

# LEEDS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## CORE STRATEGY

### ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: SHAPING THE FUTURE

(23rd October - 4th December 2007)

## SUMMARY REPORT OF CONSULTATION

September 2008

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Leeds City Council is preparing the Core Strategy to set out the vision for the future development of the Leeds District. It is a spatial plan which will at a strategic level show the location and type of land use change over the next 20 years. This is a summary of the findings from a six week programme of consultation from 23<sup>rd</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007, on the Core Strategy Issues and Alternative Options stage. A full detailed report is also available (approximately 90 pages).

### 2. METHODS OF CONSULTATION

The main document and other supporting documents were made available at the Development Enquiry Centre, the Central Library, and all local libraries and One Stop Centres across the Leeds District. They were also published on the Council's website at [www.leeds.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/ldf) or could be obtained by contacting the Council. The Core Strategy consultation was publicised through adverts in the press, direct contact, posters in libraries and Council buildings, an article in the Council's newspaper 'About Leeds' which was sent to all households, Leeds Older People's Forum newsletter and website, and questionnaires sent to Morley High School.

Direct contact was made with a range of stakeholders through a number of events and outreach work. Following a major conference for business stakeholders and other local and regional partners, there were a series of public consultation 'drop in' events held in thirteen locations. There were at least one in each inner and outer wedge, plus one in the city centre, and sessions at shopping centres were particularly popular. Staff were on hand to explain and discuss the different options. Council officers also attended a range of forums and partnership meetings, with youth groups, older people, and groups concerned with equality and diversity.

Residents and stakeholders could give their views by completing a questionnaire, by writing in additional comments via letter or email, or by speaking to staff at the exhibitions.

### 3. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Overall 385 representations were received, many of which were in-depth and showed great awareness of the issues and challenges involved.

#### Climate Change

The majority wanted all new development to be designed according to sustainable construction principles, and to have a challenging target for renewable energy, reducing emissions, and adapting to climate change. There were concerns over how this would impact on the viability of developments. Many people had very strong feelings about not building homes in high flood risk areas, including the developers' consortium (as this would encourage building on greenfield land instead). Some argued that flood areas should be left undeveloped to provide greenspace.

## **Environment**

A very high majority supported increasing the quantity of greenspace by requiring new development to provide it, building on poor quality greenspace in favour of improving quality elsewhere, and protecting and enhancing natural habitats.

A very high majority wanted to protect the built heritage and character across Leeds, rather than only in designated areas, and agreed that creative and distinctive design should be encouraged in appropriate locations. However, protection of historic environments must be properly justified as they can be combined with new, innovatively designed development to create distinctive places. Several respondents suggested that designs should also promote eco-friendliness, in terms of use of energy and materials, biodiversity, and local use.

## **Waste**

It was felt that more needs to be done to minimise waste at its source, e.g. reducing packaging and not providing plastic bags (particularly by supermarkets). More could also be done to help individual households recycle. Most people felt waste facilities should be in commercial/industrial areas, with support also for small-scale facilities in residential and rural areas e.g. for recycling.

## **Regeneration**

A majority supported the current approach to identifying regeneration areas: i.e. high levels of deprivation; poor health; poor education; poor conditions of housing and environment; high crime; high unemployment; areas with little private investment; and areas already designated for regeneration. Few new criteria were suggested. These were: a lack of greenspace; vacancy rates; areas with student or refugee communities; and areas with poor access to public transport.

Many new regeneration areas were suggested: Pudsey; Otley; Headingley; Woodhouse; Holt Park; Guiseley; Micklefield; Kippax; Allerton Bywater; Barnbow (Vickers) site; Crossgates; rural communities, Kirkstall to Horsforth; Bramley; Kirkstall Road; Leeds/Bradford Corridor; Chapeltown; Harehills; Sheepscar; and Belle Isle

## **Housing**

A majority favoured concentrating new housing in the urban area, although housebuilders believed building on greenfield land is necessary to address the need for housing. Some respondents felt there is no room for further housing within urban areas. Other respondents suggested that new greenfield housing development could provide new quality greenspace.

Most would accept higher housing densities, particularly in the city centre, town centres and at other transport nodes, but less so on the edge of the city centre. A widely shared response is that there are too many apartments and additional family housing is needed. Generally, housebuilders think that the Council should not set out the sizes or mix of dwellings. Any control over housing mix would need regular review.

There was support for all proposed methods of increasing affordable housing, including higher targets, lower thresholds, village exception sites and land release. However, housebuilders questioned the robustness of the Council's evidence on the housing market, and that viability of development must not be harmed.

A majority of 'tick box' respondents preferred extension of Cottingley Springs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. However, most of those making written comments preferred either smaller sites, or listening to the preferences of Gypsies and Travellers themselves (who also favour smaller sites).

## **Employment**

An equal response was given to whether sites for employment need to be widely distributed to be locally accessible or concentrated in areas favoured by business. Most felt that both options would be required due to the different types of employment.

A high majority favoured protection of the best employment sites, protection of sites for certain employment uses, use of agreements to provide affordable business premises, and use of agreements to secure local training and recruitment. Developers did consider that the market needed flexibility, and that policies which required such agreement across all sites would be contrary to government guidance.

A high majority felt that rural areas need to be treated separately from urban areas. However, some respondents were concerned that development of rural employment should not be at the expense of greenfield land.

### **Town Centres**

A majority supported the existing hierarchy: i.e. the city centre; town and district centres; and local centres. Interest groups also proposed that LCC should support local shops and assist shopping parades to be viable. It was noted that there needs to be a distinction between town and district centre, and that more detail needs to be provided as to their role and opportunities. Retailers considered the hierarchy should acknowledge the role of existing, accessible, out-of-centre locations, plus locations that could be well served by a choice of means of transport. There also needs to be a recognition that some centres are on the District's boundary and can fulfil a service role for areas outside Leeds, and vice versa.

There were a great many suggestions as to locations for new centres or changes in the designation of centres across the District. Developers also suggested that local centres suitable for expansion or intensification should also be identified.

Most agreed with options to intensify or expand particular town centres, although there were doubts over the expansion of Kirkstall and Otley. However, this is likely due to confusion that this would involve developing on greenfield sites, which is not what was intended by the Council. Additional centres were also proposed for intensification or expansion, and it was commented that the potential expansion of Leeds City Centre should be identified.

Most favoured keeping the existing out-of-town shopping centres (Colton, Owlcotes, White Rose, and Killingbeck) as they are, rather than integrating them into the community. Diversification should only be allowed if linked to better public transport, for housing, or for smaller and local businesses. However, developers and retailers promoted diversification and expansion. In particular, the owners of White Rose considered it could be part of wider regeneration in south Leeds.

### **Community Facilities**

The majority said that major cultural facilities should be in the city centre, edge of city centre, and outside of the city centre but highly accessible by public transport. It was noted that different types of facility will have different requirements, so location will depend on factors such as use, land area, and access requirements. It was also noted that in reality many people will travel by car so sites would need good motorway access.

There was great support for all the options to improve health and well being, including providing greenspace, improved public sports facilities, cycling and walking routes, allotments, and an accessible network of health facilities. Particular points included that activity should be built into daily routine, and that improvements in public transport and associated reduction in car use are essential in order to help improve health. Encouraging local food production would reduce traffic and environmental impact.

There was a great majority of support for all the education proposals; schools and colleges to make their facilities available for wider community use; locating schools where they are most accessible to the communities they serve (particularly so that children can walk to school); and encouraging the location of new further education provision within the city centre and town and district centres.

## **Transport**

There was high support for park and ride, particularly on high volume traffic corridors and where close to rail stations, and where the whole journey cannot be completed by public transport. There was high support for more local rail stations, although with better integration of transport modes and bus priority measures needed. There was widespread support for car free areas, parking management, safe and accessible walking and cycle routes, travel plans, and low emission zones. Only a third were in favour of road user charging. Generally, it was felt that all these measures need to be brought together to be effective.

The majority preferred that Leeds Bradford Airport should expand to serve those living and working within and beyond the Region, rather than only within it. However, many also noted that they did not want any expansion, and that the question should have allowed for this option. This was mainly because of the increased level of emissions from expansion and its subsequent impact on climate change, and the poor location. Overall, if expansion were to go ahead, the great majority would only want this if mitigation measures were put in place for noise, and if public transport was improved, including a rail link. Those in favour of expansion commented that the airport is important to the local and wider economy; it does have a valuable role for short-haul flights; and that if people use Leeds Bradford it cuts down travel to other airports.

## **Scenarios for the Overall Future Development of Leeds**

There was greatest support for Scenario 2 'Compact City', as it allows concentration on areas with good public transport, and will also reduce the need to travel and the need to extend the urban area outwards. The second favourite was Scenario 4 'New Urban Neighbourhoods', as it would ensure development is spread across Leeds in a more sustainable manner, would provide enhanced communities and would reduce commuting. Developers generally favoured Scenario 3 'Dispersed Development Hubs' as it provides more choice of locations, and greenfield land which is easier to develop. Alternatively, there were many suggestions of further combinations including methods for phasing, generally from Scenario 2 into Scenario 4.

Generally it was considered that in order to be assessed the scenarios need a better evidence base including how the required housing and employment figures could fit into them. This includes more information about the potential need for development on greenfield land, including greenspace within existing urban areas. There also needs to be more clarity about regeneration in the 'Leeds Bradford corridor'.

## **General Comments**

The Core Strategy should be more spatial and specific to Leeds, and recognised as a series of places. It should also pay more consideration to the strategies of neighbouring authorities and the role of nearby towns and cities. A number of developers or agents promoted specific sites for development.

Teenagers considered that scenarios 3 or 4 was best, that new housing should be built on brownfield land, and there should be a mix of house types with more needing to be affordable. There should be excellent public transport with facilities located where everyone can get to them.

## **4. NEXT STEPS**

Responses to the Issues and Alternative Options will be considered and used to help prepare the Preferred Options document, which is anticipated to be published for public consultation in winter 2008/Spring 2009. There will be a further period of consideration following this consultation before the final proposed Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State later in 2009 alongside another round of public consultation.

Further information about the Core Strategy is available by emailing [ldf@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@leeds.gov.uk), visiting our website [www.leeds.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/ldf) or by telephoning a member of the Core Strategy Team on 0113 247 8075. Your details can be put on our consultation database, ensuring that you are automatically notified at each stage of formal consultation.