

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: Castle

**STRATEGIC PLANNING & REGENERATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

9 May 2005

**ST.GEORGE'S NORTH & SOUTH
AREA STRATEGY GUIDANCE
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE**

Report of the Service Director, Environment

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report covers the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Local Plan, for the St. George's North and South area of the city centre.

2 Summary

- 2.1 St. George's North and South is situated in the east part of the city centre. It is the fourth of the Leicester Regeneration Company's major intervention areas called the New Community in their 2002 Masterplan. St. George's North is the Lee Circle area to the north of Humberstone Gate. St. George's South is to the south of Humberstone Gate and covers the area of the proposed 'cultural quarter'.
- 2.2 The SPG will be used to guide the design and layout of future development across the whole area and in particular will help to deliver 1,500 to 2,000 new dwellings of mixed tenure.

3 Recommendations

The Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's views are invited on the attached draft SPG.

4 Financial & Legal Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

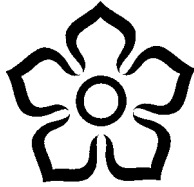
- 4.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications of this report.
Financial author R & C Head of Finance, Alan Tomlins 31.03.2005.

4.2 Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no immediate legal implications of this report.

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Report of the Service Director, Environment

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The attached draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is an Area Strategy Guidance (ASG) for St. George's North and South. The area covers one of the major 'intervention areas' identified in the Leicester Regeneration Company's Masterplan 2002. This Masterplan was subject to intensive public consultation, which influenced the strategy and confirmed support for the major proposals. The principles of the Masterplan were agreed by Cabinet in September 2002 and incorporated into the Draft Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan July 2003.
- 1.2 St George's South covers the area of the proposed Cultural Quarter. St George's North covers the 'New Community' intervention area proposed by the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC).
- 1.3 To enable a comprehensive approach for the whole of the area the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is for St. George's North (LRC intervention area New Community) and St. George's South (LCC Cultural Quarter).
- 1.4 When adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Plan, the SPG will provide planning guidance to help to determine any planning applications submitted to the City Council for this area and for Compulsory Purchase Orders sought as part of the delivery and land acquisition programme.

2. The LRC Development Framework

- 2.1 The LRC Development Framework (St George's North: New Community) draft was prepared in August 2004. This document includes aspirations for the area, a proposed urban structure, proposed land use and phasing to enable a sustainable community in the area for all including families.

- 2.2 The LRC draft Development Framework and the draft SPG were subject to a joint public consultation, which is detailed in paragraph 4 in this report and the appendices.
- 2.3 Following amendments as a result of the public consultation the LRC Development Framework will be presented to the LRC Board for endorsement on the 21st April 2005. The final Development Framework document will be published by the LRC.

3. The Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 3.1 This SPG document details the planning context and guiding principles for the whole of the St George's North and South area and includes the objectives and proposals in the LRC Development Framework.
- 3.2 When adopted the SPG will inform developers as to the type and form of development the City Council expects in the St. George's North and South area.
- 3.3 The purpose of the guidance is to:-
1. Illustrate clear planning and urban design guidance for St. George's North and South. It provides a 'vision' for the area.
 2. Promote a mix of land use at an appropriate density to ensure vitality and sense of place.
 3. Identify opportunities for future development including residential (including family housing), retail, community, leisure and employment uses.
 4. Identify potential environmental improvements and the creation of new public spaces.
 5. Identify potential for and means of securing improved pedestrian access through the St. George's areas and re-unite them with the St. Matthew's housing area, city centre retail core, and the new business quarter (Office Core).
 6. Create an attractive and enhanced setting for buildings of architectural and historic importance and conservation area elements.
 7. Secure high quality, innovative building design, and sustainable development.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 A joint public consultation on the draft SPG and the LRC Development Framework was undertaken between 22nd November 2004 and 7th January 2005.
- 4.2 The public consultation comprised of:-
- **Posters** in 21 locations in the area and the city centre.
 - **Leaflets** with information on SPG and Development Framework, with questionnaire.
 - **Direct mailing** of leaflet with questionnaire to all addresses (commercial and residential) within St George's North and South.
 - **Stand** with storey board display and leaflets for a week each in the following six locations:-
 - Prince Phillip House, St. Matthew's estate
 - Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate
 - LCB Depot, Rutland Street
 - Haymarket
 - Leicester Mercury Offices
 - The Shires shopping centre

One day in the weeks was staffed (every day in the Shires shopping centre).
Comments from the public were written on a flip chart.

- **A Copy** of the SPG and Development Framework in:
 - City Council Customer Services
 - Central Lending Library
 - Leicester Regeneration Company's Offices
 - Leicester Mercury Offices.
- **Press Release** for Leicester Mercury (including questionnaire), LINK, and local radio.
- **Direct Mailing** of a copy of the draft SPG to all stakeholders and other interested parties e.g.
 - Landowners
 - Local ward councillors
 - Housing Corporation
 - Development industry representatives
 - English Heritage
 - Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (CABE)
 - Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM)
 - Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (ESEP)
 - English Partnership (EP)
 - Police architectural liaison officer
 - Local Interest Groups
- **Website** with consultation material and links from the LCC website.
The results of this consultation were placed on the website.

4.3 A total of 68 responses from the public were received and these were analysed by De Montfort University. The full report is in Appendix A and its conclusion is as follows:-

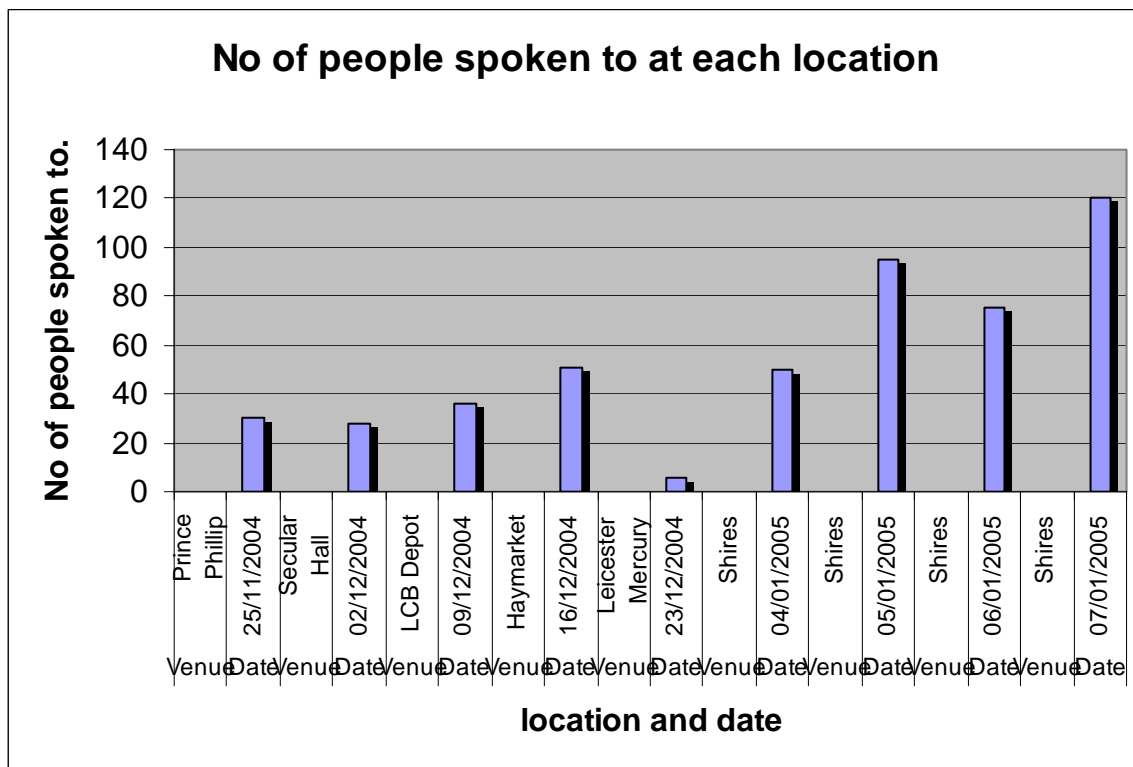
“Despite the fact that there were a relatively small number of respondents, a consistency of response was demonstrated across the 84% of the supporters and the fewer dissenters. Many respondents, both for and against the plans, eloquently and frequently described their concerns about city centre living. These results may therefore reflect the population at large.

Many were excited and enthusiastic about the prospect of regenerating this area of the city, and were pleased to share their personal experiences and to proposed solutions. A number would like to remain engaged in the process, and to provide their first hand experience and advice.

Although the majority were supportive of the plan, it is clear that the underlying barriers of traffic congestion, pollution, safety, facilities and needs of the disabled must be addressed before plans can be transformed in a reality.”

Details of the changes in the SPG document in response to these comments are in Appendix C.

4.4 A total of 491 people visited the venues and the number of people spoken to in each location is shown in this graph.



Comments written on the flip chart are in Appendix B in this report.

4.5 11 letters were received from the interested parties who were directly mailed and sent a copy of the draft SPG. A summary of the comments in these letters, and the responses and amendments to the SPG are in Appendix C of this report.

4.6 7 memos/emails were received from council officers who were sent copies of the draft SPG. A summary of the comments, and the responses and amendments is in Appendix C of this report.

4.7 There was a total of 1114 hits on the website as indicated on this table.

Month	Hits
Nov 2004	243
Dec 2004	790
Jan 2005	81
Entire Log: 23/11/04 -10/01/05	1114

2 emails were received from the public and these are summarised in Appendix C of this report.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 The St. George's North and South draft SPG has been subject to extensive public consultation and received favourable support. This document has now been amended taking account of the comments received.

5.2 The Strategic Planning and Regeneration Committee's views are invited on the attached draft SPG.

6. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications of this report. However, when development proceeds there will be income generated to the City Council in the form of contributions in accordance with Sections 46 & 47 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and planning application fees.
- 6.2 The outline plans in the draft SPG identify alternative uses for some council owned land and properties. These uses may also affect the finances of the council depending on the changes made and the timing.

Financial author R & C Head of Finance, Alan Tomlins 31.03.2005.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 There are no legal implications for the council at this stage. On adoption however the SPG will be a consideration as part of the planning application process, so it will have to be considered along with the Development Plan

7 Other Implications

7.1

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/N O	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	Yes	<p>Paragraphs in the SPG.</p> <p>5.0 VISION AND AIMS</p> <p>Ease of Movement Improving links through the area and connections to, the St. Matthew's area, the City Centre, and the railway station, especially for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people.</p> <p>Mixed Use Encouraging a mix of uses, including a mix of house types, sizes and tenure that will contribute to the economic and social 'health' of the area.</p> <p>7.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES</p> <p>7.1 Access & Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of and respond to the specific needs of disabled people. <p>7.2 Urban Design</p> <p><u>7.2.3 Place</u></p> <p>Mixed Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type and size of residential units should be mixed and include accommodation for families and disabled people. <p>9.1 Affordable Housing The City Council will seek to achieve an overall target of 30% of new dwellings to be affordable.</p>
Policy	Yes	<p>Paragraph in the SPG lists policies this report supports:-</p> <p>2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT</p> <p>2.1 City of Leicester Local Plan 2001</p> <p>2.4 Replacement City of Leicester Local</p>

		<p align="center">Plan</p> <p>2.5 Other Planning Guidance St George's Conservation Area Character Statement. July 2003. St. George's Strategic Regeneration Area ASG. June 22001. Odeon Cinema SPG. March 2002. City Centre A3 Uses SPG. December 2003. Public Open Space SPG. Draft 2003. The Office Core SPG. December 2004.</p>
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	<p>Paragraphs in the SPG.</p> <p>7.3 Sustainability</p> <p><u>7.3.1 Leicester better Buildings</u> Requests that all buildings in the area should reflect the aspirations of the Leicester Better Buildings Project.</p> <p><u>7.3.2 Energy Efficiency</u> Refers to RCLLP policies on energy efficiency, renewable energy, CHP and district heating.</p> <p><u>7.3.3 Water Conservation and Drainage</u> Refers to RCLLP policies on sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting and reuse, and water efficient management systems.</p> <p><u>7.3.4 Adaptability</u> Refers to RCLLP policy on designing buildings to allow future changes of use.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Yes	<p>Paragraphs in the SPG.</p> <p>5.0 VISION AND AIMS</p> <p>Activity Commercial activity should be concentrated along key movement routes to maximise safety by providing vitality and surveillance.</p> <p>7.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES</p> <p>7.2 Urban Design</p> <p><u>7.2.1 Quality</u> Public Realm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should seek to enhance safety, security and surveillance and minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. <p><u>7.2.2 Form and Scale of new Residential Development</u> Perimeter blocks are the expected form of the new residential development in the area to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage live frontages • facilitate good surveillance of public realm • define/safeguard private open space. <p><u>7.2.5 Vitality</u> Active Frontages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets and other public spaces should be overlooked by the fronts of buildings that should contain windows and main entrances and have activity generating uses on the

		<p>ground floor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals that include large blank elevations or ground level parking will not be acceptable as they reduce the vitality and surveillance of the street. <p>8.0 PUBLIC REALM 8.1 Enhancement of Existing Routes 8.1.7 Rutland Street to St. George Street Opportunities will be sought to improve St. George's churchyard and the space on St. George Street is an opportunity to improve this pedestrian route and make it feel safer.</p>
Human Rights Act	No	This report is not seeking any Compulsory Purchase Orders.
Older People on Low Income	Yes	Paragraph in SPG 9.1 Affordable Housing This paragraph will ensure that people on low incomes will be able to rent or purchase dwellings in the area.

7.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	Not relevant		

8 Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- Report to Cabinet - Strategic Framework of the LRC's Masterplan, September 2002.
- The adopted City of Leicester Local Plan 1991-2006
- The July 2003 2nd Deposit Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan, 1996-2016
- St. George's Conservation Area Character Statement. July 2003
- St. George's Strategic Regeneration Area ASG, June 2001
- City Centre A3 Uses, December 2003
- Odeon Cinema SPG, March 2002
- The Office Core SPG. December 2004

9 Consultations

Details of the public consultation on the draft SPG are in part 4 of this report. The stakeholders and other interested parties who were consulted on the draft SPG are listed in part 4.2 of this report. Also the following within the city council were consulted.

Consultee	Date Consulted
Head of Finance R&C	23 November 2004
Head of Legal Services RAD	Ditto
Chief Executive	Ditto
Director & Service Directors of Education & Lifelong Learning	Ditto
Director of Social Care & Health	Ditto
Service Director, Environment R&C	Ditto
Service Director, Community Protection & Wellbeing R&C	Ditto
Service Director, Regeneration R&C	Ditto
Head of Service, Energy Management	Ditto
Regeneration Manager, Property, RAD	Ditto
Head of Economic Development, R&C	Ditto
Head of Highway Management, R&C	Ditto
Section Manager, Transport Development & Traffic Group	Ditto
Head of Building Regulations, R&C	Ditto
Head of Development Control, R&C	Ditto
Head of Development Plans, R&C	Ditto
Head of Pollution Control, R&C	Ditto
Head Regeneration Policy, R&C	Ditto
Team Leader Central Development Control, R&C	Ditto
Cultural Quarter Project Manager, R&C	Ditto
Liveability Co-ordinator, R&C	Ditto
Service Director, Housing Renewal & Options, Housing	Ditto
Head of Parks & Green Spaces, R&C	Ditto
Director Cultural Services, R&C	

APPENDIX A

St. Georges New Community

Results of the Public Consultation

Introduction

The Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC), in collaboration with the Leicester City Council carried out a consultation exercise on the proposed development plans for the St George's new community between 22nd November 2004 and 14th January 2005.

Members of the public were given information on the proposed development and were asked to complete a questionnaire (appendix 1). The information and questionnaires were available in the following venues:

- 22nd-26th November 2004-Prince Phillip House, Malabar Road, St Matthew's Estate
- 29th November-3rd December 2004 Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate
- 6th-10th December 2004 LCB Depot, Rutland Street
- 13th-17th December 2004 Haymarket next to Index
- 20th-123rd December 2004 Mercury Reception, St George Street
- 4th-7th January 2005 The Shires, upper balcony near Debenhams

The public could also choose to contribute via the LRC website and through the Leicester Mercury supplement, published on 30th November 2004. Interpreters (Asian, African and Portuguese languages) were available at the Prince Phillip House venue.

Results

A total of 68 responses from the public were received, of which 41 (60%) stated they had or currently live within walking distance of a city centre. 33% had no past city centre living experience and the remaining contributors were unanswered. Analysis of their responses revealed very little difference between these two sub-sets.

A number of respondents additionally submitted notes or detailed letters. One letter, received from a resident of the Metropolitan Apartments in Lee Street, provides a comprehensive reflection on the problems of living in the area and their solutions. Another similar response was received from a resident of the adjacent St Matthew's Estate.

The results are not a representative sample of the general or local population and therefore they should be interpreted as a 'selection of views' expressed by members of the public sufficiently motivated to respond to the questionnaire. In addition, a number of very specific themes were repeatedly and similarly presented by 7 responders all of whom wrote very similar information, for example; 6 out of the 7 cited their dissatisfaction with the changes proposed to the churchyard adjacent to the Leicester Mercury and requested that the 'green man' should be programmed to remain longer to enable people with mobility difficulties to safely cross the road.

The application of this information should also therefore be carefully considered, with the rationale clearly defined.

The Overall Scheme

84% of respondents thought the overall plan was good or very good. In contrast, 9 stated the plans were bad or very bad. The proportion of responses was similar irrespective of whether the respondent had any experience of city centre living. "It can't get any worse than it already is!"

46 respondents also provided freehand comments on the overall plans. These widely ranged from "I think these plans are horrible" and "same old development dross", to more the frequent "Its about time Leicester got a makeover", "the plans look wonderful – please carry them out", "

I've known the area since 1946 – it will be nice to see Wharf Street renewed – but not * storeys high!" and "it is important to start asap"

There were a number of concerns expressed, even by those who expressed enthusiasm for the plans. These focused on the need to create a balanced community "you must achieve a living, family-friendly community which is both attractive and safe – and make sure all the local areas are improved".

The needs of people with disabilities were frequently cited "ground floor flats and bungalows should be available for disabled people", "a pedestrianised area means I cannot walk to the areas I wish".

But it was recognised by many that bringing more people to live and enjoy the city living experience has its downsides, particularly in terms of traffic and safety – "is a residential area compatible with all night drinking?", "have you been in town at night?", "the plans do not show traffic, litter and drunks", "the cultural quarter will be spoilt by the booze culture", "the city centre is already a no-go area after dark for decent citizens", "more families means more street gangs" and "the area is not safe for families".

Many residents highlighted the problems with traffic: "traffic considerations are vital for these plans", "commendable plans, but housing will create more car use – this must be addressed", "a school and housing will produce lots of traffic – important to sort this out now", "we need better access to bus routes and an improved bus station", "pedestrianise Belgrave Gate", and some requested "more bus shelters and telephone boxes".

There were also solutions proposed to transport problems "The local bus service needs to circle this central area using St Margaret's Bus Station which seems to have spare capacity and is well appointed with toilets, café and waiting room. If this is adopted, buses will not have to park along the city thoroughfares, easing congestion. A shuttle link will be required between the bus stations and the railway stations passing through the city centre, if this shuttle can take slightly different routes through the centre, a larger area would be served, of benefit to the disabled, mothers with prams and people carrying heavy shopping loads."

Residents are aware of the cultural quarter and the geographical vicinity "lets get the theatre up and running – this will be the finishing touch to St Georges", some were keen to remind us about past regeneration failures "has nothing been learnt from the past?"

Many of the respondents were concerned about pollution and public spaces – "not sure about a school in the city centre, otherwise these are very good plans," "children's health will be damaged by local pollution". There were also concerns about the new communities of Leicester – "asylum seekers will not fit into the Humberstone Gate East area – they already congregate into groups and will fill any public seating or spaces developed as part of these plans" (the respondent's overall impression of the plans was very good).

Some respondents were anxious that we keep them informed and advised that we widely circulate these plans. Some expressed concerns "small businesses might be forced to close".

Requirements for the proposed St George's Community

There was a great deal of consensus about what was required to make St George's a good place to live, work and play.

The most frequently cited need was for good housing (secure, energy efficient, soundproofed) with 66% of the respondents supporting this requirement.

Respondents also cited areas to sit and relax (63%); with access to a GP surgery, public transport and private garden space equally prioritised by 59%.

51% requested local shops; approximately 50% wished for nearby school, local sports facilities; children's play areas, activities for young people and community centres.

Fewer respondents cited places to eat and drink (40%) and access to local jobs. A similar proportion also wished for homes to rent and homes for families, 33% wanted homes for single people and 32% would like the option to buy. Requests for local places of worship were recorded by 29%.

In addition to the range of facilities presented in the questionnaire, individual respondents additionally requested affordable housing (2), accessible homes and public spaces for disabled people (5), resident only parking (2), local police support (4), 'good people' to move into the area (1), the permission to have pets at home (1), access to park n' ride (1), better pedestrian crossings and a local estate management structure (1).

Other suggestions included public toilets, a cinema, an ice rink and a swimming pool.

57 of the 68 responded to the question whether they would be prepared to pay more for an environmentally friendly, energy efficient home. 65% of these stated that they would be prepared to pay more, but with caveats "solar panel energy in houses should be free for those on benefits".

The vast majority (84%) acknowledged the benefits of living close to a city centre in terms of more time for activities outside work because of less time on travelling.

Respondents were more evenly split on whether they would consider moving to the St George's Area if they were planning to move, with 53% for and 42% against. Of those that would consider moving, the majority would like homes with either 2 or 3 bedrooms.

A number of themes emerged from the 57 respondents who wrote about the best and worst aspects of these plans. Just over half of these stated that the best features related to easy access to the city centre, bringing the city centre to life and being able to walk to work. However these respondents also described the negative impact, with 63% identifying noise and traffic pollution, safety issues and generally the city centre not being suitable for families. "who picks your neighbours", a city centre is for shopping and leisure", "there are already problems with the city centre – this will make the problem worse".

Conclusions

Despite the fact that there were a relatively small number of respondents, a consistency of response was demonstrated across the 84% of supporters and the fewer dissenters. Many respondents, both for and against these plans, eloquently and frequently described their concerns about city centre living. These results may therefore reflect the population at large.

Many were excited and enthusiastic about the prospect of regenerating this area of the city, and were pleased to share their personal experiences and to propose solutions. A number would like to remain engaged in the process, and to provide their first hand experience and advice.

Although the majority were supportive of the plan, it is clear that the underlying barriers of traffic congestion, pollution, safety, facilities and needs of the disabled must be addressed before the plans can be transformed in a reality.

APPENDIX B

New Community Consultation

1. Prince Philip House

- New health centre would be needed.
-

2. Secular Hall

- Building types need to reflect existing historic buildings
- Legibility – signage
-

3. Clock Tower

- Where is the Metro, buses out of town!
- When will the school be built, quality of the school in St Matthew's (Taylor)
- Buses out of Humberstone Gate
- Transport hubs on inner ring road – trams in centre
- Facilities for students/young people – skate park, gym.
- Leisure Centre – gym needed
- Affordable houses/flats to rent. Mixed tenure – good.
- Don't need to move age concern out of Clarence House. There are enough pubs/restaurants in Leicester already.
- Links to St Matthew's very good idea and very much needed.
- Lower Hill Street link good.
- Need more car parking – not enough in the city centre.
- Age concern should stay in Clarence House. We do not need more pubs.

4. Shires

- Consider providing quieter areas for aged / retired population.
- School / Health / Community facility could also be a multi cultural food hall to attract/service local communities and commercial/office community in city centre
- A need for more shared ownership. Accommodation – young couples in “catch 22”. Don't live in city so can't get on housing lists but want to live in city centre but can't afford to buy outright.
- Concerns over introducing buses into Wharf Street and impact on old peoples home in St Matthew's.
- Too many buses in city centre
- Litter problems
- Parking – too much proposed – too little.
- Long term sustainability and maintenance of social housing a problem.
- Swimming pool – green spaces – cycle routes required.
- Need to get buses out of Belgrave Gate, Humberstone Gate and High Street.
- Nice Cafés wanted.

- Maintenance and litter a problem.
- Buses a problem in Humberstone Gate. This area needs improving.
- Have environmental issues been considered?
- Will there be housing for people on the housing benefit list?
- Humberstone Gate needs improving – Grass
- St George's South – welcome more people living in the area + improvements to churchyard.
- Open up path through churchyard
- More green space
- Move buses from Humberstone Gate and clock tower and Charles Street
- No Casino
- No 24 Hour Drinking
- What will happen to businesses already in the area?
- Will existing landowners be given the opportunity to develop acceptable housing schemes on their land?
- Extra congestion caused by new crossings on ring road.
- Need business and community interest
- Require shops and other facilities for people living in the city centre.
- Living in city centre would be very convenient – could walk to shops etc.
- City centre needs a swimming pool.
- Quality of sound proofing in mixed tenure housing important
- General quality of development important – something that will last for a long time.
- Pavements on Belgrave gate need widening or pedestrianising.
- Too many buses clogging up city centre – people can walk to look and shop.
- Interested in living in the area – wants to buy an apartment
- Removal of disused footbridge over Charles Street.
- Area needs improving.
- Important to provide a range and mix of house types to encourage people to stay in area.
- Crucial to provide adequate leisure facilities. Everyone has to go to Braunstone for a swim. Need areas for young people to play sport.
- Car parking is essential especially designated: for elderly or those with mobility difficulties.
- Level access to facilities.