

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 9 MARCH 2017

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

APPROACH TO MASTERPLANNING AND DELIVERY OF STRATEGIC SITES

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report sets out the background and advantages of adopting a Masterplanning approach to development within East Herts.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL:</u> That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:

(A)	the approach to Masterplanning set out in this report, be agreed to support the delivery of sites allocated for development in the emerging District Plan.
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1.0 Background

1.1 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 East Herts will grow and develop whilst at the same time maintaining its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. The Plan covers the period 2011–2033. Once adopted, the policies in the District Plan will replace the policies in the Local Plan 2007.

1.2 The District Plan includes a series of site specific policies which establish the principle of development in locations across the district and identify what a planning application is expected to address. For the strategic sites (generally those over 500 homes) the District Plan sets out a specific policy requirement that prior to the submission of any planning application, a Masterplan should be prepared.

1.3 This report provides further information for Members on the role of Masterplans and seeks agreement to a process whereby 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.

2.0 Report

2.1 The District Plan sets out the expectation that a Masterplan will be prepared, prior to the submission of any planning application, for the following sites:

- Bishop's Stortford North (Policy BISH3)
- Bishop's Stortford South (Policy BISH5)
- Land North and East of Ware (Policy WARE2)
- The Gilston Area (Policy GA1)
- Land East of Stevenage (Policy EOS1)
- Land East of Welwyn Garden City (Policy EWEL1)

In addition, it is anticipated that masterplanning of the town centre sites in Bishop's Stortford will be informed by the ongoing work on the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework.

2.2 Whilst there is no policy requirement for other sites allocated in the District Plan to produce a Masterplan, it is considered good practice and as such there will be an expectation that all site promoters should do a Masterplan. This report establishes this principle and seeks to ensure that a Masterplan approach is taken where appropriate.

2.3 The role of a Masterplan will be to:

- elaborate on the development principles that will guide development;
- show how these principles can be delivered through an indicative spatial layout;
- clarify arrangements for delivery and phasing;
- provide more explicit advice regarding infrastructure contributions; and
- provide a mechanism for public engagement on the future shape of the sites.

2.4 Masterplans should be:

- visionary, raising aspirations for an area;
- deliverable, taking into account likely constraints and implementation timescales;
- flexible, allowing for changing circumstances and new opportunities;
- inclusive, being prepared with participation from local communities; and
- adaptable, allowing for existing areas to be thought of differently.

2.5 A typical Masterplan might show:

- how streets and open spaces are to be connected;
- define the height, bulk and massing of buildings;
- set out the suggested relationship between buildings and public spaces;
- determine the uses which will take place in an area;
- identify the movement patterns for people on foot, or by bicycle, car or passenger transport;
- set out the basis for the provision of utilities and other infrastructure;
- relate the physical form of the site to local social and economic circumstances, taking into account the needs of people living and working in the area; and
- show ways in which new developments can be integrated into existing communities, and the built and natural environments.

2.6 Community support in its widest sense is essential to the successful delivery of development, and site promoters will be expected to work with the Council to ensure this is carried out in a meaningful manner. As such it is expected that Masterplans will be collaboratively prepared involving site promoters, landowners, East Herts Council, Hertfordshire County Council, town and parish councils, local communities, Neighbourhood Plan forums where appropriate and other key stakeholders.

2.7 Masterplans will sit alongside the District Plan and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications on sites. They will not be part of the statutory development plan, but will be endorsed by the Council. Whilst this Council has not historically adopted Masterplans as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) consideration will be given to this approach where appropriate. The NPPF is clear that SPDs should only be considered where they are clearly justified, for example where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery. They should not be used to add

unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development. An SPD approach is proposed for the East of Welwyn Garden City site as this is allocated for development in both the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan and the East Herts District Plan and an SPD would ensure a consistent approach across the whole site.

- 2.8 Having an agreed Masterplan that has been subject to public consultation is considered to be the most effective way of ensuring that the planning application stage is straightforward, and as such will speed up the decision making process. It will also ensure that the optimum level of developer contributions to infrastructure and mitigation of development impacts can be achieved.
- 2.9 It is anticipated that Masterplans should be considered by the District Planning Executive Panel. Members would also have the opportunity be involved in the Masterplanning process as key local stakeholders.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

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