

Land to the North of Red Lodge: Masterplan

Report number:	CAB/WS/23/013	
Report to and date:	Portfolio holder decision	10 March 2023
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Decisions Plan:	Notice of Intention providing the purpose of the decision and the date in which the decision is expected to be made has been published on 19 August 2022.
Wards impacted:	The site is predominantly within the Icen Ward. However, the eastern parts of the site included in the Masterplan are situated within the Manor Ward.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Planning approves the adoption of the Red Lodge North Masterplan as planning guidance, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report number CAB/WS/23/023.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The site is allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 under Policy SA10, which was adopted in September 2019. The site forms part of the allocation known in the SALP document as North Red Lodge.
- 1.2 Policy SA10 of the SALP 2019 document sets out that 27.4 hectares of land is allocated for a mixed-use development to include provision for 300 dwellings, 8 hectares of employment land 3 hectares for a new primary school and other appropriate uses. The policy also confirms that any masterplan (and future planning application/s) will require a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 1.3 Approximately 2.5 hectares of the site allocation has already been developed for a new Primary School which opened for the Autumn term of 2018.
- 1.4 Policy SA10 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 entire site has been approved by the Local Planning Authority. The masterplan seeks to establish a vision and delivery mechanism to achieve these policy requirements.
- 1.5 The masterplan site is privately owned (other than the developed school site) and the landowner has commissioned the preparation of a Masterplan to inform future planning applications and decisions for development within the site.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 The Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 Development Plan document, in Policy SA10, allocates 27.4 hectares of land for a mixed-use development to include 300 dwellings 8 hectares of employment land, 3 hectares land for a primary school, and other appropriate uses. The primary school has been delivered by the Suffolk County Council and opened in 2018.
- 2.2 The remaining undeveloped parts of the Masterplan site are in private ownership. The landowners have progressed the Masterplan document to this point.
- 2.3 The Masterplan document evolved following workshop meetings and other discussions with various officers of West Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils.
- 2.4 An eight week period of Community and Stakeholder engagement commenced on 29 April 2022 and closed on 17 June 2022. The aim was to

engage local residents and key stakeholders in the preparation of the Masterplan document at a time where changes arising as a consequence of the engagement could be accommodated.

- 2.5 The promoter's team wrote to over 3,000 local residents and stakeholders to invite their participation in the development of the Masterplan. Information was shared at an in-person event and throughout the whole engagement period via a dedicated website. Written feedback was invited and facilitated at the event and via the website. The outcome of the community and stakeholder engagement is summarised later in this report.
- 2.6 The promoter has prepared a comprehensive Statement of Community Consultation detailing the consultation including a summary of the responses received and a schedule of amendments to the Masterplan made post consultation.
- 2.7 It is important to note that the principle of the development was established at the point at which the site was allocated for development in the adopted Site Allocations Local Plan (2019) and the community and stakeholder engagement did not provide a further opportunity to challenge or comment upon the principle. While the principle of development has been established, the purpose of a masterplan is to put in place a framework against which future planning applications can be assessed and provide a clear vision as to the nature of the development that will come forward to fulfil the policy allocation.
- 2.8 Following a review of the consultation responses and updated masterplan officers identified three key areas where further engagement with the landowners and/or Suffolk County Council was necessary. These related to highway matters including internal junctions, car parking and illustrative layout designs, further clarity about the delivery and likely composition of the employment land component and the proper incorporation of sustainable drainage features within the residential components.
- 2.9 The promoters of the Masterplan site responded positively to the engagement period and post engagement discussions with other stakeholders and carried out a series of amendments to the Masterplan document.
- 2.10 Officers are aware of the need to deliver economic growth alongside the delivery of housing and for this reason the promoters were asked to provide further clarity about the delivery and composition of the 8 hectares of employment land included in the Local Plan allocation. A phasing plan was added into the Masterplan which illustrated a three-phase approach to the development of the site. Phase 1 would include a small number of dwellings to the west of the primary school and part of the employment land to the north of this. Phase 2 would provide a further number of dwellings to the east and north-east of the school whilst phase 3 would see the completion of both the residential and employment components of the

allocation. The phasing plan envisages the provision of a local centre, close to the main vehicular access into the site (to the southwest corner of the site) in phase 2 or 3. The text of the Masterplan was amended to add some commentary about the likely composition of the employment land. This envisages Class B2 and B8 uses being located in the northern employment area (with greatest separation from residential areas) and light industrial uses (traditional Class B1 uses, now Class E(g)(iii) uses) located in the southern employment area. In a broad sense, the north and south employment areas would deliver approximately 50% of the overall requirement for employment uses.

2.11 A number of other changes were made to the Masterplan document following public and stakeholder engagement. These are set out in full (together with a statement about why the change was made) at Appendix 2 to the attached Statement of Community Engagement document. Whilst some of the changes were minor or inconsequential in nature, the following major changes were made alongside the phasing and employment land related changes discussed above:

- Removal of the reference to opportunities for construction of buildings up to 4-storeys in height. The final Masterplan document discusses 2 and 3-storey scale.
- Removal of diagram/sketch examples of development layout from the final document (to address highway authority concerns about the approaches).
- Removal of prescriptive provisions for how car parking should be designed and provided (to address highway authority concerns and to allow for flexibility at planning application stage and avoid claims of precedent setting by later developers).
- Positive re-drafting of a negative paragraph relating to affordable housing provision (including removal of reference to viability).
- Removal of a prescribed amount of retail floorspace to be provided (to allow for market flexibility – NB Policy SA10(a) does not require specific quantities to be provided).
- Introduction of clarity about the roundabout junction shown within the Masterplan site throughout the document. The highway authority was concerned this might not be the best and safest solution to traffic management at this part of the site and requested the roundabout was noted as an illustrative solution in the Masterplan document (i.e. the highway authority did not wish for a priority 'T' junction to be ruled out as an option at this stage).
- Changes to the phraseology used for bus provision to cement a commitment to providing appropriate infrastructure for bus services as part of the construction.

- Clarification about SUDs infrastructure provision for the existing primary school.

2.12 The landowner has submitted the masterplan attached as Appendix A together with a request that the document is adopted by the Council as planning guidance. Officers are satisfied that the document provides a sound framework against which future planning applications can be assessed and it is recommended that the masterplan is adopted as planning guidance.

2.13 The submission is accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The document identified a number of measures and opportunities set out in local policy and the associated evidence base which would/could mitigate effects of increased recreational pressure on Breckland Special Protection Area. These measures allowed the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the SALP to conclude there would be no effects on the integrity of the Special Protection Area. A copy of the Habitats Regulations Assessment is attached at Appendix 3.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

3.1 Policy SA10 of the SALP 2019 document sets out that 27.4 hectares of land is allocated for a mixed-use development to include provision for 300 dwellings, 8 hectares of employment land 3 hectares for a new primary school and other appropriate uses.

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 adopted as planning guidance. The Masterplan must fit within the parameters of the development allocation set out at Policy SA10 of the SALP document. Other options regarding the potential development of the site have therefore not been considered as part of this process.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

4.1 The preparation of the masterplan, including the consultation process, has been undertaken by the landowners in accordance with West Suffolk Council's Masterplan Protocol and has demonstrated that, where possible, the issues raised by the local community and statutory consultees have been addressed in the masterplan.

4.2 The landowners worked closely with officers at WSC as well as bodies such as the Local Highway Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority throughout the process of preparing the masterplan.

4.3 The relevant ward member was briefed prior to the consultation period and matters raised were addressed via amendment to the Masterplan

document. Matters will continue to be addressed through the development of the outline planning application. No formal comments were received from the Red Lodge Parish Council or Ward Members during the consultation.

- 4.4 The outcome of public consultation is set out in the document titled 'Statement of Community Consultation' which is attached to this report at Appendix 2. That document includes a summary of the changes made to the Masterplan document following consultation (appendix 2 of that document). The promoters of the Masterplan received 28 feedback submissions via the forms provided at the event or via the website with further feedback received from the West Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils.

5. **Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 There is a risk that failure to adopt the masterplan as planning guidance will impact upon the delivery of an allocated site for a mixed-use development including residential and employment uses as the policy requires that a masterplan is adopted prior to the determination of any planning application. Any significant delays could impact on the Council's ability to demonstrate a deliverable 5-year housing supply, as is required by National Planning Policy.

6. **Implications arising from the proposals**

- 6.1 **Financial** - There are no potential adverse financial or resource impacts resulting from the adoption of the masterplan. The reverse is possible if the masterplan is not adopted and further time and resources must be committed to the process.
- 6.2 **Legal compliance** - There are no legal implications arising from the adoption of the masterplan. The preparation and adoption of the masterplan for the North Red Lodge site is a requirement of planning policy. An adopted masterplan would enable the Local Planning Authority to proceed in determining planning application(s) for the site.
- 6.3 **Personal data processing** - No personal data or information is detailed within the masterplan or its accompanying documents. All responses to the engagement/consultation have been anonymised in the submitted report such that no personal data is presented.
- 6.4 **Equalities** - Consideration has been given to the provisions of Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) in the preparation of the masterplan. No significant issues arise at this point. There is further opportunity to consider the implications of the Equalities act at the planning application stage when more detail is provided.

- 6.5 **Crime and disorder** - The adoption of the masterplan will not give rise to any matters affecting crime and disorder. Further opportunities to consider crime and disorder implications will be available at planning application/reserved matters stage when further details (layouts etc) are provided for consideration.
- 6.6 **Safeguarding** – No safeguarding issues arise at this time. Further opportunities to consider safeguarding matters will be available at planning application/reserved matters stage when further details (layouts etc) are provided for consideration.
- 6.7 **Environment or sustainability** - The masterplan seeks to promote a sustainable development that accords with local and national policy in this regard. A shadow Habitats Regulations Impact Assessment has been provided to demonstrate that important nature conservation sites would not be adversely impacted by the Masterplan development, with further opportunity to consider potential impacts available at planning application/reserved matters stage/s when further information is made available.
- 6.8 **HR or staffing** - There are no HR or staffing implications as a result of the adoption of the masterplan.
- 6.9 **Changes to existing policies** - The adoption of the masterplan does not require any changes to existing policies. The preparation of the masterplan has been carried out in accordance with the Council's Masterplan Protocol and is required by Development Plan policies.
- 6.10 **External organisations** – There is an existing business adjoining the Masterplan site that could be affected by development proposals surrounding it. There are also dwellings in the vicinity (to the south) and an operating primary school within the Masterplan site. The Masterplan does not raise any significant issues for the continued operation of the business and educational establishments and does not indicate that the existing dwellings would be impacted significantly. Further opportunity to consider potential impacts upon adjoining/adjacent land uses and operators will be available when more detail becomes available at planning application/reserved matters stage/s.

7. **Appendices referenced in this report**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – North Red Lodge Masterplan (version to be adopted) – December 2022
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Statement of Community Consultation – North Red Lodge Masterplan – August 2022
- 7.3 Appendix 3 - North Red Lodge – Allocation SA10 Document to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Development Masterplan – February 2022

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) 2019 Development Plan Document
https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/upload/Final-SALP-September-2019.pdf
- 8.2 National Planning Policy Framework – updated July 2021
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>