

West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

Title of Report:	Mildenhall Hub: Development Brief	
Report No:	JGG/JT/16/004	
Report to and dates:	West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group	10 May 2016
	FHDC Cabinet	17 May 2016
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Lead officer:	Chris Rand Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) Tel: 01284 757352 Email: chris.rand@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>Many of the buildings housing public services in Mildenhall are either coming to the end of their planned lives, or require major investment. Any growth within the town will put an extra demand on these facilities. There is the potential to bring together a number of public services on to one site in order to create a single 'hub'. This would help reduce running costs and improve public access as well as freeing up vacated sites for other uses.</p> <p>Policy DM4 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document requires that a Development Brief will be required for a proposal which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) being of a size; and/or ii) in a location; and/or iii) proposing a mix of uses; and/or iv) of significant local interest such as to make this necessary <p>The policy requires the Development Brief shall have been through an agreed process of consultation and approved</p>	

	<p>prior to the determination of a planning application.</p> <p>In January 2016 the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group approved the draft Mildenhall Hub Development Brief for public consultation.</p> <p>The formal consultation process commenced on 7 March 2016 and ran until 25 April 2016 and included a drop-in event for neighbours and interested parties held at The Pavilion in Recreation Way on 6 April 2016. In addition, a separate meeting was held with a local residents' group at their request.</p> <p>Following consultation, the masterplan has been amended to take account of the many comments and suggestions.</p> <p>Officers are satisfied that the Development Brief has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Protocol for preparing Development Briefs.</p>
Recommendation:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, subject to the approval of Cabinet, the Development Brief for the Mildenhall Hub, be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation took place from 7 March 2016 to 25 April 2016. Details of the consultation and community engagement events together with consequential changes to the masterplan are addressed below.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None considered
Implications:	
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not directly as these will be addressed separately for the Hub project.
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is intended that the final Development Brief will be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance by Forest Heath District Council
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public consultation and community engagement events sought to engage the local community.

Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Failure to approve the Development Brief for consultation could inhibit the local community and Council's ability to shape the nature and content of planning applications for the development of this important site.	Low	Adopt the Development Brief as a non-statutory planning guidance.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		Market, Great Heath	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		www.mildenhallhub.info	
Documents attached:		<i>(Please list any appendices.)</i> Appendix A – Draft Public Services Hub Development Brief Appendix B – Draft Public Services Hub Development Brief Consultation report	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The adopted Forest Heath Core Strategy defines Mildenhall as a market town which provides a broad range of shops, services and facilities that serve the needs of its catchment area. It has a population of approximately 10,315 (2011 Parish Profile) and will be a focus for growth to 2031, which will place greater demand upon public services. Many of the buildings which house public services in Mildenhall are coming to the end of their planned lives, or are in need of major investment.
- 1.1.2 Against this background and the government's 'One Public Estate' initiative, a partnership of public service providers in Mildenhall commissioned Concertus to investigate the business case for development to replace accommodation on a shared basis. The 2014 report which considered the business case examined a number of options involving five sites across Mildenhall in a number of configurations. One of the options, for a single site 'Hub' at Sheldrick Way, was found to be most beneficial in terms of the business case. The 2014 business case (which was updated in 2016) can be read at the weblink set out in the background papers section above.
- 1.1.3 A draft Development Brief was prepared in late 2015 and approved for consultation by the West Suffolk Joint Steering Group at its meeting on 26 January 2016.
- 1.1.4 The draft Development Brief (incorporating post-public consultation amendments) is attached at **Appendix A** of this report. Post public consultation additions and ~~deletions~~ to the document are annotated.

1.2 Draft Development Brief Consultation and Amendments

- 1.2.1 The consultation commenced on 7 March and ran until 25 April (just over 7 weeks). A drop-in event was hosted in the afternoon and evening of 6 April at The Pavilion, Recreation Way, Mildenhall. This was very well attended and resulted in an invitation to officers to attend a meeting of residents. Accordingly, officers and the ward Member attended a meeting of a Residents' Group for Wamil Way and neighbouring streets at Mildenhall Cricket Club on the evening of 20 April.
- 1.2.2 Both consultation events were very well attended and the subsequent responses have been particularly informative and largely constructive. Details of all the replies, together with Officer comments and consequential changes to the Development Brief are included in the Consultation Report which is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 1.2.3 The report identifies two distinct themes arising from the consultation. The first relates to the principle of grouping facilities together on a single site and whether Sheldrick way is the appropriate site and the second relates to concerns and issues arising from the development of the site at Sheldrick Way.
- 1.2.4 The first theme is addressed in the 2014 business case and was considered as part of the Local Plan consultation in August 2015. The local plan consultation

identified support for the principle of bringing public services together on a single site at Sheldrick way, which resulted in the inclusion of the site as part of draft Policy M1 in the Preferred Options Site Allocations Local Plan which is currently at consultation until June 2016.

- 1.2.5 The second matter relates to the implications arising from the proposed development addressed by the Development Brief. A number of consistent and important issues were raised, some of which have resulted in changes or clarification within the document, whereas others related to details which will need to be addressed at a later detailed planning application stage. The key issues were as follows:
- Concern about additional traffic on Queensway and the junction of Queensway, Kingsway and High Street at Police Station Square;
 - Concern about access for emergency services based at the hub;
 - Need for adequate parking;
 - Conflict between cars and pedestrians in Church Walk;
 - Strong support for improved swimming pool;
 - Need to improve public transport;
 - Wish to protect allotments;
 - Premature ahead of release of RAF Mildenhall.
- 1.2.6 Further issues raised in discussion by residents at the drop-in meeting and the meeting at the cricket club included opinion about the choices for any complementary housing with a strong preference for Option 1 and dislike of Option 3 and a suggestion that the existing car parking in Wamil Way on the site of Option 3 could be retained and utilised for the benefit of residents or church users. There was also concern that the site should be adequate to accommodate any future growth arising as a result of the housing expansion to the west of Mildenhall.
- 1.2.7 Notwithstanding any strategic growth arising from the Local Plan proposals referred to above and currently at consultation, the hub proposal does not propose an overall increase in vehicle movements, rather a redistribution of vehicle movements already taking place within the town. The most significant change will arise from the relocation of the Mildenhall Academy on a single site and this will have implications for vehicle movements particularly along Queensway and the town centre junction at Police Station Square. Revisions have been made to the Development Brief to reflect this, but more detailed work and analysis of the most appropriate solution will be required as a more detailed scheme is developed in association with a planning application. This will also need to take account of any proposals arising from the local Plan process.
- 1.2.8 Adoption of the draft Development Brief as amended post consultation would be a key element in guiding development opportunities in the development of public services for Mildenhall.