

ANNEX D

DRAFT CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS ON THE LRC MASTERPLAN; STAGE 2

Strategic framework

(to be sent to LRC and their consultants)

The following are the comments that have been received from Officers and Members of the City Council in relation to the Stage 2 report and presentations. It is important that they are given appropriate consideration as we move forward into stages 3 and 4 of the masterplan process. They are broadly consistent with comments received during the public consultation.

Firstly, I would like to thank you very much for all the work that has gone into stage 2 . Generally, the response has been positive, with the exception of moving the market. Secondly, I would like to set out the flavour of the responses received from the series of presentations and discussions on Stage 2.

The Stage 2 work was welcomed, in particular the sound socio economic analysis that underpins the emerging framework. The Council issued a press release ahead of the public exhibition that sets out its position. In the Press Release, The Cabinet Lead on Regeneration expressed, support for partnership working and intervention to deliver the vision for the City; support for working together with the LRC to see how the vision can be delivered; concern that the masterplan must deliver city wide benefits and that the consultation marks the start of the debate about the future. However, there were several important issues raised that will need to be addressed in Stages 3 and 4. The main issues that need to be addressed are;

Transport

Stage 2 ideas are broadly consistent with the LTP and we are aware that the travel surveys are underway with results from the modelling expected in September. However, there is concern that at present, insufficient consideration has been given to how the traffic generated by the development proposals will be accommodated, particularly in terms of public transport networks and impact on other routes/pressure for new links. It was considered that the report could usefully give greater emphasis to the role of buses in relation to city centre access. There has also not been much work on the impact and feasibility of downgrading the ring road. In addition, much remains to be done in working up ideas for the major transport interchange at the London Road Station, particularly in relation to other interchanges in the City and bus routes.

Consultation

Both Members and officers are concerned that whilst three days in the Shires is an excellent opportunity it is not enough. Further ongoing opportunities for public consultation will need to be arranged and this is underway with advice from the City Council.

Housing

With regard to affordable housing policy, the LRC, in consultation with the Council, has agreed to prepare a report on progress with the moratorium on affordable housing. It was considered that the masterplan should make clear that affordable housing would be sought within the LRC area when the moratorium ends, subject of course to the viability of individual schemes. A forthcoming Housing Needs Survey commissioned by the City Council is anticipated to identify a surplus of smaller social housing units in and around the LRC area, and a significant shortfall of larger family social rented housing (4+ beds). The significant growth of Leicester's retail and leisure sectors proposed in the masterplan may move this situation on again, and comment on addressing the housing needs of the relatively low-paid workers in these industries would be welcome.

With regard to market housing, a comment was made that there may be a need for executive family housing in the LRC area to attract high earners to this location. The likely demand for family housing in St George's North was questioned, but on balance it has been agreed that people could be retained in the City Centre after starting families if there were high quality support service available, particularly education and health. Comment on mechanisms to deliver such high quality services is anticipated in later stages of the masterplan.

Leisure and Heritage

There was little coverage in the report of leisure /visitor aspects, nor heritage. There is a need to determine a sustainable level of visitor attractions and an appropriate level of hotel accommodation. There is also a need to ensure that new visitor attractions complement existing and committed schemes. The proposed Cultural Tapestry facility should not duplicate existing or proposed provision. It was suggested that the prospects for delivering the Cultural Tapestry would be improved if it could be accommodated within an existing facility rather than as a new stand-alone feature. The proposed HLF funded extension to New Walk Museum was suggested as a potential location.

The need for development schemes to provide heritage trails was mentioned.

Performing Arts Centre and Cultural Quarter

Locating one of the proposed cultural quarter projects on the police station site on Charles Street was welcomed. Because of time constraints, it is unlikely that this would be the Performing Arts Centre.

Links to other Projects

The report and early drawings do not fully reflect complementary projects including, "Old Town", the Shires extension, DMU, University and hospitals.

Riverside

Apart from the marina ideas there was a feeling that not enough has been made of the potential of riverside locations for new development, especially residential.

Relocations

There was concern that the Masterplan should identify relocation sites for displaced uses such as businesses in the Frog Island and St Georges north areas.

Other concerns, public realm/local benefits

An area that it is anticipated will be covered in stages 3 and 4 is the issue of developer contributions and public realm improvements. Some strong mechanism to ensure even handed contributions to the public realm, such as bridges, will be essential.

An issue that Members feel particularly strongly about is the quality of development and benefits for local people. As you are aware, the Leicester Partnership has asked the City Council and LRC to prepare something like a “code of practice” that it proposes should be adopted by LRC and the Council. This would cover building standards, best sustainability/environmental practice and links to jobs, training and local sourcing.