
Report of the Director of Development

Executive Board

Date: 14 March 2007

Subject: Draft Masterplan Proposals for Elland Road

Electoral Wards Affected:

Citywide

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The area around Elland Road stadium is a key and sensitive site in the city which is currently dominated by low-grade surface car parking. This situation presents a low quality physical environment for local residents and does little to help regenerate the area.

Whilst there has been a long standing need to resolve this position, there are a number of current development factors that make this an appropriate time to develop draft masterplan proposals for the site for public consultation, which builds on its existing UDP allocation for leisure/tourism uses that enhance the regional and international role of the city.

This process will ensure that the public has an opportunity to inform any proposals going forward and facilitate developments which have beneficial physical, economic and social impacts, both within the local area and the wider city and help mitigate the negative impact experienced by local residents from the current uses of the site.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the work undertaken towards the development of a Masterplan proposal for land in the vicinity of Elland Road Football Ground and to obtain Executive Board's approval to undertake public consultation on the draft Masterplan prior to its adoption as informal planning guidance for the site.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Members of Executive Board will be aware that Leeds City Council has extensive landholdings in the vicinity of Elland Road as detailed in Plan 1. In total Leeds City Council has the freehold ownership of 12 hectares of land and leases a further 2.1 hectares to third parties in the form of long-term tenancies. Much of this site has remained undeveloped for a number of years, with no development of any consequence taking place since 1996. Although development proposals have come forward in the past, it is recognised that in bringing forward development proposals at this time there needs to be an opportunity to engage with the public early in the process to ensure that any proposals that might be implemented in the future have regard to local views and opinions.

- 2.2 In addition to Leeds City Council, the other land interests in and around the Elland Road site includes:

- West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority who own the bus terminal site (site J);
- Leeds United, who currently lease the Elland Road Football Ground (site H) from the Teak Trading Corporation and;
- Stanley Leisure, who have an option to purchase the site to the north of the Football Ground (site I).

- 2.3 Currently, much of the Elland Road site presents a low grade environment dominated by unmade surface car parking which is vacant for the significant majority of the time. This situation is considered unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. From the City Council's perspective the site:

- Is unattractive and contributes to a poor physical environment in the local area;
- Makes little or no contribution to the regeneration of a ward with relatively high levels of social and economic deprivation;
- Is high profile, not just because of its proximity to the City's Football Club, but also due to its location next to the M621 and the Leeds to London mainline railway, which necessitates the need for high quality design solutions
- Is identified for prospective arena developers that either do not have land interests of their own, or believe that the public land available offers the best solution.

2.4 In the context of the issues identified, it is important for the City Council to start to develop proposals outlining how the site can be developed in the future, whether the site is eventually chosen for the arena development, or not. In addition, any development proposals for the site need to take into account the aspirations of the other interested parties in the greater site. In this context, Leeds United have ambitions to improve the ancillary commercial offer at the Elland Road Stadium including the development of a hotel as part of the complex. Also, prior to the announcement that Leeds will be able to grant a license for a large casino, Stanley Leisure lodged an outline planning application for a casino on the site, which if successful, would operate under the 1968 act licensing procedures. This would not prejudice Stanley Leisure from seeking to secure a large casino license in the future through a transparent and competitive process.

2.5 It is therefore clear that there is development pressure on the site and without a coherent masterplan to inform individual development proposals brought forward there is the potential for incremental and piecemeal development of the site. This would not result in a positive development outcome and the site would not contribute to the wider regeneration aspirations for the Beeston Hill area.

2.6 The Elland Road site also lies just to the west of the Beeston Hill/Holbeck Neighbourhood Renewal Area, one of the city's priority regeneration areas. The redevelopment of the Elland Road site clearly presents an opportunity to contribute to this wider regeneration initiative by for example, linking employment initiatives generated by an Elland Road development to the Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

2.7 **Main Issues**

In view of the position outlined above, Leeds City Council, with the support of Yorkshire Forward, has liaised with Leeds United AFC, Stanley Leisure and the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority to develop a consensus on the need for a masterplan for the site and to engage in the development of draft proposals. Against this background, with the agreement of the stakeholders identified above, Leeds City Council has engaged with Austin Smith Lord to develop draft masterplan proposals for the site.

2.8 **Masterplan objectives**

In view of the importance of the site within the City, the objectives of the masterplan process are to:

- Provide guidance on the development of some eighteen and a half hectares of brownfield land which currently contributes to a low grade environment in a key regeneration area of the City.
- To formulate a vision which will transform the area immediately surrounding the Leeds United Football Club Stadium into a vibrant leisure quarter hosting a mix of activities accessible to all.
- To promote the site as a destination of choice contributing to the wider success of the local economy.

- To facilitate the development of exciting buildings, welcoming, comfortable, safe and well-used spaces which create a sense of place, which are easily understood and which people will wish to visit repeatedly.
- To facilitate development which has a physical, economic and social regenerative impact within the local area of the Elland Road Stadium.

2.9 In developing the draft masterplan there have been a number of factors to consider which have shaped the proposals presented. These include:

- The need to improve the quality of the physical environment and deliver regeneration benefits.
- The planning context for the site.
- Transport issues in terms of public transport, traffic management and on site/off site car parking with a view to mitigating any potential impact for local residents.
- An understanding of the commercial issues that impact on the site and the deliverability of the end scheme.
- The potential for the site to be identified as the most suitable location for a Leeds arena through a competitive procurement process.

2.10 **Improving the quality of the physical environment**

Much of the Elland Road site is dominated by low grade surface car- parking, which is largely unused outside of match days. In addition, some of the existing low grade car parks are located on the southern side of Elland Road and sit next to well established residential areas. There is clearly a need to ensure that the quality of the physical environment next to residential properties is improved for the benefit of local residents.

2.11 **The planning context**

The planning context for the Elland Road site is primarily influenced by two factors, namely:

(a) The Unitary Development Plan - In the Unitary Development Plan Review (Adopted July 2006) 18.5 hectares of land is reserved for leisure and tourism proposals which would enhance the regional and national role of the city, subject to:

- An innovative design
- Setting development within a strong landscape framework.
- Careful consideration being given to the relationship of the development to existing local housing.
- Satisfactory resolution of access and parking arrangements
- An agreed planning brief

- (b) Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres 2005 (PPS6) - This planning policy statement provides planning guidance on the approach to development in town centres. Sustainable development is the underlying principle of PPS6, which recommends a sequential approach to site identification for a variety of uses starting with existing town centres, moving to edge of town centres and finally considering out-of-centre sites. The Elland Road site would be regarded as out-of-centre. Leeds City Council, in preparing the UDP, determined its current allocation for major tourism, cultural, sporting and other leisure facilities.

2.12 Accordingly, in developing the draft masterplan, consideration has been given to the extent to which development options fit within this policy statement. Clearly, a rigid application of this policy to Elland Road which discounted all town centre uses would severely prejudice the potential for ever bringing forward this key site for development. However, the extent to which some 'town centre' uses could be accommodated on the Elland Road site will be a matter of judgment and any proposals will need to be proportionate in the context of the primary leisure and tourism uses envisaged. The masterplan proposals have been primarily built on the existing tourism and leisure classification and the recognition in PPS6 that other relevant matters need to be taken into account, including the sites:

- Physical regeneration potential - by promoting a complete transformation of the site which has remained underdeveloped for many years.
- Potential for economic growth – by delivering significant investment into the area
- Employment potential – through construction activity and via the end uses developed
- Prospects for enhancing social inclusion - through increased accessibility for all groups in the community and enhancing public transport connectivity to and from the site and entry to the city-centre.

2.13 **Transport Issues**

There are a number of transport issues that have been considered as part of the masterplan development. In particular the draft proposals have sought to:

- Mitigate the impact of traffic for existing residents and businesses within the development area, particularly those affected by match day carparking during football games.
- Promote sustainable modes of transport where possible with travel by car as a secondary option.
- Minimise the impact on the strategic highway network adjacent to the site, in particular the M621.
- Facilitate public transport options which ensure buses can access and egress the site in preference to private vehicles, making it a more attractive mode than driving.

2.14 **Commercial deliverability of the proposals**

It is important to recognise that the Elland Road site has remained in a brownfield and undeveloped state for a considerable number of years. Whilst there are a number of complex reasons why this is the case, in part it has to be recognised that, in taking account of the existing UDP notation, the ability for developers to deliver a scheme that can bear the up-front infrastructure costs of laying out the site and be deliverable in a commercial sense are marginal. On this basis the masterplan draft proposals that have been developed have had to take account of the need to establish uses that will generate sufficient value to enable the benefits of developing the site to be realised.

2.15 **Potential Arena Site**

Members will recall that on the 13 December 2006, Executive Board agreed a report from the Director of Development outlining how the proposals for a multi-purpose arena for Leeds will move forward. Specifically, Executive Board supported the findings and recommendations contained in PMP's report on the proposed funding and procurement of a multi-purpose arena and associated facilities. The PMP report included the recommendation that:

2.16 *'The procurement competition should invite bids from developers/landowners on their own sites, whilst also providing a publicly owned site (namely Elland Road) for those participants that either do not have land interests or believe that the public land available offers the best solution.'*

2.17 In view of this recommendation, it is important to stress that the final decision on the site for an arena in Leeds will be determined by a transparent and competitive process which evaluates all sites that come forward for consideration. To facilitate the final outcome of this process, the City Council does need to demonstrate to potential bidders how the Elland Road site might accommodate an arena facility. This will enable bidders to develop their proposals on an informed basis.

2.18 Accordingly, the masterplan proposals that have been developed have taken account of the uncertainty over any arena proposal for the site and therefore are based on a common infrastructure that can accommodate development proposals either with or without an arena.

2.19 **Masterplan proposals**

Taking account of the points considered above, draft masterplan proposals have been developed that seek to achieve the stated objectives detailed in paragraph 3.2. The draft public summary proposals that are presented in Appendix 1 are the outcome of an iterative process that has tested a number of development scenarios for the site and concluded with proposals both with and without an arena.

2.20 The preferred solution emerges from:

- An analysis of how best to accommodate the various requirements of the key development components together with associated car parking, access and movement.
- An understanding of how development opportunities may be best exploited to meet aspirations and to enhance the reputation of this site for leisure purposes.
- An assessment of how the land footprint configuration can best serve the objectives set by the brief.
- Cognisance of the current planning policies and their application to this site in the context of its regeneration potential.

2.21 The key features to draw out of the draft proposals presented are:

- The existing low grade car parks to the south of Elland Road are brought forward for development as residential sites, with the option that the site of the former greyhound stadium be considered as a replacement Police Head Quarters following the closure of Millgarth Police Station. An appropriate landscaping scheme would be incorporated to provide appropriate separation and buffering between the new development sites and the remainder of the Elland site. This proposal should make a significant impact on improving the quality of the local environment and provide a clear separation between the leisure/football activities, with ancillary car-parking, to the north of Elland Road and the residential area to the South.
- The site to the north of Elland Road would be accessed via a new access road, which will afford access from both the eastern and western approaches.
- The introduction of appropriate traffic management and environmental treatment of Elland Road and the local catchment area to limit the potential for on street car parking and 'rat running'. Final proposals could include the provision of expanded residents' parking Zones together with other solutions which could be secured by a transport access plan.
- The development of formally laid out car parking with capacity for circa 2,750 cars
- The development of an enhanced transport hub to the east of the stadium site with park and ride facilities and match day coach parking.
- The provision of sufficient space around the perimeter of the football ground to enable any remodeling or expansion of the facilities at some point in time in the future, should the demand arise and proposals be forthcoming.
- The development of a comprehensive series of leisure facilities on the site adjacent to the existing football ground including hotel(s), a casino, ancillary food and drink facilities and a health club in compliance with planning policy.

- The provision of a 12,500 seat arena with associated conference space, should Elland Road be determined as the most appropriate site through a competitive procurement process .
- The provision of sufficient space around the Elland Road Stadium to not prejudice its potential for expansion at some point in the future, for either international tournaments, or the football club's future needs.

2.22 **Next Steps**

Subject to Executive Board approval, it is proposed that the Council undertakes a preliminary public consultation exercise to help further inform the draft masterplan proposals outlined. This public consultation exercise will take place in April and May 2007 and will help to finalise the masterplan for approval by the Chief Strategy and Policy Officer. In the context of the Planning & Compensation Act of 2004, this will be 'informal' guidance which will assist in the assessment of detailed development proposals, including any arena proposals that come forward for Elland Road for consideration alongside any schemes on alternative sites that might be brought forward.

2.23 In addition, in view of the development pressure on the site, officers will need to continue to liaise with the other stakeholders with land interests in the area and the West Yorkshire Police Authority. Consequently, once a preferred site for an arena has been determined, officers will need to come back to Executive Board indicating how any development proposals can be implemented.

3.0 **Consultation**

3.1 The proposals presented in this report have been developed in consultation with Leeds United AFC, Stanley Leisure, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority and Yorkshire Forward. In addition, the Ward Members for Beeston & Holbeck have also been consulted prior to this report being finalised. The Ward Members for Beeston & Holbeck have asked the following views to be brought to Executive Board's attention:

- The Ward Members feel that car parking capacity should not fall below that which is currently available
- That any capital receipt generated by the Council should be reinvested in Beeston & Holbeck
- That as part of any development that takes place a full environmental management plan for the area should be implemented
- That, as part of any proposals, employment initiatives are implemented to ensure that any jobs created help to alleviate unemployment in the local area

4.0 **Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 Subject to a masterplan proposal being ultimately agreed, the end document will offer informal guidance to assist future development proposals that come forward for the site.

5.0 Risk Management

5.1 There are a number risks associated with the proposals outlined in this report. If the Council does not move forward with the development of a masterplan for the site it is exposed to the risk of incremental development pressure on the site. In turn, this could lead to an inappropriate development in a key gateway location for the city. Should the Council progress with the development of a masterplan, it is exposed to the potential that any proposals coming forward do not meet the aspirations of one or more of the third party/public stakeholders with an interest in the development of the site. It is proposed that this risk is best managed through a public consultation process.

6.0 Legal and resource implications

6.1 Financial provision to undertake the initial consultation service will be met from existing resources held by the Development Department.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Elland Road is a key regeneration site in the City in need of development. Any development proposals brought forward need to improve the quality of the physical environment for local residents and enable the site to enhance its contribution to the City's economy. In view of the current development pressures on the site, it is considered appropriate, at this time, to bring forward draft masterplan proposals for the site for public consultation and to consider the views expressed prior to finalising a preferred development mix.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Members of Executive Board are asked to:

- Agree to officers procuring consultants to undertake a preliminary public consultation exercise on the draft masterplan proposals contained in Appendix 1.
- Agree to officers developing an informal planning statement for the site, taking account of the outcome of the public consultation exercise.
- Request officers report back to Executive Board with a revised masterplan/ planning statement produced, prior to inviting bids from developers for their arena proposals.
- Request officer report back to Executive Board with proposals for how any development of the Elland Road site may be brought forward once the preferred site for an arena development has been identified.

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Elland Road Masterplan – Towards a Preferred Masterplan Framework Solution.