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# St Peter's Lane Area Strategy Guidance

## **1 Introduction**

This guidance concerns the St Peter's Lane area of Leicester City Centre, lying between the Shires Shopping Centre and the Central Ring Road. It is presently characterised by a mix of industrial, commercial and retail uses with a significant proportion of vacant sites and underused buildings.

The Masterplan produced by the Leicester Regeneration Company in November 2002, and in particular its proposal to create a new retail circuit in the City, together with a recently identified need for more retail space in the city centre has raised the prospect of further significant retail investment in this area, presently covered by the St Peters Lane Area Strategy Guidance (April 2000). This guidance is now being updated and reissued to ensure that potential investment delivers maximum benefits for the City as a whole.

This document provides advice on the type and form of development that will be acceptable within the area. The guidance has been subject to public consultation and Committee approval and is now adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

## **2 Description and Analysis**

### **2.1 Location**

The St Peter's Lane area is located within the city centre adjacent to the Shires shopping centre. The whole area is within 500 metres of the Clock Tower (the City's perceived central point), and within a similar distance of the river. It incorporates St Peter's Lane, Freeschool lane, Causeway Lane and part of Highcross Street. (See Diagram 1)

### **2.2 History**

The area lies within the town walls of both Roman and Medieval Leicester. Documentary evidence records the presence of substantial buildings located within the area, notably St Peter's church that is thought to have stood north of St Peter's Lane close to its junction with Freeschool Lane. Highcross Street was the main north-south thoroughfare of the town from the medieval period onwards. Elements of this heritage most obviously survive in buildings such as the listed 16<sup>th</sup> century Old Grammar School, and are reflected in the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century frontages along Highcross Street. It is also possible that previously unrecognised historic remains may survive as upstanding remains behind the facades of later buildings.

Archaeological investigations within the area have revealed well preserved Roman, medieval and post-medieval remains, underlining the importance of the area to the urban history of the city.

Little now survives above ground to reflect this importance. The construction of the Central Ring Road in the 1960's swept away much of the old town and opened up opportunities for new development. Many of the existing buildings in the area date from this period.

### **2.3 Current Uses and Ownership Pattern**

The area is predominantly in commercial use with general industry, offices, car parking some warehousing and retail, including the Shires shopping centre as well as leisure uses. Many existing buildings to the north of the Shires shopping centre are underused, reflecting changes in commercial/business requirements over the last 30-40 years. Land ownership is mainly private. The City Council does however own a number of sites and buildings, the most significant of which is the site of the former St Margaret's Baths. The remainder are subject to long ground leases granted by the City Council.

### 2.4 Townscape

This area is dominated by the Central Ring Road which severs and truncates many of the streets and divorces the city centre from the river. The clearance associated with the construction of the Ring Road has disrupted the historic urban grain, leaving a disjointed street pattern.

The built form across the area includes small 2 storey terraced properties, purpose built factories, several large 1960's offices and new buildings such as the 6 storey office block on Causeway Lane.

There are few significant 'Gateways' into the area sandwiched as it is between the primary shopping area and the Ring Road. There are several access points onto the Ring Road but none give any particular sense of arrival to, or departure from the area. (See Diagram 2)

### 2.5 Environment

Very high traffic flows on the central Ring Road (c.60,000 vehicles per day) generate localised environmental problems in respect of air quality and noise. Both these pollutants are found in proximity to the Ring Road at levels that exceed acceptable national standards. Much of the land covered by this guidance falls within the Air Quality Management Area. Existing air quality, and the need to improve air quality will influence the type and form of development that can be permitted.

## 3 Planning Context

### 3.1 City of Leicester Local Plan

The First Deposit Draft Local Plan 2001 is the most up-to-date statement of planning policy for the City. As many of the relevant policies are largely a continuation of policies set out in the Adopted Local Plan (1994), this guidance refers to the 2001 Deposit Draft unless stated otherwise.

St Peter's Lane is designated a Potential Development Area (PDA) in the adopted and first deposit revised Local Plan. Within PDA's it is the City Council's policy to encourage development, regeneration and refurbishment, by allowing a range and mix of land uses. For St Peter's Lane, Policy SPA01 considers the priority uses are retail (A1, A3), major leisure (D1, D2), offices (B1a, A2), and provision for bus operations in accordance with Local Plan policy SPA10. Other acceptable land uses include light industry, residential, hotel, education, and community facilities.

Other relevant Local Plan designations include the Central Commercial Zone, which the St Peter's Lane area lies within, and the Central Shopping Core that lies immediately adjacent to the area (see diagram 2). Sites within the Central Commercial Zone are favoured for key city centre uses and facilities including cultural, arts, tourist, leisure and office development. The Central Shopping Core and sites adjoining its edge are the preferred destinations for retail development.

### 3.2 Related Background Papers to the Local Plan

The Central Leicestershire Retail Study (CLRS), 2002 and the Masterplan for the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC) will inform the ongoing review of the Replacement Local Plan. It is intended that the CLRS together with other material information will form the basis for a retail strategy that will be adopted as SPG, building on or superseding the 1994 Central Leicester Retail Study, the 1997 Central Leicestershire Retail Strategy and 1998 Retail Site Assessment. It is intended that the Masterplan will be incorporated into the statutory planning framework through revisions to the Second Deposit Replacement Local Plan planned for 2003, and the preparation of SPG for key sites. Two further detailed retail studies are also underway focusing on the LRC area and the regional perspective, both are due to report in early 2003 and will also

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inform the Local Plan review and the retail strategy.

The Masterplan's Strategic Framework has already been subject to extensive public consultation and formally endorsed in principle by the Council. The principles contained in the Strategic Framework will therefore be regarded as a material consideration and given appropriate weight when considering any planning application.

### 3.2.1 The Central Leicestershire Retail Study 2002

The CLRS (2002) is yet to be published, however early indications suggest that by 2011 there will be an identified need for around 100,000m<sup>2</sup> additional comparison-shopping floorspace within the central Leicestershire area, the majority of which should be accommodated within Leicester city centre. The consultants also recommend that provision should take the form of either a major new comparison facility or an extension to one of the City's existing malls. Given the need for additional retail floorspace and the limited opportunities to accommodate it within the existing central shopping core, the shopping core boundary will be amended in the light of the CLRS findings. Diagram 2 shows the proposed extension to the central shopping core.

The review of the shopping core boundary has also been informed by the (adopted) Retail Site Assessment Study (1998). This work was commissioned by the Council to identify appropriate sites for retail development within the city-centre but outside the central shopping core. It concludes that the St Peters Lane area is an edge-of-centre site suitable for a comprehensive redevelopment scheme to include a mix of uses and a significant quantity of retail floorspace.

### 3.2.2 The Leicester Regeneration Company Masterplan

The LRC Masterplan Strategic Framework provides for the redevelopment of a large part of central Leicester. Five key projects are proposed including the consolidation and expansion of the City's retail circuit, which includes St Peter's Lane. Other important interventions include strengthening the link between the city centre and waterfront through a mix of active ground floor uses within and beyond this area, complemented by work to reduce the impact of the Ring Road, and the development of a prime office core at the railway station. The redevelopment of the St Peter's Lane area will play a key role in achieving some of these objectives.

Forecasts of anticipated outputs from the Masterplan interventions indicate that an additional 100,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail and leisure floorspace could be created in the city centre by 2016. This figure is derived from an assessment of the need for retail and leisure space after taking account of planned changes to the City's economy to be brought about through the other masterplan interventions. Further detailed research on anticipated city centre floorspace capacity (taking into account the masterplan proposals) is now underway, and initial indications from this study confirm that the Masterplan proposals are in line with the likely expenditure capacity that will be available to support growth. Moreover the emerging CLRS has also identified a need for significant additional comparison shopping floorspace within the central Leicestershire area, the majority of which should be accommodated in the city centre. Overall therefore it is clear that significant change and growth in the city centre is likely as a result of the LRC work and that there will be need and capacity for substantial additional retail space.

The amount of any retail floorspace in any scheme for St Peter's Lane will have to be considered at the time in relation to need (quantitative and qualitative), commercial viability and the requirements of a scheme that provides sufficient vitality and interest for visitors.

Redevelopment of the St Peter's Lane area for a scheme that is consistent with the guidance in this document and the LRC Masterplan is an important part of the City Council's and LRC's overall regeneration strategy for the city centre and will play a key role in maintaining and enhancing the City's competitive position.

### 3.3 Other Policies and Guidance

**National and Regional Guidance and Structure Plan policies** - Retail investment meeting an identified need in this area is consistent with Government policy advice contained in PPG6, RPG8 and relevant policies of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan, which seek to enhance the vitality and viability of Leicester as a shopping destination.

**Leicester City Council Community Plan** - Advice given in this document is consistent with the aims of the Community Plan, in particular the objective to promote and sustain the city centre as the focus of retail, commercial and leisure activity.

**High Street Conservation Area** – a small part of the site lies within the High Street Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings within the area (see diagram 2).

## 4 Vision and Aims

The purpose of this guidance is to help transform the St Peter's Lane area from its current marginal role to an integral part of a vital and vibrant city centre. Redevelopment of this site must contribute to the LRC Masterplan objectives of creating a strong retail circuit in the city and reintegrating the city centre with the riverside. This will be achieved by realising 6 key aims:

**Quality** – incorporating within the area quality designed buildings and spaces, and protecting and enhancing the historic qualities of the area to promote an attractive external environment. Attractive, active frontages must turn this area from inward facing to a series of appealing outward facing spaces.

**Place** – making a place that is memorable with a positive image.

**Mixed Use and Density** – encouraging a mix of vibrant and commercially viable uses that will contribute to the economic and social health of the city centre. A varied and intricate street life is one of the key indicators of a successful urban space.

**Connectivity and Accessibility** – improving links through the area and connections to the City Centre and waterside, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Movement should be through a series of safe and attractive spaces.

**Activity** – creating a place that is and feels busy. This is particularly important along main routes where active uses convey vibrancy and provide safe routes for pedestrians.

**Sustainability** – incorporating adaptable buildings and flexible layouts which can sustain a variety of uses and help buildings to change over time.

## 5 Guiding Principles

### 5.1 Comprehensive Development

Planning permission will only be granted where a comprehensive and coordinated approach to development can be demonstrated. In particular, the timescales for providing necessary infrastructure must be closely related to the needs generated by the development and its occupants. Development that would prejudice a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach will be resisted.

If necessary, the Council will use its compulsory purchase powers to enable comprehensive redevelopment of the area to proceed. It is likely that in order to achieve comprehensive redevelopment and the proper planning of the area, land currently within the City Council's ownership will have to be included.

The LRC may be able to assist in the relocation of occupiers on land that may be

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required for redevelopment.

### 5.2 Uses:

The St Peter's Lane area has previously been identified as an appropriate edge-of-centre location suitable for retail development. (Retail Site Assessment 1998, St Peters Lane Area Guidance, 2000 and Deposit Draft Local Plan 2001). Given the need for additional comparison-shopping floorspace demonstrated in the CLRS and the recommendation of how this should be accommodated (e.g. a new facility, or extension to an existing mall), the Council considers that this area is suitable for major comparison-retail development and therefore proposes the extension to the Central Shopping Core shown on Diagram 2.

For urban design and transport reasons the site is not considered suitable for traditional retail-warehouse schemes and such proposals will be resisted.

As an extension to the Central Shopping Core, the following uses may also be considered appropriate:

#### 5.2.1 Leisure and Recreation use and Food and Drink

Leisure, recreation (D2) and food & drink (A3) uses are encouraged as part of a balanced mix of uses in the extended shopping core, providing they comply with Replacement Local Plan policy SPA06 which seeks to protect the predominantly retail function of the Central Shopping Core from excessive concentrations of non-retail uses.

#### 5.2.2 Offices

Offices for financial and professional services (class A2) will be acceptable as part of a balanced mix of city-centre type uses providing they meet the provisions of policy SPA06 outlined above.

Modest class B1a office proposals may be acceptable if they do not occupy space at ground level in predominantly retail areas. However, in order to support emerging LRC Masterplan proposals for a prime office core at the railway station, the Council is seeking to concentrate all new major office provision at that location. Major office proposals (1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more) in the St Peter's Lane area will therefore be resisted. It is intended to introduce appropriate policies to support this approach through the ongoing review of the Local Plan.

#### 5.2.3 Residential Development

An increase in the residential population of the city centre is an important aim of the LRC Masterplan and residential use (both private market housing and affordable provision) in this area is therefore encouraged. In the interests of maintaining vitality and viability it is anticipated that residential use at ground floor level in predominantly retail areas will be avoided.

#### 5.2.4 Other uses

Other appropriate uses set out in the Local Plan include education and community uses. Again, predominantly retail areas should be protected from non-retail frontage at ground level.

### 5.3 Movement

#### 5.3.1 Integration with the Wider Area

Comprehensive redevelopment of the St Peter's Lane area presents opportunities to improve connectivity between the area and its surroundings, and create stronger links between the city centre and the riverside. The Council will expect to see such issues explored; in particular the LRC Masterplan proposals for the area to form an anchor of a new retail circuit and an extension to New Walk through the area should be a key feature

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of any redevelopment proposal. Development proposals that could prejudice a fully integrated retail circuit or the New Walk proposal will be resisted.

Redevelopment must deliver significant improvements to the pedestrian and cycling environment around and through the area to link the City Centre to other areas. It must also ensure that the needs of the whole community are addressed (i.e. there are no barriers for people with disabilities, restricted mobility or young children). Further details are provided in the Urban Design section.

### 5.3.2 Dealing with Traffic Growth Pressures

Further significant retail investment in the city centre will bring substantial benefits through the consolidation of Leicester's role as an important regional shopping destination. Major retail schemes are travel intensive and it is appropriate to locate them in central or edge-of-centre locations such as this area where they may be reached by all means of transport, and are highly accessible to public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists.

Nevertheless, significant retail development may bring increased demand to travel to the centre, with the potential for associated problems of increased traffic congestion and pollution. St Peter's Lane is within a designated air quality management area where efforts to improve air quality through traffic reduction/management measures are required. In accordance with Local Plan Policy AM10, a transport assessment will be required to accompany proposals for large-scale travel intensive development (those which could create an increase in traffic on the adjacent highway of 5% or more). The Assessment should include measures to mitigate traffic growth and promote a shift away from car travel.

The types of measures the Council will expect to see addressed in any Transport Assessment include:

- Avoiding unnecessary additions to the parking stock; instead contributions toward the provision of alternatives including improved bus services, additional Park & Ride, and cycle infrastructure including secure cycle parking facilities should be considered.
- Management agreements on any new car parking space promoting short-stay only during the day time, with extended evening parking to support the night time economy of the city and Sunday parking as necessary, with appropriate charging regimes.
- Provision of secure parking for powered two-wheelers
- Provision for staff parking in accordance with the reduction targets set out in the 'Vehicle Parking Standards' SPG, i.e. nil.
- Amending the variable message signing system serving city centre car parks take account of changed parking provision to make more efficient use of the existing stock and reduce queuing at popular sites.
- Improved bus access to this part of the city through operational changes and improved infrastructure.
- Provision of taxi rank(s) in appropriate locations. The Council may also seek to negotiate for the creation of a "taxi reservoir" outside but on the edge of the City Centre which would feed taxis to City Centre ranks when space became available
- Direction signing for pedestrians and cyclists
- Proposals should have regard to long-term proposals from the LRC and other groups to downgrade the Ring Road on the western side of the city and wherever possible assist in making this happen

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- Management of servicing activity in the area.

### 5.3.3 Air Quality Impact

In addition to a Transport Assessment, an air quality impact assessment may be required to identify changes in air quality associated with any predicted changes in traffic due to major redevelopment. This should include air quality modelling of the changes in air quality associated with redevelopment. Continuing air quality monitoring may be required. Detailed modelling requirements should be agreed with the Council's Pollution Control Group.

### 5.3.4 Car Parking

Comprehensive redevelopment of the area presents an opportunity to review private car access and parking arrangements in this part of the City. Changes in the way parking is provided should take account of wider redevelopment proposals in the area; specifically, the LRC proposals for investment along the riverside, including provision of a marina that may also generate demand for parking in this area.

Significant additions to the stock of city centre parking spaces would be contrary to Council policy. However, the Council would welcome proposals for new parking facilities that:

- Are based on the relocation of existing space in the area (St Peter's Lane NCP car park, Shires roof-top car park and on-street or ancillary surface parking space), and avoid unnecessary additions to the stock of city centre spaces,
- Designed and located to serve both the redeveloped St Peter's Lane area, and new development opportunities at the riverside, (mitigating the severance of the riverside from the city centre by the ring road)
- Fully integrated with the St Peter's Lane area and are readily capable of integration to potential new developments at the Riverside area, in order to further strengthen linkages between these areas,
- Consistent with the urban design strategy for the wider area,
- Avoid the need for cars to use High Street or new bus routes to access parking facilities; and,
- Ensure that parking continues to be available in the area operating 24hrs per day and easily accessible by pedestrians from all parts of the area.

### 5.3.5 Loading

Comprehensive redevelopment of the area also presents an opportunity to review the way servicing and loading is effected for this part of the City including within existing retail areas. Within the retail areas it will be expected that measures will be taken by the City Council to restrict this activity by time, unless it can be undertaken off-street and the access routes are not along shopping streets. In the rest of the area, particularly around, and to the north of, the required new bus route (see 6.1 below), access routes for loading and servicing must minimise and if at all possible avoid completely use of the roads forming the bus route. Potential conflict between bus operations and other vehicular movements must be controlled through traffic management measures.

## 5.4 **Retail Assessment**

PPG6 and subsequent Ministerial statements require a retail impact assessment for any new retail development of 2500m<sup>2</sup> or more. Applications for schemes above this threshold should be accompanied by such an assessment. Studies should show evidence for a sequential approach to site selection and an assessment of the impact of any proposals on the vitality and viability of Leicester city centre and town and district centres within the Central Leicestershire Policy Area (defined in the Structure Plan).



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Evidence of need for the development may also be required if development is proposed on the edge of or beyond the Central Shopping Core. Proposals in the LRC Masterplan to strengthen the retail circuit should be taken into account. Further details on the required scope of retail assessments may be obtained from the Council's Development Plans team.

In accordance with the 1993 Shopping Direction the Council must inform the Secretary of State of retail schemes over 2,500m<sup>2</sup> due to the amount of accumulated retail floorspace built within the last five years within ten miles of the site.

### **6 Developer Obligations**

#### **6.1 Off-site capital works**

As set out in Local Plan policy SPA01, the benefits of major retail-led mixed-use development in the St Peter's Lane area are recognised and appropriate proposals are encouraged by the City Council. The City Council wishes to ensure that benefits are realised and positively managed and any potential detrimental impacts are avoided or mitigated where appropriate.

The retail assessment required for major schemes will confirm the likely impact of proposals on the rest of the city centre. This information will form the basis for determining any necessary appropriate measures to ensure the wider city centre benefits from new investment. It is important that new floorspace is seamlessly integrated into the existing retail circuit through high quality links, both to ensure the long-term success of any new provision and to allow established areas to benefit from the increase in retail activity. Proposals for public realm enhancement work in surrounding areas to strengthen linkages back to the traditional shopping streets where necessary may be required. Subject to the findings of the retail assessment, the Council may seek developer contributions for such works.

Local Plan policy SPA10 requires proposals in the St Peters Lane PDA to provide a new east-west public transport route, to allow for the removal of buses from the High Street. Currently the presence of buses on the High Street and around the Clock Tower severs the Shires shopping centre from the rest of the City. Removing this barrier and improving the shopping environment in this area through extensive enhancement works on the High Street / Belgrave Gate corridor will be an important feature of comprehensive redevelopment proposals for St Peters Lane.

The Council is seeking to provide a two-way bus route through the area between St Nicholas Circle across Church Gate and onto Belgrave Gate. Developers will be required to deliver the section of this route from Vaughan Way in the vicinity of St Peter's Lane to Church Gate (within the PDA boundary). This should preferably follow the alignment of St Peter's Lane to Mansfield Street, but alternatives may be acceptable as part of a comprehensive scheme. Necessary infrastructure including bus stands, shelters and information displays will be required. The scale of the route and the infrastructure should allow not only for the replacement of the facilities currently in High Street / Belgrave Gate but should also allow for future growth including the accommodation of Park and Ride services.

If the transport assessment identifies a need for additional public transport infrastructure that cannot be accommodated within the St Peter's Lane area together with all of the displaced bus stands from High Street, a contribution may be sought for off-site provision. Further details on required landscaping works to High Street are given in section 7.

Provision of this link may open up new redevelopment opportunities around Mansfield Street. The Council will have regard to this prospect when reviewing the Central

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Shopping Core boundary.

In order to achieve the objective of seamless integration to the wider area, major enhancement work may be required in the following areas:

- High Street / Belgrave Gate (as above)
- Church Gate
- The Lanes area
- Market Place
- Gallowtree Gate
- Vaughan Way – The Council and LRC will be working to downgrade the ring road and undertake significant environmental improvements. Developers working in the St Peter's Lane Area will be expected to have regard to, and contribute towards, these works as appropriate.

Subject to the findings of the Transport and Retail Assessments, contributions may be sought for a range of transport related measures designed to provide attractive alternatives to car travel or to minimise the adverse effects of car usage set out in section 5.3, for the provision of the bus corridor and associated infrastructure and for the enhancement works as set out above. Developers are encouraged to make early contact with the Council to agree appropriate mechanisms to deliver those works not built as part of the development itself in the light of other funding that may be received.

### **6.2 Future Maintenance**

A commuted sum to allow for the maintenance of any landscaping schemes, new highways, pavements or urban hardware (lighting, street furniture etc.) the developer(s) wish the Council to adopt, together with existing areas which are the subject of enhancement works, will be sought. The sum should cover the maintenance of those areas for a period of ten years.

In respect of the existing public realm, the sum should recognise the increased maintenance burden brought about by higher rates of footfall in the area as a result of redevelopment.

### **6.3 Public Art**

The Council will seek to negotiate for 1% of the capital cost of any redevelopment proposals to be made available for the provision of public art within the scheme. The Council and its stakeholders are in the process of preparing a Public Art Strategy for the City, which should be completed towards the end of 2003. Developers should have regard to this strategy and are encouraged to make early contact with the Council's Public Art Manager to discuss an appropriate programme of provision. (Contact details are on page 16)

### **6.4 Local Labour Agreements**

The Council and its partners have established training programmes that aim to allow local people to access job opportunities created through major development proposals, both during the construction period, and when the development is completed. The Economic Development Group in the Council are able to provide details and advice of similar programmes, best practice and the appropriate approach to take with this initiative. (Contact details are on page 16)

### **6.5 Affordable Housing**

At least 30% affordable housing will be sought on developments of 25 or more dwellings or sites over one hectare although the precise amount will depend upon local and site specific circumstances, as is envisaged in Replacement Local Plan policy H06. Leicester's Housing Needs Survey Final Report (October 2002) recommends that over 86% of the annual new provision of affordable housing should be 'affordable rented' provision and the remaining element should be 'shared ownership' provision. Therefore, for each site the need for affordable housing for rent will be regarded as the priority, with shared ownership the next priority. Low cost market housing will only form the remaining part of the element of affordable housing once the need for rent and shared ownership has been met. In terms of appearance, design and quality the affordable housing dwellings should be indistinguishable from the appearance and quality of 'market sale' dwellings. The affordable element should also be 'pepper potted' throughout the development. Further details including the types, size and mix of affordable housing required are available from the Housing Development Team. Developers should also have regard to the requirements of Replacement Local Plan policies H07 (Access Housing) and H08 (Wheelchair Housing).

## **7 Urban Design Principles**

This section sets out the design requirements the Council will expect to be addressed in development proposals for the site

### **7.1 Design Statement**

The City Council will require a design statement (as outlined in Annex A of PPG 1) to be submitted with any future planning applications. This should include a written statement and accompanying plans, elevations and other supporting graphic material, setting out:

- how the design for a scheme has been worked up,
- the design rationale that has been followed,
- how the scheme fits into its wider surroundings and
- how it addresses the key urban design principles outlined below.

### **7.2 Overview - The city centre context**

The area has an important role in the future structure of the city centre. It is a principal entrance point to the city. It will anchor a corner of the proposed retail circuit. It will be a focal point on the proposed New Walk extension, forming a link between the city centre and riverside.

To fulfil this role new development should reflect the vision and aims for the site outlined in section 4 of; Connectivity and Accessibility, Mixed Use and Density, Quality and Place, Activity, and Sustainability.

### **7.3 Connectivity and Accessibility**

New buildings should be seamlessly integrated into the existing network of streets surrounding the St Peter's Lane area and where appropriate improve linkages across the area. A series of safe, attractive pedestrian routes will be required, to ensure permeability of the area itself and to adequately link this area with adjacent parts of the city, public transport routes, and the streets on the northern side of the ring road. Redevelopment proposals should address the need for new linkages to reinforce the area as a key part of a new retail circuit in the City, as envisaged by the LRC Masterplan.

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Three new principal pedestrian routes indicated on Diagram 3 are identified as a necessary requirement of major redevelopment proposals:

- *The New Walk extension*

The original section of the New Walk currently ends at Welford Place, next to the City Council Offices. The LRC Masterplan proposes to extend it to the waterfront to the northeast of the City Centre. Development within the St Peters Lane area will be required to deliver the extension from the end of Carts Lane, along High St and across the area to Vaughan Way in the vicinity of High Cross St.

New Walk, a 200-year-old tree lined pedestrian-only promenade has a nationally unique character that should be responded to in its extension. The Council will expect to see schemes that offer a contemporary interpretation of the promenade, and not merely a new city street. A simple palette of high quality materials will be required, appropriate to the style of architecture fronting onto the promenade. This could provide an exciting opportunity for contemporary and innovative design and use of materials. Appropriate tree planting, integral lighting and art work will be required, Early contact must be made with the LCC Public Art Manager and Urban Design team.

- *East - West Connection*

The requirements of a new east-west public transport link are set out in section 6. In addition to this bus route, an east-west pedestrian link will be required. The Council is seeking to provide a link from the Church Gate area to the riverside in the vicinity of St Augustine's. Developers will be required to provide a section of this route from Highcross Street near the Blue Boar site to Church Gate. It should recognise potential opportunities to create new pedestrian links through the Blue Boar site and on to Holy Bones/Welles Street.

Bus drop-off points on the new public transport route must be served by strong pedestrian links into redeveloped areas, to the Clock Tower and to the Haymarket/Belgrave Gate area. A link to reconnect the eastern end of New Bond Street to Churchgate and the Clocktower, incorporating appropriate enhancement works will be sought. Developers will be required to provide the parts of those links that fall within the area covered by this guidance

- *North of the ring road*

A pedestrian route will be sought from the centre of the site to its north-eastern edge on Vaughan Way, aligned to allow for a future connection to the All Saints area, as and when downgrading works to the ring road permit.

### 7.3.1 Existing linkages

To maintain and improve permeability through the area, development proposals must, where appropriate take account of the existing street pattern and acknowledge and reinforce its significance with new buildings. Highcross Street is an important historical route and its character should be respected. Opportunities to restore links with the section of Highcross Street to the north of the ring road should be explored. New development should positively address Causeway Lane, a further significant route.

### 7.3.2 All routes within the site should respect the following principles:

- All streets should terminate in other streets – culs-de-sac will not be acceptable.
- Although it need not be straight, street layout should be simple and clear to encourage through movement.
- There should be a variety of routes that people can choose when travelling

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through the area.

- A variety of uses should ensure that streets are overlooked throughout the day and evening to enhance safety and security, minimising opportunities for crime.
- Street design should reduce vehicle speed rather than ease traffic flow.
- Where appropriate, routes within the site should be designed to give clear priority to pedestrians, but allow vehicle access after shopping hours to support the evening economy.
- Streets should remain open 24 hours a day. However, closure of some routes for a brief period during the night to allow for essential maintenance may be acceptable as part of a walkway agreement.
- Servicing and vehicle manoeuvring areas should allow for forward egress and minimise conflict with pedestrians.

### 7.3.3 Disabled Access

Developers will be required to design and plan for the needs of disabled people and people with restricted mobility. Early contact with the City Council's Access Officer will be required. Developers will be required to follow the guidelines set out in the SPG 'Paving the Way'. The Access Officer can arrange consultation with organisations representing disabled persons as required.

### 7.3.4 Family Friendly access

Development proposals should ensure that there is a high standard of design in relation to the needs for families and those accompanying young children. Appropriate facilities should be provided and ease of movement enabled for example through the provision of crèche facilities, unisex baby changing facilities, small children's toilets, push chair/pram friendly routes/building layouts etc.

### 7.3.5 Car Park Design

Car Parking should be designed to 'Secured by Design' standards. Car parking access arrangements should be designed to minimise conflict with pedestrians.

Vehicular entrances and exits should be designed to minimise their impact on the public realm. Highly visible locations such as at the 'head of a road' should be avoided. Wherever possible entrances should be designed as an integral part of the built form, with buildings adequately enclosing and, where appropriate, spanning over the top of the entrance, in the form of an archway.

Vehicle access points off Vaughan Way could be designed in a grander way, making an architectural feature of the entrance.

Pedestrian access points need to be highly accessible and visible from the main public realm.

Multi-storey car parks, if proposed should be positioned to avoid being prominent features of existing views and vistas and should not have frontage onto key routes. If this is not possible, structures should be flanked by activity generating development, screened from view by "wrapping" development around them, particularly along important pedestrian routes. Any exposed elevations should be designed to high architectural standards using high quality materials. In addition the design must be flexible enough to accommodate alternative uses should parking requirements change in the future.

Surface Car Parking should be avoided wherever possible. Where unavoidable, these areas should be enclosed by built development (providing natural surveillance) and screened from the public realm. Ground level parking within buildings should also be avoided as this reduces the possibility of active ground floor uses and building frontages.

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Where this form of parking is unavoidable, it should be flanked by activity generating development fronting onto the public realm. Service areas should be screened in a similar way.

Basement Parking can be an effective way of providing adequate levels of parking, without affecting the delivery of high-density active development. The opportunities for providing this type of parking may be limited by archaeology, suitable access or other constraints, but opportunities should be explored wherever possible.

Internal design of the car park should ensure that motorists can easily and quickly find vacant spaces, especially when the car park is near capacity, to minimise external queuing.

### **7.4 Public Realm Improvements**

All streets and open spaces must be finished in high quality durable materials. To ensure seamless integration with existing retail areas, the quality of finish on the surrounding streets listed at 6.1 needs to be lifted to a similar standard. The Council has a programme of enhancement works that developers will be expected to contribute towards where appropriate.

The enhancement programme features surface treatment of high quality York stone paving, granite kerbs and 'tegular' block carriageways, and a new range of street furniture which developers will be required to adopt (further details are available from the Urban Design Team). The inclusion of high quality lighting products will be required.

Well-designed pedestrian and cycle crossings will be required to ensure that appropriate and adequate priority is given is afforded to these users of the area, and to encourage movement through and between different areas. Locations and details will be subject to agreement with the Council's Traffic Group. Cycle parking facilities should be provided at entrance point locations around the site. Facilities should be overlooked, secure and preferably offer some weather protection.

Where works to Vaughan Way are necessitated these should be designed to reduce the barrier and severance caused by its current operation. High quality surface level crossings should be provided where appropriate and a high quality appearance for the road provided through the use of appropriate materials and design.

The following issues must be addressed:

- An integrated approach to public realm design will be required. This includes co-ordinating the overall layout, access, hard and soft landscaping, lighting, street furniture and other urban hardware.
- Planting schemes will be required to form part of the structured landscape strategy for the area, to provide interest on streets, to soften buildings, to create structures and delineation, or to establish landmarks where necessary. All new planting must be designed sensitively within the street scene and subsequently managed to avoid undue concealment of retail frontages and signs.

### **7.5 Mix of Uses and Density**

The St Peters Lane area should become a vital, vibrant and visually exciting place. Density and mixed uses can promote a better quality environment by encouraging a diversity and 'critical mass' of activity on the streets throughout the day and night,

Appropriate uses are listed at 5.2. The Council does not wish to stifle market creativity by imposing quotas however residential development should form an integral part of redevelopment proposals and it is important that there should be a sufficient mass of residential development to avoid residents feeling as though they are isolated in an otherwise commercial area.

A mix of uses should be accommodated close to one another across the development, whilst recognising the need to protect the function of predominantly retailing areas.

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All buildings should front onto streets, and incorporate activity generating uses at ground floor where appropriate to provide surveillance of pedestrian routes. Frontages should be punctuated with frequent door openings. The principal means of access to buildings should be from the street.

Air Quality Management Area status means that careful attention must be given to the location and design of new residential development to minimise occupiers exposure to poor air quality and noise. Residential areas should be protected from late-night noise generating uses such as, nightclubs and loading areas, and from poor air quality areas, particularly in the vicinity of the ring road and car park access points. Existing residential use at Highcross Street could be consolidated. Residential use may also be appropriate in the more intimate environment around the Great Meeting School, East Bond Street. Whilst A3 uses need not be restricted, their scale and hours of operation may be controlled by condition to safeguard residential areas.

### 7.5.1 Density

Land in the City is a scarce resource. The Council will expect the density of development proposals to reflect the central and highly accessible character of this site. Proposals which consolidate ancillary land uses such as loading areas and car parking into a limited number of efficiently set out locations are encouraged.

Residential development should be built to a minimum density of 50 dwellings per hectare, but densities significantly higher than that will be encouraged subject to maintaining a high quality living environment.

### 7.5.2 Public Open Space

Developers will be required to contribute to the network, range and distribution of public open space within the city centre. Within the St Peters Lane area it is expected that public open space will generally take the form of hard landscaped squares, piazzas or linear spaces. All should be reinforced with public art, high quality street furniture and structured, appropriate tree planting.

A Landscape Strategy will be required to accompany planning applications to demonstrate how the open space within the St Peters Lane area connects with, and contributes to, the existing open spaces in the city centre, and which clearly identifies a design rationale for the provision of open space within the site itself.

Unstructured, or piecemeal "left over" areas of open space, which are neither functional nor meaningful, will not be accepted.

Redevelopment presents an opportunity to create a new urban square that the Council will expect to be explored. This could be located where key pedestrian routes cross. This must be of the highest quality of design, materials and landscaping. The design should encourage and facilitate activity within it and along its edges.

### 7.5.3 Private Open Space

Residential development should where possible incorporate private amenity space. Innovative designs such as roof gardens are encouraged. The BedZed development in the London Borough of Sutton is considered to be an example of good practice in this area

Where private space is to be provided at ground level there must be a clear distinction between public and private realm. Private areas should be screened from the public realm and afforded high levels of natural surveillance from surrounding development. Where possible, and in particular along key pedestrian routes private external spaces should not front onto the public realm, but where unavoidable, they must receive appropriate, high quality enclosure treatment, to ensure these areas present an acceptable frontage.

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### 7.6 Quality and Place

The scale, massing and architectural styles of the existing built form vary between different parts of the area. There are four distinct character areas that need to be individually addressed in the architectural design and urban design of redevelopment schemes. These are the Lanes, High Street, Vaughan Way and the area around East Bond Street

- New development should reinforce the distinctiveness of the Lanes by adopting complementary and contrasting styles.
- The quality of the pedestrian environment along High St will be greatly enhanced by the proposed significant reduction in traffic. New development should reinforce the use and perception of High St as a major city centre street.
- New development along Vaughan Way should acknowledge the importance of the Vaughan Way transport corridor as a key route and gateway into the city centre by providing a strong built frontage with suitably strong/grand corner designs, and address the larger scale environment with a massing and scale which is appropriate. Redevelopment proposals should also have regard to the LRC Masterplan aim to downgrade the ring road.

Note that the area around Vaughan Way presents significant scope for bold contemporary design.

- High Cross Street and the area around East Bond Street are more quiet and intimate areas. New buildings of a more domestic scale may be appropriate here.

All new development should adhere to the following design principles:

- A high quality of design will be required, with the use of form, scale, massing and materials in the design of buildings and external spaces, appropriate to the high profile of the area.
- Whilst acknowledging local context, diversity in building materials, individual expression and variety in architectural style is encouraged, although 'pastiche' design will not be acceptable
- Whilst uniform building height is not necessary, extreme differences in heights should be avoided. Taller buildings will be encouraged at key gateways, focal points and important corner buildings.
- Public areas (i.e. streets, squares, lanes etc) must be addressed by buildings containing active frontages (entrances, windows etc), Dead frontages must be avoided.
- New development at entrance points to the area should be distinctive and memorable emphasising a 'sense of arrival' and assisting people to orientate themselves.
- Development should maintain and where possible create new views and vistas into and out of the site to assist people to orientate themselves.
- Buildings should define routes through the development.
- Buildings should only be set back from the edge of pavements where new public spaces are proposed.
- Development should enhance safety, security and surveillance and minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Signage must be incorporated as an integral part of any design, especially 'shop front' signage.



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### 7.6.1 Conservation

The area is of historic importance and it will be necessary that an assessment be made of the character of the historic environment as a pre-requisite to informed decision making. In particular, part of the area falls within the High Street Conservation Area (Diagram 1) and consent is likely to be required to demolish buildings within this area. The Council has a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and would normally expect that buildings which contribute to the special character of the area are retained. The opportunity also exists to enhance the character of the area through sympathetic new development.

In addition, there are a number of buildings listed as being of architectural and historic importance on High Street and Highcross Street. Of particular importance is the former grammar school (Grade II\*) on Highcross Street, and just outside the area the Unitarian Chapel and Great Meeting School on East Bond Street. It is important that any new development takes into account the scale and context of the historic environment to ensure that it is sensitively incorporated into the new development. Early contact must be made with the Council's Building Conservation Officer.

### 7.6.2 Archaeology

The area lies within the 'Archaeological Alert Area' a zone defining the walled town, suburbs and cemeteries of historic Leicester. Early contact with the City Archaeologist will be required, to establish the need for, and character of any assessment of the potential archaeological resource.

Early archaeological advice may assist in the design of schemes, potentially limiting their impact upon preserved archaeological remains, and thus the scale of subsequent archaeological investigation and recording.

Given the potential importance and vulnerability of both buried and above ground archaeological remains, development proposals may require the completion of an archaeological impact assessment. This should comprise a documentary assessment of the known archaeological resource, and if necessary, a field evaluation of the affected area(s) to assess and clarify the character of any archaeological remains. Without this information it is unlikely that the local planning authority will be able to determine any planning application. On the basis of the submitted archaeological information, and the character of any proposed development, planning consents may be refused or conditioned to ensure that archaeological requirements are adequately incorporated into development proposals.

### 7.6.3 Community Safety

All aspects of design, the integration of new within existing development, measures to protect people and property and the perception of safety are all essential elements of good urban design. Early reference should be made to "Crime Prevention, by Planning and Design" (produced jointly by LCC and Leicestershire Constabulary, and now being reviewed), and early contact should be made with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer.

## 7.7 **Sustainable Development**

Leicester is committed to developing in a way that respects the needs of future generations, and the City Council maintains a checklist of sustainability criteria to help with decision-making. Further information can be obtained from the Environment Team/EMAS help line (0116 252 7258). Early contact with the Environment Team is required to discuss the requirements of the checklist.

### 7.7.1 Energy Efficiency

New buildings should demonstrate good practice in energy efficiency and water conservation. Residential development should achieve a National Home Energy Rating of 9 or above. Non-residential development should achieve a "very good" rating in terms

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of energy efficiency under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM 5/93). Development should use materials from sustainable sources where possible.

The City Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance – 'Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy in New Developments'. Developers should consult this at an early stage to ensure that their development proposals take account of its requirements.

## Contacts

### Planning advice is available from:

The Development Control Group  
Department for Environment Regeneration and Development  
Leicester City Council  
New Walk Centre  
LE1 6ZG  
For the attention of Andy Ward, tel. 0116 252 7264

### Other City Council Contacts are:

Planning Policy/LRC Masterplan	Diana Chapman	252 7251
Urban Design	Deborah Rose	252 7251
Traffic	Barry Pritchard	252 6522
Public Art	Jashia McArdle	299 5988
Building Conservation	Dave Trubshaw	252 7217
Access Officer	Pat Midson	252 7290
Employment Initiatives	Daxa Pancholi	252 8634
Housing	Martin Field	252 8713
Pollution Control	Catherine Mallon	252 6619
City Archaeologist	Richard Clarke	225 4969