

# Shepherd's Grove, Stanton: Masterplan

<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/19/038</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder for Growth</b>	7 October 2019
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<b>Key Decision:</b>  <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  Notice of this intended decision was given on the Cabinet Decisions Plan published on 6 September 2019.	
<i>The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within <b>48 hours</b> and cannot be actioned until <b>five clear working days of the publication of the decision</b> have elapsed.</i>		

**Wards impacted:**      **Barningham and Stanton**

**Recommendations:** It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Portfolio Holder for Growth:

- (1) approves the amendments to the draft Shepherd's Grove Masterplan, as set out in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/WS/19/038; and**
- (2) adopts the Shepherd's Grove Masterplan as informal planning guidance for a period of three years.**



## **1. Background / Context**

- 1.1 The adopted Rural Vision 2031 Local Plan document allocates an area of some 53 hectares at Shepherd's Grove, Stanton as a rural employment area (Policy RV4J).
- 1.2 Shepherd's Grove Employment Area is a large employment area located to the east of Stanton. It is a former air base formerly occupied by the USAAF until the 1960s. Following the cessation of military use, the site developed as an industrial area, initially using existing buildings, then developing new industrial buildings. Most of the existing buildings were located on the west side of the base, with access achieved from the centre of Stanton village via Uphorpe Road. Later development on the east side of the site is accessed from Sumner Road, a County road linking the village of Walsham le Willows with the A143 at Hepworth. The area served from Sumner Road includes a large mushroom farm a bottled gas plant and warehousing. Much of the land between the two developed areas was formerly occupied by Redland Roof Tiles for the manufacture and storage of roof tiles. However, that use ceased in the early 1990s and that part of the site was subsequently cleared of all buildings.
- 1.3 The site has been allocated for employment uses since the first Bury St Edmunds Local Plan in 1989 and that allocation has continued through to the Rural Vision 2031 local plan document. However, any further growth of the site is dependent on the prior provision of a new access road onto the A143. This will both replace the existing sub-standard junction of Sumner Road and provide a link to the existing industrial area on the west side of the site avoiding the need for all traffic to travel through the centre of the village and past the primary school.
- 1.4 During public examination of the Local Plan the site owner argued that the commercial value of the site was unlikely to be sufficient to deliver the necessary infrastructure ahead of any development. Accordingly, the Inspector modified the policy (Policy RV4(J)), to allow an element of residential and/or other higher value uses necessary to deliver the road. The amount, location and nature of any higher value development will be specified in a masterplan and be subject to review, having regard to market conditions and development viability. Although the site is in multiple ownerships and all will benefit from the new road, the burden of providing that road rests with just one landowner.

## **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 A draft masterplan has been prepared by consultants on behalf of the landowners in accordance with the Council's adopted protocol. The masterplan is arranged in six sections and sets out the policy background to the document, an in-depth analysis of the existing site identifying constraints and opportunities. The main masterplan proposals are set out in section 5 of the document.
- 2.2 The masterplan was accompanied by a detailed viability assessment to help inform the quantum of higher value uses required to deliver the highway infrastructure. The information contained therein is commercially sensitive, so was not included as part of the public consultation.

- 2.3 The inclusion of higher value uses, particularly housing introduces additional infrastructure costs over and above those required to serve employment uses alone. These include education, health and recreation requirements together with the provision of new footpath and cycle connections to Stanton Primary School. The quantum of higher value development has also had regard to the policy requirement for the provision of 30% affordable housing.



### **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The preparation of a masterplan for this site to inform the delivery of essential infrastructure is a policy requirement. However, prior to commencing public consultation, alternative highway solutions were explored to see if it was possible to provide an access to the A143 using improvements to the existing highway network, thereby reducing the highway infrastructure costs. This was carried out in conjunction with the Highway Authority, but no suitable safe alternative could be found.

### **4. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 The masterplan has been the subject of public consultation undertaken by Strutt and Parker from 21 February until 5 April 2019. Any consultation responses received after that date were accepted. In addition, a public exhibition and drop-in event was held at Stanton Village Hall on 21 February 2019. Consultation with statutory bodies and other stakeholders was undertaken during the same period. A copy of the Statement of Community Engagement prepared by Strutt and Parker is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 4.2 Feedback forms were provided for those people who attended the drop-in exhibition and the dedicated website and a total of 57 feedback forms were returned. These indicated broad support for the principles underpinning the masterplan, but were more divided when it came to identifying priorities.
- 4.3 A key element of the feedback forms was the opportunity to add further comments on any issue. These additional comments have been grouped together in a table under subject headings together with individual responses to those comments and any consequential amendments which have been made to the masterplan.
- 4.4 In addition to the observations/comments from the public, the statement also includes the observations from statutory and non-statutory consultees and Parish Councils.
- 4.5 Some of the main issues raised include:
- Traffic concerns relating to HGV movements and rat-running through Hepworth village;
  - Concern at the appropriateness of housing adjacent to an existing industrial area;
  - Impact of the development on existing infrastructure services such as education and health;
  - Need to identify sustainable drainage provision within the masterplan area;
  - Need to provide safe pedestrian and cycle links.
- 4.6 A number of these issues are already addressed in the masterplan, in which case reference is made in the statement of community engagement to the relevant section of the masterplan. Examples include the details of improved footpath and cycle links between the site and Stanton village.
- 4.7 A key element of the masterplan is firstly to identify what infrastructure is required to deliver the development of the site and secondly how and when

that infrastructure will be delivered. This includes both the essential infrastructure required by Policy RV4(J) to deliver the employment site and the additional infrastructure generated by the introduction of housing. This includes the provision of infrastructure contributions such as education and health which will be delivered through a S.106 Agreement at planning application stage.

- 4.8 Where an issue lies outside the scope of the masterplan, a short explanation is given of how or where the issue will be addressed. This includes the concerns about heavy goods vehicles using the road through Hepworth as a short cut. Again, it is not the purpose of the masterplan to provide the solution, but by raising it as an issue it ensures that it is addressed by the planning application. This may require resolution by a S106 legal agreement, or other legal agreement such as Section 278. In this particular instance the concern about heavy traffic using unsuitable roads may require a traffic regulation order to impose a weight limit. This can only be done by Suffolk County Council, but it may be financed by the developer through S106. Similarly, a weight limit may be worthy of consideration in Upthorpe Road to ensure that existing heavy traffic uses the new road when it is provided. Alternatively, some form of traffic calming to make the new route the natural preference for all traffic may be appropriate. The masterplan now addresses this very point with a new paragraph at section 5.3 (page 24).
- 4.9 A further change is a small northward movement of the boundary of between the proposed residential area and the commercial area. This arises in part from a revision to the viability report which has resulted in a potential modest increase in housing numbers and a need to ensure adequate space to provide the necessary screening and buffer between residential and commercial activities.
- 4.10 The draft revised masterplan incorporating post-public consultation amendments is attached at **Appendix A** of this report. Post public consultation additions are shown **bold and underlined** and deletions are shown ~~struckthrough~~.
- 4.11 Details of all replies, together with comment and consequential changes to the masterplan document are included in the Masterplan Consultation Statement of Community Engagement which is attached at **Appendix B**.

## **5. Risks**

- 5.1 There is a risk that failure to adopt a masterplan for this site could result in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of this site without the significant investment in necessary infrastructure, or that all further employment growth will be halted by the lack of adequate highway infrastructure.

## **6. Implications arising from the proposal**

- 6.1 When the masterplan is adopted it will become non-statutory planning guidance for a period of three years.



- 6.2 The process is subject to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 6.3 The public consultations sought to engage with all sectors of the local community.
- 6.4 Policy RV4(J) sets out clearly the requirements which must be addressed by the masterplan in respect of the quantum, nature and location of higher value uses. The draft masterplan achieves this.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 **Appendix A** – Land at Shepherd's Grove, Stanton: Draft Masterplan  
**Appendix B** – Statement of Community Engagement

## **8. Background documents**

- 8.1 [Rural Vision 2031 Development Plan document adopted 2014](#)
- 8.2 [Local Plan Policies Map](#)

