

# LEEDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

DJL/1058  
13 April 2011

Aire Valley Leeds Consultation  
Forward Planning & Implementation  
Leeds City Council  
2 Rossington Street  
Leeds  
LS2 8HD

Dear Sirs

## **AIRE VALLEY LEEDS AREA ACTION PLAN: INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE EMERGING PROPOSALS FOR THE DRAFT PLAN FEBRUARY 2011 : COMMENTS ON THE CHANGES BY THE LEEDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The following comments have been prepared by the Leeds Sustainable Development Group (LSDG), a network of individuals who share a commitment to the future of Leeds. We note from your brief document published in February this year that a written document is to be prepared which will give more detail on the proposals and planning policies for the area and we will have the opportunity to comment on a consultation draft of the Area Action Plan when it is published "next year". The LSDG was not in existence when the last major consultation took place in 2007 and, as the main purpose of the brief document is to announce that the boundary of the plan area has changed (and that some of the sites are now planned for other uses), our comments are limited to the changes to the boundary of the plan area in relation to the city centre, as defined in the LCC's UDP.

The LSDG previously provided representation on the South Bank Draft Planning Statement, issued in October 2010 (LSDG letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010). Our comments were very much related to the area of the City Centre South that not only extends beyond the South Bank area defined in the Draft Planning Statement but also extends beyond the area of the City Centre as defined in the UDP (see the plan in the LSDG leaflet entitled 'Leeds City Centre South: A Huge Opportunity' published in June 2010, as attached).

We consider that there is a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' offered by the many large scale, vacant or under-utilised sites south of the River Aire, mostly located within the city centre boundary, to plan for a mixed-use, environmentally-sensitive, socially and culturally sustainable urban development, both in and beyond Leeds city centre.

The extension of the AVLAAP area, including the area defined in the South Bank Draft planning statement but excluding the remaining area of the city centre as defined by the LCC's UDP, will severely compromise the opportunity currently available to properly consider and plan for the future for our city centre. The combination of the isolated areas of current planning consideration within the Holbeck Urban Village plan to the West of the city centre and now within the AVLAAP to the East of the city centre, leaves significant areas disconnected and with no apparent planning status (see the attached plan entitled 'Leeds City Centre South', showing the various fragmented planning boundaries and the significant area left over). This fragmented approach to the planning and development of our city centre will compromise the delivery of a viable framework for the sustainable development of Leeds City Centre South.

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A positive benefit could be obtained by integrating the city centre with any consideration of the adjacent existing communities and now the proposed Aire Valley settlements as there needs to be sufficient connectivity to enable these communities to directly benefit from the future development of the Leeds City Centre South Area.

There is a huge opportunity for Leeds to change and progress by choosing to take sustainable development seriously by making the required radical change in the way we plan for the future. We believe that the holistic development of Leeds City Centre on the south side of the river should be managed in a strategic way to create the framework for an integrated, logical, attractive and sustainable future mix of development. The challenge is that such a long term approach to realising mixed use, environmentally sensitive, socially and culturally varied development and a sustainable solution will need some innovative thinking about land ownership, financial arrangements and delivery structures. This may be achieved either by including the leftover parts of the city centre within the revised AVLAAP boundary or bringing forward a separate holistic plan for the City Centre South Area including the South Bank area, in parallel with the AVLAAP. While the latter is our preference, we do see the value of integrating City Centre South with 'feeder' communities in the Lower Aire Valley, benefiting from any comprehensive infrastructure funding approach – conversely, realising the potentially higher values in City Centre South could generate funding to help drive forward infrastructure development further East.

In summary, the benefits of a holistic approach to the area defined as Leeds City Centre South are as follows:

- a comprehensive approach to the wider south city area which follows the current physical boundaries of the railway lines/motorway etc that does not create new artificial barriers (along Hunslet Road)
- an opportunity for new funding mechanisms in the wider south city area e.g. TIF (Tax Increment Financing)
- a 'joined up' approach for economic infrastructure beyond the City Park e.g. roads, green corridors, utilities, schools.

We trust that our representation, although submitted beyond the date in your February document, will receive due consideration and we hope that we can promote an enhanced way of working in partnership with yourselves, so that we can develop ideas in a co-operative and constructive dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Yours sincerely

DAVID LUMB  
LSDG Co-ordinator  
For and on behalf of  
Leeds Sustainable Development Group