

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP
12 JANUARY 2010**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE
18 JANUARY 2010**

**EXECUTIVE
26 JANUARY 2010**

**MASTERPLAN FOR THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF MONKERTON / HILL BARTON**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief Members on a draft Masterplan, to seek approval for its use for Development Management purposes and for its publication for public consultation as a proposed draft Supplementary Planning Document after finalisation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) proposed 11,000 dwellings in Exeter between 2006-2026. The Panel who held the Examination in Public of the RSS recommended, in December 2007, a limited increase from 11,000 to 12,000 dwellings. The "Proposed Changes", published by the Secretary of State in July 2008, further increase the target for the City to 15,000 dwellings. Whichever of these targets is finally set, the full development of the strategic development areas at Newcourt, Alphington and Monkerton / Hill Barton, that were the subject of the Core Strategy consultation in October / November 2009, will be required.
- 2.2 The draft RSS sets a target net density for urban extensions of at least 50 dwellings per hectare.
- 2.3 The Monkerton/Hill Barton study area, delineated on the plan at Appendix A, is located at the eastern edge of Exeter, around 4 miles from Exeter city centre and in close proximity to Junction 29 of the M5 motorway. It is sandwiched between the main rail line to Waterloo to the north, the M5 to the east, the A3015/Honiton Road to the south and the City's outer bypass (the B3181) to the west. The recently developed Monkerton link road (Cumberland Way) crosses the site from north to south.
- 2.4 The Exeter Local Plan First Review protects this area from development. The emerging Core Strategy proposes that this area should be a strategic allocation but this document cannot provide detailed guidance. There is significant

developer interest in bringing forward development and there is therefore a need to provide guidance for development in the short term.

2.5 The Masterplan for the Monkerton / Hill Barton area was commissioned to:

- Present a comprehensive development strategy based on the principles of sustainability, which provides for a mixture of land uses i.e. housing and employment supported by local retail and community facilities and green infrastructure;
- Present options for low or zero carbon development;
- Identify the development capacity of the area, having regard to the Clients' wider development objectives for Exeter;
- Identify arrangements for access and movement within the site and linkages with surrounding areas, including for pedestrians and cyclists as well as all vehicles;
- Establish the design principles that will create a high quality and sustainable environment in terms of buildings and spaces;
- Provide a clear and practical delivery strategy;
- Identify and prioritise key infrastructure requirements;
- Provide a sound basis for allocating land in the Exeter Local Development Framework (LDF), taking into account issues of viability and deliverability; and
- Establish a clear framework within which any early planning application for development in the area could be determined.

2.6 The Masterplan has been jointly commissioned by Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, Exeter and East Devon Growth Point Team and landowners representatives.

2.7 The Masterplan has been prepared by LDA Design with support from Parsons Brinckerhoff on transport matters, GVA Grimley on property issues and Gardiner and Theobald on cost and viability matters.

2.8 Stakeholder interests were explored at a series of workshops held in July, August and September. These gathered input from a range of interested parties, landowners, government agencies and statutory bodies to inform preparation of the vision and aims of the Masterplan and the proposed development strategy.

2.9 The Masterplan is an A3 size document of over 140 sides. A copy is available in the Members Room and electronic copies are available on request. Key figures are attached as appendices.

Appendix A: Study area

Appendix B: Character areas

Appendix C: Land uses

Appendix D: Densities

Appendix E: Movement framework

Appendix F: Green Infrastructure framework

Appendix G: Illustrative Masterplan

An outline of the structure of the Masterplan is provided as Appendix H.

3 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

3.1 The emerging Core Strategy anticipates designation of the Monkerton / Hill Barton Masterplan area as a strategic development area delivering 2300 dwellings. The Masterplan identifies a potential for nearly 2500 dwellings. The Masterplan is envisaged as being delivered in four phases and taking until 2026 to develop out fully.

3.2 The process of masterplanning identified three key challenges for development of the area.

(i) How to promote sustainable modes of transport over use of the car?

3.3 Promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport has a wide range of benefits from improving health and encouraging social interaction to reducing road congestion and helping to move towards low carbon living, tackling issues of climate change and pollution. Through the stakeholder workshops, baseline context and recognition of national and international policy, the need to actively encourage sustainable means of movement has clearly emerged as a fundamental issue to be tackled within the Masterplan.

3.4 The Masterplan has taken this challenge head-on and it has fundamentally shaped the nature and structure of the plan. It has led the plan away from the traditional 'gridded' vehicular urban street pattern to one where development plots are orientated around a network of footpaths, cycleways and open spaces'. It is this 'green infrastructure' that forms the permeable movement network through the area, linking homes with key destinations and public transport hubs. The road network, although still allowing access to homes by car, is less permeable and seeks to discourage people using their car for short journeys such as to the local shops, school or into the City. Providing high quality public transport both by bus and rail is also a fundamental part of the Masterplan.

3.5 Principal vehicular access point to the area south of Hollow Lane would be from Hill Barton Road, Fitzroy Road and Oberon Way (see Appendix E). North of the ridge a new road between Tithebarn Bridge and Cumberland Way and a new public transport only route between Cumberland Way and Pinhoe Road provide access and a link for public transport from east of the city to by-pass Junction 29 of the M5. This is intended to be part of a High Quality Public Transport link connecting Monkerton / Hill Barton and developments to the east of Exeter to the city centre

3.6 Land is proposed to be safeguarded for a future rail station and associated car park in the south west of the site at Hill Barton. A station in this location would significantly improve access to the lower part of the site by public transport and would improve rail access to existing residential areas, the Met Office and Sowton Industrial Estate.

(ii) How to treat the ridgeline?

- 3.7 The ridgeline of Hollow Lane / Gypsy Hill Lane was recognised as an important landscape feature of the site and as having a vital role as both green infrastructure and a movement link. Three options as to how the ridge should be integrated were for considered:
- Green ridge – leaving the ridgeline undeveloped would however not allow housing and employment demands to be met.
 - Urban Ridge – focussing high density development on the ridgeline would provide a focus for development and support the ridgeline as a transport route but would compromise the ridge’s landscape and green infrastructure function.
 - The ‘picturesque’ ridge with set piece buildings in strong landscape structure was the preferred option as it reinforces the ridgeline and allows uses to be introduced in a way that creates a character and identity for the ridge area.

(iii) The number and location of centres?

- 3.8 The extent of the Masterplan area and quantum of residential development is considered to warrant the formation of a new centre to give the area focus and identity. The Masterplan area is divided by the ridgeline into two and, having discounted centring the development on the ridgeline, it was determined that two centres were necessary to serve the new population. The principal options were considered to be that, in addition to a new local centre in the Hill Barton;
- The existing Pinhoe centre be the focus as the main centre north of the ridgeline, or;
 - A new local centre north of the ridge and west of Cumberland Way, or;
 - A new local centre in the northwestern part of the site (near Sainsbury’s).
- 3.9 The access and movement difficulties between the site and Pinhoe and the limited opportunity for expansion of the existing local centre of Pinhoe was considered to make the first option unworkable, though Pinhoe will of course be used to some extent by the new population. The viability of a new centre wholly within the development area where any retail offer would be competing with Sainsbury’s was considered questionable. The third option of locating adjacent to Sainsbury’s was considered the greatest opportunity to create a viable centre in the early phases of the development as it is situated at the meeting of strategic routes with a high profile and visibility. This option had the advantage of serving existing and new communities and employment areas.
- 3.10 The Masterplan also sets out approaches to a number of topic areas where co-ordination across the site and across different land ownerships is required.
- 3.11 *Energy/sustainability.* Carbon savings targets for new residential buildings were announced in 2006. These staircase to zero carbon standard in 2016. Development at Monkerton / Hill Barton is envisaged to start in 2010, and run through to 2026 and so will be subject of increasingly stringent carbon saving targets. Whilst the first phase may come forward quickly and before the introduction of more stringent targets not including these parts of the development in a community heat and power network would reduce the potential

for the later stages to meet their carbon reduction targets. At the very least it is expected that the first phase will incorporate the infrastructure for community heat and power.

- 3.12 The opportunity to link a community heat and power network with both residential and other balancing users such as education and commercial developments (new and existing) exists in this area and is a crucial factor in making any such network a workable proposition. The opportunity to link with development east of the M5 such as Skypark further enhance the potential to make such a system work in this location.
- 3.16 *Green Infrastructure.* A key benefit of a comprehensive approach to developing the wider site is to allow green spaces to be laid out as a connected network to maximise public utility and ecological value. The Masterplan approach allows significant new open spaces to be created, rather than open space to be distributed in small parcels, and for these spaces to be linked. The green spaces in the Masterplan area can form linkages to the green spaces adjacent the Masterplan area. It envisages new allotments at four locations, new parks adjacent the Pin Brook east and west of Monkerton, and a new park adjacent the Met office site which will be linked by linear green spaces such as the Picturesque Ridge. The linear spaces will provide green travel and recreation routes and act as wildlife corridors.
- 3.14 *Character areas.* The Masterplan divides the study area into 7 Character areas (see Appendix B);
- The 'picturesque' ridge. As described above. Feature buildings in a strong landscape setting with a green transport route prioritising cycles and pedestrians that links a new primary school, new skills centre, St. Luke's secondary school and Ellen Tinkham School. Pedestrian and cycles routes link the ridge to the wider development. Building heights would be dictated by considerations of design and impact on the skyline. Residential densities will need to allow for strong landscape structure.
 - Pilton Centre. The new district centre adjacent the Sainsbury's site on a public transport link to Pinhoe Road. This will accommodate local retail provision, community hall, medical facilities, residential uses, potentially offices uses and be centred on a public transport corridor. Residential densities of 65+ dwellings per hectare in 3 or 4 storey buildings.
 - Pilton. A residential area west of Cumberland Way centred on a public transport corridor. Residential densities of 55-65 dwellings per hectare in 2 or 3 storey buildings.
 - Monkerton. Residential extensions to the existing area of Monkerton. Residential densities of 45-55 dwellings per hectare adjacent Cumberland Way but 35-45 dwellings per hectare across the majority of this area. Generally two storey but potentially taller fronting new road link and Cumberland Way.
 - Hill Barton. Residential extensions to the existing Hill Barton area. Residential densities of 55-65 dwellings per hectare close to Hill Barton Core and around the park, 45-55 dwellings per hectare across the majority of the area, 35-45 dwellings per hectare behind existing housing, 2 or 3 story buildings.

- Hill Barton Core. Adjacent a new access to the site from Hill Barton Road accommodating small scale commercial uses, local shop and providing the opportunity for an additional rail halt. Small area of high density, 2 to 4 storey buildings.
- Sowton. The southern part of the site fronting Honiton Road which could provide extensions to the existing employment areas in a highly visible and accessible location.

The Masterplan recognises that taller building may be appropriate in some locations to create landmarks and improve legibility.

- 3.15 *Densities.* The overall net housing density is 50 dwellings per hectare in accordance with draft RSS guidance for urban extensions. As summarised above densities are varied to allow lower densities (35-45 dph) adjacent existing residential areas and higher densities along public transport corridors (up to 65 dph) and at the district centre (65+dph) (see Appendix D).
- 3.16 *Drainage.* The Masterplan area is divided in to two drainage areas by the ridgeline, to the north the land drains to the Pin Brook and to the south to the Great Moor stream. Neither has capacity to accept additional flows. Comprehensive sustainable urban drainage systems will be required therefore to ensure surface water drainage does not increase run-off rates. The formation of standing open bodies of water is unlikely to be acceptable given the proximity of Exeter Airport.
- 3.17 *Ellen Tinkham School.* The development of the surrounding area offers the opportunity to improve the site and accessibility of Ellen Tinkham School.
- 3.18 *Education.* Primary education provision is made through the allocation of land for a new primary school on the ridgeline where access by green travel routes can be achieved from all parts of the development site. Secondary education provision can be accommodated through the expansion of St. Lukes whose original land allocation and design allowed for expansion.
- 3.19 *Gypsy and traveller site.* The requirement that provision for Gypsies and Travellers be provided within the city by 2011 can be accommodated in the study area. The site should be positioned so that it adjoins new development, rather than existing, provided that the design criteria can be met. The location of such a site should be established through the consultation process that will be undertaken in forming a supplementary planning document.
- 3.20 *Phasing.* Delivery of the Masterplan is broken down in to four phases.

Phase 1: (2010-2014)

Hill Barton residential area along with open space and allotments. Part of Pilton centre adjacent Sainsbury's. Gypsy and traveller site. Creation of the Picturesque Ridge green travel route.

Phase 2: (2014-2018)

Continuation of Hill Barton and Pilton residential areas. New primary school on ridge.

Phase 3: (2018-2022)

Delivery of new Link Road between Tithebarn Lane and Cumberland Way. Pilton residential area and public transport route. New Public open space adjacent Pin Brook west of Monkerton.

Phase 4: (2022-2026)

Residential development east of Cumberland way at Monkerton. Open space adjacent Pin Brook east of Monkerton.

- 3.21 *Infrastructure.* A schedule of infrastructure required to support the development has been prepared and costed. Infrastructure elements include new roads and public transport links, primary school, multi-use community hall, allotments and open spaces. The ability of the development to support the infrastructure cost and other obligations such as affordable housing and delivery of the infrastructure in a timely manner will be key to the viability of the Masterplan. At the time of writing this viability assessment had not been completed, however it is likely that choices between elements of desired infrastructure and other obligations will need to be made given the finite ability of the development to provide funding.

4 PURPOSE OF MASTERPLAN

- 4.1 The Exeter Local Plan First Review protects this area from development. The emerging Core Strategy proposes that this area should be a strategic allocation but this document cannot provide detailed guidance. There is significant developer interest in bringing forward development and there is therefore a need to provide guidance for development in the short term. Planning Member Working Group and Planning Committee are therefore asked to support and Executive to approve the Masterplan for Development Management purposes. Whilst it will only have limited weight until adopted, there is a danger that the desire to see comprehensive development of the area could be undermined if decisions any individual proposal is taken in the absence of a co-ordinating plan.
- 4.2 In order that the Masterplan will have statutory backing, the Council intends that the Masterplan will be subject to public consultation and brought forward for formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst final adoption is dependent on the adoption of the core strategy it is intended that public consultation should start immediately. Planning Member Working Group and Planning Committee are asked to support and Executive to agree the publication of the Masterplan study as a draft Supplementary Planning Document. There will be a six week period for public consultation, and then Planning Member Working Group and Executive will then be asked to consider a more detailed report on the proposed SPD, and the public representations upon it, towards the middle of the year. The public consultation will involve small exhibitions in the Civic Centre offices and Libraries and material on the City Council's website.

5 ADVICE SOUGHT/RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Planning Member Working Group supports the use of the Masterplan for Development Management purposes and publication of the draft Masterplan for public consultation as a proposed Supplementary Planning Document.

- 5.2 That Planning Committee supports the use of the Masterplan for Development Management purposes and publication of the draft Masterplan for public consultation as a proposed Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.3 That Executive agrees the use of the Masterplan for Development Management purposes and publication of the draft Masterplan for public consultation as a proposed Supplementary Planning Document.

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ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Monkerton and Hill Barton Masterplan Study by LDA Design

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options paper.