

**Wards Affected: Abbey and Latimer**

**Cabinet**

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2006**

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**ABBHEY MEADOWS STRATEGY GUIDANCE  
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

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**Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report covers the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the proposed "Abbey Meadows" area of the city and in particular the recently completed public consultation exercise.

**2 Summary**

- 2.1 Abbey Meadows is 1 mile to the north of the city centre and comprises the former John Ellis School, Wolsey Island, former BUSM site and Riverside West. It is the second largest of the Leicester Regeneration Company's major intervention areas.
- 2.2 The SPD will be used to guide the development of Abbey Meadows and in the process deliver a Science and Technology Park, and approximately 3000 new dwellings.
- 2.3 A comprehensive programme of public consultation has now been completed. A summary of the written responses to the draft SPD is included in Appendix A.

**3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to adopt the document as Supplementary Planning Document to the City of Leicester Local Plan, subject to the amendments set out in Section 6 in the Supporting Information.

**4 Financial & Legal Implications**

**4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications for this report. However, when development proceeds there will be income generated to the City Council in the form of planning contributions in accordance with Sections 106, 46 and 47 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and planning application fees.

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#### 4.2 *Legal Implications*

Preparation of this draft Supplementary Planning Document has been in accordance with the revised statutory governing development plans contained in the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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#### 5 **Report Author**

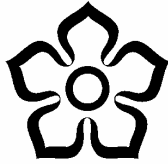
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#### **DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	No
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Executive (Cabinet)



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED: Abbey and Latimer**

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**ABBHEY MEADOWS STRATEGY GUIDANCE  
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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**Report of the Director Environment**

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Report**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The attached draft SPD represents Area Strategy Guidance for Abbey Meadows, which is the second largest of the intervention areas proposed in the LRC's Masterplan. The LRC Masterplan set out a vision for a Science and Technology Park located close to the National Space Centre, providing research and knowledge based enterprise and employment opportunities. It also identified the potential for a substantial new residential neighbourhood, supported by community uses, that would benefit from its proximity to the high quality environment of the river and canal corridors to the north of the city centre.
- 1.2 The Masterplan was subject to intensive public consultation, which influenced the strategy and confirmed support for the major proposals. The principles for the Masterplan were agreed by Cabinet in September 2002, and incorporated into the draft Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan July 2003.
- 1.3 Abbey Meadows intervention area covers approximately 32 Hectares of land. It is 1 mile to the north of the city centre and is presently largely of industrial character. It spans an area between Abbey Lane, Abbey Park Road, Ross Walk and Corporation Road
- 1.4 The draft SPD aims to identify a comprehensive approach to development. It aims to facilitate and promote the regeneration of the site as an attractive place to live, work and visit. This document will identify the urban design, highway

network, planning policies and other requirements, and the means by which the infrastructure will be financed and delivered.

- 1.5 When adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Local Plan, the SPD will provide planning guidance to help determine any planning applications submitted to the City Council for this area.

## **2. The LRC Development Framework**

- 2.1 This Supplementary Planning Document has evolved from the Development Framework for the Abbey Meadows area commissioned by the Leicester Regeneration Company in response to the Leicester Regeneration Strategic Masterplan for the City.
- 2.2 The Development Framework identified the aspirations, a proposed urban structure and land uses for the area to facilitate the development of a Science and Technology Park and residential community. The LRC's Development Framework was subject to an extensive public consultation exercise in December 2003. Feedback from the consultation exercise has been incorporated into the preparation of the Council's draft SPD

## **3. New Government System of Local Development Frameworks**

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and accompanying regulations have established a new system of local Development Frameworks – a portfolio of local development documents. These include supplementary planning documents (SPD's) to elaborate on development plan policies. SPD's will replace former supplementary planning guidance. The main differences under the new system are that SPD preparation must be programmed in the authority's Local Development Scheme, community and stakeholder involvement must be more rigorous and sustainability appraisals must be an integral part of the process.

## **4. The Supplementary Planning Document**

- 4.1 This SPD details the planning context and guiding principles for the development of Abbey Meadows
- 4.2 The purpose of the document is to:-
  - Set out the City Council's and LRC's vision for Abbey Meadows
  - Provide for 45,000 square metres of Science and Technology floorspace in a phased delivery programme.
  - Include sixty small and medium sized businesses.
  - Create a new neighbourhood of mixed housing types and tenures – high quality apartments and townhouses
  - Facilitate the retention of historic and significant buildings and features.

- The formation of new cross-river linkages to improve connectivity between east and west communities. These will be by way of new road connections serving each of the development areas and strategically positioned bridge links for cycle, pedestrian and vehicular access.
- Enable and promote public transport permeability and accessibility to the new and existing neighbouring developments including the city centre
- Retain and enhance the quality of the riverside and canal side corridors for biodiversity, recreation and commuting, and provide for their long-term management.
- Provide the highest quality environmental and landscape infrastructure within and fronting the public realm.
- Ensure that the development is highly accessible to the city centre on foot, by cycle and all public transport.
- Improve landscaping and environment
- Enhance pedestrian walkways and cycle paths from Abbey Park Road stretching northwards to link with new pedestrian bridges over the river
- Provision of a primary new school or improvements to the existing school, and provision of other community facilities
- Provide the planning backing, building on Development Framework, for land assembly by negotiation or Compulsory Purchase as part of the delivery and land acquisition programme.
- Create places that generate appropriate levels of activity.
- Encouraging a mix of uses that will contribute to the economic and social 'health' of the Abbey Meadows area.
- Stipulation of the building density, heights, form and massing to all proposed development sites to create quality public realm and clarity
- Stipulate the requirement for high quality building design
- Enable good public transport penetration and convenient access
- Provide a level of high quality and equipped public open space
- Indicate the likely level of developer contributions. For example, infrastructure, public realm improvements and affordable housing

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The public consultation of the draft SPD has now been completed. It started on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2006 and ran until 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006.
- 5.2 Publicity in advance of the consultation comprised the following:
- Writing personally to all freehold landowners and tenants within the Abbey Meadows intervention area boundary
  - Delivery of approximately 3200 letters to all owners/occupiers and tenants within the adjoining existing communities
  - Posters and leaflets displayed at 30 locations around the city
  - An article uploaded to the Council's dedicated website: [www.leicester.gov.uk/regenerationconsultation](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/regenerationconsultation)
  - Two press releases in the Leicester Mercury
- 5.3 The public consultation was promoted by a touring exhibition that illustrated the key elements of the draft SPD and was staffed by Council Planning Officers and/or personnel from the LRC.
- 5.4 Public Exhibitions will run for one week at each venue and were as follows:
- 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> February, Customer Service Centre, New Walk Centre
  - 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> February, Abbey Park Pavilion
  - 28<sup>th</sup> February – 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Space Centre
  - 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> March, Belgrave C of E School (Thurcaston Road)
  - 13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March, Abbey Meadows Pumping Station
- 5.5 During the course of the consultation period, hard copies of the draft SPD were made available for viewing at the following venues:
- Reference Library, Bishop Street
  - Leicester City Councils Customer Service Centre
  - Belgrave Library, Cossington Street
- In addition the whole of the draft SPD was uploaded onto the Council's dedicated web site, address: [www.leicester.gov.uk/regenerationconsultation](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/regenerationconsultation)
- 5.6 Direct mailing of a copy of the draft SPD was sent to Local Ward Members. Hard copies were also sent to over 50 agencies and non-statutory consultees in line with the Statement of Community Involvement. A copy of this list is available should members wish to view it.

- 5.7 Members of the public, the development community and all other interested parties were invited to submit their comments about the Draft SPD in writing to the City Council’s Urban Design Group at New Walk Centre or direct to personnel staffing the exhibition. Approximately 3200 letters were sent out to all addresses in and around the intervention area. In addition a further 200 members of the public picked up copies of the leaflet.
- 5.8 During the course of the 5 week consultation programme, personnel staffing the exhibition engaged in conversation with approximately 300 people who were keen to seek further information and express their views about the regeneration programme. Many others were pleased to view the exhibition text and diagrams without offering verbal comments. Most of those who did make verbal representations were in favour of the principle to regenerate this part of the city.
- 5.9 A summary of feedback from the public consultation programme is outline in the chart appended to this report (Appendix A). The chart contains formal representations from individuals and organisations that have submitted comments in writing and provided the Council with their names and addresses. The chart is broken down into the following categories:

**Number of responses received**

1. Statutory Bodies	10
2. Stakeholders and their agents	3
3. Groups and their societies	3
4. Local residents	8
5. City and Countywide residents	1
6. Ward Members	0

- 5.10 All of these people will in due course receive a letter thanking them for their response and explaining how their concerns are already incorporated within the SPD, or if appropriate how their comments can be incorporated into the document. If some suggestions are considered to be unfeasible, then it will also be explained to the author why that is felt to be the case.
- 5.11 The majority letters received from local residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees supported the aims and objectives of the draft SPD.
- 5.12 Concerns were expressed about proposed densities for housing, particularly on Wolsey Island. Landowners were concerned about restrictions on housing density given the high costs of infrastructure and other Section 106 provisions. The issue of how planning obligations will be operated and managed was also raised, as was the need to protect and enhance existing open space.
- 5.13 Local residents questioned whether the local highway network could cope with the increase in traffic and parking. There were also concerns about the loss of open space and wildlife habitats, and links with the city centre.

**6. Outstanding Amendments and Refinements to the SPD**

**6.1 Section 106, Developer Contributions**

The current approach to developer contributions has a number of problems and difficulties, and is currently being reconsidered at both local and national level. It is necessary to explore alternative methods for calculating, apportioning, negotiating and collecting developer contributions for infrastructure, public realm, affordable housing and other community facilities. Officers and Council’s partners are currently undertaking detailed research into this complex issue. When the research is completed and an approach can be recommended, the details will be inserted into the SPD.

**6.2 Representations to public/stakeholder consultation process**

All the written representations received in response to the consultation process and the manner in which the representations will be addressed are contained within Appendix A.

**7. Recommendation**

7.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft SPD for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document to the City of Leicester Local Plan, subject to the amendments set out in Section 6 above, and any further changes requested by Cabinet. The document will then be edited to include all agreed changes, page numbers, cross referencing, insertion of illustrations and photographs, which cannot be incorporated until the written text has all been completed and set.

**8. DETAILED FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1 Financial Implications**

As in the cover report

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**8.2 Legal Implications**

As in the cover report

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**8.3 Other Implications**

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Paragraphs in the draft SPD



		<p><b>Pedestrian and Cycle Network</b></p> <p><u>8.1 Pedestrian Movement</u>  <u>8.3 Disabled Access</u>  <u>8.6 Cycle Links</u></p> <p>These sections highlight the requirement to increase safe movement through the area for all pedestrian and cyclists.</p> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>Emphasises the need for a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures</p> <p><b>16.9 Affordable Housing</b></p> <p>Identifies the need to deliver a target average of 30% affordable housing across Abbey Meadows.</p>
Policy	Yes	Adopted City of Local Plan January 2006
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	<p>The entire SPD seeks to embody the latest thinking in terms of creating a balanced sustainable community</p> <p><u>16.3 Sustainability</u></p> <p>This section deals with energy, water conservation/drainage, adaptability, Leicester Better Buildings</p>
Crime and Disorder	Yes	<p><u>16.7 Community Safety</u></p> <p>This paragraph emphasises the need for buildings to be designed in order to facilitate natural surveillance of the public realm from surrounding new buildings. The document also states that new buildings should also offer security to pedestrians and cyclists, so that they can be encouraged to move by foot around areas rather than the car.</p>

		This requirement is repeatedly emphasised throughout the document.
Human Rights Act	No	This report is not seeking any Compulsory Purchase Orders
Older People on Low Income	Yes	<p><u>4.7 Housing</u></p> <p>Emphasises the need for a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.</p> <p><u>16.9 Affordable Housing</u></p> <p>Identifies the need to deliver a target average of 30% affordable housing across Abbey Meadows</p>

## 9. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- Report to Cabinet – Strategic Framework of the LRC’s Masterplan, September 2002
- Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan January 2006

## 10. Consultations

### 10.1 Consultations relating to this report:

- Legal Services
- R & C finance

### 10.2 Internal Consultees relating to the SPD

- Legal Services
- Development Control Group
- Development Plans Group
- Environmental Health
- Highways Group
- Traffic Group
- Parks and Open Spaces Group
- Education and Lifelong Learning Group

- Housing Development Group
- Social Care & Health
- Regeneration
- The Environment Team
- Building Regulations Group

### 10.3 External Consultees relating to the SPD

- Housing Corporation
- Leicester Regeneration Company