

Wiltshire Council

Strategic Planning Committee

15 June 2015

Subject: West Warminster Urban Extension masterplan

Cabinet Member: Councillor Toby Sturgis -
Strategic Planning, Development Management,
Strategic Housing, Property and Waste

Key Decision: Endorse

Executive Summary

The Wiltshire Core Strategy sets the strategic framework for growth and development in Wiltshire up to 2026, which includes at Core Policy 31 the allocation of land to the west of Warminster (the West Warminster Urban Extension – or ‘WWUE’) for the delivery of housing, employment and associated infrastructure. Core Policy 31 sets out that the WWUE will deliver 900 dwellings and 6ha employment land over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026. A development framework for this site is also set out in Appendix A of the Core Strategy which requires, along with a range of specific infrastructure to support the development, that the development should be preceded by a comprehensive masterplan for the whole of the site. The masterplan should be endorsed before any planning application on the site can be determined.

A draft masterplan has been prepared by the developers with interests in the WWUE site, which had been subject to public consultation and presented to this committee on 13th April 2016. This draft masterplan is shown at **Appendix 1** of this report. As a result of discussions at this committee the decision was deferred in order that officers could look into how the masterplan could be brought into greater conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and to examine further issues regarding flooding, landscaping, traffic management and the location of the new primary school. After further work, the second iteration of the masterplan, shown at **Appendix 2**, was subject to discussion at an open public meeting held in Warminster.

This report recommends that the second iteration of the draft WWUE masterplan be endorsed, subject to officer and statutory agency verification of additional technical reports as detailed in para and summarised in paragraph 11 of this report.

Proposals

That Strategic Planning Committee:

- (i) Endorse the draft WWUE masterplan as a significant material consideration, subject to the recommended changes set out in paragraph 11 of this report;
- (ii) Authorise the Associate Director for Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste, to make any further necessary changes in the interest of clarity and accuracy. This will include confirmation of drainage and modelling as discussed in para 12 of this report.

Reason for Proposals

The Wiltshire Core Strategy relies upon the delivery of the WWUE to meet its strategic housing and employment requirements for the area. In accordance with the Core Strategy, which seeks to deliver plan-led growth, the delivery of the strategic allocation is to be steered by a comprehensive masterplan for the whole of the site which will indicate the quanta and general location of development and infrastructure.

Endorsement of a comprehensive masterplan will enable subsequent planning applications to be determined, and will ensure that the site can start to deliver the housing, employment land and essential infrastructure that are planned for within the Core Strategy. This will boost jobs in the area, provide much needed affordable homes, enable the delivery of key infrastructure, and help the Council towards delivering a positive five year housing land supply position for the duration of the Core Strategy plan period in the North and West Housing Market Area.

Alistair Cunningham
Associate Director for Economic Development and Planning

Wiltshire Council

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**Cabinet Member: Councillor Toby Sturgis -
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Key Decision: Endorse

Purpose of Report

1. To:
 - (i) Endorse the draft WWUE masterplan as a significant material consideration, subject to the recommended changes set out in paragraph 11 of this report;
 - (ii) Authorise the Associate Director for Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste, to make any further necessary changes in the interest of clarity and accuracy. This will include confirmation of drainage and modelling as discussed in para 12 of this report.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The masterplan will guide the future development of the WWUE, which will deliver a significant portion of the town's housing and employment needs over the Core Strategy plan period to 2026. The delivery of the WWUE will deliver much needed housing (including affordable), boost employment opportunities, and provide infrastructure to support this growth.

Background

3. The Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted in January 2015, and sets the strategic framework for growth and development in Wiltshire up to 2026. The Core Strategy allocates 16 strategic housing and employment sites across a range of the larger settlements in Wiltshire. This includes the strategic allocation to the west of Warminster, as set out in Core Policy 31. Each of the strategic allocations are supplemented by a 'development template' which set out a range of infrastructure and mitigation measures that must be delivered as part of the development of

the strategic allocation. The development template for the WWUE can be found at pages 356-361 of the Core Strategy.

4. In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements set out in the development template, the Core Strategy also requires planning applications for development of the site to be guided by a comprehensive masterplan, which is to be produced in consultation with the local community and should be done prior to any planning applications being determined. Once endorsed, the masterplan will guide the determination of any subsequent planning applications across the site.
5. The developers with current interests in the development of the WWUE (Persimmon Homes, Hannick Homes and Redrow Homes) jointly produced the draft masterplan (**Appendix 1**), **that the council subsequently consulted on** which was presented to this committee on 13th April 2016.
6. The officer report to this committee dated 13th April 2016 recommended the following amendments should be made to the masterplan:
 - i. Community facilities to be disaggregated from the proposed school, to a location to be agreed with the Council.
 - ii. Introduction of a more effective buffer between homes and employment.
 - iii. Relocation of all balancing ponds away from the flood plain.
 - iv. Detail the approach to the public realm strategy to be implemented in future applications.
 - v. Revisions to demonstrate that junction from Bath Road to the Link Road will adequately protect the amenity of local residents.
 - vi. To move the school out of the landscape buffer, or to provide further evidence demonstrating that landscape impacts can be mitigated in this location.
 - vii. Explanation and illustration of where a doctor's surgery could potentially be accommodated on the site.
 - viii. Further information is submitted to and agreed by the Council providing evidence for the effectiveness of the proposed landscape strategy including: landscape heritage sensitivity assessment; the advance planting schedule to include retained landscape features and new semi-mature native species (including approximate timetable and costings) ; the deliverability, construction and effectiveness of the major landscaping scheme (including bund).
7. As a result of discussion at this committee dated 13th April 2016, Councillors made the following recommendation:

To defer consideration of the draft West Warminster Urban Extension masterplan and to request the officers:

(1) to look into how this could be brought into greater conformity with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and

(2) to examine further the issues regarding potential flooding, landscaping, traffic management particularly affecting West Street and the position of the new primary school.

8. Officers have been in discussion with the developers with current interests in the development of the WWUE (Persimmon Homes, Hannick Homes and Redrow Homes) to ensure amendments to the draft masterplan (identified in para 6 above) and resolve the two areas for consideration identified in para 7 above. As a result a second iteration of the Masterplan has been prepared (**Appendix 2**). This includes the masterplan, an additional plan that shows indicatively how housing will be delivered over time and an amended written statement that supports the masterplan (**Appendix 3**).
9. The masterplan still proposes the development of approximately 1,550 homes and 6ha employment land. It should be noted the housing figure proposed is substantially higher than the 900 homes set out in Core Policy 31, although the intention of the masterplan is that delivery of the site will extend beyond the Core Strategy plan period to 2026 with estimates showing that 893 dwellings will be delivered within the Core Strategy Plan period to 2026, with the remaining figure to be delivered over the following years to 2033.
10. The uplift in housing numbers has been justified by detailed work set out by the developers, subject to final 'sign-off' as detailed in para 11 below. The work that the developer has undertaken identifies that there is capacity at the site to deliver more than 900 homes to meet need post 2026. This uplift would make the most efficient use of a strategic site that can ensure we secure an ongoing 5 year housing supply and alleviate pressure for further greenfield development beyond the plan period at Warminster. This uplift beyond 900 homes is now identified on the phasing masterplan attached in Appendix 2. This clearly shows that around 900 homes will be delivered at Warminster on the WWUE during the WCS plan period up to 2026. It should be emphasised that endorsement of this Master Plan does not grant planning permission and the onus is entirely on the developer to justify a larger scale of development, through subsequent planning applications.
11. As a result of the response to comments received during the public consultation, subsequent public meeting and minutes of this committee, the developer has made the following amendments to the overall masterplan and supporting narrative;
 - a. Introduced an indicative plan showing how housing will be delivered on the site over time (see Appendix 2)
 - b. Disaggregation of community facilities from the school: The proposed delivery of a community hall separate from the school that is part of the local centre is now set out in the updated masterplan text (see Appendix 3). No change to the masterplan drawing is proposed by the developer.

- c. Landscape buffer between employment and residential areas: Masterplan drawing has been updated to include the landscape buffer (Appendix 2)
 - d. Relocation of balancing ponds away from the flood plain: Developer has issued a non- technical note (see Appendix 4) to support the location of the balancing ponds within the masterplan. However the effectiveness of this still requires verification by the Council and the Environment Agency
 - e. Detail the approach to the public realm strategy: The masterplan text (Appendix 3) has been updated to incorporate some generic statements on place-making, permeability and legibility
 - f. Demonstrate that the proposed junction from Bath Road will protect the amenity of local residents: Developer has issued an updated non-technical note (see Appendix 5) to demonstrate this. However this still needs to be verified by council officers
 - g. Further evidence that the landscape impacts arising from the proposed school can be mitigated / effectiveness of the landscape buffer: SLR consultants have issued a technical note (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 'LVIA') and a non technical summary (see Appendix 6) responding to the comments of Natural England, Historic England, Wiltshire Council, AONB and National Trust. However this still needs to be verified by the Council and the statutory agencies
 - h. Further detail on the proposed doctor's surgery: A symbol has been added to the masterplan to suggest a proposed location of a doctor's surgery and the masterplan text (Appendix 3) has been updated to provide clarification
12. It should be noted that comment has now been received from the Councils Drainage Officer who is satisfied with the Master plan and proposals.
13. The revised masterplan has been subject to further consultation with the local community through a public meeting held on 31st May 2016, details of which and a summary of comments made at the meeting are provided in para 22.

Main Considerations for the Council

- 14. The masterplan, once endorsed, will guide the determination of subsequent planning applications on land within the WWUE allocation area.
- 15. The main considerations for members of the Strategic Planning Committee is whether the revised submitted masterplan, once all technical evidence has been verified by officers and statutory agencies is sufficient to address the requirements set out in the Core Strategy development template for the strategic allocation as well as the requirements set out by this committee at its meeting of 13th April 2016.

16. Members will also need to consider the scale of development proposed over and above the Core Strategy allocation of 900 homes, and consider whether the additional phasing masterplan and evidence now provides sufficient justification for this.
17. Based on the feedback that has been received at the public meeting and confirmation that officers and statutory agencies are satisfied with the justification provided it is recommended that the masterplan be approved by the council subject to any further amendments as a result of outstanding items that are still to be confirmed as set summarised in paragraph 11 of this report.

Consultation

18. Consultation on the first draft of the masterplan took place in November 2015, comprising a series of three topic based meetings with community focus groups to discuss questions from the community regarding the principle of development, highways matters, and flooding and drainage matters.
19. The feedback from these topic based meetings, together with feedback from internal specialists at Wiltshire Council was given to the developers to inform a revised version of the masterplan.
20. The revised masterplan, as shown at **Appendix 1**, was then subject to a three week period of public consultation between Thursday 18th February and Friday 11th March 2016. The consultation was publicised via a range of channels.
21. As a result of the consultation responses, some further amendments were proposed to the West Warminster Urban Extension masterplan (summarized in para 6 to this report). This committee in their meeting of 13th April 2016 deferred their decision as detailed at para 7 of this report in order for officers to undertake more work with the developers. Further amendments were made to the masterplan and its supporting text, as detailed in para 11 to this report and a plan indicating when housing would be delivered over time introduced. This was presented to a public meeting held on 31st May 2016 at 7pm to 8.30pm at The Athenaeum, Warminster where council officers presented to the community on the masterplan and members of the public were able to ask officers and questions. The meeting was advertised on 2 occasions within the Warminster Journal on Thursday 19th and Thursday 26th May and neighbours to the site and those that responded to the previous consultation were sent notification either via letter or email notification of the meeting. Feedback received at the meeting can be summarised as detailed below.
- 22.

Approximately 120 members of the Warminster community attended the meeting. There was a presentation given by Wiltshire Council officers who confirmed or clarified:

- the principle of development had been set on the site through the WCS
- the masterplan is about managing development effectively and gives the council and community certainty and control
- the site is critical to housing delivery to maintain a 5 year housing supply in the North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area
- the community comments had influenced the masterplan as detailed in para 6 of this report
- that if developers can show that the site can accommodate more than 900 homes in a sustainable way, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, then this has to be given proper consideration by the Local Planning Authority
- that allowing a greater number of homes on the WWUE site, if the evidence shows this can be delivered without unacceptable adverse impact, would make more efficient use of land and could alleviate pressure for further greenfield development at Warminster post 2026.
- that only 900 (or 893) would be built to 2026, the remaining dwellings would come forward post 2026
- that there should be an attenuation pond to the south of Victoria Road within the Redrow homes area of the masterplan
- Ecologist have asked for further habitat surveys on the site
- that if the council were refusing a planning application on highways grounds this must be due to the development having a 'severe and harmful impact'
- that if more homes than 1550 homes were proposed on the site at any time the developer would need to provide further evidence that infrastructure would have capacity
- material considerations in determining the planning applications will be the NPPF, Wiltshire Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan with the question is, is there evidence to show that 1,550 can be accommodated on the site. The evidence needs to satisfy the LPA that it is sustainable
- that there would be likely to be 1550 homes on the site as detailed in the text of the Masterplan, however the council currently have applications for 1403 dwellings but officers are unable to take this to planning committee as there is evidence outstanding
- there is currently no sign-off on drainage matters.

During the presentation and after there was an opportunity for members of the community to ask questions or to seek clarification. The main issues arising relevant to the masterplan can be summarised as:

- objection to more than 900 homes being delivered on the WWUE
- transport issues including:

- consideration of why there is a new roundabout at Bath Road rather than a 4th Arm to Crusader Roundabout together with concern over the number of accidents that had occurred around this roundabout
- questioning whether the Transport Assessment was robust
- concern that there would be rat running down Thornhill and Broxburn Road's
- concern over safety of pedestrians and traffic of those going into Warminster town centre own along Victoria Road and West Street given regular incidents of speeding
- concern with regard to residential access off the proposed Bath Road roundabout
- concern that access to the Redrow site from Victoria Road would not be built to 10 years and therefore residents will access the street via Thornhill Road
- concern that more cars would park on yellow lines in the town centre
- concern over timing of infrastructure delivery to ensure that it is delivered when it is needed especially with regard to education infrastructure
- concern over parking around the town centre especially as members of the community already seem to park on yellow lines
- concern over flooding and drainage
- concern that West of Warminster would be taking all of the development for the next 20 years
- indication that the largest block of flats in the Redrow planning application is situated on the highest ground which will be very obvious from Cley Hill

Safeguarding Implications

23. There are no direct safeguarding implications arising from this report, which is about enabling the plan-led delivery of the strategic allocation for Warminster to be delivered in a timely manner.

Public Health Implications

24. Public health bodies will continue to be consulted on planning matters, including in relation to any subsequent planning applications that come forward within the strategic allocation site.

Corporate Procurement Implications

25. There are no direct procurement implications arising from the report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

26. The masterplan seeks to boost the supply of much needed homes in Warminster, which will increase the availability of affordable homes,

reduce disadvantage and inequality, and seek to deliver resilient communities.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

27. Statutory bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England have been consulted on the first draft masterplan, and their comments, along with officer recommendations of changes to be made influenced amendments discussed in para 11 of this report. Consultation with environmental bodies will continue to take place on planning matters in any subsequent planning applications within the WWUE site including issues such as landscape and flooding.

Risk Assessment

28. By endorsing a comprehensive masterplan for the West Warminster Urban Extension site, this will allow planning applications that accord with the masterplan to be approved, which will in turn reduce the risk of the Council being unable to maintain a five year supply of housing in the North and West Housing Market Area.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

29. If the masterplan is not agreed, the Council will be unable to take it into account in the determination of planning applications on this allocation site, and further delay could further risk the Council being unable to maintain a five year supply of housing in the North and West Housing Market Area. This could result in speculative development that is not planned through the Core Strategy coming forward, which may not deliver the same level of planned infrastructure as would be delivered through development on this site.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

30. If the masterplan (incorporating officer recommendations) is agreed, the Council will need to ensure that any subsequent planning applications on the WWUE site are determined in accordance with the masterplan.

Financial Implications

31. Endorsing the WWUE masterplan will ensure that the Council can take positive steps towards the delivery of housing and employment that is planned within the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Once subsequent planning applications can be approved and development commences, the Council will be in receipt of funds derived from Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

Legal Implications

32. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Wiltshire Core Strategy forms the relevant development plan for Wiltshire and in accordance with the Core Strategy, the land identified as the WWUE is allocated for the delivery of housing, employment and associated infrastructure, to be delivered through a comprehensive masterplanning process. Endorsement of a masterplan which conforms to the Core Strategy and national policy will enable subsequent planning applications to be determined through the plan-led approach set out in the Core Strategy. The Government has placed great emphasis on the expediency of plan making, as well as in the determination of planning applications, and having an endorsed masterplan in place will assist the expedient delivery of this allocation.

Options Considered

33. The Core Strategy is clear in its requirement that a site-wide masterplan should precede the determination of any individual planning applications on the WWUE site. Therefore no alternative approaches to the production of a masterplan have been considered.

Conclusions

34. The masterplan for the WWUE strategic allocation is a requirement set out in the Core Strategy to guide future planning applications on the allocated site. The draft masterplan has been subject to public consultation with members of the public, stakeholders and statutory bodies, as well as internal specialists at Wiltshire Council. Subject to the final sign off / verification of further technical and non-technical evidence by officers and statutory agencies as detailed at paragraph 11 of this report, the masterplan represents a framework for the delivery of the site which can be used to guide the determination of subsequent planning applications on the site.
35. Having an endorsed masterplan in place will enable the Council to expedite the delivery of the strategic allocation which will provide a range of infrastructure, employment opportunities, and much needed housing (including affordable). The delivery of housing on the site will also enable the Council to improve its five year housing land supply position in the North and West Housing Market Area.

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The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft masterplan for the West Warminster Urban Extension

Appendix 2 – Draft masterplan for the West Warminster Urban Extension including indicative housing delivery plan – second iteration.

Appendix 3 – West Warminster Urban Extension Allocation Masterplan (text) – second iteration

Appendix 4 – Non-technical note to support the location of the balancing ponds within the masterplan

Appendix 5 – Non-technical note to demonstrate that the proposed junction from Bath Road will protect the amenity of local residents

Appendix 6 – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ‘LVIA’ and a non-technical summary