

NORTH WHITELEY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

29 MARCH 2010

ROLE OF THE NORTH WHITELEY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

Contact Officer: Steve Tilbury Tel No: 01962 848 256

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1909 – Proposed North Whiteley Development Forum Area – 12 November 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report provides members of the Forum with an explanation of its role and the way in which it will contribute to the creation of a successful extension of the community at Whiteley.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

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REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

1.1 The extension of Whiteley by the addition of a new Major Development Area (MDA) to the north of the existing settlement is a proposal within Winchester's emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The proposal is consistent with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) agreed approach to the development of some 80,000 new dwellings in the PUSH area between now and 2026. The PUSH strategy assumes that the MDA will begin to deliver houses by the end of 2012.

1.2 Consultation with the Whiteley community during earlier stages of preparing Winchester's Local Development Framework has indicated that there is, in principle, no great controversy regarding further development. Understandably, however, existing residents are very concerned that it should help to resolve existing infrastructure issues and have as little detrimental impact as possible on themselves.

2 Development Interests

2.1 A consortium of three developers, Bovis, Taylor Wimpey and Crest hold interests in almost all of the land that might form part of the MDA. Their planning agent is Terence O'Rourke, a large and well-respected firm based in Bournemouth. Other consultants have been appointed by them to advise on technical matters such as transport, drainage and ecology. This information is contributing to the evidence that will be needed to support the Core Strategy allocation, as well as being preparatory work for a planning application. If construction is to begin towards the end of 2012, there is a very large amount of work to do in a relatively short time.

3 Proposed Approach

3.1 Where a major scheme is proposed, most planning authorities will adopt a project management approach to creating the best form of development. The aim is to engage with the development interests in a full and open dialogue to share and explain the issues that each faces and to agree and negotiate solutions as the scheme is progressed. The project management approach is particularly important where there are existing community interests and where infrastructure needs are complex (and occasionally competing for resources).

Public consultation is a vital part of the process and other organisations which have an important say, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, must be involved. By the time a planning application is made, there should be no surprises or major issues for which some form of solution does not already exist. Negotiations are rarely easy and the planning authority retains its full decision making powers, including the right to refuse an application if it is unacceptable, but the spirit of the process is collaborative and problem solving rather than confrontational.

- 3.2 Throughout the process it is essential that all parties remember that a MDA will be eventually be a real place where people live and work, where their children grow up and where friendships and communities are established. It is therefore essential to develop and hold to a vision for the kind of place that it is intended to create.

4 Operation of the Forum

- 4.1 The process described above is driven by the work of professional representatives of each of the organisations involved, but it is essential that elected Members and community representatives are also involved. There are various ways of doing this and the establishment of a Member Forum is considered to be an important component. The role of the Forum is to provide a setting in which elected Members can receive reports and updates on the key issues as the MDA work proceeds and give guidance to officers and development interests. In particular the Forum will agree and 'own' the vision for the MDA and will agree what kind of a place it wants the MDA to be. This has significant practical implications because it helps to define what form the master plan for development should take. An acceptable master plan must be based on the vision for the MDA but it will also have to take account of the technical issues that are bound to arise and there may be alternative solutions available. The Forum will provide a sounding board for discussing these issues; providing an opportunity for Members to understand them and to give guidance on behalf of the community as to the preferred approach.
- 4.2 The Forum discussions are not an alternative to the statutory planning process and once an application is submitted the planning authorities will be responsible for the formal determination process. Feedback from the Forum will be recognised as valuable by the development interests but they are not bound to follow a particular suggestion or approach if they do not wish to – ultimately the merits of their planning application will be tested through the planning process. If the development does go ahead the Forum will play an important role in overseeing the development of the community and the resolution of any emerging issues.
- 4.3 The Forum will receive reports from officers (and contributions as necessary from Fareham Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Whiteley Parish Council as well as Winchester City Council) and presentations from the development interests. Any recommendations it makes will be reported back to Winchester City Council's Cabinet for consideration if formal decisions are

required. In most cases, however, the Forum will provide guidance which officers and the development interests will factor into the development process.

- 4.4 The frequency of meetings will reflect the need to consult the Forum and to keep it informed of progress. Over the next year it is expected that it will meet several times. It is important to stress that it is not an alternative to direct consultation by the developer with the public which will also need to take place.
- 4.5 Meetings are held in public and there is scope within the Forum format for a much greater level of public participation than is normally the case with local authority meetings. The Waterlooville Forum commences with an opportunity for general questions from the public which, where possible, are answered there and then. Subject to the discretion of the Chairman, public participation in other items can also be accommodated. This direct engagement has proved very helpful in building trust and confidence in the master planning process.
- 4.6 The remit of the Forum is set out in the agreed Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 1.
- 4.7 The success of the Forum, and of the MDA itself, will depend on a constructive dialogue between all of those involved and an understanding of the constraints involved in the process. The Forum provides a real opportunity to make the evolution of the MDA both better understood and more reflective of community aspirations.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 5.1 All of the issues covered by Winchester City Council's Sustainable Community Strategy are embodied in planning a new community. Engagement with the community at an early stage through the establishment of the Forum is consistent with the objectives of the Strategy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The costs of the Forum comprise room hire and officer time in administering and attending the Forum. The room hire costs can be met from existing budgets and officer time is being factored into relevant Divisions' Business Plans.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues arising from the operation of the Forum.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: CAB1909 Proposed North Whiteley Development Forum

CAB 1909
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): WHITELEY, OWSLEBURY & CURDRIDGE

CABINET

12 November 2009

PROPOSED NORTH WHITELEY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

Contact Officer: Steve Tilbury Tel No: 01962 848 135

RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report proposes the establishment of a North Whiteley Development Forum to provide a mechanism for local elected members and the wider community to contribute to and shape the development process for the proposed Major Development Area north of Whiteley.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the North Whiteley Development Forum be established with the terms of reference and membership as described in the report.

CABINET

12 November 2009

PROPOSED NORTH WHITELEY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

DETAIL:

8 Introduction

- 8.1 The City Council's emerging core strategy proposes the allocation of an area of new development to the north of the existing Whiteley settlement, the North Whiteley MDA. This proposed allocation of approximately 3000 dwellings is consistent with the agreed strategy for the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and the South East Plan.
- 8.2 Although it would be overstating the position to say that the proposal is uncontroversial, the extensive consultation on the core strategy has generated very little local opposition to the principle of development, provided that the infrastructure necessary to support the housing numbers and its impact on existing problems in Whiteley is properly provided for. This is, of course, entirely consistent with the objectives of the local planning authority and, to a large extent, those of the development interests.
- 8.3 Further development at Whiteley would present the opportunity to resolve some existing problems and to create a settlement of sufficient size to meet many of its own needs – a key sustainability objective. This is also the thinking behind the proposed redevelopment of the Whiteley Outlet Shopping Village as a 'proper' town centre for an extended Whiteley.
- 8.4 Given the likely planning position and what would appear to be the "in principle" view of the local community, the development of an MDA at Whiteley is a likely prospect under any regulatory environment. This is also the view of the development interests who have control of the land that will form part of the MDA. It is a matter of public record that they are considering an early planning application and have made clear their wish to consult fully with the local community, indeed some consultations have already taken place.
- 8.5 To be acceptable any development will have to address complex issues such as integration with the existing community, transport impacts, phasing, ecological and environmental impacts and so on. All of these will be fully and properly dealt with through the planning process. However, there are options and alternatives on many issues which have to be weighed up before formal applications are made. Engaging with the community to understand which of these are preferred, how they are to be phased and when they may happen are important elements in making a good place to live in.

- 8.6 Given the likely timetable for a planning application it is important that a formal mechanism for community engagement is put in place. It is proposed to follow the successful model for West of Waterlooville and to establish a North Whiteley Development Forum with the following terms of reference:

The Forum is to act as an informal advisory body to allow the members of the Forum to discuss and engage with the public on the following issues, and advise the relevant authorities accordingly:-

- *Advise upon a vision for the development of the MDA at north Whiteley which will act as a template for the master planning process and subsequent planning applications and keep this under review.*
- *Provide a response to key issues and options arising during the course of planning for and delivering the extension to the community at Whiteley, with input from local authorities, community groups and development interests.*
- *Act as sounding board where ideas, options and issues relating to the development can be considered before becoming part of the formal planning process.*
- *Develop for consideration by the relevant authorities a community development strategy for the MDA.*
- *Consider and advise upon the community infrastructure required to support and integrate the new and existing communities.*
- *Consider good practice from development elsewhere and consider key findings for inclusion in the master planning process.*
- *Consider and advise upon a strategy for the ownership and management of the social infrastructure and community assets.*
- *Review progress reports on the development of the masterplan and relevant planning applications.*

- 8.7 The membership of the Forum is proposed as follows:

- Winchester City Council (4 representatives - including chairman of the Forum)
- Hampshire County Council (2 representatives)
- Fareham Borough Council (1 representative)
- Whiteley Parish Council (1 representative)
- Curdridge Parish Council (1 representative)

- 8.8 Although parish councils are not represented formally on the West of Waterlooville forum, this is because for all practical purposes the development area is an extension of Waterlooville town centre rather than a greenfield development in Boarhunt and Southwick parish and therefore the impact on

the parish itself is marginal. In the case of North Whiteley there will be a very great deal of interest from existing residents in Whiteley parish and on Curdrige parish in which the development will actually be constructed. Including parish council representatives therefore seems appropriate to ensure input from all three tiers of local government.

- 8.9 The other aspects of the operation of the forum are proposed to mirror those of the West of Waterlooville Forum. Its first meeting will probably be called before Christmas 2009 and it will meet on an 'as necessary' basis thereafter as the development process progresses.
- 8.10 It should be stressed that the existence and operation of the Forum will not prejudice the position of the City Council as local planning authority which will consider all aspects of any planning applications on their merits.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

9 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 9.1 The establishment of a Forum is seen as an important mechanism to help achieve all of the desired outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy for the existing residents of Whiteley and through the spatial planning of the MDA.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 10.1 The Forum itself will have no budget and will not make spending decisions. The organisation of meetings, hire of rooms etc will have a small cost which can be accommodated within existing budgets. It will require support from Democratic Services which will have to be prioritised against other pressures on resources within that service.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 11.1 The Forum is an advisory body only and there are not considered to be any financial or policy risks associated with the Forum itself. The existence of a Forum is likely to be helpful to the progress of the MDA both in quality of outcome and timescale.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES: None