

# **East Herts Council Report Template**

## **Executive**

**Date of Meeting: 4 July 2022**

**Report by: Cllr Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning & Growth**

**Report title: Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document -  
Draft for Consultation**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

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## **Summary**

- To seek Members' approval to publish the draft Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation.
- To agree that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive:**

- (a) That the draft Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be agreed and published for a four-week period of public consultation between 5 July - 2 August 2022; and**
- (b) That in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 it has been determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the emerging Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not required as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.**

## **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 The Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is being prepared to provide guidance on the implementation of Policy BISH8 in the East Herts District Plan 2018.
- 1.2 Once adopted the Old River Lane SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Old River Lane is a development site allocated in the East Herts District Plan (Policy BISH8) which forms a key opportunity for sustainable redevelopment in the heart of Bishop's Stortford and an opportunity to reconfigure the retail, community, and leisure provision in the town centre.
- 2.2 The Old River Lane SPD sets out aspirations and ambitions for the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site.
- 2.3 A copy of the draft Old River Lane SPD is attached at **Appendix A**.

## **3.0 Reasons**

### Purpose of the SPD

- 3.1 Policy BISH8 (Old River Lane) of the East Herts District Plan 2018, sets out that the Old River Lane site will provide for a mixed-use development and around 100 new homes. The policy states that the 'Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework' 2016 will form the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document which will be used to inform the masterplanning of the site.

- 3.2 This SPD sets out the aspirations of the Council for the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site. The ambition is to create a well-designed development that responds to the character of the surrounding area. The SPD will:
- Set out the existing planning policy framework for bringing forward appropriate redevelopment of Old River Lane;
  - Establish placemaking and design principles;
  - Improve the quality of proposals;
  - Ensure high quality design.
- 3.3 The SPD has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will be a key material consideration in determining the acceptability of development on the site and seeks to reduce uncertainty by creating a framework against which development proposals can be assessed.

#### Content of the SPD

- 3.4 The SPD addresses a range of planning matters relating to Old River Lane; as such the SPD has been split into nine Chapters as follows:
- **Introduction** – describes the background to the SPD including the planning policy context and the process for preparing the SPD.
  - **Site Context and Analysis** – examines the historical development of the area, looking back at the evolution of Bishop’s Stortford, followed by a brief history of the Old River Lane site. Further analysis of the Old River Lane site today follows and how it relates to the wider town centre.
  - **Policy BISH8 Old River Lane** – provides further information on the policy requirements of BISH8 with particular reference to land use on the site.
  - **Transport Options** – considers broad transport issues

and options relating to Old River Lane.

- **Constraints and Opportunities** – sets out the constraints and opportunities that were identified following the appraisal of the site and its existing uses.
- **Vision and Development Objectives** – sets out the vision for the Old River Lane site and development objectives.
- **Design Principles** – sets out the design principles that will guide development at Old River Lane.
- **Strategic Masterplanning Framework** – sets out the framework for development proposals at Old River Lane.
- **Planning Application Requirements** – outlines the documents required to accompany planning applications.

3.5 An Old River Lane Steering Group was set up. The Steering Group has met on six occasions between November 2021 and May 2022. Meeting with stakeholders has ensured a better understanding of the key issues and aspirations that the community have for the Old River Lane site. Alongside this the Council has been able to get feedback on emerging proposals and principles as well as jointly setting a vision and objectives for the site. The discussions that have taken place at the Steering Group meetings have therefore influenced both the scope and content of this SPD.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

3.6 Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), certain types of plans that set the framework for the consent of future development projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment. It is therefore a requirement that the Council undertakes a Screening Assessment to determine whether the draft Old River Lane SPD should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

3.7 The Regulations require that the Council consults three statutory bodies in reaching this determination. Consultation has therefore been carried out with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. At the time of writing this report, no responses have been received, though no contrary view is anticipated.

3.8 The SEA Screening Statement attached at **Appendix B** is therefore provided in draft, pending the receipt of consultation responses.

#### **4.0 Options**

4.1 Option 1: not producing the SPD – would mean that there wouldn't be an overarching strategy produced to guide future development at Old River Lane.

4.2 Option 2: producing the SPD – will allow the Council to set out the strategy and aspirations for the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site.

#### **5.0 Risks**

5.1 The draft SPD will help guide the redevelopment of Old River Lane.

#### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

6.1 As part of the scoping of the SPD, an Old River Lane Steering Group has been set up. Membership of the Steering Group includes: Officers from East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council; Councillors; landowner and developer representatives; representatives from the Cross-party Working Group on Old River Lane; as well as other representatives from the Town Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Group, the Bishop's

Stortford Climate Change Group, the Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District (BID) and Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation. A number of community representatives also attended the Steering Group meetings.

- 6.2 Meeting with stakeholders has ensured a better understanding of the key issues and aspirations that the community have for the Old River Lane site. Alongside this the LPA has been able to get feedback on emerging proposals and principles as well as jointly setting a vision and objectives for the site. The discussions that have taken place at the Steering Group meetings have therefore influenced both the scope and content of the draft SPD
- 6.3 The draft SPD will be published for consultation for four-weeks between the 5 July and 2 August 2022 (5pm). The consultation will be advertised via a press release. Information will be made available on the Council's website and via social media.
- 6.4 The draft Old River Lane SPD will be available for public inspection at:
  - East Herts District Council (Hertford Office)
  - East Herts District Council (Bishop's Stortford Office)
  - Bishop's Stortford Town Council
  - Bishop's Stortford Library
- 6.5 A draft Consultation Statement has been produced, as detailed at **Appendix C**. This outlines the statutory requirements and summarises early engagement with stakeholders. Following the 4-week public consultation, a final version of the SPD will be produced. At the same time a final Statement of Consultation will be produced, setting out who was consulted during the preparation of the SPD; a summary of the main issues raised; and how those issues have been addressed in the SPD. It is currently anticipated that the final SPD will be presented to

Members in October 2022.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No - The SPD provides more detailed guidance on policies in the East Herts District Plan 2018, which was the subject of an EIA.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes - The emerging Old River Lane SPD has been screened to determine whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. On the basis of the screening process, it is the Council's opinion that the Old River Lane SPD does not require a SEA or Sustainability Appraisal. This is because there will be no significant environmental, social or economic effects arising from its implementation, as the SPD seeks only to expand upon and provide guidance on the effective and consistent implementation of District Plan policies.

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

No

### **Human Rights**

No

### **Legal**

No - The SPD is not introducing new legal requirements.

## **Specific Wards**

Bishop's Stortford Meads

### **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 East Herts District 2018:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/districtplan>

7.2 **Appendix A:** Draft Old River Lane Supplementary Planning Document June 2022

7.3 **Appendix B:** Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement June 2022

7.4 **Appendix C:** Draft Consultation Statement June 2022

### **Contact Member**

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