

Land to the West of Mildenhall: Draft Masterplan

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/047	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	9 November 2021
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Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: The site is located in Mildenhall Queensway Ward. Other Wards impacted are Mildenhall Great Heath, Mildenhall Kingsway & Market, Mildenhall Queensway, Manor and The Rows

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the West Mildenhall Draft Masterplan for public consultation by the developer team, as set out in Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/21/047.**

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The site is allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 under Policy SA4(a), which was adopted in September 2019. The site forms part of the allocation known in the SALP document as Land West of Mildenhall.
- 1.2 Policy SA4(a) of the SALP 2019 document sets out that 97 hectares of land is allocated for a mixed-use development to include 1300 dwellings with a local centre, a minimum of 5 hectares of employment land, a 10 hectare SANG, school, leisure facilities and public services.
- 1.3 Approximately 19.2 hectares of the site allocation has been developed as the Mildenhall Hub, a public service, educational and leisure facility that opened in Summer 2021.
- 1.4 Policy SA4(a) states that the precise numbers and distribution of uses and access arrangements will be informed by a detailed masterplan for the site. It goes on to state that applications for planning permission will only be determined once the masterplan for the whole site has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.5 Suffolk County Council (SCC) are the majority landowner for the remainder of the land within the allocation and the draft masterplan has been prepared by SCC. The draft masterplan includes the land within third party ownership.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 The Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 Development Plan document, in Policy SA4(a), allocated 97 hectares of land for a mixed use development to include 1300 dwellings with a local centre, a minimum of 5 hectares of employment land, a 10 hectare SANG, school, leisure facilities and public services. The public services and leisure facilities element of the scheme has been delivered by the Mildenhall Hub. The Hub includes provision for secondary education.
- 2.2 SCC are the majority landowner for the remainder of the allocated site and, whilst formal agreement has not been reached with the third party owners, they are aware that SCC has begun the process of preparing a masterplan to inform the future development.
- 2.3 In 2019/2020 SCC commissioned a series of assessments and reports to inform the early stages of the masterplan process and they held a public consultation on this preliminary information from 4 January 2021 to 15 February 2021.

- 2.4 SCC collated the feedback from the consultation and categorised it into several key areas including site and land use, density, character and design of residential areas, transport movement and connectivity, green infrastructure and climate change.
- 2.5 Following the conclusion of the public consultation, SCC engaged with officers at West Suffolk Council along with statutory bodies and organisations, including the Lead Local Flood Authority, Local Highway Authority and Ministry of Defence Safeguarding in order to develop a series of masterplan framework plans addressing land use; landscape; ecology; drainage and connectivity and movement.
- 2.6 It was established at the Local Plan stage that there was no requirement for a bypass to the west of Mildenhall to cater for the growth allocated within the Plan. However, SCC has acknowledged the need for detailed Highway information at this masterplan stage in order to set out deliverable highway mitigation measures. To enable an understanding of the off-site mitigation that will be required, SCC has agreed the scope of the Transport Assessment (TA) with the Local Highway Authority and are undertaking the necessary work to inform the TA. Such work would not normally be carried out at the masterplan stage as it is required to inform the outline planning application stage, which follows the adoption of a masterplan.
- 2.7 The draft masterplan confirms that the scheme will be policy compliant in respect of affordable housing, with 30% of the proposed units to be affordable. These will be broadly delivered as 30% per phase.
- 2.8 The relevant ward members have been regularly briefed on the progress of the draft masterplan and on the outcome of discussions between officers at SCC and WSC. However, it is noted that the local members remain concerned about any potential highway related impacts of the proposed development.
- 2.9 The Council's Masterplan Protocol states that 'Developers will be responsible for undertaking an agreed form of consultation [on the draft masterplan] which will be in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement'. It goes on to state that 'approval to proceed to public consultation is delegated to the Assistant Director of Growth [now Director of Growth and Planning] and the Portfolio Holder (Planning and Growth) [now Planning]'. Where it is considered appropriate the Portfolio Holder may refer the matter to Cabinet for a decision.
- 2.10 SCC have submitted a draft masterplan to the Council with the intention to commence a public consultation in mid-November. Officers have reviewed the document in detail and are satisfied that it is in an appropriate form for public consultation and that this is the appropriate time to invite the local community and statutory bodies and organisations to comment on the proposals within the document.

- 2.11 Approval of the draft masterplan being subject to a public consultation will allow SCC to seek the views of the community on the content of the document and make any necessary amendments and revisions to the document that may be required in order to progress towards the adoption of the masterplan by the Council. Once adopted, the masterplan would assist the Council to shape the nature and content of future planning applications for this allocated site.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 Policy SA4(a) of the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 states that the precise numbers and distribution of uses and access arrangements will be informed by a detailed masterplan for the site. It goes on to state that applications for planning permission will only be determined once the masterplan for the whole site has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.2 In order to ensure that a comprehensive and policy compliant development comes forward on this allocated site it is necessary for a masterplan to be prepared and adopted as planning guidance, therefore other options regarding the potential development of the site have not been considered as part of this process.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 To date the draft masterplan has been prepared in accordance with the Council's adopted protocol.
- 4.2 SCC has carried out an informal public consultation on the preliminary information gathered to inform the content of the draft document. The issues raised through that consultation have been taken into account in the preparation of the draft document.
- 4.3 SCC has worked closely with officers at WSC as well as bodies such as the Local Highway Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 4.4 If Cabinet approves the West Mildenhall Draft Masterplan for public consultation, an Engagement and Consultation Strategy will be agreed with SCC, and the local population as well as statutory bodies and consultees will be consulted, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.5 In accordance with the SCI, and whilst Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, it is expected that SCC will conduct a six week consultation and will engage the public using a range of methods, including face-to-face techniques.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 There is a risk that failure to sanction the progression of the draft masterplan to a public consultation will result in a protracted masterplan process that will impact upon the delivery of an allocated site for a mixed use development including residential and employment uses.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 **Financial**
There are no potential adverse financial or resource impacts results from the progression of the draft masterplan to the public consultation phase.
- 6.2 **Legal Compliance**
There are no legal implications arising from progression of the of draft masterplan to the public consultation phase. The preparation of the masterplan for the Land West of Mildenhall site is a requirement of planning policy ahead of development proposals on the site. An adopted masterplan would enable the Local Planning Authority to proceed in determining detailed planning application(s) for the site.
- 6.3 **Personal Data Processing**
No personal data or information is detailed within the draft masterplan. SCC will be required to undertake the public consultation and collate the responses to the consultation in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.4 **Equalities**
The public consultation will identify and engage all appropriate members of the community and other key stakeholders.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder**
The public consultation will not give rise to any matters affecting crime and disorder.
- 6.6 **Environment or Sustainability**
The draft masterplan seeks to promote a sustainable development that accords with local and national policy in this regard.
- 6.7 **HR or Staffing**
There are no HR or staffing implications as a result of the draft masterplan progressing to the public consultation stage.
- 6.8 **Changes to existing policies**
The progression of the draft masterplan to the public consultation stage does not require any changes to existing policies. The public consultation must be carried out in accordance with the Council's Masterplan protocol.

- 6.9 External organisations (such as businesses, community groups)
See 6.4.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Appendix A – Draft Masterplan document for Land West of Mildenhall

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 Development Plan Document.
[Final-SALP-September-2019.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)