

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 6TH APRIL, 2009
COUNCIL – 23RD APRIL, 2009

CENTRAL TELFORD AREA ACTION PLAN – PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To approve the final draft of the Central Telford Area Action Plan in order that it can be submitted to the Secretary of State and progressed towards adoption as Council policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Council approve the Central Telford Area Action Plan and supporting documents attached as Appendices 1-3 to this report, in order that the documents can be published, subjected to consultation and, along with representations received, then submitted to the Secretary of State;**
- 2.2 **That authority is delegated to the Head of Planning & Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Council's Development Plans Steering Group and the Cabinet Members for Environment and for Regeneration, to agree any minor changes to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State.**

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Central Telford Area Action Plan has been prepared in order to provide a planning policy framework against which development proposals in Telford town centre and surrounding areas can be considered.
- 3.2 Prior to formal adoption this document requires Council approval, followed by publication along with the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Consultation Statement for a six week final public consultation and then submission to the Secretary of State. Subject to the document being considered "sound" after public examination, it could then be then adopted by the Council.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Cabinet 17 September 2007 - Central Telford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document Preferred Options Report for Consultation
- Council 20 September 2007 - Local Development Framework – Central Telford Area Action Plan

5.0 INFORMATION

5.1 The draft “Publication” Central Telford Area Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1. The document covers the Town Centre plus the adjacent areas of Central Park Old Park, Hollinswood and Malinslee. Its structure contains:

- a spatial development strategy, vision and objectives for the area;
- a detailed “Character Areas” section which brings forward site-specific proposals for each part of the Central Telford area;
- a Policy section which provides overall policies for different types of development and relevant planning considerations;
- a Delivery Section that sets out how the proposals will be implemented and the overall objectives delivered.

5.2 Key guidelines for the scale and location of new development are included:

- 70,000 sq m of new non-food retail development and 7,000sqm of new food retail,
- 2,500 new homes (with 2,000 in the town centre where there is currently no housing at all)
- 110,000 sq m of office floorspace.

5.3 The Area Action Plan seeks to be flexible enough to ensure that development proposals are encouraged to come forward, yet robust enough to ensure that development helps deliver the key elements of the spatial vision for the area.

5.4 Further Appendices containing a Sustainability Appraisal and Statement of Consultation are attached at Appendix 2 and 3. These provide a summary of the sustainability appraisal and the public and stakeholder engagement processes that have been carried out. They form part of the documentation, subject to approval by Council, that will be published for consultation and proposed submission to the Secretary of State.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Central Telford Area Action Plan is required to pass through a number of preparatory stages involving public engagement. These culminate in an independent examination by a government appointed planning inspector at an Examination in Public.

6.2 The key spatial development issues and options first emerged from a series of workshop events in 2004 involving Councillors, Community Groups, and the

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wider public in 2004. A Central Telford Area Action Plan consultation then took place in 2005. Responses received resulted in a revised Preferred Options Report for the Central Telford Area Action Plan being prepared. This document was published in September 2007 for a 6 week consultation with key stakeholders (such as government agencies, utility providers, neighbouring Councils, Parish and Town Councils) and the wider public. Altogether 579 responses to the 2007 Preferred Options Report were received, 466 objecting to the document and 113 in support.

- 6.3 Responses to the Preferred Options Report were considered by the Development Plans Steering Group (an advisory non-decision-making all party Council Member group) in February 2008.
- 6.4 Throughout 2008, Council officers, advised by Members of the Development Plans Steering Group, have been engaged in the preparation of the Central Telford Area Action Plan. A series of Development Plan Steering Group meetings during 2008 considered elements of detail concluding with a meeting in December, 2008, at which Members considered the overall approach to the Central Telford Area.
- 6.5 The draft "Publication" version of the Central Telford Area Action Plan was then considered by the Development Plans Steering Group on 3 February 2009. Members of the Development Plans Steering Group resolved that, subject to specific amendments, the draft Central Telford Area Action Plan be endorsed for consideration by Cabinet and Council. Members of the Development Plans Steering Group will be considering the revised version at their meeting of 4 March.
- 6.6 In order to give all Members and representatives of Town and Parish Councils a more extensive opportunity to consider the Central Telford Area Action Plan, a seminar took place on 26 February. This allowed Members to address some of the content of the Central Telford Area Action Plan in more detail in an informal workshop in advance of the Council meeting of 5 March.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 7.1 The document will have an impact on significant numbers of stakeholders under the various equality strands, but the impacts are generally positive.
- 7.2 Significant positive equalities impacts would arise out of various policy approaches to manage development in the Central Telford Area. These would include policies seeking to secure for example:
- A greater range of housing types, sizes and tenures including affordable housing and seeking more Lifetime Homes-standard housing;
 - Provision for more convenient, attractive and safer pedestrian circulation and to move away from a car-dominated environment to greater support for non-car modes of travel including better pedestrian and cycle links;

- Development with a mix of uses including housing, enabling more convenient access including to non-car users, and directing key developments such as employment, leisure/culture and retail into accessible central locations;
- Protection and enhancement of the current character of residential neighbourhoods and their open spaces of identified value and creation of new open spaces.

7.3 Negative impacts might occur as a result of a policy approach to affordable housing which allows for flexibility and could therefore result in delivery of less affordable housing than might result from a more prescriptive approach. A viability study is therefore being undertaken to further inform the Council's approach to development proposals and affordable housing.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 A detailed Sustainability Appraisal of the document has been undertaken as an integral part of its preparation. This uses a Sustainability Appraisal Framework in order to consider the environmental, social, economic and natural resource implications of the Area Action Plan and allows for recommendations to be made that can be addressed through, for example, changes to the Area Action Plan.

8.2 The completed results of the Sustainability Appraisal process are set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

8.3 In summary, the results of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Central Telford Area Action Plan are predominately positive and demonstrate that overall the Area Action Plan performs well in sustainability terms. The Sustainability Appraisal will be published to accompany the Area Action Plan and form part of the documentation to be consulted upon.

9.0 LEGAL COMMENT

9.1 Because the required procedural issues are summarised in this report, there is no further legal comment to add to this aspect of the Area Action Plan.

9.2 It should be noted that in order to implement various elements of the Area Action Plan it may be necessary for the Council to acquire areas of land or property. This may require the use of Compulsory Purchase powers by the Council. In these circumstances the necessary authority to serve and progress Compulsory Purchase Orders will be sought separately.

10.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10.1 The Central Telford Area Action Plan will be a major delivery vehicle for the shared Telford and Wrekin Partnership Vision 2026 of a "Modern City". In the Area Action Plan this Vision has been taken further and a range of specific sites

and policies to ensure that development helps deliver the key elements of the spatial vision for the area. It will contribute to the Priority Plan for Maintaining a High Quality and Sustainable Environment.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The preparation of the action plan will be undertaken within existing staffing and budgetary resources.
- 11.2 A provision of £150,000 is included within the 2009/10 budget framework to cover the costs of public consultation and the public inquiry. Actual costs may well exceed this amount as the full scope and focus of the inquiry will not be known until the draft document has been submitted and considered by the planning inspectorate.
- 11.3 Dependant upon the focus of the inquiry, there may be a requirement to seek external specialist technical and legal advice, the cost of which cannot be contained within existing budget provisions. A further report will be brought forward as necessary.
- 11.4 When adopted, the delivery of various infrastructure requirements set by the planning framework will have financial implications for the Authority. These will be the subject of separate reports and approvals as required.
- 11.5 In the event that authority is sought to serve and progress any Compulsory Purchase Orders to acquire land or property on behalf of the Council in order to implement any element of the Area Action Plan, the financial implications of such an order will be subject to a separate report seeking authorisation.

12.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In providing a framework for development, particularly in the Town Centre, the Central Telford Area Action Plan will have implications for all residents of the Borough.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Central Telford Area Action Plan - Preferred Option Report, September 2007

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