

Report on the North- West Braintree Masterplan Public Consultation	Agenda No: 6
<p>Corporate Priority: Environment is clean and green, business is encouraged and local economy prospers, housing and transport meet local needs</p> <p>Report presented by: Alan Massow</p> <p>Report prepared by: Alan Massow</p>	
<p>Background Papers: Braintree District Council Core Strategy (2011) http://www.braintreenorthwest.co.uk/</p>	<p>Public Report Yes</p>
<p>Options: To approve, or not approve the draft North- West Braintree Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document. To approve, or not approve the inclusion of B1 employment uses at the Local Centre.</p>	<p>Key Decision: No</p>
<p>Executive Summary: This report sets out a summary of comments made during the consultation in July 2012 on the North- West Braintree Draft Masterplan, together with officer responses to the issues raised in those comments. It recommends alterations to the Masterplan in response to the public consultation comments. The consultation responses are set out in Appendix 3 to this report.</p>	
<p>Decision: That it be recommended to Cabinet and to Council that the North- West Braintree Masterplan be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a reference is included to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document • That the phrase HGV Restriction is added to the link road on the illustrative Masterplan • That a reference concerning the parking standards for stadia is added to page 25 • That a reference to the maximum size of the convenience retailing at the neighbourhood centre is added. (The appropriate size will be discussed at the meeting, following advice from the retail consultants' report, which is being finalised). • That the area identified for the community sports pitch is enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full sized playing pitch with run-off area. 	

Purpose of Decision:	
To provide a Masterplan to support and guide any future planning applications for the Council's growth location at North-West Braintree.	
Corporate implications [should be explained in detail]	
Financial:	Community benefits and infrastructure requirements will be linked to future development.
Legal:	The masterplan and its consultation must be carried out in line with regulations, in order to be approved by the Council as planning guidance.
Equalities/Diversity	Proposed development and protection of the environment have an impact upon equality/diversity
Customer Impact:	Impact of planning proposals and future planning decisions
Environment and Climate Change:	The masterplan proposes to develop the land in line with sustainability principles, including retention of hedgerows and trees and provision of sustainable urban drainage.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	A public consultation took place which involved writing to residents in the locality, press releases and adverts and publicity via a website. A public exhibition was also held which was attended by the developer and Council Officers.
Risks:	Risk of Master Plan not being approved which could delay the delivery of the Core Strategy
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1. Introduction

1.1 Braintree District Council adopted its Core Strategy in September 2011. This document allocated strategic growth locations for development in the District. A strategic site at North- West Braintree was allocated comprising housing and employment uses, as set out in policy CS1 Table 1. The development site is 44.3ha, which is proposed to accommodate a minimum of 600 dwellings, with 15 ha of employment land, which could include a new site for Braintree Town Football Club. The growth location also provides a spine road linking Springwood Drive with Panfield Lane, which will be designed with an HGV restriction. The Core Strategy indicates that the growth location housing would be phased between 2018 and 2026. The employment element of the site is not phased. A map showing the proposed layout of the site is shown at Appendix 1. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy stated that "The development of the mixed use growth locations will be in accordance with Master Plans to be approved as supplementary planning documents by the Council."

1.2 An initial informal consultation took place in March and included two well attended public exhibitions. The outcome of this consultation was report to the Panel on the 23rd May 2012.

1.3 The second consultation took place between the 2nd and 27th July 2012. This included the consultation documents being made available to the public to view on a website and at the Council Offices. A press release was also issued.

2. Publication of the changes from the previous version

2.1 The following changes have been made to the Masterplan following the first consultation;

- Hedgerows- More green areas have been provided throughout including enhanced hedgerows along Panfield Lane and green corridors linking the development with the countryside.
- Open Space – The revised Master Plan gives further consideration to the possible location of additional open space uses such as allotments and children’s play space.
- Sports – Following the initial consultation it was felt that the initial proposal for recreation was too football focussed and that a broader range of sports provision should be provided.
- Northern Site Boundary – A wider buffer area to the north boundary is shown to take account of potential habitat issues and the need to accommodate land for surface water attenuation. This will also improve access to the countryside and form an extension to the existing woodland.
- Neighbourhood Centre – The approach to delivering the neighbourhood centre has been reviewed, and the revised Master Plan looks to create a more substantial mixed- use area that would include space for small business uses, alongside shops and community uses, forming a wider mixed-use “heart” to the development.
- Protecting existing residents – the revised Master Plan includes new areas identified as “buffers” between the new development and existing properties along Panfield Lane.

3. Consultation Responses

3.1 In total 31 responses have been received. These include comments from Natural England, Sport England, Anglia Water, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation, Essex Police and Panfield Parish Council.

3.2 Other comments were received from local residents, Xpect Leisure, Vincent and Gorbing Planning Associates, UNEX, Braintree Town Football Club, Friends of Braintree and Henry Davidson Developments. In addition, a petition with 98 signatures was also received.

3.3 The consultation responses can be summarised as follows;

- Environmental – Request that TPO’s should be put in place to protect trees and hedgerows on site and that local wildlife sites and wider biodiversity should be assessed. Green infrastructure should be an integral part of the development.
- Highways – Concerns regarding traffic safety, safety of the proposed junctions onto Panfield Lane, congestion in the wider area and the need for restrictions between the growth location and the proposed spine road.

- Design – Concerns regarding overlooking and the number of storeys for the new development and suggestions for boundary treatment fronting onto Panfield Lane. Also a comment was made regarding security and safety of the scheme.
- Sport/Recreation – Public footpaths should be retained. The number of football pitches appears to have been reduced and that the site for the club and pitches should be of a sufficient size. There should be general provision for sport/recreation over the entire site.
- Housing Numbers – Concerns over the term minimum and that the number of houses proposed is 600. Concerns that the phasing should not be brought forward.
- Neighbourhood Centre – Concerns about the introduction of employment uses and its position within the growth location. A proposal to allow for expanded supermarket provision for the local centre was also received.
- Adjacent Development Sites - A site adjacent to Xpect Leisure should be developed for residential uses and be included within the growth location. Also an objection that the extent of the spine road should not preclude development potential at the former Towerlands site.
- Naming – That appropriate road names should be used and suggestions of what the area should be called as a whole.

3.4 All representations are included in Appendix 3.

4. Officer Response

4.1 A response has been given to each comment received in Appendix 3.

4.2 The draft Master Plans purpose is to agree the general principles of the growth location, the majority of comments received relate to detailed matters of design and highways safety, which are issues for consideration during the later planning application stage. Other comments have already been addressed through the Core Strategy process, for example traffic impact on the local area has already been assessed and road infrastructure improvements that will be required in response to that assessment are identified in the Core Strategy. However, an updated traffic assessment will be necessary to support any future applications.

- Environmental – The draft Master Plan shows the retention and strengthening of many of the natural features on the site, it also shows provision for sustainable drainage systems. The single public right of way is shown as being retained on the Master Plan. Landscape officers have been asked to assess any trees on the site in order to determine whether or not they should be subject to any Tree Preservation Orders.
- Highways - It is expected that the spine road will be used as an alternative route for some vehicles currently using the Aetheric Road/Rayne Road junction. This location is currently very heavily congested and the spine road will be able to help relieve this congestion. There will be consideration of the use of traffic regulation orders and traffic calming when a planning application is submitted and Essex County Council Highways will be consulted on further traffic matters at that time. An HGV restriction will be required in order to

prevent large vehicles, other than buses and emergency vehicles, from using the link road between Springwood Drive and Panfield Lane.

- Design - In terms of the design concerns and the issue of building height, officers are of the view that it is not appropriate to place restrictions on building heights in the Master Plan. These issues will be considered when planning applications are submitted for the site, in order to facilitate good design, protect amenity and provide an acceptable street scene in the new development. The design and layout will be expected to be in accordance with the Council's design policies and can be guided by the principles in the Essex Design Guide in terms of appropriate distances between buildings and the protection of private amenity space.
- Sport Recreation - It is necessary to ensure that the area of land identified for Braintree Football Club is of a sufficient size to accommodate its re-location and future needs. This would include sufficient space for the stadium and associated parking and facilities. It would be desirable for the stadium site to have a segregated access for away and home fans. The illustrative Master plan indicates two entrances. In order to provide sufficient car parking on site it is estimated that between 300-400 spaces would be required depending on the ground capacity. Sufficient provision for parking for people with disabilities, cycles, motorbikes and coaches is also required. It should however be noted that the parking provided to serve the stadium could also serve the proposed adjacent employment area, because their peak use times are different. The development will also have to provide sufficient open spaces for the development in accordance with the Council's Open Spaces SPD. The community sports and play facilities area shows a football pitch. However this pitch is too small to meet the required pitch size as set out in Sport England's Comparative Sizes of Sports Pitches & Courts (April 2011), which specifies that a pitch should be between 93.66m x 49.16m minimum and 126m x 96m maximum. As such it is recommended that the Master Plan community sports area should be enlarged to enable it to accommodate a full sized adult pitch (including run off area and landscaping).
- Housing Numbers – The Council cannot stipulate a maximum housing figure as this would be contrary to the adopted Core Strategy requirement. The exact number of houses will be determined through the planning application process.
- Neighbourhood Centre - In terms of the Neighbourhood Centre, a local centre should be provided to support the development as it is necessary to have local services and facilities. The inclusion of employment uses has been proposed to off-set a slight under provision of the Core Strategy requirement of 15ha of employment land. The local centre employment is restricted to B1 office type units, which would be able to integrate with the other uses. Increasing the size of the main employment area is not an option, as the position the spine road is fixed by the course of a water main and the desire to have recreational uses between the employment and housing area. Members can choose whether or not to support provision of B1 uses at the local centre. Officers are seeking advice from the retail consultants' evidence study on an appropriate maximum size of store for the local centre and will report on this matter verbally at the meeting.
- Adjacent Development Sites - Comments relating to the former Towerlands site and land adjacent to Xpect Leisure. Both sites are outside the boundary

for the growth location. The Towerlands site has been given a draft allocation by the LDF Sub Committee for a mixed use of commercial/leisure type, such as conference facility/hotel and leisure uses. Once detailed proposals have been formulated by UNEX then they can be given further considerations before agreeing an extent for the development. Any highways implications would have to be assessed and access options considered when a plan for the site is drawn up. The Xpect leisure site is also outside the boundary of the growth location and outside the scope of the Master Plan. As the site is readily accessible from Springwood Drive and is currently allocated for employment uses it is not proposed to include it within the growth location. Any future allocation for the site could be determined through the Council's Development Management and Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

- Naming – The streets in the development will be named in accordance with the Council's street naming policy.

5. Recommendations

That it be recommended to Cabinet and to Council that the North- West Braintree Masterplan be approved as guidance in the determination of planning applications, subject to the following amendments;

- That a reference is included to the Council's Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document
- That the phrase HGV Restriction is added to the link road on the illustrative Masterplan
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- That a reference to the maximum size of the convenience retailing at the neighbourhood centre is added. (The appropriate size will be discussed at the meeting, following advice from the retail consultants' report, which is being finalised).
- That the area identified for the community sports pitch is enlarged to be of sufficient size to accommodate a full sized playing pitch with run-off area.

6. Future Steps.

6.1 Once approved, the Master Plan can be used to determine any future planning applications for the growth location.

6.2 Further work will continue between the Council, Highways Authority and the developer in order to bring this development forward in accordance with the phasing in the Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – Proposed illustrative Master Plan

Appendix 2 – Previous illustrative Master Plan

Appendix 3 – Responses Received