

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 17 JULY 2018

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

SAWBRIDGEWORTH MASTERPLANNING FRAMEWORKS – LAND TO
THE NORTH OF WEST ROAD AND LAND TO THE SOUTH OF WEST
ROAD

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To enable Executive Members to consider the Masterplans for the following sites in Sawbridgeworth:
 - (i) Land to the north of West Road
 - (ii) Land to the south of West Road

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: To recommend to Council that:

(A)	<p>The Masterplanning Frameworks for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Land to the north of West Road (SAWB2)(ii) Land to the south of West Road (SAWB3) <p>as detailed at Essential Reference Papers ‘B’ and ‘C’ to this report, be agreed as material considerations for Development Management purposes.</p>
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The East Herts Approach to Master Planning was first presented to the District Planning Executive Panel in September 2017 (and agreed by Council on the 18th October 2017). The report set out a series of steps that describe the various stages involved and processes expected for each of the District Plan strategic allocations. Whilst not a one-size-fits-all approach, the process is based upon a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving issues, creating a vision for what the site aspires to achieve, testing design options and consulting upon preferred solutions. The output of this process is a masterplan framework or masterplan which is presented to members for consideration.
- 1.2 In order to embed the Masterplanning process in the District Plan, a new policy has been proposed through the Main Modifications Consultation. Policy DES1: Masterplanning requires all 'significant' development proposals to prepare a masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets and other relevant matters. Furthermore, the masterplan should be collaboratively prepared and informed by public participation. Finally, Policy DES1 states that in order to ensure sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the masterplan as a whole.
- 1.3 The masterplan should therefore provide sufficient information to inform the preparation of detailed aspects of the site at the planning application stage. The level of detail required for the masterplan will depend upon the likely form of delivery of the site. For example, if it is likely that the site will be delivered by a number of developers, more detail will be needed in the masterplan in order to provide more certainty on key matters so that future parties are very clear on what the site is expected to achieve. Where delivery is

expected by one party, a masterplanning framework may be prepared which sets out key parameters and aspirations upon which further detail will be provided.

- 1.4 For each of the strategic sites allocated in the emerging District Plan a Steering Group has been, or will be established. This will comprise East Herts councillors, town and parish councillors, representatives of the local community and other interested groups where appropriate. The Steering Group is a sounding board for key issues and depending upon specific circumstances, for discussing detailed design elements whilst preparing the planning application through to when construction is underway.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The sites the subject of this report comprise land to the north and south of West Road. They are strategic allocations within the emerging District Plan, which is expected to be adopted in summer 2018. The site promoters (Taylor Wimpey Homes and Barratt/David Wilson Homes) have embarked on a masterplanning exercise with Officers in order to demonstrate that the policy requirements can be achieved on both sites. Subsequent to the District Plan Examination in Public, work has advanced on establishing a number of key parameters and conceptual designs of the sites, which are now expressed in the Masterplanning Frameworks as detailed in **Essential Reference Papers 'B' and 'C'**.
- 2.2 Policies SAWB2 and SAWB3 of the emerging District Plan set out the proposed land uses and other policy requirements for each site as well as a requirement that a masterplan is produced in a collaborative manner with stakeholders. The District Plan allocations provide that the land to the north of West Road will deliver at least 125 new homes and land for the expansion of Mandeville School. The land to the south of West Road will deliver at least 175 new homes.

Land to the north of West Road

- 2.3 Taylor Wimpey's proposals will deliver approximately 133 new homes of varying mix, including 40% affordable housing, associated access, landscaping, open space and infrastructure works.
- 2.4 The site will also deliver land for an expansion of Mandeville primary school by 1 form of entry to provide for the needs arising from the new developments.
- 2.5 The developers have expressed a desire to submit a full planning application towards the end of June 2018. A draft description of development is included below:

Development of 133 dwellings, including affordable homes, associated access, landscaping, open space and infrastructure works.

Land to the south of West Road

- 2.6 Barratt/David Wilson's proposals will deliver approximately 200 new homes of varying mix, including 40% affordable housing and associated accesses, landscaping, open space and infrastructure works. Arising from discussions with the Steering Group and Town Council the development will also deliver public recreation space and allotments.
- 2.7 The developers have expressed a desire to submit full planning application in towards the end of June 2018. A draft description of development is included below:

Development of 200 dwellings, including affordable homes, open space, allotments, associated access, landscaping and infrastructure works.

- 2.8 The Masterplanning Framework for each site sets the context for development. The Frameworks describe, in brief, the background to the site, an analysis of the site constraints and surrounding environs and provides a series of diagrams illustrating the key elements of the site at a parameter level. The main Framework diagrams bring together these parameters and draws out key features of the proposal.

Highway improvements

- 2.9 The allocated sites in Sawbridgeworth (SAWB2, SAWB3 and SAWB4) will together deliver highway improvements, including key improvement works to the existing double roundabout junction of West Road/Station Road/London Road/Cambridge Road.

Engagement

- 2.10 A Steering Group was set up to enable the open debate of issues. This Group comprises councillors and representatives of Sawbridgeworth Town Council.
- 2.11 Taylor Wimpey and Barratt/David Wilson presented their proposals at sessions of the Steering Group and have actively engaged in debate with the group on topics and issues. In addition, there have been separate meetings with Officers and joint meetings with the Highway Authority in respect of both sites. Taylor Wimpey have also met with HCC Education in regard to the school expansion site. These discussions have informed the Masterplanning Framework and the emerging application for each site. The Hertfordshire Design Review Panel were also engaged to provide an independent assessment of proposals and their input has been very helpful in shaping the emerging schemes.
- 2.12 A number of matters have been discussed at the Steering Group sessions for each site including:

- Highway issues, including traffic on West Road;
- Pedestrian and vehicular access to the school;
- Access points and footpath and cycle routes and linkages to the existing urban area to the west;
- Green infrastructure and Green Belt boundary treatment;
- Public open space and recreation provision;
- Sustainable drainage and landscaping;
- Layout and design.

Some of these matters are addressed through the proposed Masterplan Frameworks, while some more detailed matters will be considered at the planning application stage.

- 2.13 As part of the process a public exhibition of the Masterplans was held on 4th June 2018. Further to the exhibition some 50 written responses were received from residents. The majority of responses were in the form of objections to further residential development in Sawbridgeworth and the resulting impact on traffic and infrastructure. However, the sites are strategic allocations forming part of the development strategy in emerging District Plan which has been the subject of consultation and examination. The principle of the developments will therefore be established on adoption of the District Plan.

Conclusions

- 2.14 It is the view of Officers that the Masterplanning Frameworks for the sites provides a good basis upon which to move forward to preparing the detailed application stages. They provide a framework regarding the main issues of significance in relation to the development of each site within which a planning application submission can be made. The frameworks provide information in relation to a number of matters such as the areas of built form, the location and type of green infrastructure, sustainable drainage strategy,

pedestrian/cycle routes through the sites as well as connections to the rest of the town.

2.15 It is recommended that the Masterplanning Frameworks, as detailed at **Essential Reference Papers 'B' and 'C'**, be agreed as material considerations¹ for Development Management purposes.

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

Emerging East Herts District Plan Main Modifications Consultation
Version 2018 – Chapter 8 - Sawbridgeworth,
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/mainmodifications>

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¹ A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.