Agenda Item No: 12

West Wiltshire District Council

Cabinet

30 June 2004

East Melksham Development Brief

1. Purpose

To approve a draft East Melksham development brief for public consultation.

2. Background

The emerging District Plan 1st Alteration proposes the allocation of a strategic housing site east of Melksham (Policy H6). The development will be a well planned extension to the existing urban area, to incorporate 750 dwellings including affordable houses, a new primary school, a new community building, a local centre including shops, public open space including changing facilities and an extension to the Clackers Brook country park. The site will also deliver a distributor road to the east of the town between Snowberry Lane and Sandridge Road.

In order to achieve a well planned development, it is essential that a development brief is prepared for this site to show how the policy is to be delivered in more detail.

An illustrative development brief was prepared and submitted to the District Plan Inquiry in 2002 to demonstrate the commitment of the landowners, developers and local planning authority to the principle of the development. This work has now been taken forward by officers, in partnership with the prospective developers.

A Policy Project Group was set up to consider the issues to be considered in the draft brief and to consider an initial draft. Meetings were held on 18 May 2004 and 9 June 2004. The PPG suggested amendments to the initial draft and these have been incorporated into the draft brief which is circulated with this agenda.

3. Key Issues

This brief includes detailed information on the site, including a site appraisal, overall quality of life and sustainability objectives and detailed development and design principles, covering, for example, advice on the distribution, phasing and densities of the development, affordable housing, highways and transportation matters, provision of recreation and public open space, educational facilities, local shopping, drainage, landscaping and design guidance.

Primary School

One of the key issues for public consultation is to seek views on the form and location of the primary school. The development will require the provision of a new primary school. However, there is also an opportunity to relocate the existing Forest & Sandridge School and to create a larger integrated school.

Local centre

The form and location of the local centre is critical to creating a sustainable urban development for the future. The community building, local shops and other community facilities should be carefully designed and the relationship between these land uses and the local school and playing fields also needs to be considered.

Distributor road

The development will be accessed via a new distributor road running from Snowberry Lane to Sandridge Road. The design of this road and associated landscaping will need to be carefully handled to ensure no loss of amenity to existing and future residents.

Snarlton Lane

The site will include development on either side of Snarlton Lane. Integrating the development with Snarlton Lane, whilst avoiding vehicular access through Snarlton Lane is another sensitive issue.

Consultation

Officers have prepared the guidance and the views of the Council's East Melksam Policy Project Group were taken onboard. However, it is essential that the draft proposals are subject to a public consultation exercise, as the intention is that the Council will use this document in making future planning decisions.

At this stage, due to the summer period, it is recommended that the public consultation should extend into September 2004. All comments received should be reported to the Council and the Council should respond to each comment received. The opportunity should exist for the final guidance to be amended should the Council consider that the consultation has raised valid issues which need to be addressed in the document.

It is therefore proposed that the public consultation should consist of:

Press Release
Notice in Wiltshire Times
Guidance to view at County, District, Town Council offices and Melksham library;
Guidance to view on website;
Letters and documentation to statutory bodies, and other relevant local organisations;
Leaflet to be circulated to residents near the proposed site;
Public exhibition at Lowbourne Primary School, Queensway Hall and the Co-op store on Sandridge Road.

Consultation meeting at Melksham First meeting on 14 September 2004.

Timetable

Formal adoption of the final brief by the District Council should take place after the results of public consultation have been considered by Cabinet. The draft timetable is as follows;

16th July 2004	Public Consultation commences
17th September 2004	Closing Date for Public Consultation
23rd September 2004	Policy Project Group considers responses
29th September 2004	Adoption by Cabinet

Financial Implications

There are none.

Legal Implications

There are none.

Environmental Implications

The brief is intended to create a sustainable, mixed and balanced community and contribute positively to the urban environment at Melksham. Provided that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development brief, the document, when adopted, will have a positive impact on the local environment.

Human Rights Implications.

The Human Rights implications recommended in this report have been considered and are acceptable and the checklist has been addressed.

4. Options

Cabinet is recommended to approve this draft document for the purposes of public consultation, subject to any further views Cabinet may have. The results of consultation will be reported back to Cabinet. At that stage, Cabinet can choose to amend the document as appropriate and adopt the document as a Supplementary Planning Document.

5. List of Background Papers

File Ref: East Melksham Development Brief
File Location: Planning Policy and Conservation Section

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

(i) approves the draft East Melksham Deveopment Brief for the purposes of public consultation;

(ii) approves the period of public consultation and the timetable to adoption as set out at in this report.

Plain English Guidance Given ✍

Cllr Christopher Newbury	Mark Russell
Portfolio Holder Planning	Planning Policy Manager

18 June 2004

List of Appendices
Appendix 1: Draft East Melksham Development Brief