

Report To: Planning Portfolio Holder

13 December 2016

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Strategic Sites Supplementary Planning Documents

Purpose

1. To agree the way forward for preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for Waterbeach New Town, Bourn Airfield New Village and a joint SPD with Cambridge City Council for Land North of Cherry Hinton.
2. This is a key decision because:
 - (a) It results in the authority making savings which are significant having regard to this Council's budget for preparing further guidance for major developments;
 - (b) It is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

and it was first published in the November 2016 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder agrees:
 - (a) That a Supplementary Planning Document be prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council for Land North of Cherry Hinton to the broad timetable set out in paragraphs 19-20.
 - (b) To commence preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents for Waterbeach New Town and Bourn Airfield New Village to the broad timetables set out in paragraphs 21 to 25.
 - (c) The general process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents contained in paragraph 13.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. To prepare SPD to provide guidance for proposals contained in the emerging Local Plan and to provide a clear framework for the preparation and determination of planning applications by site promoters and for this to be to a timetable that ensures they can influence such planning applications.

Background

5. The emerging South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, currently at examination, includes proposals for new settlements north of Waterbeach and at Bourn Airfield and a housing-led urban extension North of Cherry Hinton that straddles the boundary with Cambridge.
6. The Council meeting of 17 November 2016 agreed to put forward proposed modifications to the examination Inspectors to change the proposal in the submitted

Local Plan to prepare Area Action Plans (AAPs) for the new settlements to a proposal to prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This change follows legal advice that the documents the Council intends to prepare to provide further guidance for the new settlements should be SPDs rather than AAPs. Council agreed that a report be brought to this Portfolio Holder meeting to consider the way forward.

7. It is also intended to prepare a joint SPD with Cambridge City Council for Land North of Cherry Hinton to provide the masterplan required by both Local Plans. The approach to that SPD is also addressed in this report.

Considerations

Purpose of the SPDs

8. It is important that the Council as local planning authority can lead the development of these major new developments and provide an opportunity early in the process for community engagement. The SPDs can help achieve this objective.
9. The NPPF describes SPD as documents that add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan, including further guidance for development on specific sites. Regulations make clear that SPD are documents that address environmental, social, design and economic objectives in relation to development proposed in a Local Plan. SPD provide further guidance to the policies included in the Local Plan for specific sites or topics and can work through particular issues before proposals reach a more detailed stage. They can be a helpful part of the planning process, and include community engagement. The intention is for the SPDs to be concise, useful and useable documents.
10. The Modifications recently agreed by Council for the two new settlements mean that SPD will now be prepared to provide guidance in relation to the policies included in the Local Plan with the objective of providing a clear framework for the preparation and determination of planning applications for the new settlements by site promoters. They will have a focus on ensuring a comprehensive approach to the planning of these major sites and on the transport and other infrastructure being planned and delivered at the right time. The modified Local Plan policies set out some key issues that the SPD for each site will include:
 - An overarching, high level vision for the new settlement.
 - Consideration of relevant context including key constraints and opportunities.
 - The broad location of the components of the new settlement which are essential to support comprehensive and seamless development. A spatial framework diagram will be included that ensures the creation of a sustainable, legible and distinctive new settlement.
 - Broadly how the development is to be phased, including the delivery of key infrastructure.
11. Other factors that the SPDs will cover can be expected to include strategic principles for development and place-making that would set the quality expectations of the Council, and through the engagement process the local community, of the new settlements to guide the future master-planning of the sites. The SPDs will also consider issues such as the dwelling capacity of the sites and the relationship between the new settlements and nearby communities both physically and functionally.

12. The Local Plan policy also says that Waterbeach New Town SPD will look at the location, nature and extent of any formal open space to be provided outside of the Major Development Area. This is particularly important given the relationship with Denny Abbey Scheduled Monument to the north to ensure an appropriate setting to this important heritage asset is retained.

Preparation of the SPDs

13. The preparation of SPDs will require a number of stages. Cambridge City Council has already established a process for preparing site SPDs that has proved effective for a number of sites in the submitted Cambridge Local Plan. It is proposed to widen this as a Greater Cambridge approach and to use it also for Cambridge fringe sites and the new settlements. It involves five main stages as follows:

Stage 1: Initial preparation and evidence gathering - including technical surgeries, and also stakeholder and community workshops. This would include local Members and Parish Councils as local community representatives.

Stage 2: Prepare draft SPD - leading to consideration by the Planning Portfolio Holder and approval to consult.

Stage 3: Public Consultation - involving 6 weeks consultation.

Stage 4: Finalise SPD - including considering results of public consultation and revision of SPD. If the Local Plan has not been adopted at that time, the Portfolio Holder would resolve to adopt once the Local Plan is adopted

Stage 5: Adoption SPD – final SPD agreed by the Portfolio Holder.

14. In order to be able to achieve the objective set out at paragraph 8 of the Council leading the development of these new settlements and of the SPDs providing an opportunity early in the process for community engagement, and also providing a clear framework for the preparation and determination of planning applications by site promoters, the SPDs need to be prepared to a timetable that ensures they can influence such planning applications.
15. In the interests of shaping and accelerating housing delivery, there is also merit in preparing SPDs that will support development as early as possible whilst ensuring delivery of high quality sustainable new communities. This is both a national objective and important to the implementation of the Local Plan and to the Council achieving and maintaining a five year housing land supply over the medium to long term. Once construction of major sites, and in particular new settlements, is established they can provide an important and ongoing source of housing completions. For example, Cambourne has averaged 220 completions a year over its 20 year lifetime to 2031 across multiple economic cycles.
16. It is therefore important that each SPD is sufficiently advanced to provide a planning framework and feedback on public consultation by the time it is anticipated that any planning application is likely to come forward and be determined. The appropriate timescale also needs to be considered in the context of the particular proposal, outstanding objections to the Local Plan, and developer intentions.
17. The Council has received legal advice that the relevant proposed SPD will need to have advanced to a stage where it has been subject to public consultation and the

results of consultation considered before planning permission could be granted; effectively a resolution to adopt the SPD. It would be possible for the Council to agree the SPD that it intends to adopt, but for the formal adoption to only happen once the Local Plan is adopted. This is the approach that Cambridge City Council has taken on a number of site specific SPD relating to proposed allocations in the submitted Cambridge Local Plan.

18. It is therefore relevant to consider the appropriate timescales for preparing SPDs for each of the strategic sites.
 - *Land North of Cherry Hinton*
19. This site is already allocated in the Cambridge East Area Action Plan 2008 as part of a wider urban extension, which identifies a potential second early phase of development (after an early first phase on land north of Newmarket Road – now the Wing development). With the Airport now remaining for at least the plan period to 2031, the submitted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans allocated land for residential led development based on knowledge at that time and proposed to change the rest of the allocation of the Airfield to safeguarded land. As part of the additional work the Councils undertook in response to the Inspectors' preliminary conclusions, the Councils put forward modifications to the specific proposals for Land North of Cherry Hinton that were contained in the Local Plans. These modifications included an increase in the allocation, consistent with the AAP and informed by further evidence, on land that can come forward with the Airport remaining operational, for 1,200 dwellings (780 in Cambridge and 420 in South Cambridgeshire). An SPD will provide the masterplan required by the proposed policy and will aim to ensure co-ordination of the development as a whole and avoid piecemeal development.
20. The promoters of this site have agreed to prepare an SPD in partnership with the Councils. This is consistent with other SPD prepared by the City Council for site allocations included in the submitted Local Plan during the examination process and is considered an appropriate approach for this site, recognising that the land is already allocated in the AAP. Initial technical work is under way, with the intention to undertake stakeholder engagement early in 2017, moving on to preparation of a draft SPD and public consultation, following the process set out in paragraph 8.
 - *Waterbeach*
21. It is understood that Urban & Civic, the promoters for the western part of the new town comprising the former barracks and airfield, are expecting to submit a planning application early in the new year. The aspirations of RLW, as promoters of the eastern part of the site, are less immediate. To secure the objectives for the Waterbeach New Town SPD set out in the modified Local Plan policy, and ensure an holistic and joined up approach to the planning of the new town and its infrastructure, officers view is that it is appropriate to begin preparation of the SPD to cover the whole of the new town early in the new year so that it can still provide a clear framework to assist decision making. The risk of delaying until the Inspectors' view is known later in 2017 is that the planning application process is too far advanced and it becomes difficult for the Council and community to influence the proposals.
22. It is recognised that some of the local community remain opposed to the new town allocation in the Local Plan and will be appearing at the examination hearing, likely to be held in the Spring. Taking these various factors into account, it is considered that it would be appropriate to commence early work on the SPD in the new year following

the process set out at paragraph 8, but programmed so that stages involving community engagement do not commence until after the Local Plan hearing. This would allow the process to recognise and respect community feelings locally whilst avoiding the risk that delay would prejudice the ability of the Council and local community to influence the planning application for a large part of the new town, in the event that the Local Plan Inspectors consider such an allocation is sound.

23. The preparation of the SPD will make use of evidence prepared by the promoters as appropriate and subject to assessment by Council experts and key stakeholders. This will include work already undertaken by the promoters as part of recent work on a potential development framework document (DFD).

- *Bourn Airfield*

24. The main promoters of Bourn Airfield new village, Countryside Properties, are indicating that they do not currently intend to submit a planning application before the Autumn, which is when it is anticipated that the Inspectors' views on the modifications needed to make the Local Plan sound may be known. However the promoters have indicated that they expect to develop their proposals swiftly at that point. The process needs to include the owners of the current employment land to ensure an holistic approach. It is important that the Council and community can participate in an inclusive process to shape the planning the new settlement in the event that the Local Plan Inspectors consider such an allocation is sound. Therefore, whilst there is not currently anticipated to be the same urgency to move forward as at Waterbeach, it may be appropriate to start some early work in the middle part of next year following the process set out at paragraph 8.

25. It is recognised that a significant part of the local community remains opposed to the new village allocation in the Local Plan and will be appearing at the examination hearing, likely to be held in the Spring. Therefore, respecting community feelings locally and in light of the current aspirations of the promoters, it is envisaged that workshops and community engagement would not take place until the Inspectors' views are known, which as indicated above may be in the Autumn next year. This will however need to be kept under review.

Resources

26. A consequence of the change to SPD for the new settlements is that they can be prepared more quickly and they do not require an independent examination. However, in view of other work pressures facing the Planning Service, it is not possible to fully resource the preparation of the new settlement SPD within existing resources.
27. For land North of Cherry Hinton, as set out above the promoters have agreed to prepared the SPD working closely with the Councils.
28. For the new settlements, in view of the scale and nature of the proposals, the stage in the Local Plan process and outstanding objections, and to provide Member and community confidence in the Council's ownership of the process, it is proposed to commission consultants to prepare the SPD on the Council's behalf. The Council would expect that some of the costs arising from the need to accelerate development (at risk) will be met by the promoters. It is proposed that the promoters will sit on the steering group, and that preparation of the SPDs will draw on the extensive evidence already and still to be prepared by the new settlement promoters for these major sites, subject to independent review by Council officers and the consultant team. This

is very much the approach the Council followed when it prepared the adopted AAPs for Northstowe and the Cambridge fringe sites. It is therefore proposed that a suitable multi-disciplinary consultant/consultancy team is appointed to undertake the preparation of the new settlement SPDs and for the procurement process to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Options

29. The Council meeting of 17 November made the decision that SPD will be prepared for the two new settlements. The modification in respect of Land North of Cherry Hinton agreed by Council in March 2016 includes a policy requirement for a masterplan to be prepared, which will be met through the proposed SPD. The options for the Portfolio Holder are therefore around who prepares the SPD and the timing of that work.
30. The Portfolio Holder could decide that preparation of the SPD is not commenced until the Local Plan is adopted, however this runs the risk that they could be prepared too late to positively influence planning decisions and therefore impact upon delivery of housing on sites that form a key part of the Council's development strategy. A key role of the SPDs is to consider planning and delivery of infrastructure and to assist engagement with providers and delay would run the risk that costs will increase.

Implications

31. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

32. Savings arise from the decision of Council to change from preparing AAP to SPD. However, having regard to the need to accelerate the programme for preparing further guidance for these strategic sites, the Council is expecting all three sites to contribute to the cost of the Council preparing the SPDs. The Council would still expect to pay for the basic SPD preparation costs, including exhibitions, public notices and printing.

Legal

33. Legal advice has been received in terms of the preparation of SPD rather than AAP and on the timing of determining any planning applications in relation to the Local Plan process and preparation of SPD.

Staffing

34. The acceleration of preparation of the SPDs, in order for the Council and community to lead the process and shape outcomes, will place additional burdens on existing staff resources. It is proposed therefore to supplement resources and appoint consultants to assist delivery.

Risk Management

35. Risks are identified in the report in relation to timing of preparation of the SPD and influencing planning applications.

Climate Change

36. New settlements and land North of Cherry Hinton are key parts of the sustainable development strategy included in the submitted Local Plan, and the preparation of

SPD will help ensure that they come forward with appropriate measures to address climate change.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

37. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

A. LIVING WELL Support our communities to remain in good health whilst continuing to protect the natural and built environment

38. The strategic developments form a key part of the sustainable development strategy contained in the submitted Local Plan and preparation of SPD will help ensure they are built in a way that supports healthy lifestyles and protects and bring overall benefits to the natural and built environment.

B. HOMES FOR OUR FUTURE

Secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities

39. The strategic sites are a key part of the Local Plan aim to support delivery of new homes to meet identified needs.

C. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Work with partners to ensure new transport and digital infrastructure supports and strengthens communities and that our approach to growth sustains prosperity

40. Preparing SPDs for the strategic sites means transport and digital infrastructure can be appropriately planned to accommodate growth.

D. AN INNOVATIVE AND DYNAMIC ORGANISATION

Adopt a more commercial and business-like approach to ensure we can continue to deliver the best possible services at the lowest possible cost

41. The proposed approach to preparation of the SPDs reflects this strategic aim.

Background Papers

Planning Portfolio Local Plan Update Report 8 November 2016:

<http://scambsmodern.gov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1059&MId=6771&Ver=4>

Council Local Plan Update Report: 17 November 2016

<http://scambsmodern.gov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=410&MId=6689&Ver=4>

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