

Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
All Wards

**Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

**June 2004**

**Cabinet**

**May 17<sup>th</sup> 2004**

---

**LEICESTER REGENERATION COMPANY BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2007**

---

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

**1. Purpose of Report and Summary**

- 1.1. This report presents a corporate response to the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC)'s draft Business Plan as presented to the LRC Board on 9 February 2004. In particular, it sets out an action programme for the City Council during 2004-5 in response to the LRC Business Plan. A more detailed, longer term Action Plan for City Council officers has also been produced. This will ensure that over the period 2004-2007 the City Council Directorates' Business Plans incorporate the necessary priority for LRC related strategies and tasks. A copy of the First Draft is available in the Members Area.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree the recommended responses to the LRC Business Plan as set out in the report.

**3. Financial and legal Implications**

- 3.1 Comments have been received from John Mc Ivor in the Legal Section and Nick Booth/ James Slater in Finance and I paraphrase them as follows:

- The LRC Business Plan is based on a number of assumptions. The LRC should be asked to do further risk analysis, particularly in respect of the implications for programming and the financial commitment of partner organisations. The City Council expects that this will be an integral part of the partnership working to establish detailed delivery plans as the year progresses. Particular attention is drawn to the matters of transport infrastructure and support facilities such as schools.
- The City Council's consideration of the Business Plan that follows, takes into account the Council's wider, corporate objectives, within which physical regeneration is a key element and corporate priority.

- As set out in the report that follows, the actions contained within the LRC Business Plan do not pre- judge the Council's decisions when acting as a statutory body such as Local Planning Authority, Highway Authority or Housing Authority. The LRC Business Plan and the City Council's related Action Programme/Plan have an advisory and co-ordination function rather than a decision-making role. Key decisions such as the disposal of sites will be taken by the City Council's appropriate decision making Committee/ Cabinet in due course and not prejudiced by this report or the LRC Business Plan.
- With regard to property matters any disposal of Council assets will be considered as need arises and in accordance with the Council's wider policy proposals. Regeneration is a key council corporate objective. However, the LRC needs to be mindful that the Council has many other competing priorities for investment in the City as well as the physical regeneration agenda. It also has a duty to ensure that disposal is for "best consideration". More detail can be found in the supporting report.
- It would be helpful if when the Business Plan makes references to Compulsory Purchase Orders, the organisation that is expected to use its powers is stated; eg. East Midlands Development Agency..

These comments will be passed on to the Regeneration Company and are explored further in the supporting report that comprises the response to the LRC on the Business Plan.

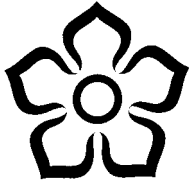
3.2 There is a budget of £320,000 in 2004/05 allocated to fund the Leicester Regeneration Company. From this year it becomes part of the base budget for the Regeneration and Culture Directorate.

**4. Report Author/Officer to contact:**

Diana Chapman, LRC Liaison/Development Plans Group.  
 Extension 7251  
 chapd001@leicester.gov.uk

**DECISION STATUS**

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



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
All Wards

**Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

**June 2004**

**Cabinet**

**May 17<sup>th</sup> 2004**

---

**LEICESTER REGENERATION COMPANY BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2007**

---

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

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1. Background**

1.1 At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2001 Cabinet gave formal approval for the City Council to join and fund the Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC) and to provide a contribution of £250,000 per annum. In addition, the Council has set aside £70,000 per year to cover staff and related expenditure within the Council. This related budget enables the City Council to:

- support the activities of the LRC
- co- ordinate its mainstream activities to deliver the LRC Masterplan
- maximise the links and benefits of the LRC strategy to all parts and people of the City.

These revenue support sums are to be incorporated into the Regeneration and Culture Directorate's base budget from April 2004 onwards.

1.2 Established in 2001 the LRC became fully operational, commissioning its Masterplan and starting to recruit its permanent staff team in early 2002. It is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee, whose remit is to plan, resource and orchestrate the physical regeneration of 1000 acres of central Leicester. One of fifteen urban Regeneration Companies nationally, it provides an effective partnership between the public, private and community sectors in the city. With the private sector in the majority on its board, and with a private sector Chair, the company's revenue funding comes from its three public sector founding partners; Leicester City Council (LCC), East Midlands Development Agency (emda) and English Partnerships (EP). A significant portion of emda's investment is administered through the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. As well as providing revenue funding, emda and EP are being approached through the Business Plan to commit capital funding in support of the LRC's strategy. All three partners are also asked to consider introducing an approved and agreed scheme for the consideration of the use, as

appropriate, of compulsory purchase procedures and other statutory powers. The City Council is asked to deploy its land holdings in support of the Masterplan strategy.

## **2. LRC Draft Business Plan**

2.1 At the LRC Board meeting of 09 February the board agreed to send its draft Business Plan to its three funding partners for comment and agreement. The draft plan covers the period 04-5 in detail, with indicative plans up to 2007. The Business Plan is based on the Masterplan's Strategic Framework (prepared by Roger Tym and Partners), endorsed in principle by Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2002.

2.2 At that meeting Members also noted that further more detailed work on the implementation and delivery of the Strategic Framework will be required and that further reports would be placed before Members for consideration. This report is the second of these, setting the framework for future joint working. Officers intend to bring further reports to Members over the following months, for example to establish detailed development guidance/delivery plans for the five major projects that make up the Strategic Framework. These reports will form the basis of future Supplementary Planning Guidance. Reports concerning the disposal of Council owned land, to support the LRC Business Plan, were presented to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> March. Further such more reports are likely on related details and further disposals in the future.

### ***LRC Business Plan 2003-2006***

2.3 In March 2003 the Cabinet and SPAR commented on the LRC Business Plan for 2003 - 2006. Several concerns were raised which were fed back to the LRC and incorporated into the work over the last year. The prime concerns related to:

- Integrating participation and active consultation into the process.
- Taking extra steps to ascertain and take into account the views and needs of people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, including the homeless and people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that social and community regeneration initiatives are linked to the physical schemes.
- More emphasis and consideration of reflecting the unique social and cultural characteristics of the City now and in the future.
- Ensuring that accountability is clear.
- The provision of sufficient new affordable housing to meet the current shortage, demand for key workers and growth in the number of low income jobs that will be created by the delivery of the Masterplan. (The Council is also keen to see more family housing of mixed tenure in the City).
- The need to reflect the City's historic heritage, the importance of conservation and links with projects in the Old Town part of the City.

- The need to acknowledge visitor potential and look at leisure provision.
- The benefits of linking consideration of the new live-work community in St Georges North to the Council's strategy for the Cultural Quarter in St Georges South.
- That LRC are working with the City Council and other agencies to ensure that new residential communities will be supported by adequate and appropriate facilities, including in particular education and health.
- The need for more detailed transport/accessibility work to be fed into the development of area frameworks.
- More work on linkages between the City Centre and Belgrave Road area.
- Most importantly, to establish a communications strategy that includes proposals for how the City's present and future citizens can be actively involved in the forthcoming development process.
- Employment and training links are optimised to the new developments.
- Ensuring that development meets high standards in terms of sustainability, including in particular, energy use, materials, recycling, dealing with waste and the adaptability of buildings.

2.4 Considerable progress has been made in addressing these concerns and progress is listed in Annex 1 to this report.

***LRC Business Plan 2004 - 2007***

2.5 The LRC's Draft Business Plan was presented to the LRC Board on 9<sup>th</sup> February and agreed in principle for more detailed discussion with the funding partners.

2.5 The Business Plan sets out the aims of the LRC, the process by which it is achieving those aims, how far it has progressed, the next stages in carrying out the five key projects in the Master plan and its other regeneration activities. Its key purpose is to set out, in detail for the 2004-2005 financial year and indicatively for the subsequent two years, the resources in cash and kind which it needs to carry out that programme, how it proposes they should be managed, and what will be produced from these resources in terms of both receipts and particularly regeneration benefits.

2.6 In an Appendix to the LRC Business Plan there is a summary of what the LRC is seeking from its funding partners. These are set out in the table below with draft responses from the Council.

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
<p><b>1. Top-priority preparation of Major Project Bids for Prime Office Core (POC) and Waterside and submission in 2005 Local Transport Plan.</b></p>	<p>The City Council is already prioritising and resourcing work on the preparation of a City Centre Access Strategy (CCAS).</p> <p>Consultants have been jointly funded and appointed by the LRC and City Council and will complete their study in time for the submission of an LTP bid in 2005. The Study and related Strategy will be looking at how the four major LRC intervention projects can be delivered and linked to ensure that adequate access is provided, traffic is managed and aspirations such as reducing the impact of the ring road are achieved. It will consider how and when the agreed strategy will be funded and delivered, through Major Project Bids to the Department for Transport (DfT). It will also look at how the LRC aspirations tie in with other major developments in the pipeline including the Shires West extension, De Montfort University (DMU)'s Masterplan, Leicester Royal Infirmary ( LRI ), Granby Halls and St. Augustines/Old Town plans.</p> <p>The City Council will work with the LRC to develop Major Schemes Bids (MSB) for submission to the DfT as part of the Local Transport Plan. This work will be the key part of the City Centre Access Study/Strategy.</p> <p>However, the LRC needs to be aware that the DfT will expect to see explicit transport benefits from their proposals. Alternatively it may wish to see funding packages made up from MSB funding, developer contributions and funding from other sources.</p> <p>The LRC Business Plan includes two main tables relating to funding transport infrastructure. The first shows LTP funding being available in 2005-6.</p>	<p><b>Transport Group</b></p> <p>Alistair Reid</p>	<p>Submit LTP to DfT in 2005</p>

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
	<p>However, the second table is more realistic with the prime Office Core MPB becoming available in 2006-7.</p> <p>There are however, still significant concerns that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In practice the LTP application made in 2005 will only become “active “ in the financial year of 2006-7.</li> <li>• The City Council and LRC cannot assume that the DfT will fund 100% of the transport works.</li> <li>• The later years figure of £ 38.9m. for transport infrastructure in the Office Core and Waterside may be ambitious.</li> <li>• In logistical and practical terms it would be difficult to spend around £24m on the office core transport works over two years. Funding is likely to be phased over a number of years, possibly over more than a single (5 year) LTP.</li> <li>• Other major transport works will be going on in the City over the next five years, including for the Shires extension and a new Upperton Rd bridge, therefore programming of transport works needs to be realistic and look at the operational issues for the whole City. In relation to the LTP the City Council will have to make decisions for the maximum benefit of the City as a whole and having regard to available funding.</li> <li>• Fallback scenarios have been looked at by the LRC but they are perhaps not appropriate for a formal published Business Plan. The City Council will however, need to be assured that LRC have all eventualities covered with regard to transport infrastructure needed to support the development proposals.</li> </ul>		

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
2. <b>Completion to schedule of CCAS and linked work, jointly with LRC</b>	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
3. <b>Active support for delivery of POC Phase 1 and Phase 2</b>	The LRC's development framework for the Office Core around the railway station is being incorporated into Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for presentation to Cabinet, after further consultation, in summer 2004. The project appears in the City Council's LRC related Action Plan and officer time will be scheduled to help facilitate its delivery.	<b>Urban Design</b>  Ian Tomie	Adopted SPG by summer 2004, Subject to prior adoption of development framework by LRC Board
4. <b>Inclusion of residential development of allotments within Science &amp; Technology (S&amp;T) Park Joint Venture arrangements</b>	The LRC is asking for the City Council to include these direct let and temporary allotments in their joint venture agreements for the Abbey Meadows area, to ensure comprehensive development that supports the Science Park. The final use identified for this site will emerge from the Development Framework and subsequent SPG. The LRC Masterplan's development framework (supported by the City Council), shows the allotments as part of the science park, as does the Roger Tym/ LRC's final Masterplan report (July 2003). But, the latest Building Design Partnership (BDP) work on a detailed delivery/development framework for the area shows the allotments as residential development. The recent draft development framework assumes that the Council releases the John Ellis site for Phase 1 of the Science Park. A final development proposal for the Abbey Meadows area has yet to be resolved by LRC and taken through the SPG route by the City Council. The principle of discontinuing the use of the land for allotments has been established as part of	<b>Urban Design</b> Ian Tomie Prepare SPG	SPG to be adopted by late summer, subject to prior adoption to development frameworks by LRC Board.

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
	<p>the Council's Allotments' Review.</p> <p>It was an issue at the recent Local Plan Inquiry as an allotment holder made an objection to the identification of the land for development, and the loss of allotment space. The inspector's report is expected before the end of 2004. The Council has not yet given a commitment to make any form of contribution to the Science Park and our position with regard to the John Ellis site is outlined below.</p> <p>Any potential capital receipt arising out of the Abbey Park Road allotments will contribute towards the funding of the Council's Capital Programme. Furthermore, at present, the Council would wish to reserve the right to dispose of the land without any capital commitment to the Science Park. However, in this event the Council would be recommended to develop the land in accordance with the emerging development framework and subsequent SPG.</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave</p> <p>to resolve release of allotment land as part of Joint Venture work on Abbey Meadows Development Framework</p>	<p>By end 2004</p>
<p>5. <b>Conclusion in 2003-04 of negotiations on John Ellis School to bring site forward for Science &amp; Technology Park</b></p>	<p>The City Council as owner, is in discussion with LRC over the inclusion of this site in the Science and Technology Park.</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave</p>	<p>Resolution by end 2004</p>
<p>6. <b>Rapid completion of its move from Abbey Meadows depot and removal of the restrictive covenants on its previous sale to emda.</b></p>	<p>The Council is now clear of the former Abbey Meadows Depot, 12 months earlier than the long stop date agreed with emda. Officers have been authorised to negotiate the release of the restrictive covenants affecting the future of the site. Property Services are awaiting a response from emda.</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave Remove covenants</p>	<p>By end 2004</p>
<p>7 <b>Adoption of Development Frameworks into Supplementary Planning Guidance at the earliest opportunity</b></p>	<p>The City Council will translate the four development frameworks into Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as soon as possible after agreement by the</p>	<p><b>Urban Design</b></p>	<p>All four adopted by end</p>

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
	LRC Board. This work will be given a high priority. The SPG process involves a six- week public consultation phase. It is therefore likely that from receipt of the final report and drawings from the LRC, to Cabinet approval, will take around twelve weeks.	Ian Tomie	2004, subject to prior agreement of frameworks by LRC Board
<p><b>8 Strategic support through linking education provision to LRC's targets for growing the central Leicester residential community</b></p>	<p>The Director of Education has recently been engaged in the process of assessing the two-way relationship between new development in the LRC area and education provision. Fundamental decisions rest on whether new or enhanced primary and /or secondary schools can be provided during the life of the LRC to support the new communities. Without appropriate educational facilities plans for the new community in St George's north, Abbey Meadows and a balanced community in the Waterside area cannot be achieved. It is unlikely that households with children will move into the new developments if a full range of support is not available or committed. The long-term sustainability of the LRC Masterplan's programme depends on good quality education, health and social/community facilities. This area of the strategy has associated with it the greatest risks and has to date not been fully explored.</p> <p>In seeking to develop new balanced communities, interesting ideas are emerging in St. George's North. The consultants are recommending a pilot residential scheme including 30% affordable units and family/accommodation for households with children. This will be an exemplar and demonstrate to the private sector that such schemes can be deliverable. Registered Social Landlord and Housing Corporation support, in principle, is being sought and will be</p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Adrian Paterson</p>	<p>Strategy Agreed by summer 2004</p>

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
	<p>necessary for success. However, even this incremental approach requires some confidence in terms of support facilities.</p> <p>Therefore, the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, with the LRC and the City Council's Liaison Manager will, as a matter of urgency, commission consultants to look at education and other community facilities needed to support the new homes proposed in the LRC area and produce an agreed delivery strategy. This will be fed into the LRC Business Plan and delivery frameworks within the next few months.</p>		
<p><b>9 In-house resources, land/property holdings, and property purchases deployed in support of the Retail Circuit</b></p>	<p>The Council through the officer working groups is supporting aspirations for the retail core and circuit and major private sector led projects such as the Shires West planning application. Clarity is required from the LRC as to what commitments are being sought from the Council in respect of the Retail Circuit.</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>10 All LCC-owned land within key project areas should be reviewed with LRC, and if surplus or likely to become so, LRC should have first refusal for its deployment, on an appropriate valuation and through sale, marriage with adjoining sites, or JV stake, rather than being placed on the open market</b></p>	<p>In response to the LRC's 2003 Business Plan regarding the use of Council owned assets, Members agreed "in so far as it is not inconsistent with City Council policies, to seek to use land holdings and maximize available flexibility in disposal arrangements in support of the Masterplan." In considering the disposal of assets to facilitate the regeneration programme, the Council will have regard to its statutory functions for which land is held or to be used and also the Council's planned Capital Programme and unexpected contingencies. The Council has a duty to achieve "best consideration" for the disposal of its assets and also has a general fiduciary duty. However, the 2003 General Disposal Consent has given the Council and other Local Authorities greater flexibility to dispose of assets at less than best consideration provided that such</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
	<p>actions secure social, economic and environmental benefits. The Cabinet also agreed last July a Property Disposal Policy Framework (PDPF) that allows the disposal of assets on a “solus basis”(one to one transactions without marketing) in particular circumstances, facilitating regeneration being one of these instances. Section 5.2a of the PDPF provides an exception to the policy of open marketing in cases where the terms of the disposal are to facilitate regeneration within the area of the LRC, where the Council and the LRC are in agreement that for reasons of either site assembly, preferred developer status, or preferred scheme, it is necessary to treat with that person or body to the exclusion of others, but nonetheless on reasonably commercial terms. Such disposal may involve a Development Alliance, or involve a disposal of property to enable the relocation of displaced occupiers from the sites. The LRC’s request is therefore reasonable on property assets that are being marketed or are about to be marketed, although the LRC needs to be mindful that the Council has many other competing priorities for investment in the City as well as the physical regeneration agenda. The Council does however have to comply with its fiduciary duty and observe the regulations relating to the use of Consents.</p>		
<p><b>11 All LCC-owned industrial land should be reviewed with LRC to assess its suitability for relocations, and of the means of bringing it forward for that purpose, and only placed on the open market if unsuitable for that purpose</b></p>	<p>A review of industrial land coming to market with the LRC to support relocations is acceptable in principle subject to cases being considered on a site by site basis.</p>	<p><b>Property</b> Lynn Cave</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>12 Monitoring of residential planning applications within the LRC area to assess the impact of the revised Affordable Housing Policy, and a review of that policy</b></p>	<p>The Corporate Director of Housing has agreed that a process of monitoring the provision of affordable housing should be in place. However, this should not be interpreted as a commitment to amend the current</p>	<p><b>Housing</b> Ann Branson With <b>Planning</b></p>	<p>Annually From Dec. 2004</p>

LRC Request	LCC Response	Action By	Date
<p>after one year of its inception if that impact is adverse. Review of the appropriate level of Affordable Housing in each key project area following completion of each development Framework, and adoption of the effective financial contribution rate of 15% as the requirement for future 'planning contributions, under forthcoming legislation, in the LRC area</p>	<p>policy. And no review of the policy is planned.</p>	<p>Frazer Robson</p>	

Please note that after initial drafting of this report the LRC proposed the following wording to request 10, in response to discussion with the Town Clerk and Liaison manager;

**All LCC-owned land within key project areas which LCC considers to be surplus to their needs, or likely to become so, should be reviewed with LRC with a view to their being offered first refusal for its deployment , on an appropriate valuation and through sale, marriage with adjoining sites, or JV stake, rather than being placed on the open market.**

### 3. Conclusion

3.1 The key concerns to emerge from the above table are:

- **Transport;** the LRC needs to be aware of the City Council's current concerns in relation to the DfT funding streams identified in the Business Plan. It is hoped that the current work underway on the City Centre Access Strategy will resolve any divergent assessments of likely funding from the Local Transport Plan and Major Schemes Bids. In the meantime the City Council will need to be assured that LRC have all eventualities covered with regard to transport infrastructure needed to support the development proposals. Appropriate risk analysis needs to be carried out.
- **Education and other support facilities.** The City Council is also concerned that current LRC strategies do not yet identify the delivery mechanisms for the provision of community support facilities. If a balanced community and family environment is to be provided in the intervention areas and their residential developments, there is a need for schools and other social and community facilities to be in place, or at least committed before occupation occurs. The research mentioned in the report should establish how these supporting facilities can be delivered. In the meantime fall back scenarios and further risk analysis should be considered by the LRC. The issue of how adequate new open space will be provided within the intervention areas is also one that requires further consideration through the development frameworks and related Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Whilst the City Council will prioritise the adoption of **Supplementary Planning Guidance** for the four major intervention areas, LRC needs to be aware that this can only progress once the LRC Board has "signed them off".
- Whilst the City Council has agreed to monitor annually the progress on delivering **affordable housing** within the LRC area, there is at present no commitment to amending the current policy.

3.2 Further work on programming and risk analysis about partner investment and commitment needs to be built in to the production of the delivery plans over the next year.

### 4 Consultation

	<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Date Consulted</b>
Geoff Mee	Head of Service - Property	March 2004
James Slater/Nick Booth	Head of Service Finance	March 2004
John McIvor	Head of Service Legal	March 2004
Ann Branson/ Martin Field	Head of Service Housing	March 2004
Jeff Miller	Service Director Regeneration	March 2004
Tot Brill/ Richard Watson	Service Director Culture	March 2004
Corporate Directors Board		April 2004

### 5 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within this report
Equal Opportunities	Yes	None specific
Policy	Yes	City Council Asset Disposal policy, Local Plan policies and Supplementary

		Planning Guidance.
Elderly and people on low income	Yes	None specific
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	None specific
Crime and Disorder	No	Indirectly only
Human Rights Act	No	

## 6 Risk Assessment Matrix

6.1 *Key decisions such as disposal of sites will be taken by the City Council's appropriate decision making Committees/ Cabinet in due course and not prejudiced by this report. The report sets out comments on the LRC Business Plan and proposes a related City Council Action Programme for 2004-5. Further, it does not pre judge the Council's decisions when acting as a statutory body such as Local Planning Authority, Highway Authority or Housing Authority. It has an advisory and co- ordination function rather than a decision-making role. A more detailed, City Council Action Plan for officers involved in LRC related work has also been prepared for 2004-2007, which is available to Members on request and is available in the Members Area.*

## 2003-4 MILESTONES

### 1. Affordable housing

- 1.1 A moratorium that did not require any affordable housing in parts of the LRC area was in place last year. This was aimed at kick starting residential development in the City during the formative period of the Regeneration Company. This has now been replaced by new guidelines, which apply to the whole LRC area and give added incentive to the provision of affordable units. The Council will support developers' applications to the Housing Corporation for grant towards 50% of the affordable housing requirement. A target of 30% affordable units will be sought across the LRC area, over the life of the LRC, subject to a streamlined viability test. Work is well progressed on making the appraisal process as quick and easy as possible whilst thoroughly assessing issues of viability. Property Services (Regeneration Team) has offered to support the planning development appraisal process that will assess the ability of schemes to meet various planning obligations including; affordable housing, public realm etc. Outside the LRC area at least 30% affordable units will be requested and the 50% assistance will not be available. The Housing Corporation is prioritising the LRC area for Regional Housing Grants.

### 2. Historic Heritage

- 2.1 Stephen Bowyer has just started work as a Conservation Officer, based at the LRC. The City Council, LRC and English Heritage jointly fund his post. This will ensure that appropriate priority is given to the architectural and historic character of the area.

### 3. Cultural Quarter

- 3.1 Members were concerned that work on the Cultural Quarter should be linked to the LRC activities. Closer officer working has achieved this. For example at the recent presentation to the Arts Council the LRC context and links were highlighted. Much of the LRC interventions in this area are depending on successful implementation of the Cultural Quarter. This is reflected in the emerging development frameworks.

### 4. City Centre Access Study

- 4.1 In response to concerns about transport and access issues, the Council and LRC have recently appointed consultants to carry out a wide-ranging City Centre Access Study/ Strategy to inform forthcoming Local Transport Plan bids.

### 5. Belgrave

- 5.1 Linkages between the ideas for Abbey Meadows and Belgrave have been explored during the year through meetings with local Councillors and residents. The Belgrave area/SRB will now be producing its own Masterplan to link with the LRC's development framework for the adjacent area.

## **6. Consultation/ Member involvement**

- 6.1 There has been considerable public consultation during the last year. As each development framework is drafted, newspaper and broadcast media are involved; there have been public exhibitions and meetings. Once the more formal Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is prepared further consultation will take place.
- 6.2 Members are also now involved in all of the five LRC Board Sub Groups, steering the development frameworks and delivery plans. They are also involved in the Social and Community Sub Group. An accompanying paper to the LCC Action Plan is being prepared which sets out issues around Social Cohesion that could be taken to this group in due course.
- 6.3 Consideration of the unique social and cultural characteristics of the City, now and in the future, has been integrated into the development frameworks being prepared. But this is an area that needs to be constantly returned to through public consultation and debate.

## **7. Employment Issues**

- 7.1 The City Council has commissioned consultants to look at how the major developments in the City can be linked to training and employment initiatives. This is being led by the Economic Development Division. There are also plans to appoint an additional LRC officer, funded jointly by Job Centre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council.

## **8. Leicester Standard/ Leicester Better Buildings**

- 8.1 A web-site should be placed online by June 2004. This will offer advice and contacts on how to achieve the most sustainable development solutions. It will set out the business case for best practice across a wide range of construction/ building issues; including, training, employment, building materials, waste, energy, access, procurement. It will also include plans of recent major development proposals such as the Shires west. An officer located at the LRC and funded initially through NRF and the City Council will promote these guidelines with developers and others delivering construction projects across the City. It will be the first such web-site in the UK and include local examples as well as best practice from further afield.

## **9. Funding**

- 9.1 Comments from the Legal Team highlight the issue of ensuring that adequate resources are available within the Council to continue supporting the LRC activities. Staff currently involved are often working on LRC related projects in addition to an otherwise heavy workload. This is particularly true for Transport and Urban Design colleagues who do not receive any additional funds from the LRC related budget. However, finance is limited to £70,000 per annum. This is currently used to fund extra development control time, the LRC/English Heritage/City Council conservation officer, and the Liaison manager, as well as project related contributions. In an ideal world a service enhancement bid would be possible but in the current budget climate it is accepted that additional funds will not be found. There may therefore be implications for delivering projects such as the City Centre Access Study (CCAS) and Supplementary

Planning Guidance. However, further funding opportunities are being pursued, such as through the Planning Delivery Grant.

- 9.2 The £250,000 revenue support for LRC has been confirmed as part of the recent budget discussions. This level of support is consistent with other Urban Regeneration Companies.

## **10. Local Plan**

- 10.1 The replacement City of Leicester Local Plan incorporates the strategic framework of the LRC Masterplan. Few objections have been received to related issues. Considerable work has gone into negotiating with objectors. The inspector's report should be complete by the end of the summer at which stage the Council will decide whether to accept all his recommendations and a new plan can proceed to adoption, late in 2004 or early 2005.

## **11. Public realm**

- 11.1 Work continues within the development frameworks to design and enable the provision and enhancement of open spaces and links. A particular success this year has been the award of £3m capital and £420,000 revenue for St George's, from the government's "Liveability Fund". Joint working between the City Council and LRC successfully prepared the bid.

## **12. Office base**

- 12.1 During 2003 the Regeneration Company moved to permanent offices on Charles Street. This was enabled by work by the Property team and the lease is paid for by the City Council as part of its revenue contribution.