

Planning Committee

A meeting of Planning Committee was held on Wednesday, 6th January, 2016.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E(Chairman), Cllr Stephen Parry(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Sonia Bailey(Vice Cllr Tracey Stott), Cllr Michael Clark, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Nigel Cooke , Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stephen Houghton(Vice Elsi Hampton), Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Sally Ann Watson(Vice Cllr Phil Dennis), Cllr David Wilburn

Officers: John Dixon, Barry Jackson, Peter Shovlin(DNS), Julie Butcher, Sarah Whaley(LD)

Also in attendance: Agents, Applicants, Members of the Public

Apologies: Cllr Philip Dennis, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley,

P Evacuation Procedure

79/15

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

P Recording of Council Meetings

80/15

The Chair informed Members of the Committee and Members of the Public that the Planning Committee meeting was to be recorded as part of the Council's commitment to legislation permitting the public recording of public meetings, and in the interests of ensuring the Council conducted its business in an open and transparent manner. These recordings would be made available to the public via the Council's website. Members of the public present who preferred not to be filmed/recorded/photographed, were asked to make it known so that so far as reasonably possible, the appropriate arrangements could be made to ensure that they were not filmed, recorded or photographed.

P Declarations of Interest

81/15

There were no declarations of interest.

P Draft Minutes from the meeting which was held on the 25th November 2015.

82/15

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting which was held on the 25th November 2015 for approval and signature.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

P Yarm Back Lane & Harrowgate Lane Masterplan

83/15

Members were asked to receive and consider a report which advised the Planning Committee on joint working to prepare a masterplan for a strategic sustainable urban extension at West Stockton which would be used in the preparation of planning applications at the site and as an evidence base in support of the emerging Regeneration and Environment Local Plan (RELP).

The Council had identified land at Yarm Back Lane and Harrowgate Lane as housing allocations within the RELP. The RELP was currently at publication

stage and emerging policies (H17, H18 and H19) highlighted the need for development to be delivered in accordance with a masterplan to ensure that a sustainable urban extension of 2,150 dwellings, including associated infrastructure, was successfully delivered.

The scale of the development meant that there were numerous shared infrastructure requirements which needed to be delivered; this included but was not limited to a primary school and highway junction improvements. In addition to this there were numerous landownerships across the site. A masterplan was seen as essential in ensuring that:

- individual planning applications came forward in accordance with the Masterplan to deliver a sustainable and integrated urban extension; and
- infrastructure was delivered when it was required .

The purpose of the Masterplan was to provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to support the allocation of the sites and to guide individual planning applications.

The Council had been working in collaboration with the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), landowners and developers and agents to prepare a comprehensive masterplan for the sites.

Planning Committee had refused a planning application on part of the site, known as Tithebarn Land (planning application reference (14/2291/EIS). This decision was being appealed by the applicant and was currently progressing towards a public inquiry. The reasons for refusal were as follows:

- Development does not represent sustainable development:

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal in coming forward ahead of an established masterplan, could lead to an unfair distribution of uses and another developer coming forward later being asked to provide more than is justified by their own development. This could make some parcels unviable and risk necessary infrastructure not being provided for the proper planning of the area, resulting in significant social and economic harm which would be contrary to the definition and aims of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF (paragraph 7, 9 and 14).

- Highway Safety:

The Applicant had failed to provide sufficient information to satisfactorily demonstrate that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety and the free flow of traffic to both the Local and Strategic Highway Networks or that the impact could be satisfactorily mitigated to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and was therefore contrary to guidance within policy CS2 of the Core Strategy (1&2) and paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The first reason for refusal highlighted concern with development preceding in advance of a masterplan and the implications this could have for the wider site.

The planning application, which was subject to public inquiry sought permission for 340 dwellings whilst the masterplan only distributed 250 dwellings to that

element of the site. The appellant was not in agreement with the distribution of dwellings identified within the Masterplan. As all elements of the collaborative masterplan could not be agreed the Council had sought to progress a separate masterplan albeit the contents of the masterplan maintained the main elements of the collaborative process undertaken.

The Masterplan, which was attached at Appendix 1 of the main report, sought to:

- Outline the vision and development objectives for the site;
- Identify constraints and their impact on development;
- Identify infrastructure requirements;
- Provide a Strategic Framework Plan to shape development proposals;
- Provide clarity regarding the requirements for planning applications; and
- Provide clarity regarding the phasing and delivery of housing and infrastructure

Following allocation of the sites within the RELP the Masterplan could be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Should the Council decide to take the Masterplan forward as an SPD so that it formed part of the Development Plan there would be a requirement for a statutory period of consultation and potentially a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The emerging RELP was supported by an Infrastructure Strategy and Schedule which provided a strategic level assessment of the infrastructure requirements arising from the RELP as a whole. Building upon this strategic assessment, a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) had been produced as part of the Masterplan to co-ordinate the delivery of the infrastructure which was necessary to support residential development on the Yarm Back Lane and Harrowgate Lane sites.

The IDP drew upon the evidence base prepared to support the preparation of the Masterplan and set out what infrastructure was needed and the anticipated timescales/phase of development when this should be provided. The key infrastructure requirements identified in the IDP include the provision of:

- Junction enhancements;
- Other access and transport infrastructure;
- Community hub (incorporating a primary school, community centre and neighbourhood centre);
- Green infrastructure;
- Surface water drainage infrastructure;
- Affordable housing;
- Utilities related infrastructure.

The Council had been working with landowners and developers to agree an approach to contributions and the delivery of infrastructure which was both equitable and CIL compliant. At the present time no agreement had been

reached. The Masterplan identified that until agreement had been reached, to the satisfaction of the Council, it would not be possible to determine planning applications at the site. The Council would continue to liaise with landowners and developers to reach agreement.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions/make comments on the Masterplan and these could be summarised as follows:

- This was a huge urban extension with 2150 proposed dwellings, although this could be fewer in reality; however it was still more than the total of all of the previous major developments which had been before the Planning Committee within the last couple of years. There was also future potential builds which were identified within the safeguarding land and there was also the Summerville Farm Site which was already approved; although not included in the 2150 units. Due to the size of the site assurances were sought that all Ward Members would be consulted in the future, particularly, Hartburn; Fairfield; Bishopsgarth and Elmtree though it was recognised that the development was important to all Members.

- It was acknowledged that the sites had been previously identified for residential development in the RELP within the draft Plan of February 2015, though the current RELP was adopted as long ago as March 2010 and the housing needs reviewed in 2012 and were found not to deliver the housing requirements for the Borough. It was therefore essential that the delivery of these homes was right.

- The infrastructure was vital to support the developments and when looking at the IDP it included 3 major junctions, junction enhancements, and the creation of three gateway junctions. The Elton interchange was of particular concern, it was understood that with only 30 additional journeys it would trigger a requirement for improvements at that Junction. The Elton Interchange was currently a major gateway entrance to West Stockton, yet visibility from the A66 was very poor. The busy gateway was not impressive in anyway and was the entrance to the following sites; Nifco (which provided employment); Elton; the proposed sites and Hartburn, therefore raising concerns regarding its inadequacy.

- How long would it take to make the improvements at the Junction at Elton as it seemed the plan suggested that the A66 would become almost like a ring road to distribute traffic around. Without it the traffic would route along Junction Road in Norton and Durham Road, both of which already had considerable issues, and without improvement would be exacerbated.

- The transport infrastructure continued to be a problem in the Hartburn area as there were only 2 buses which ran infrequently. This was of great concern to the elderly population who required public transport to get into town.

- The Community Hub which had been mentioned briefly incorporated a 2.5 entry primary school, hopefully the provision may increase to a 3 form entry which could possibly ease some of the existing problems in relation to primary places which currently existed in the West of Stockton.

- Members raised questions in relation to whether medical provision had been

considered, or whether North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust had been approached to provide services as part of the Community Hub for the many residents who would reside on the proposed sites.

- Drainage was a major concern as the site was currently flooded. A historic drainage system existed and it was felt that adequate drainage would need to be included in the proposals.
- No formal agreement had been reached for the contributions to the infrastructure improvements, however it was noted that the involvement from ATLAS to facilitate this had been useful and it was hoped that this would continue to get a satisfactory agreement going forward. The agreement would have an impact on the contributions needed from both the Local Growth Fund and Highways England particularly to improve the Elton Interchange.
- Clarity was sought in relation to the impending appeal on the Tithebarn application. Members asked if the Masterplan would quash the appeal, and if permission to develop the land was already being proposed at zone c why was it not in the timeline until 2018 to 2026? Surely that parcel of land could be developed to meet Stockton's housing shortages before that time.
- Questions were raised in relation to the position of the boulevard on the plan and whether this was in fact a tree lined wide avenue through the main part of what was zone e.
- One of the parades of shops on the list was Harper Parade. The Co-oP owned that land and Members hoped that they would undertake improvements to the the parking facilities there It was a popular parade in Hartburn and it was felt that Harper Parade would be closer to the new residents than the Community Hub.
- What was the statutory consultation period for the SPD if the Masterplan was accepted?
- Had consideration been given to other junctions further afield which fed into the area where the site was proposed?
- Had sustainability been looked at in relation to General Practitioners?
- The Masterplan was welcomed and seen as a form of reassurance with the provision of evidence to make the right decisions going forward, and mitigate against existing problems.
- Within the report the Council had stipulated their expectations of the developers for the Masterplan, were there any guarantees for those expectations, as in the past original plans in Ingleby Barwick East had not been adhered to.

Officers were given the opportunity to address the Committee in response to some of the concerns raised by Members. Their comments could be summarised as follows:

- Elton Interchange was one of the key junctions that the Masterplan sought to

address and both Stockton Borough Council and Highways England were aware of this. Subject to a planning consent and agreement to the Masterplan, Stockton had managed to secure £2million improvement for that junction, which would bring forward a scheme enabling the circa 2500 houses to come forward. Stockton had been working with developers to bring forward through Local Growth Fund some of the improvements to the infrastructure such as the Elton Interchange which could be as early as 2020 pending approval of an application.

- The highway package was circa £9.5 million. This would provide improvements to the existing Junction at the Horse and Jockey, and create a new Junction at Yarm Back Lane which would be signalised.
- In relation to the Tithebarn application and timescales it was important all parties involved worked together. The major Junction improvements on Yarm Back Lane was dependent on land which was owned by a third party, hence the collaborative approach.
- Due to North Tees Hospital remaining, a further study had been undertaken in relation to other junctions around the Borough where it was likely further improvements would be made.
- Where concerns were raised in relation to bus transport, Stockton's Public Transport Officers stated that the houses on the proposed sites would support a bus service which was already at risk.
- The Boulevard would be a wide tree lined Avenue and would be a main route through the development; However Harrowgate Lane would be a more attractive route for a bus service. It was outside of the Local Authorities Control to subsidise the buses however subsidy was being sought from the development for buses and cycle ways elsewhere.
- Where drainage was concerned, Officers were aware of problematic areas. All the blue corridors had been mapped as part of the wider Masterplan, but it would be down to the individual applications to meet its own needs. However the idea was that it would be looked at collectively to ensure the drainage was in the right place. Each site would contribute to get the right infrastructure to meet the needs of the wider community hence the Masterplan approach.
- With regards to the wider sustainability of the site, Officers within the Spatial Planning Team had met with representatives from the NHS in relation to the provision of services. The general response regarding GP's and medical services was that it would be a commercial decision as to where they would operate or locate. It was indicated however that if there was a provision of units within the neighbourhood centre, and if it was commercially viable then a service could be provided.
- Essentially if the Masterplan was adopted by Council it would become Council Policy and would be used in the determination of planning applications. If the site was allocated then the Masterplan would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document(SPD) which meant that it would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Therefore if

applications came in contrary to the Masterplan then the material considerations would allow refusal of the applications.

- It was confirmed to Members that the Public Inquiry in relation to the Tithebarn appeal was still to go ahead and would only not do so if the appellant withdrew his appeal. The decision in relation to the Masterplan would not impact on the appeal.

RESOLVED that:

1) The report and its content be noted.

2) Members support the progression of the Report to Cabinet so that it can be approved for use in the preparation of planning applications and as an evidence base in support of the emerging RELP.