

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 1 DECEMBER 2010

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 20 20 VISION AND MILL SITE BRIEF

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All Bishop's Stortford Wards

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To inform Members of the progress being made by the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Group and to seek endorsement and adoption of a site brief for the area known as the Mill Site in Bishop's Stortford

| <u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> that | |
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| (A) | the work of the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 group be endorsed; |
| (B) | the Bishop's Stortford Mill Site Development Brief as attached be adopted as the Council's vision and objectives for the site; |
| | and |
| (C) | used for development control purposes in determining planning applications relating to the site; |
| | and |
| (D) | used to inform emerging Local Development Framework strategies and policies. |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 24 November 2009 Executive received a report to update them on the progress being made by the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 Visioning group and to seek adoption of a Vision document for Bishop's Stortford.

- 1.2 The Executive had previously agreed to the establishment of a multi agency board to develop a long term vision for the future of Bishop's Stortford. Chaired by the Leader of the Council, membership was drawn from a wide range of statutory agencies, business and enterprise and representatives of the community.

The work of the group has been to identify and consider the major issues which might shape Bishop's Stortford over the next 10 or 20 years. The output being to develop a vision which might influence positive outcomes from the plans and ambitions of statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations who might have a part to play in the town's future.

- 1.3 A draft Vision document was presented to the Executive which recommended to Council that
- the principles set out in the Draft Vision Document produced by the Bishop's Stortford 20 20 group should be adopted as being consistent with its ambitions for the Town
 - the Council affirms its commitment to refer to the 20 20 Vision when making decisions that will impact on the town; and

- 1.4 Those recommendations were agreed by the Council on 9 December 2009 and the document A Vision for Bishop's Stortford was subsequently published in January 2010. It is available as hard copy from the council offices or electronically on the Council's website at www.eastherts.gov.uk/bishopsstortford2020

2.0 Report

- 2.1 *A Vision for Bishop's Stortford* identifies a number of sites in and around Bishop's Stortford town centre which have the potential to contribute to the delivery of the Vision and the delivery of the desired outcomes.

- 2.2 In order to provide a means of positively influencing any development proposals that may come forward for the sites, the 20 20 group undertook to promote the development of a site specific brief for each of the sites, commencing with the area which includes the flour mill.

- 2.3 The purpose of a Site Specific Brief is to set out clear guidelines for potential developers on the local expectations for parts of the site to be retained or developed for the benefits of the town.

- 2.4 Based on an extensive scoping study of the Mill Site Area covering existing and emerging land uses around the town centre, a draft Site Specific Development Options brief setting out a range of development potential and options was produced. A draft 'long list' was considered by the 20 20 Group and took into account the scoping study plus input from a number of key statutory organisations. Informed by those findings the 20 20 Group believed that the number of development options needed to be reduced. Two options emerged as lead proposals and a draft brief of which set out those 2 development options was prepared. This, together with a number of related documents and supporting material has been made available through the Council's website as given at 1.4 above.
- 2.5 Consultation on the draft development options brief took place through the organisations represented on the 20 20 Group. The full list is attached as **Essential Reference Paper B**. The purpose of this local initiative consultation was to ascertain the most preferred option to provide a basis for a site brief. The consultation provided feedback from a wide range of interest groups and the public through the range of local and national organisations and bodies which were actively involved in developing A Vision for Bishop's Stortford.
- 2.6 Responses received were collated and summarised. The overwhelming response was a strong preference for riverside regeneration integrated into a mixed use development including some residential, business and commercial uses. Based on the outcome of the work of the 20 20 Group and the feedback from consultations officers have prepared a Development Brief for the Mill Site. In summary the key considerations arising from the various responses were:
- The River is a key asset of the town which is not adequately exploited economically or environmentally. This may be the last opportunity to make a positive impact on the central riverside environment.
 - Many of the responses support riverside related development which could include commercial and leisure facilities directly related to river use.
 - In respect to urban design for future developments along this stretch of the river several responses express the avoidance of a 'canyon' effect in terms of height, massing and visual appearance.

- The canal basin approach together with additional moorings was seen as desired development option.
- It is important to create a link across the river with central part of the town.
- Design should be traditional, but incorporate a variety of architectural styles.
- The existing Flour Mill if retained must be tidied up to enhance the area.
- Listed building buildings should be identified and protected.
- Tourism potential is considerable and should be emphasised.
- Local traffic issues including any two way traffic along Dane Street and access points into the site brief area should be addressed.

2.7 The site brief for consideration is provided as **Essential Reference Paper C**. It is also available in its full format, including appendices on the Council's website at the web address given at paragraph 1.4 above.

2.8 The site brief reflects the most current and up to date views for the site and is fully supported by the feedback from the consultation process. It is supported by and consistent with the Vision for Bishop's Stortford 20 20. If the brief is adopted as policy by the council then the document will become a strong material consideration for development control purposes. If adopted as policy, it will also be able to feed into and inform the Local Development Framework and could be proposed and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Please refer to **Essential Reference Paper A**

Background papers;

A Vision for Bishop's Stortford, Mill Site Development Options Brief and Consultation documents, all documents and appendices to ERP C plus further background papers are available at www.eastherts.gov.uk/bishopsstortford2020

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

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| <p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities</p> | <p>Promoting prosperity and well-being; providing access and opportunities <i>Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.</i></p> <p>Pride in East Herts <i>Improve standards of the neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p>Caring about what's built and where <i>Care for and improve our natural and built environment.</i></p> <p>Shaping now, shaping the future <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p> |
| <p>Consultation:</p> | <p>Extensive consultation was undertaken to inform the development of A Vision for Bishop's Stortford. Consultation has also been undertaken through the organisations represented on the Vision 20 20 group</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>The Brief, if adopted by the council will have the status of being a material consideration for development control purposes. It will also be used to inform the content of the Local Development Framework.</p> |
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>None specific to this report</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>None specific to this report</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>The purpose of the production of a site brief is reduce the risk that in the event development proposals come forward for the site, that development would take place that might not realise the best potential for the site and the town.</p> |