

REPORT TITLE: STATION APPROACH – CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

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REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Jackie Porter – Place and the Local Plan

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WARD(S): ST PAUL AND ST BARTHOLOMEW WARD

PURPOSE

The land identified as Station Approach (including Carfax, the Cattlemarket and adjoining areas) has been identified for development opportunity in Winchester City Council's Emerging Local Plan (as policy W8). The policy sets out a requirement for a mixed use development including the provision of 250 residential units, offices, leisure/culture/community, retail, student housing (on suitable sites), hotel, public car parking and public realm improvements. It is anticipated that multiple planning applications will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority spread across the defined regeneration area.

The site is located within the Winchester settlement boundary and currently contains a number of uses including public car parking, public realm (such as the Station entrance) and buildings operated by the Ministry of Defence. The site is located in close proximity to the Winchester Conservation Area and surrounding listed buildings. This setting of the site, and its opportunities to provide a comprehensive development, means that a heritage and landscape led masterplan will need to be prepared and agreed in order to provide a clear vision for a high-quality development across all parts of the Station Approach Regeneration Area.

Examination of the draft Local Plan commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 and is expected to conclude by 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025. On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 Matter 6 dealt with Winchester Housing and mixed use allocations (including this site).

The emerging Local Plan policy will require any future application at the site to be preceded by, and consistent with, a comprehensive and evidence based site wide masterplan that has been undertaken following the Council's conceptual masterplan framework process. This will demonstrate how high-quality design will be delivered for all parts of the Regeneration Area which has engaged stakeholders and

interested parties before it is endorsed by the Local Plan Authority as a material consideration for development management purposes.

The Council's Regeneration Project Team responsible for the regeneration area have entered into pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority to enable the Authority's specialists to comment on the site context and masterplan as it has evolved. The Regeneration Project Team and their consultants have undertaken a series of engagement events and where appropriate have taken on board the comments received.

This report explains the process undertaken to date in preparing the concept masterplan and seeks Cabinet endorsement for this concept masterplan to be considered as a material planning consideration in the assessment of future planning applications across the Station Approach site.

The concept masterplan approach has been undertaken in conformity with the master planning approach and framework process that has been agreed by the Council.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the concept masterplan process including the public engagement strategy undertaken by the Regeneration Project Team which has helped to inform the preparation of the concept masterplan for the Station Approach regeneration area which has been undertaken following the Council's master planning framework process;
2. Endorse the 'Connecting Place: Station Approach Concept Masterplan that is attached as Appendix 1 which will then become a material consideration to inform the development management assessment of future planning applications across the regeneration area.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

## 1.1 Greener Faster

1.2 The concept masterplan report sets out the vision and objectives for development across the Station Approach regeneration area. The report recognises the importance of Local Plan policy requirements to achieve contemporary leading environmental design standards for energy conservation and efficiency. Future planning applications will demonstrate how the applicant will meet policies CN1 and CN3 to reflect the council's climate and natural emergency declarations.

1.3 The report acknowledges the importance of material selection to consider embodied energy in construction, and promotes the use of sustainable public transport provision by introducing safer and more direct routes for walking and cycling from this key public transport interchange area. In addition, the role of new buildings to provide renewable energy generation on site alongside biodiverse blue/green roofscapes is well defined.

## 1.4 Thriving Places

1.5 Policy W8 envisions a mixed use development including residential, commercial and public uses across the regeneration area. This encourages strong, sustainable business growth and welcomes investment into the Town and wider district.

1.6 Public Realms are positioned across the masterplan area to ensure this is a public facing development with a strong sense of Place.

## 1.7 Healthy Communities

1.8 The masterplan report highlights the importance of open space and landscape and its relationship with the wider Winchester town. The role of landscape, open space and bio-diversity (both onsite and connections to wider spaces outside of the regeneration area) is well established and there are clear opportunities to use green infrastructure to provide access to attractive and well-maintained public facilities, green and natural spaces with space to play and gather for all ages.

1.9 Cabinet in March 2025 adopted an Air Quality Strategy which provides a framework to improve the health of everyone by working collaboratively across the whole of the District to achieve cleaner air by 2030. With the aspiration of "30 by 30" meaning annual average of less than 30 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for nitrogen dioxide and annual average of less than 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The masterplan refers to aims to create new greenery and planting along new and existing routes and pathways and providing 'pocket parks' with the goal to enhance mental well being and physical health through interaction with nature which will improve air quality.

## 1.10 Good Homes for All

- 1.11 The supporting text to policy W8 notes that the capacity of the area is estimated to be about 250 residential units, which could include specialist forms of housing for the elderly or student accommodation. Future applications will outline the precise amount of housing development including densities, tenure, size and house types. The concept masterplan has identified key areas where housing can be delivered whilst taking account of surrounding uses and heritage assets. This will be considered further through the development management process.

## 1.12 Efficient and Effective / Listening and Learning

- 1.13 The requirement for a concept masterplan is to be agreed before the submission of any planning application as well as engagement with stakeholders and interested parties to ensure an open, transparent, inclusive and enabling council and to ensure stakeholders and interested parties have been engaged in the concept master planning process.
- 1.14 There has been a multi stage engagement strategy, including in-person workshops with local heritage, cycling, environmental and accessibility representatives in the pre-design stage. Local schools and colleges close to the site were also visited at the time and train operators, bus companies and taxi group representatives were engaged at this time. Specialist sessions were held with local commercial agents and Business Improvement District (BID) members.
- 1.15 The resultant concept masterplan was then presented to the public in a formal consultation, which included online and in-person events and welcomed comments on the proposals.
- 1.16 The project team also engaged with Local Planning Authority officers, including specialist consultees.

## 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Regeneration Project Team have entered into pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority which has covered the council's costs in delivering a programme of meetings and involvement to comment on and shape the work of the project team and its consultants to deliver a concept masterplan.
- 2.2 Future applicants will be expected to engage with the Local Planning Authority using a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) which will allow the council to resource officer input into more detailed pre-application responses and the efficient assessment and determination of future planning applications including post planning decision work.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A report was agreed at Cabinet on 21 June 2023 regarding the concept master planning governance (CAB 3408). This establishes the framework which all sites requiring a masterplan should follow. The concept masterplan as prepared will be a material consideration for development management purposes and will be weighed appropriately in the planning assessment.
- 3.2 There are no other particular legal or procurement implications in agreeing to the process that this concept masterplan has followed.

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Pre-application processes secure cost recovery for officer time and future applications will be subject to Planning Performance Agreements or paid-for pre-application enquiries to ensure officer resource is available and accounted for.

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposal to endorse a concept master plan approach does not in itself have any property or asset implications. It is noted that the Station Approach regeneration area includes land owned and/or operated by Winchester City Council. Separate governance arrangements exist for the Council's Regeneration Project Team leading the regeneration programme.

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 As required by the concept master planning process, the Regeneration Project Team and consultants have undertaken a series of stakeholder engagement events which has informed the concept masterplan.
- 6.2 The engagement included workshop events, in-person and virtual exhibitions and feedback sessions. A bespoke website has been created:  
<https://winchesterstationapproach.co.uk/>
- 6.3 Design workshops were hosted in Spring 2024, where local heritage, cycling, environmental and accessibility groups were engaged with. Visits to local schools and colleges were also undertaken to engage with younger voices.

From a technical perspective train operators, bus companies and taxi group representatives also attended the sessions. Council and County Council officers were also in attendance representing transport, heritage and biodiversity for example.

Commercial agents and BID representatives were also invited.

- 6.4 The report summaries the key findings from these sessions and describes how the masterplan process was adapted to respond to these findings. This

demonstrates key involvement from relevant stakeholder groups at an early stage of the process.

- 6.5 The masterplan was then formally consulted. The consultation was promoted by post-card mail-outs, social media, local news channels and by physical presence across the regeneration area. A website was created to provide updates and welcome feedback. The masterplan report was then updated further to take account of the matters raised by the public consultation.
- 6.6 An all-member briefing was held on 22 May 2024 and a Member drop-in was held on 5 September 2024. An all-member briefing was also held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Environmental considerations have informed the policies of the Local Plan and future applications will be required to comply with the expectations of relevant policies, including CN1 (Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change) and CN3 (Energy Efficiency Standards to Reduce Carbon Emissions).
- 7.2 The masterplan report outlines that a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be provided for, and areas of un-developable land will be managed to enhance biodiversity and improve green corridors for urban wildlife habitat.
- 7.3 The report has taken account of the urban city centre location, and promotes alternative means of supporting environmental considerations such as supporting green or brown roofs where feasible, and also ensuring the design of buildings encourages the installation of renewable energy generation facilities.

## 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010: (1) a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 Having an agreed concept masterplan that has been subject to public consultation is the most effective way of ensuring public involvement in the concept masterplan process.

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None required

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Planning processes resourced by PPA / pre-application / planning application fees	N/A
Exposure to challenge	<p>Ensure concept masterplan taken into account as material consideration in assessment of future related planning application.</p> <p>A report was adopted by Cabinet on 21 June 2023 regarding concept master planning governance (CAB 3408). This establishes the framework which all sites requiring a masterplan will follow and this CMP follows that process.</p>	N/A
Innovation	N/A	<p>Agreeing a concept masterplan ensures that development proceeds in accordance with the council plan 2025 – 2030 and the development plan. The concept masterplan will help to ensure high quality buildings and public realm and other supporting uses. 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</p>

		successful delivery of development.
Reputation	Approving poor quality master plans would impact the council's reputation. Encouraging the concept masterplan process following key engagement ensures that a high quality masterplan is a material consideration when future planning applications are being prepared and considered.	N/A
Achievement of outcome	The pre-application process has been used to ensure the LPA is resourced. PPAs and future pre-application work will secure the resource and finances to review and work with future development partners to implement the concept masterplan vision.	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A
Community Support	A series of public exhibitions and workshops, actively engaging the public in the concept master planning process, has been undertaken.	Further consultation opportunities will be provided during the planning application process.
Timescales	N/A	N/A
Project capacity	The pre-application process has been used to ensure the LPA is resourced. PPAs and future pre-application work will secure the resource and finances to review and work with future development partners to	N/A



	implement the concept masterplan vision.	
Other	N/A	N/A

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The Station Approach regeneration area is formed by multiple and separated sites. In the adopted Winchester Local Plan Part 2 (Development Management and Site Allocations) they are dealt with as individual site allocations (Policies WIN5, WIN6 and WIN7). Historically, these sites have had a number of uses including residential and commercial, but more recently the predominant use across the sites is for public car parking. As the spaces and the different sites are functionally connected and they do work together, the emerging Local Plan has allocated the site for mixed use development under the umbrella of a single Local Plan site allocation (Station Approach – Policy W8).
- 11.2 The site in particular is located in a prominent position outside of the railway station, and as a result is the first impression for residents, commuters and visitors to the city by train. The sites also have a significant heritage context, being surrounded by the Winchester Conservation Area alongside a number of listed buildings.
- 11.3 The sites total- 7.19 hectares in size and has been identified for regeneration, policies within the existing Local Plan have allocated the site for this purpose. This policy support continues into the draft Local Plan, Policy W8 has the following requirements for a mixture of uses including:
- High quality flexible offices and other employment generating uses,
  - Public car parking,
  - Open spaces,
  - Leisure/culture/community,
  - Hotel,
  - Small-scale retail,
  - Residential (~250 units) and
  - Older person/student accommodation
- 11.4 The Project Team have undertaken a series of stakeholder engagement events including direct consultation with relevant interest groups and the general public. Elected members have also been engaged with by Member Briefings and the council's Local Planning Authority have worked alongside the Regeneration Project Team to take account of engagement feedback and produce the final Masterplan Document. The Regeneration Project Team

have worked with Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and Defence Organisation (other significant landowners) to identify the opportunities available across the sites and also engaged with other Authorities (such as the Lead Local Flood Authority and Highway Authority) to ensure their views are incorporated in the concept masterplan.

- 11.5 The council's Local Planning Authority project team includes: Town Planners, Urban Designer, Historic Environment/Archaeology, Sustainability, Landscape, Arboriculture, Ecology, Environmental Protection, Drainage and the Local Plans Team.
- 11.6 In addition, the Masterplan document was presented to the Winchester and Eastleigh Design Review Panel (DRP). The presentation included a summary of the engagement to date and presented the key vision for the site. Feedback was provided by the DRP which has been reflected in this final concept masterplan.
- 11.7 A concept masterplan should be based on and be in conformity with the council's masterplanning approach and should:
  - a) Establish a vision and objectives;
  - b) Agree baseline information / issues to be addressed;
  - c) Include engagement and consultation
  - d) Be considered by the Design Review Panel
  - e) Explain the site's constraints and opportunities and set out the key parameters for the following elements:
    - (i) Movement and access
    - (ii) Land use
    - (iii) Sustainability
    - (iv) Design principles
    - (v) Landscape principles
    - (vi) Green and blue infrastructure
- 11.8 The Station Approach Concept Masterplan has responded to these points and establishes a clear vision and objectives that takes account of the site's context and opportunities.
- 11.9 The vision for the regeneration area is *"a connected place... a series of spaces and development supporting a lively and accessible place to live, work, and play, promoting routes for sustainable travel, and identifying a welcoming gateway that showcases the nature of the city"*.

- 11.10 The report then establishes the context of the sites, both within their immediate surroundings and the wider townscape. Individual sections then concentrate on specialist aspects (such as Heritage or Biodiversity) and successfully highlight the opportunities of development from each perspective, whilst also outlining key constraints and highlighting where additional information or review will be required.
- 11.11 The report then concludes on how the importance of the engagement undertaken and summaries how this has shaped the final concept masterplan.
- 11.12 The preparation of the Concept Masterplan has followed the prescribed process and it is recommended that it is endorsed as a material planning consideration in the assessment of future planning applications at the site.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 Do Nothing – the development is of a scale and importance to warrant a concept masterplan. The delivery of the regeneration area will be over multiple phases and involve different land owners and applicants. It is therefore important to have a collective document which assess the potential of the wider area in a concept masterplan report.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3408 – Concept Masterplan Governance

#### Other Background Documents:-

[Concept Masterplanning - Winchester City Council](#)

<https://winchesterstationapproach.co.uk/>

[Station Approach - Winchester City Council](#)

[Proposed Submission Local Plan \(Regulation 19\)](#)

[Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 \(Development Management and Site Allocations\)](#)

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Station Approach Concept Masterplan –Connecting Place. February 2025

Appendix 2 Station Approach Technical Report – Appendix to the Concept Masterplan – April 2025

Appendix 3 Station Approach Distance Views Study – February 2025