



Sweet Street 2001 (before)



Sweet Street Site Sept 2005 (after)

## The Project

The disposal of Sweet Street Depot and the relocation of Council activities.

## The Authority

Leeds City Council

## Key Practice Areas

Capital Release and Reinvestment  
Financial Sustainability  
Stakeholder Satisfaction  
Economic/Visual Regeneration of  
Prime Gateway Site

**Architect:** Various

**Contractor:** Various

**Date of Construction:** 2001-2004

## The Key Steps

**Replacement Refuse Vehicle Depot** - Three sites, (Kidacre Street, the former Wholesale Market and Knowsthorpe Way) were considered for their suitability to accommodate the replacement refuse vehicle depot. The sites were assessed against four criteria namely location, development cost, value (opportunity cost) and prominence. After consideration, the site at Knowsthorpe Way was selected as it provided the highest overall score.

**Other Depot facilities** - Sweet Street Depot was also used by minor, cleansing operations. Staff were relocated to Henshaw and Seacroft Depots after upgrading the existing sites.

**IT Services staff based at Sweet Street** were relocated and consolidated to an office adjoining an existing Council IT site.

**Former Middleton Park High School** - The Department of Education declared this large secondary school site surplus to requirements. As it had recently been remodelled, it provided an excellent opportunity to re-deploy and consolidate

## The Challenge

The site of the former Sweet Street Refuse Vehicle Depot was in a key gateway position located at the junction of Leeds motorway arteries. This presented a negative visual impact upon the entrance to the Southern side to the city of Leeds as well as a large maintenance liability from obsolete buildings situated within the site.

The challenge which needed to be addressed was to:

- Deliver a capital receipt
- Contribute to the regeneration of a key gateway site
- Reprovide accommodation for a diverse range of Council services

staff from Sweet Street together with staff from other H&T sites from around the city, into one refurbished location.

#### **Legal Services Agency - 19 Wellington Street -**

Relocation of H&T, in turn, provided the opportunity to dispose of a valuable, surplus site at Wellington Street by relocating Legal Services into the area vacated by H&T staff, adding to the Capital Receipts Programme.

### **The Outcome**

Relocation of the unattractive Refuse Vehicle Depot to a more suitable light industrial location on the outskirts of Leeds.

Improvement of existing sites, creating better work places and improvement in service delivery for Leeds City Council cleansing operations facilities staff.

Rationalisation of IT Services into adjacent operational facilities, enhancing IT service provision.

Relocation of Legal Services Agency bringing the department much closer to its major client departments located around the Civic Quarter and the courts.

Development of a facility utilising surplus educational requirements to consolidate staff from around the City, achieving closer working and better service aims.

Development of major economic site at Thornes Farm contributing to the Capital Receipts Programme as well as facilitating the Council's job creation objectives in this part of the city.

Avoidance of essential maintenance expenditure to the order of £1.5m, that would not significantly enhance Sweet Street nor its end value - achieving current best value climate.

A £7m+ receipt and a cash surplus from the transactions of some £4.8m which assisted in the funding of the Capital Programme.

Injection of investment and job creation into the local community through the construction of new hotels.

Non-quantifiable measure of improving gateway aesthetics of Leeds City Centre to all visitors.

### **The Learning Points**

The proposal accords with the Best Value approach by utilising surplus accommodation and by developing a cross-service project within a single building. This may prove to be a template for other such initiatives in the future.

The sheer variety of departments that needed to be examined, emphasised the essential need to continuously examine the bigger picture of terms of the Council's requirements, assisting identification of additional opportunities to improve Council services.

The project demonstrated how councils can optimise the use of their assets to support economic regeneration activity.

Former Middleton High School provided a model for other prospective schemes with increased utilisation of office space reducing the amount of area required by each employee.

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