

# Report

**Subject:** Draft Master Plan and Development Brief for Land at Porton Down

**Report to:** Northern Area Committee

**Date:** 2nd November 2006

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## 1.0 Summary

1.1 This report presents to members the Porton Down Masterplan and Porton BioScience and Technology Centre Development Brief during the formal public consultation phase which is running from the 21<sup>st</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Members are asked to comment on the draft documents in order to raise any issues that they consider should be addressed.

## 2.0 Introduction

In 2004, Officers were asked to draw together a comprehensive planning framework which would enable members to have a greater understanding of the development needs likely to emerge at Porton Down primarily in response to the rationalisation of activity by dstl. During the process of preparing the Masterplan for the site the longer term intentions of the Heath Protection Agency's Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response and the emerging needs of the land allocated for a Science Park were also taken on board. Combining the aims and aspirations of these organisations, as well as understanding and responding to the impacts likely to result from future development on the site has been a complex task and has involved a long series of meetings and negotiations with stakeholders.

## 3.0 The Porton Down Masterplan

3.1 The Porton Down Masterplan has been a project aimed at addressing the following objectives

- Understanding the needs of an expanded presence of governmental scientific organisations at Porton Down
- Promoting a synergistic private sector R&D (Research and Development) presence at Porton Down, which has the potential to encourage diverse economic development activity in the district and its surrounding area.
- To manage the impacts that a more intensive land use at Porton Down might bring to its landscape setting, protected natural habitats and, critically the residents of the Bourne Valley.
- To promote a more cohesive form of development between the three organisations in terms of

- addressing common issues and finding shared solutions.
- To promote a positive planning framework following the removal of crown immunity provided under circular 18/84
  - To provide a means for the special planning demands of the site to be identified, discussed and then addressed in a comprehensive manner, particularly through enabling
    - local people to have an input about the issues they consider should be taken into account
    - the organisations on site to provide a greater context about their aspirations in order that the council can better understand individual proposals coming forward
    - the council, in light of the views of local people and other sources of advice, to highlight the requirements which it will expect from the Porton Down organisations when they make applications for new development.
- 3.2 In essence, The Master Plan sets out a site wide vision for the pattern of future development as a means to promote its potential as a centre of excellence in technological development and bioscience research. The document will look 10 years ahead and provide a range of agreed objectives that future development of the site will aim to address and deliver.
- 3.3 The Master Plan identifies the requirements of the Local Plan and other SPG in respect of the site and how these should be achieved. If fully adopted, the development brief will have the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to the Local Plan giving it significant weight as a material consideration in the determination of a subsequent planning application(s) on the site. It is important to note that whilst the Masterplan does identify future expansion aspirations, these will involve allocation through the statutory Local Development Framework (LDF) process
- 3.4 The Master Plan follows a broad based format with the principal sections headed as follows:
- Executive Summary
  - Introduction – *purpose of the document and commitment to ongoing dialogue*
  - Organisational background and future prospects
  - Land use plans – *site based aspirations and intentions 5 and 10 years ahead*
  - Effects of future development – *understanding impacts and issues that may arise*
  - Whole site issues – *The means by which the organisations will seek to address arising impacts in their future development proposals and through other mechanisms*
  - Conclusions

#### **4.0 The Porton BioScience and Technology Centre Development Brief**

- 4.1 The Science Park Development Brief sets out more detailed proposals for a site of up to 10 hectares, which was allocated in the Salisbury District Local Plan under policy E8B. The release of this land was made to encourage private research and development investment on the site in order that scientific knowledge being developed by the Public Sector organisations (DSTL and Health Protection Agency) can be developed for commercial purposes. PBTC Ltd, the company behind the proposal, already makes space available to small businesses developing these new technologies. The development proposals published in the document provide scope for those businesses to flourish and multiply in new purpose built premises.
- 4.2 The Brief sets out the long term development strategy for the site, which will be achieved through a series of planned phases, as part of the long term strategy to create a new Porton Down BioScience and Technology Centre. It contains a set of development principles, which any future applications for the site will be assessed against. It should be noted that the Local Plan currently only releases 5 hectares of the site – the release of the second 5ha tranche will require further consideration through the LDF process.
- 4.3 As in the case of the Masterplan, if fully adopted, the brief will have the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to the Local Plan and will thus carry significant weight as a material consideration in the determination of a subsequent planning application(s) on the site. It will provide guidance to developers, members of the public and other interested parties on the aspirations and requirements of the Local Planning Authority in respect of this site.

4.4 The development brief follows a standardised format in common with other development briefs prepared by the council with principal sections headed as follows:

- Introduction – *overview and aims of the brief*
- Planning Policy Framework – *establishment of the existing planning parameters*
- The site and its context – *analysis of the site and its setting to inform the development form*
- Development Principles – *key issues which the development will incorporate*
- The Indicative Development Plan – *a design solution for the site*

4.5 An important issue for members to note is that the Development Brief is very much tied to the Masterplan's overall intentions. The proposals within the brief are very much informed and guided by the principles and obligations of the masterplan. In bringing the development brief forward at this time - alongside the masterplan - the developers of the BioScience and Technology Centre scheme aim to illustrate how the elements of the masterplan can be applied. Hence, aspects of section 4 make direct reference to the masterplan in many instances.

## **5.0 Public Consultation and Next Steps**

5.1 In developing the content of the Masterplan, meetings were held to inform local people and statutory organisations and to identify and agree a broad spectrum of issues, which are now set out in the document. Furthermore, input to Dstl's iLab planning application earlier this year also provided a useful testing ground for some of the emerging proposals.

5.2 As part of the formal stages of seeking the adoption of the two documents as SPG a 6-week Public Consultation on the content is now being held. This period commenced on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September and concludes on the date of the committee meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

5.3 This consultation has involved –

- Direct notification of statutory consultees, local stakeholders and the public.
- Advertising in the local press
- Two public exhibitions.
  - 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006 - Salisbury Library
  - 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2006 - Amesbury library.
- Information leaflets were delivered to local residents in the area and to employees on the Porton Down site.
- Posters have been displayed in local shops and other community buildings in the area and stocks of leaflets were also left in these locations. Leaflets and posters have also been used to raise awareness amongst Porton Down employees.
- A stakeholder meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006 involving Parish Councils, Councillors and organisations from Porton Down.

5.4 Representations have been invited by the closing date of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006. At the close of the period, the results of the consultation exercise will be reported back to this Committee together with an amended Master Plan and Development Brief, and the Committee will be asked to recommend the revised versions for adoption by Cabinet. Both documents will then be presented to Cabinet for adoption as SPG.

## **Recommendation**

***That members note the content of the Porton Down Master Plan and Porton BioScience and Technology Centre Development Brief and, where appropriate, suggest any amendments which should be considered prior as part of the formal consultation exercise.***

**Background Papers:**

Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003) - available at [www.salisbury.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/localplan)

**Implications:**

**Financial:** None at this stage

**Legal:** Supplementary Planning Guidance can still be adopted under the new development planning legislation. As policies related to the Porton Down site begin to emerge within the new LDF, the council will need to consider the conversion of SPG to SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) status to maintain its weight as a material consideration. Given that all parties have committed to regular review of the Porton Down Masterplan, its next version should be directed through the SPD process.

**Human Rights:** Article 6 (the right to a fair hearing) may apply. The consultation process contributes to compliance with this.

**Personnel:** None at this stage

**IT:** None

**Community Safety:** None at this stage

**Council's Core Values:** Excellent service, thriving economy, fairness & equality, open council & willing partner, communicating with the public, supporting the disadvantaged, protecting the environment.

**Parishes Affected:** Idmiston