

NORTH WHITELEY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

18 July 2011

UPDATE ON PROPOSALS AFFECTING AREA NORTH OF WHITELEY

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report provides an update on the proposals for a major development north of the existing Whiteley settlement. It explains the timetable for the production of the Council's Core Strategy and the work which is now being undertaken by the development consortium which is promoting the development. It also reminds Members of the important role of the Forum in helping to ensure that should development proceed it meets the high expectations of the City Council and local communities, particularly in relation to infrastructure and the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the update Report be noted

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The first meeting of the North Whiteley Development Forum took place in March 2010. The report to that meeting introduced the work being undertaken by the development consortium which controls land in the area, and on Winchester's preparation of its Core Strategy which had reached the stage of identifying preferred areas for development over a 20 year period, including the area north of Whiteley.
- 1.2 In May 2010 the election of a new government was followed by a series of ministerial actions, court hearings and policy changes all of which created considerable uncertainty over planning policy and development prospects. As a result there was a need to revisit the City Council's proposals during which the development consortium undertook background studies and research but were not able to work to a specific timetable.
- 1.3 There were no meetings of the Forum during this period quite simply because there was nothing to be discussed or work to be reported.
- 1.4 Following the City Council's 'Blueprint' exercise with local communities at the end of 2010 and the publication of 'Plans for Places' on 27 June 2011 the policy position is clearer once again. The City Council suggests in 'Plans for Places' that development to the north of Whiteley remains its preferred option for accommodating a significant part of the growth needed in the southern part of the District, subject to the ability of development to satisfy not only the many requirements of all major development but also the particular requirement for early delivery of key local infrastructure.
- 1.5 Against that background the development consortium, consisting of housebuilders Crest Nicholson, Taylor Wimpey and Bovis has begun to work actively on their proposals once again.
- 1.6 Indicative Timetable
- 1.7 The City Council has produced an updated version of its Local Development Scheme (LDS) which includes a timetable for the preparation of its Core Strategy, which is the document that sets out in broad terms how much and where development should be allowed to meet the requirements for housing,

employment and community infrastructure over a 20 year period. The City Council has sought the views of local communities through the 'Blueprint' process and has now published its response – 'Plans for Places' – which is currently subject to consultation. The feedback on 'Plans for Places' will be considered carefully before the final draft of the Core Strategy (the 'Pre-Submission' version) is published by the end of 2011. It will then be submitted for a public examination into whether it is sound (the technical term used to describe whether or not the Planning Inspectorate believes it is reasonable, fit for purpose and consistent with the other policies it must by law agree with) in the middle of 2012. It does not give planning consent for these developments but it does indicate that they will be acceptable if they can meet all of the detailed requirements for development.

- 1.8 One of the important principles for the Core Strategy to be considered sound is that proposals within it must be deliverable and there must be evidence to support this.
- 1.9 For a major development proposal it is quite normal that significant work should be done, even to the extent of a planning application being submitted, in order that those who support a particular allocation can provide evidence from their pre-application work to demonstrate deliverability.
- 1.10 The development consortium which controls land north of Whiteley has now indicated that it has sufficient confidence in the planning policy position to commence the detailed work which will lead to a planning application prior to consideration of the Council's Core Strategy at the public examination. This in itself will help the Council to demonstrate the deliverability of the development.
- 1.11 At the meeting of the Forum officers from the City Council and the planning agents for the development consortium will give an oral update on the current situation and on the timetable for work to be brought forward. In particular there will be an explanation of the consultation process which will be undertaken and the role of the local representatives and stakeholders in shaping the proposals.
- 1.12 Role of the Forum
- 1.13 The report to the meeting of the Forum in March 2010 set out the role of the Forum. Given the passage of time and the change of membership it may be useful to remind the Forum of what the report said, and the following paragraphs are reproduced from the March 2010 report.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

- 1.14 The remit of the Forum is set out in the agreed Terms of Reference reproduced in Appendix 1.
- 1.15 Next Meeting of the Forum
- 1.16 At the next meeting of the Forum it is suggested that there should be reports on three subjects, and Members of the Forum may wish to suggest others.
- 1.17 The reports suggested are:
 - a) Feedback from the consultation exercise in July
 - b) Initial report on the requirements and timetable for delivery of key infrastructure

c) Consideration of a draft 'vision' for the development.

1.18 These reports will enable the Forum to consider matters of importance to local communities and to begin its role in shaping the quality and outcomes of development, should development eventually be approved.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS
(RELEVANCE TO):

2.1 The Forum promotes the involvement of local communities in the planning and development of their neighbourhoods. The aim is that it will make a positive contribution to the development of a sustainable major urban extension.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

3.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from the report or its recommendations

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 There are no risk management issues arising from the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Forum

Appendix 1

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.*