

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP
28 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**EXECUTIVE
28 SEPTEMBER 2010**

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

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Members may recall the papers at Planning Member Working Group, Planning Committee and Executive in January 2010 which explained the purpose and detailed content of the draft Masterplan and obtained member approval for use of the draft Masterplan for development management purposes and for consultation.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Masterplan, to seek approval for its use for Development Management purposes (superceding the previous draft) and for its future adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Monkerton & Hill Barton study area, delineated in red on the plan attached 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.
- 2.2 The Masterplan is prepared for the Monkerton & Hill Barton Strategic Allocation proposed in the Exeter Core Strategy Proposed Submission draft. The Core Strategy identified this area as delivering 2500 new dwellings and 5 hectares of employment land and associated infrastructure including a gypsy and traveller site.
- 2.3 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 Council's 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 planning application for development in the area could be determined.
- 2.4 The Masterplan has been jointly commissioned by Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, Exeter and East Devon Growth Point Team and landowner representatives.
- 2.5 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. An Implementation Plan has been prepared alongside the Masterplan. However, final costing of the necessary infrastructure elements has not been agreed and hence viability of the overall plan has not yet been demonstrated. The implementation plan will require the developers to make significant contributions to the infrastructure costs and work together to equalise land values across different ownerships particularly to realise the Green Infrastructure framework. It should be recognised that this may have implications for the spatial proposals in the Masterplan.
- 2.6 Stakeholder interests were explored at a series of workshops held in July, August and September 2009. 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.
- 2.7 The Masterplan is an A3 size document of over 140 sides. A copy of the proposed final version dated September 2010 is available in the Members Room and electronic copies are available on request.

3 CHANGING POLICY POSITION

- 3.1 Following revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) the government has advised that local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land. The Exeter Core Strategy Submission Draft makes provision for 12,000 dwelling in the city in the period 2006-2026 and sets out how the strategic allocation areas of Monkerton & Hill Barton, Newcourt and Alphington are central to the delivery of this strategy. However, that document cannot provide detailed development guidance. There is significant developer interest in bringing forward development and there is therefore also a need to provide guidance for development in the short term.

- 3.2 The government has further advised that the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of Gypsy and Traveller site provision and that they should continue to do this in line with current policy. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) will form a good starting point for establishing site requirements. Whilst a replacement of Circular 01/06: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites is anticipated, it is not expected to depart significantly from the above stated approach of the current government as set out above.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The draft Masterplan was subject of a six week public consultation that ran during March and April 2010. The consultation documents were made available in the local and central libraries, at the civic centre and were available to view and download from the Council website. The consultation was advertised by notice in the Express and Echo and a front page article in the Exeter Citizen which is delivered to all households, these advertised of the details of the consultation including the two staffed exhibition sessions, held on a Saturday and a weekday evening. Stakeholders and persons who had registered on a planning consultation database were advised by an email or letter.
- 4.2 A total of 176 written responses were received and a table summarising them, and the Council's proposed response to the points that were raised, is available in the Members room.
- 4.3 Setting aside responses with regards the location of a Gypsy and Traveller Site which are dealt with in section 5 below, the most commonly raised objections (and the Council's proposed response to them) are:

i) Loss of green fields, objection to housing, change to character of the area

As an urban development project, the Council accepts there will be a loss of green spaces and a change to the character of the area. However, the purpose of the Masterplan is to ensure the Council can have greater influence in guiding the detailed development of the area. The Exeter Fringes Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2007) assessed the landscape of this area and concluded there was some development potential. A key element of the Council's approach is to fit new development into a strong landscape structure. The Masterplan builds on the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which provides a green infrastructure framework for the new development. A strong emphasis on sustainable forms of transport should help to mitigate the impact of the development on local roads and road safety.

ii) Residential densities are too high

Higher densities are important in maximising public transport use and the economic prospects for community energy networks – both are essential in moving towards a zero carbon future. Other benefits include making efficient use of land, preventing the need for further greenfield sites to be developed and in providing viable and well-used local facilities. The Masterplan sets out the need for high quality design and layout in order to provide a place where people would

like to live and work. A strong emphasis is placed on providing development within a strong green infrastructure framework to ensure an attractive and healthy environment is created.

The proposed densities vary to respect the local context and reduce the impact on existing residential areas. As a result, it is proposed that there are lower densities abutting existing development. Detailed consideration will be given to building heights at the time specific proposals are submitted as planning applications.

The Core Strategy emphasises the importance of achieving the highest appropriate levels of density in order to achieve sustainable development that supports public transport and low carbon energy infrastructure. Whilst the density requirements may no longer be stipulated by the region, the arguments for encouraging higher densities remain. Great care needs to be taken to ensure this is achieved without adversely affecting the quality of places. The Council is currently preparing a Residential Design Guide which will help raise design standards in residential schemes and includes standards for minimum garden and room sizes.

iii) Effect on highway network

The Council is working with the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point, Devon County Council and others to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken in respect of growth to the east of Exeter. The Exeter and East Devon Infrastructure Study and the Green Infrastructure Strategy assess how the proposed growth may be accommodated and identify the measures required, including future infrastructure requirements, to mitigate its impact. Devon County Council is also updating the Local Transport Plan and preparing Access Strategies for growth to the east of the city. The Masterplan's strong emphasis on sustainable forms of transport should help to mitigate the impact of the development on local roads. The Local Highways Authority will assess all planning applications received to ensure the impact of development on the road network is acceptable.

In order to create a sustainable urban extension, and to mitigate the impact of the development on air quality and local roads, the Masterplan puts a strong emphasis on designing a place that is well served by public transport and provides a range of alternatives to travelling by car. In addition, the proposed road layout on the development will be designed to reduce permeability for cars and to discourage car travel to the City Centre.

Accesses will need to be designed in such a way as to satisfy the Local Highway Authority at Devon County Council that levels of visibility and highway safety are of an acceptable standard. Further detailed consideration will be given to this matter once detailed proposals are submitted through a planning application.

iv) Effect on living conditions of existing dwellings

The proposed densities vary to respect the local context and reduce the impact on existing residential areas. As a result, it is proposed that there are lower densities abutting existing development. Further consideration will be given to

building heights and the impact on existing dwellings in considering specific proposals submitted as a planning applications.

v) Impact of new rail halt

The rail halt will play an important role in offering sustainable transport alternatives to those living and working in and around the Monkerton & Hill Barton area, thereby reducing the need to travel by car. Technical constraints will determine the feasibility and precise location of the station but the Council will seek as far as possible to minimise the impact on neighbouring residential amenities. Planning powers could be used, for example, to control lighting, hours of operation, require screening and restrict amplified announcements.

5 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE SELECTION

- 5.1 The four options presented in the Masterplan consultation were selected for consultation by applying the site requirements and the Core Strategy criteria to the land within the Masterplan boundaries.
- 5.2 The points raised in the responses to the consultation have been considered, and the four options have been assessed against the suitability criteria set out in the Core Strategy Proposed Submission. The scored assessment is set out in the table attached as Appendix C.
- 5.3 Of the 176 consultation responses received 96 included points relating to the siting of a Gypsy and Traveller site. Responses to the public consultation mainly raised objection to the inclusion of a Gypsy and Traveller site in this area. Of those respondents who differentiated between sites the majority objected to sites 1 and 2, whilst site 3 received a balance of responses and site 4 received more support than objection.
- 5.4 The site north of the Met Office and west of Oberon Road (consultation site 4) has been selected to be included. This selection was agreed with the All Party Member Working Group in accordance with the process agreed by the Planning Member Working Group in 2008. This location is shown in the Masterplan extract attached as Appendix B.
- 5.5 The selected site scored well against the site selection criteria in that safe and convenient access could be provided from the new road link and that this link would be delivered at an early stage, there is good safe access to local facilities including schools. The site is not adjacent existing dwellings, and adequate physical separation from Ellen Tinkham School and the Met Office can be achieved to avoid potential conflict between different user requirements.
- 5.6 Sites on Tithebarn Lane (No. 1) and Gypsy Hill Lane (No.2) were considered unsuitable without an alternative access to the current arrangement on narrow lanes fronting residential properties. The delivery of the road link which will improve access is not phased to be delivered until later in the development period, around 2018. The sites on Tithebarn Lane and Cumberland Way (No. 3) were considered to have greater landscape impact and sites 2 and 3 were in close proximity to existing dwellings.

6 AMENDMENTS

In addition to the inclusion of the location of a Gypsy and Traveller site the amendments to the Masterplan following consultation include:

- Amendments to update the planning policy background.
- Reduction in density of residential development adjacent rail line.
- Land parcel at junction of Gypsy Lane and Tithebarn Lane shown as having potential for development.
- Further advice on archaeology.
- Possibility of co-locating some community facilities with primary schools allowed for.
- Extension of library at Pinhoe allowed for as alternative to new provision.

7 ADVICE SOUGHT/RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That Planning Member Working Group supports the use of the Masterplan for Development Management purposes and its future adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 7.2 That Executive agrees the use of the Masterplan for Development Management purposes and its future adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document

RICHARD SHORT
HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

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 September 2010 by LDA Design.

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Draft.

Statement of responses.