45 metres above ground level is shown on Map 17. However, there are constraints due to the operation of Leeds Bradford International Airport and other local airfields and the need to protect the amenity of residents. Detailed policy criteria against which wind energy applications will be judged is set out in the Natural Resources and Waste DPD.

5.5.40 There are also opportunities for wind micro-generation, and the Council is currently investigating the potential for grid-connected turbines on land in its own ownership. These could potentially contribute 36 MW of energy towards the 75 MW target. More information on this is included in the city council's Carbon and Water Management Plan 2011 – 2021.

Map 17 Windspeed

Hydro Power

5.5.41 Potential exists for the development of hydropower facilities on the rivers Wharfe, Aire and Calder. Whilst these are likely to have capacity for small-

scale generation producing up to 100 kW, some of the weirs are large enough to have potential to contribute to the overall requirement for grid-connected renewable energy. *All development at or adjacent to these weirs and their associated civil engineering works (such as mill buildings, leats, mill ponds, etc.) must not compromise their future viability as hydro power sites, and ideally should develop the renewable energy potential of the site as part of their development proposal.* It is believed that the rivers Wharfe and Aire have potential to physically accept up to ten small-scale waterpower devices. If all were to go ahead the total capacity is unlikely to exceed 2 MW. Such schemes will be supported subject to environmental impact assessments, and provision of integrated fish passes. The Council is progressing hydro-power schemes at Armley Mills and Thwaite Mill on the River Aire, and the other weirs also offer potential for new hydro power generation. These locations are shown on Map 18. The waterways serve a multitude of uses, from a route for freight to forming part of the landscape as well as facilitating renewable energy.

Map 18 Potential Hydro Power Locations at Weir Points

Biomass Treatment

- 5.5.42 Biomass can be used in chip or pellet form to be combusted for heat and combined heat and power. Sources of biomass are food waste, green waste and agricultural waste from households, commerce, landscape/ forestry contractors and agricultural waste.

Solar Energy (Active Solar)

- 5.5.43 Solar energy is collected through either photovoltaic or solar thermal panels. Electricity can be produced from photovoltaic panels, however, these have limited potential for large-scale electricity generation. As most installations require connections to the national grid (as they produce the most electricity at times of low demand) they can still contribute towards renewable energy targets. Solar thermal systems capture energy from sunlight to meet a proportion of a building's hot water demands.
- 5.5.44 Approximately 8sqm of photovoltaics is needed for each 1 kW of installed capacity on a favourably orientated façade or roof. To install just 1 MW of electricity from photovoltaics, therefore, require 8,000 m² of panels. Leeds has a huge resource of facades and roofs facing into the southerly quadrant, enough to produce several MWs of electricity if fitted with photovoltaics. Feed in Tariffs (FITs) for large solar installations are now available and help provide a viable business case for retrofitting existing buildings.

Landfill Gas

- 5.5.45 Landfill gas qualifies as a renewable energy because it is a low-carbon source. Within Leeds, there has been recent production investment of an additional 2MW at Skelton Grange, Aire Valley and 1 MW at Peckfield, Micklefield landfill sites. However, it should be recognised that landfill gas generation will decrease with time as the resource becomes exhausted. A reasonable assumption is that by 2021 the output from landfill gas would be

approximately 9 MW, but will tail off thereafter, depending on commercial factors, as well as gas yield.

Electricity and Heat from Waste

- 5.5.46 Substantial potential exists for energy from waste through the provision of strategic waste management facilities to deal with municipal waste and commercial and industrial waste. The Natural Resources and Waste DPD allocates sites suitable for energy from waste. Developments within a viable distance from these facilities are expected to connect into the heat distribution network.

POLICY EN3: LOW CARBON ENERGY

The Council supports appropriate opportunities to improve energy efficiency and increase the large scale (above 0.5MW) commercial renewable energy capacity, as a basis to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes wind energy, hydro power, biomass treatment, solar energy, landfill gas, and energy from waste.

Protection of internationally designated nature conservation sites will be a key consideration, including relevant Policies contained as part of the Natural Resources & Waste Development Plan Document. Proposals for biomass power generation are required to supply an assessment of the potential biomass resource available (including location) and the transport implications of using that resource. Any development that may lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site will not be supported.

Heat Distribution Networks (District Heating)

- 5.5.47 By distributing heat to multiple users through a pipe network, up to several thousand homes and businesses can be connected to the same sustainable heat source.
- 5.5.48 Future Energy Yorkshire have completed a study which recommends the establishment of a strategic body ('Energy Leeds') whose role would be to take responsibility for the delivery of energy related activities. These activities could include the co-ordination and delivery of heat networks. This role is particularly important to enable developments to reach code levels 5 and 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (as required under Policy EN2). Heat distribution is most likely to be viable in areas of higher density. Opportunities exist around Leeds City Centre (for example major development proposals for the Eastgate area, in the provision of an new energy centre, low carbon heating, cooling, electricity generation and potentially other utilities), the Aire Valley, the universities and St James University Teaching Hospital, as a consequence of high heat loads, which offer the potential for low carbon energy for local communities.
- 5.5.49 The Council has mapped the areas of greatest potential for the creation of heat networks across the district (see Map19). Where there is an existing heat network then it is expected that new developments will make the necessary connections. Where there is no heat network, but there is a low cost heat source such as energy from waste facilities, then opportunities

should be taken through proposals for developer to investigate the potential for connection. Where neither existing heat networks nor low cost heat sources are available or feasible then a new heating plant/energy centre needs to be provided.

5.5.50 Heat Density is the annual heat demand in KWh divided by 8,760 (the number of hours in a year), to give a heat demand, and then divided by the area of land concerned. This calculation is key to evaluating heating network viability. Research conducted by the Department of Energy and Climate Change into the potential for district heating in the UK has found that areas with a heat density above 3,000 kWh/km² is currently required to create a viable network. The higher the heat density the more cost effective the network. As technology and expertise improve the current viability threshold will decrease.

POLICY EN4: DISTRICT HEATING

Where technically viable, *appropriate for the development*, and in areas with sufficient *existing or potential* heat density, developments of *1,000 or more square metres or 10 dwellings or more (including conversions where feasible)* should propose heating systems according to the following hierarchy:

- (i) Connection to existing *district heating* networks,
- (ii) ~~Use Construction of a site wide district heating network served by a new low carbon heat source/communal heating system supplied with low carbon heat where technically viable/feasible,~~
- (iii) *Collaboration with neighbouring development sites or existing heat loads/sources to develop a viable shared district heating network,*
- (iv) In areas where *district heating is currently not viable, but there is not potential for future district heating networks*, all development proposals will need to demonstrate how ~~sites have been designed are future proofed~~ to allow for connection to ~~a future an area wide~~ *district heating* network.

(iv)

All major developments will be expected to contribute (either financially or in-kind) towards the creation of new, or enlargement of existing, district heating networks. Such contributions will be secured through the use of legal agreements and subsequently financial contributions through the CIL once introduced.

Carbon savings and renewable energy generation achieved under this policy will contribute to EN1(i) and EN1(ii).

Map 19 Locations with the Greatest Potential for the Creation of Heat Networks