

RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

8 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELTON MOWBRAY SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLANNING

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the arrangements to prepare a masterplan and delivery statement for a sustainable urban extension to Melton Mowbray and to invite approval of those arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **The Melton Local Development Framework Task Group recommends that the Governance Structure and Terms of Reference for the Melton Mowbray Sustainable Urban Extension Masterplanning be approved.**

3. KEY ISSUES/BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Melton Local Development Framework (MLDF) Core Strategy (Preferred Options) DPD sets out the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the Borough to 2026.

- 3.2 If we are to provide for 170 dwellings per annum over the period 2006 to 2026, we still need to find land for about 1,000 more houses in order to meet this housing requirement (Taking into account the houses built since 2006, existing proposals to build houses and the opportunities to re-use previously developed land).

- 3.3 The Core Strategy presented 4 housing and 2 employment growth options for the development of land on the edge of Melton Mowbray. On 1 April 2009 the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee resolved that:

“the Melton Local Development Framework Task Group prepare programmes for Sustainable Urban Extension Master planning and the preparation of an Allocations and Settlement Boundaries Development Plan Document”

- 3.4 At its meeting of 18 November 2009, Full Council was minded to proceed with the preparation of the Core Strategy, with the next version of the document reflecting a northern Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). The northern SUE is being promoted by a development consortium supported by a team of expert consultants.

- 3.5 Delivering housing growth has been a national key priority, reflected in the work undertaken at the Sub-Regional level through the New Growth Point and Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Group. The intention to focus the limited funding that is available on those areas of growth with the best prospects of timely delivery suggests that a SUE to Melton Mowbray will find support from funding partners. This has been borne out to date with successful bids to the New Growth Point Programme for transport modelling funding and, more recently, with the successful dialogue between the Council and Partners that has seen the appointment, via Prospect Leicestershire, of a Project Manager to deliver a Masterplan for the Melton Mowbray SUE.

- 3.6 Prospect Leicestershire have appointed Paul McKim Consultancy Ltd to act as project manager for the Melton Mowbray SUE. Officers have been working with Paul McKim to prepare, in partnership with the developer consortium and their consultants, an

appropriate package of activities to produce a Masterplan for the northern SUE in support of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and a subsequent planning application.

- 3.7 A Governance Structure has been prepared (Appendix 1) which provides for collaboration and debate on the preparation of the Masterplan. The Structure consists of a Masterplanning and Delivery Steering Group, supported by three Sub-Groups which deal with specific, detailed issues in support of the Steering Group. Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) for the Governance Structure have also been drafted, detailing the roles of each group. At its meeting of 8 July 2010, the MLDF Task Group considered the Governance Structure and Terms of Reference and has recommended their approval.
- 3.8 Under these arrangements, the Masterplanning and Delivery Steering Group will report to the MLDF Task Group through its chair and as a standing item at Task Group. Meetings of the Task Group have been arranged to facilitate timely political steer.

4. POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Core Strategy DPD and Melton Mowbray SUE have a close relationship with the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, particularly those relating to Housing Needs and Traffic Congestion.
- 4.2 Delivery of an SUE will have an impact upon several service areas for the Council including community planning, community safety, recreation and leisure, the country park, waste and recycling, supporting vulnerable groups and affordable housing. As a result, key officers from the authority are being identified to represent these interests and influence the outcome of the masterplanning process. The draft Group membership is set out in the draft Terms of Reference.
- 4.3 The Masterplan also has direct links with the priorities of our partners including Leicestershire County Council (education and transport) and the Primary Care Trust (health provision). Representation from those organisations is also being secured.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of project managing the Masterplanning process, c. £20,000 for a six month period, is being met by Prospect Leicestershire through New Growth Point Funding. Officers are working with the Sub-regional Support Unit at Leicester City Council to secure funding to the end of the financial year at 31 March 2011. The work of the Policy and Performance team is being met through the existing 2010/11 budget.
- 5.2 On 3 July 2010, the Minister for Housing and Local Government wrote to all leaders of Housing Growth Local Authorities setting out the Government's approach to funding in this policy area. The letter announced that growth funding for 2010/11 has been safeguarded but before funding is released assurances have been sought regarding community engagement. A response has been made on behalf of the Leicester and Leicestershire Leadership Board.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 The masterplanning process supports the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended in June 2008).

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 In planning for a high-quality SUE, the Council will wish to ensure that it takes account of community safety matters. The masterplanning arrangements include an Environment 'Sub Group' which provides for the embedding of community safety principles and requirements into the preparation of the Masterplan at an early stage. There is an expectation for the Community Safety Officer to be involved in the process.

8. EQUALITIES

- 8.1 The Masterplan provides for the needs of vulnerable groups including those with Housing Needs such as the Elderly, low income households and Gypsy and Travellers.

9. RISKS

- 9.1 The Council is required to prepare a Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. Failure to prepare the document would lead to non-compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 9.2 The housing and employment growth proposals in the Core Strategy: Submission will be tested thoroughly during the independent examination of the development plan document. Section 20(5)(b) of the Act requires the Inspector to determine whether the plan is "sound". To be "sound" a core strategy should be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. "Justified" means that the document must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base. An 'unsound' plan may not be allowed to proceed to adoption and the plan preparation process may have to start again from the beginning.
- 9.3 The strategic development choices set out in the Core Strategy will be assessed to determine whether they are deliverable. The masterplanning process supports this examination and by demonstrating spatial integration, viability and delivery assessments should provide the independent Inspector with confidence that the development policy is "sound" and deliverable.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Governance Structure and Terms of Reference have been the subject of consultation with the development consortium and others, including Leicestershire County Council.
- 10.2 The masterplan will be the subject of public consultation and sustainability appraisal as part of the plan making process although the detailed provisions of the programme have yet to be determined.

11.0 WARDS AFFECTED

- 11.1 The northern SUE is the focus of the development strategy for the Borough and consequently has the potential to affect all town. It also may impact on wards adjoining Melton Mowbray and in particular Waltham-on-the Wolds wards.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 12.1 Climate Change considerations are placed at the heart of the planning system. Masterplanning of the SUE will consider energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage systems, accessibility and alternative modes of travel to the private car, green infrastructure, biodiversity and waste and recycling and the provision of local services to reduce the need to travel.

Contact Officer: Colin Wilkinson

Date: 20 August 2010

Appendices: Appendix A – Governance Structure
Appendix B – Terms of Reference

Background Papers: Report to MLDF Task Group 8-7-2010: Masterplanning (including appendices)

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