

REPORT TITLE: CONCEPT MASTERPLAN GOVERNANCE

21 JUNE 2023

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Jackie Porter, Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan

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WARD(S): ALL WARDS

PURPOSE

This report sets out the Council's approach to concept master planning and seeks agreement that the approach is used to support the delivery of all significant development sites in the district unless a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been adopted for the site so as not to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

For the Council, this could help to clarify design expectations early in the planning process, set a clear vision for the site, inform infrastructure and viability assessments and identify requirements for developer contributions or other investment. For the developers, help to evolve their own vision for a site, assess options, engage the local planning authority and community in pre-application discussions and support an outline planning application.

The Council is also bringing forward a new Local Plan and has concluded its consultation on its Regulation 18 draft local plan after reviewing the policy to ensure it is deliverable in the next plan period. The emerging plan policy – Strategic Policy D5 [Masterplan] states that proposals for significant development on sites occupied by major landowners/users will be permitted where they accord with the Development Plan and are consistent with a comprehensive and evidence-based site wide masterplan which demonstrates how high-quality design will be delivered for the whole site which has involved and engaged with stakeholders and interested.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To agree the approach to Concept Masterplanning, as set out in appendix 1 of this report.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
- 1.2 Agreed Concept Masterplans that recognise the Council's climate emergency ensures high quality, well designed, sustainable places which embrace new technologies and construction techniques and have been permitted and developed with full community involvement.
- 1.3 Homes for all
- 1.4 Agreed Concept Masterplans ensure high quality, well designed, sustainable places which embrace new technologies and construction techniques and have been developed with full community involvement, thus enhance the quality of people's homes and lives whilst at the same time maintaining attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.
- 1.5 Vibrant Local Economy
- 1.6 Concept Masterplans will sit alongside the District Plan and will be a material consideration when determining applications on sites where they can help applicants make successful applications, local investments or aid infrastructure delivery thereby enabling a flourishing and sustainable local economy.
- 1.7 Living Well
- 1.8 It is anticipated that agreed Concept Masterplans should improve the health, wellbeing and sustainability of our residents and communities. It will also ensure that the optimum level of developer contributions to infrastructure and mitigation of development impacts can be achieved.
- 1.9 Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.10 Having an agreed Concept Master Planning Approach enhances local level collaborative engagement in its widest sense with appropriate key stakeholders, essential to improving and speeding up the decision-making process and to the successful delivery of development.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 It will be necessary to pursue early Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to ensure that necessary resources are in place in terms of funding and staff to bring forward Concept Masterplans. The Council aims for full cost recovery for services provided.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Concept Masterplans will carry the status of Interim Planning Guidance and will be a material consideration to the determination of planning applications. The responsibility for adopting the Concept Masterplan approach lies with the Council's Executive and is within the authority of Cabinet.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution does not refer explicitly to Master Plans but says that the Council: "retains responsibility for a number of decisions which have not been delegated to Cabinet [e.g., approval of the annual budget and the various policies, plans and strategies forming the policy framework, such as the Council Strategy and the Development Plan, or carry forward proposals for capital schemes above £1.5 million in total]". The Cabinet is confirmed as having the role of advising the Council on various matters including: "The preparation and adoption of local development documents which are development plan documents, and matters concerning the establishment, functions and dissolution of a joint Committee under Sections 29, 30 and 31 of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004".

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It will be necessary to pursue early Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to ensure that necessary resources are in place in terms of funding and staff to bring forward Concept Masterplans.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Concept Masterplans will naturally concern a development site, but early knowledge of proposals will allow the city council to recognise any synergy or conflict with the proposals affecting their own estate.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 To ensure Members are trained on Concept masterplans an in person externally facilitated training event was provided to Members on 24th January 2023. This was provided by Design South East. A further officer briefing to the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan took place on 25th April 2023 on the background and advantages of adopting a master planning approach.
- 6.2 It is expected that Concept Masterplans will be collaboratively prepared involving site promoters, landowners, Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, town and parish councils, local communities, Neighbourhood Plan forums where appropriate and other key stakeholders. This directly supports the council's priority area of focus of Listening Better.
- 6.3 Strategic Policy D5, Masterplan, was consulted on within the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. The responses to this consultation are still being worked through. We are starting to see developers choosing this route in anticipation of policy D5, in some form, eventually being adopted. We

therefore feel it is prudent to bring this approach forwards now to provide help to developers choosing to take this route before the Policy D5 is finalised and adopted.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Environmental considerations have informed the councils draft Local Plan policy. Master planning is not a new concept, being in general usage to describe an approach to the strategic consideration of development at any site, considering its wider impacts air quality, climate change, ecology or sustainability matters and potential.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 Having an agreed Concept Masterplan that has been subject to public consultation is the most effective way of ensuring that the public are involved, and that the planning application stage is straightforward, and as such will speed up the decision-making process.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 No personal data is submitted in the process of submitting a concept masterplan to the Council'.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure		It will be necessary to pursue early Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to ensure that necessary resources are in place in terms of funding and staff to bring forward Concept Masterplans.
Exposure to challenge	For each case, officers will make recommendations to Cabinet. The officer report will provide the assurance that the recommendation is legally sound.	
Innovation		Having an agreed Concept Master Planning Approach ensures that development proceeds in accordance with the council plan 2020 –

		2025 and the development plan including emerging development plan. It also enhances local level collaborative engagement in its widest sense with appropriate key stakeholders, essential to speeding up the decision-making process and to the successful delivery of development.
Reputation		It is expected that Concept Masterplans will be collaboratively prepared involving site promoters, landowners, Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, town and parish councils, local communities, Neighbourhood Plan forums where appropriate and other key stakeholders.
Achievement of outcome		Masterplanning in general will have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through a range of policy approaches that seek to create sustainable communities.
Community Support	Series of public exhibitions to actively engage the public in the mastering planning process.	Having an agreed Concept Masterplan that has been subject to public consultation is the most effective way of ensuring that the planning application stage is straightforward, and as such will speed up the decision-making process.
Timescales	Providing the Council with a Concept Masterplan is not the only route to achieving an agreed planning application. Where	Having an approved concept masterplan could improve planning application turnaround times.

	appropriate, a hybrid application could be submitted directly to the development management service.	
Project capacity		It will be necessary to pursue early Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) to ensure that necessary resources are in place in terms of funding and staff to bring forward Concept Masterplans.

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 Background

- 11.2 The Council is bringing forward a new Local Plan and has concluded its consultation on its Regulation 18 draft local plan after reviewing the policy to ensure it is deliverable in the next plan period. The aim is to go out on Regulation 19 on its emerging District Plan towards the end of 2023.
- 11.3 The District Plan sets out the Council's planning framework to guide future development and the use of land in the district. It identifies how Winchester will grow and develop whilst at the same time maintaining its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. The current District Plan was adopted in March 2013, and covers the period 2011–2031.
- 11.4 In its emerging District Plan Policy – Strategic Policy D5 [Masterplan], the Council has made it clear that it requires any future application for significant development on sites to be preceded by and consistent with a comprehensive and evidence-based site wide masterplan which demonstrates how high-quality design will be delivered for the whole site which has involved and engaged with stakeholders and interested parties before it is agreed by the local planning authority.
- 11.5 These aspirations can be best identified and achieved through a collaborative master planning approach to the bringing forward of significant development on sites. Members will recall that an initial in person training facilitated by Design South East on 24th January 2023 on the background and advantages of adopting a master planning approach. This report now seeks agreement of a specified approach to master planning.
- 11.6 This report refers to significant development on sites which has an impact on the community and the ability to bring forward potential benefits because of development. In addition, the significance of development may not arise because of the scale of the development proposed but be a result of the impact on the local character of the place into which it is to be introduced. As

a result, there is no threshold suggested over which this approach is to be followed.

- 11.7 Instead, each of the developments coming forward will be considered individually and, where appropriate, the Council will seek to engage with landowner and developers through this master planning approach. Irrespective of size, all significant development on sites would be included within this model unless a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been adopted for the site so as not to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development as supported by National Policy.
- 11.8 This report provides information for Members on the role of Concept Masterplans and seeks agreement to a process whereby Concept Masterplans are collaboratively prepared and agreed to ensure high quality, well designed, sustainable places which embrace new technologies and construction techniques and have been developed with full community involvement.
- 11.9 What are Concept masterplans?
- 11.10 Master planning is not a new concept, being in general usage to describe an approach to the strategic consideration of development at any site, considering its wider impacts and potential.
- 11.11 It is in this generic way that it is now being applied to seek to ensure that good quality development is secured through all District Plan allocations and other significant developments on sites. Furthermore, this has been explored and defined the concept further to that done by Cambridge City Council and East Herts Council so that it can be appropriately applied to significant development sites that come forward, in order that the requirements of it can be understood in the local context, and so that a judgement can be made as to whether its requirements have been fulfilled.
- 11.12 The results of this review are set out in appendix 1. This is effectively a template document that sets out the approach to be followed.
- 11.13 The main areas of work that should be included in a master planning exercise and as set out in this approach include:

Establishing the vision and aspirations

This should be a wide-ranging activity, including all stakeholders, as appropriate, enabling the opportunity for aspirations to be articulated and a vision formed. This should then form a baseline against which outcomes are judged throughout the process. Often development proposals will come forward in the absence of this step, formulated based on what only the landowner and/ or developer consider to be the important aspirations for the development and the inclusion of this stage will address that issue.

Deriving and testing scenarios

This is the process through which different development and land use scenarios should be canvassed and tested to ensure that all the implications of development are considered. The scope of this cannot be definitively set out as it will be relevant to the development scenario, but it should be comprehensive enough to ensure that all relevant development issues are tested. A common approach is that development promoters will come forward with development solutions without enough information to show that their proposals have been fully tested in this respect and the inclusion of this step will address that matter.

Consultation

This is the stage where the development scheme identified is tested back with all stakeholders. They are asked to scrutinise it and to comment on it about the aspirations identified at the earlier stage.

Refinement

This follows consultation and is the process of building in, where possible and appropriate, the feedback that has been received through the consultation exercise.

Implementation and future governance

This is the stage at which the future management, control and governance of the scheme is identified to ensure that it will remain a quality development in the longer term. These issues will be relevant and should be considered through the development stages set out above, but this is the stage at which future responsibilities should be clarified and confirmed. This clearly is an important stage, and it should not be delegated to a later point in the process and/or passed to the responsibility of other organisations without their agreement.

Output

Once all the above processes have been undertaken, the result should be a concept master plan that is in an acceptable form for the Council and is consistent with the outgoing and emerging local plan policies.

- 11.14 The master planning process is flexible enough to allow arrangements in each case to be adapted to the circumstances of the development. The Council will expect the approach in each case to be a joint one, between it, relevant stakeholders and the developer party and for the consideration of the process to be undertaken jointly. In each case however it is expected that the following working arrangements would be in place:
- a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) will have been secured between the Council and the developer party at the outset setting out approach, milestones and the resources that can be made available to the Council to support the approach.

- A senior Lead Planning Officer would be allocated; and,
- appropriate consultative arrangements to ensure that all wider and relevant stakeholders are enabled to engage in the process.

11.15 Well-designed concept masterplan would come about when there is a clearly expressed 'story' or vision for the design concept and how it has evolved into a concept proposal. This would typically be unique to the site and provide clarity on spatial parameters [or frameworks] for the following elements of development: movement and access, land uses, strategic urban principles, built up areas like community hubs, nodes and landmarks, green and blue infrastructure, key contextual interfaces and high-level viability. It may also introduce new approaches to contrast with, or complement, its context. This 'story' will inform and address all the afore-mentioned characteristics and appropriate policies including policy areas of interest.

11.16 Once a final version of a concept master plan has been achieved that is deemed to be acceptable, it will be subject to formal endorsement. This formal endorsement will be through Cabinet Decision.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Emerging local plan policy requires any new application for development of this site to be preceded by, and consistent with a comprehensive masterplan. It is therefore appropriate for the masterplanning approach that concept masterplan be considered and agreed by Cabinet.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Other Background Documents:-

(Available on the council's website - <https://www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk/local-plan-library>)

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – March 2013

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – April 2017

Regulation 18 Winchester District Local Plan 2019 – 2039 (November 2022)

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3357 Local plan Regulation 18 Consultation

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Winchester City Council Master Planning Approach for Concept Masterplans