

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EAST HERTS APPROACH TO MASTER PLANNING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report sets out the Council's approach to master planning and seeks agreement that the approach is used to support the delivery of significant development sites in the district.

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

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| (A) | the approach to master planning set out in this report be endorsed as the approach to be followed in relation to the development of significant development sites in East Herts. |
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1.0 Background

1.1 The Council has submitted its emerging District Plan for examination by the Secretary of State and the dates for the initial Examination hearings are fixed for October and November this year.

1.2 Once adopted, the District Plan will allocate land for significant development in the district. Landowners and developers are already in the process of engaging with the Council to seek to show how their sites can come forward for development and be deliverable.

1.3 Throughout the development of the Plan the Council has made it clear that it is seeking to ensure that development of the highest quality comes forward, fully supported by infrastructure and delivering a range of aspirations that the Council and the

community in general has about the benefits to be delivered as part of development.

- 1.4 These aspirations can be best identified and achieved through a collaborative master planning approach to the bringing forward of sites for development. Members will recall that an initial report on the background and advantages of adopting a master planning approach was presented to the Panel in March 2017 (see Background Papers). This report now seeks endorsement of an East Herts agreed approach to master planning.
 - 1.5 This report refers to significant development sites; in effect, any development which has an impact on the community and the ability to bring forward potential benefits as a result of development. In addition, the significance of development may not arise as a result 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.
 - 1.6 As a result, there is no threshold suggested over which this approach is to be followed. 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 District Plan allocations would be included within this model.
- 2.0 Report
- 2.1 Master planning is not a new concept, being in general usage to describe an approach to the strategic consideration of development at any site, taking into account its wider impacts and potential.
 - 2.2 It is in this generic way that it is now being applied by Officers to seek to ensure that good quality development is secured through all District Plan allocations and other significant developments. Furthermore, Officers have explored and defined the concept further so that it can be appropriately applied to specific 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.

- 2.3 The results of this more specific East Herts perspective are set out in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**. This is effectively a template document that sets out the approach to be followed.
- 2.4 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 on the basis of 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 particular 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 with regard to 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 master plan that is in an acceptable form for the Council.

- 2.5 The master planning process is flexible enough to allow arrangements in each case to be adapted to the particular circumstances of the development. The Council will expect the approach in each case to be a joint one, between it 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;
 - Steering Group arrangements, which may comprise the Executive, a sub group of the Executive, or other appropriate arrangements;
 - a Member working group, drawn from local ward members, members of the DM committee, as well as other interested members; and,
 - appropriate consultative arrangements to ensure that all wider and relevant stakeholders are able to engage in the process.
- 2.6 Once a final version of a master plan has been achieved that is deemed to be acceptable, it will be subject to the formal endorsement of the Executive at the next available meeting and then by full Council.
- 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

DPEP Report on the Approach to Master Planning and Delivery of Strategic Sites (9th March 2017) is available to view here:

<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s38580/Masterplanning.pdf?J=5>

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