

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 24 APRIL 2014

SHAPING PLACES: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SITES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING SPECIALIST

LEAD CABINET MEMBER - COUNCILLOR CHARLES SMITH

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Development Scheme approved by Cabinet in December 2013, the next stage in the Local Plan process is to consult on proposed housing and employment sites in the Borough. The proposals will address the delivery of local priorities and opportunities and provide greater certainty to developers and investors enabling the delivery of growth which is key to the Council's overall strategy for prosperity and providing a supply of new homes.
- 1.2 Based on the findings of this exercise, sites will then be allocated in the draft Local Plan with a further period of consultation planned. As part of the on-going approach to establish the Plan, Cabinet approval is sought to undertake a period of six weeks public consultation on the Proposed Housing and Employment Sites document commencing in May 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet approve the “Shaping Places Local Plan: Proposed Housing and Employment Sites” document for public consultation;

2.2 The Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the document be approved for public consultation

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Council priorities are reflected in the Local Plan objectives. The objectives form a thread throughout Local Plan documents, ensuring the quantity, type and location of future development support the delivery of the Council's priorities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The Local Plan relates to the whole borough and those who live, work and visit the area.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Subject to Cabinet approval, it is proposed to commence the consultation on 6 th May 2014 to 17 th June 2014.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The costs of the public consultation process will be met from within existing resources. The planned use of online, social media and existing consultation groups will support the consultation process and reach as wide an audience as possible.
LEGAL ISSUES		Inviting representations on the Proposed Housing and Employment Sites document is part of the Council's consultation and engagement which is being undertaken in advance of the more formal processes

		to be followed prior to adoption of the Local Plan. Full Council will need to approve this consultation document. However, it is considered appropriate for Cabinet to give the approval to the document and for the consultation process to begin as soon as possible.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		The approach set out in this report will ensure conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular, paragraph 157 which states that “Local Plans should:... allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate”. Allocating sites for future development provides certainty and choice to the market and to new investors.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS		Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 During June-July 2013, a public consultation was held on The Shaping Places Local Plan: Strategy & Options Document. This document set out the context for future development in the borough and sought comments on options associated with the scale, type and broad location of development.
- 4.2 As reported to Cabinet in December 2013, the comments received during consultation are being used to inform the emerging Local Plan including the identification of proposed sites for future housing and employment development.
- 4.3 Landscape and green space has been at the heart of the vision for Telford when the New Town was first established and the emerging Local Plan reinforces that vision for the borough as a whole. The green spaces and natural features not only complement development, they provide a structural context for the homes, employment areas and retail centres that support our community.
- 4.4 Measured as a whole over 90% of the borough is made up of green infrastructure with Telford having substantially more green spaces than the average town. The borough’s green assets are substantial:
- Part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - 7 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - 5 Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
 - 41 Local Wildlife Sites
 - Telford Town Park
 - Granville Country Park
 - Wrekin Forest
 - Local Parks
 - Over 400 hectares of managed woodland
 - Over 15 million trees in Telford giving tree cover of over 15% across the borough as a whole.
- 4.5 Within these protected areas there is a network of footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways that include the Silkin Way and together make up “green ways” that provide green routes that link

all the principle areas of green open space. The Plan will protect and enhance the green open space and landscape features to ensure that Telford & Wrekin continues to be an attractive place in which to live, work and invest.

- 4.6 It is within this context that the Proposed Housing and Employment Sites document proposes a range of sites for public consultation. Based on the Strategy & Options document, the proposed sites balance growth with the protection of green space and are distributed across both the urban and rural areas. The document aims to help manage development, addressing priorities around the economy and housing whilst continuing to provide space for nature, sport and leisure in which economic, social and environmental benefits can be delivered for all.

The Proposed Housing and Employment Sites document is enclosed at Appendix 1 of this report. It includes the following sections:

- Growth strategy
- Location of development
- Housing sites
- Employment sites

5.0 GROWTH STRATEGY

5.1 To ensure that Telford is an attractive place in which to live, work and invest the Plan will:

- protect the network of interconnected green open spaces and woodland to secure the social, economic and environmental benefits we gain from green spaces such as health, attractive environment, rich wildlife habitats and resilience to surface water flooding
- promote growth that offers the best of urban and rural living by providing new homes and employment within the strong and resilient green setting
- seek to support the prosperity of existing centres through development, recognising the services and facilities they provide
- support an arc of employment around the east of Telford to take advantage of the connections to the national motorway and rail system and the West Midlands conurbation
- address and target issues of social, economic and environmental deprivation through community employment initiatives, environmental interventions and improved housing
- respond to the availability of land acquired for development by the Telford Development Corporation that is mostly brownfield and prepared for redevelopment.
- take advantage of established and existing infrastructure, including schools and colleges that support learning, skills and leisure.

Scale of growth

5.2 The Strategy & Options document proposed 3 options for growth for the Plan period (2011-2031). The consultation responses received were broadly supportive of growth. We were asked to support the approach with a robust and justified evidence base on housing and employment need to ensure that the economic opportunities of growth levels are fully considered. We were also asked to demonstrate the deliverability of the development proposed over the 20 year Plan period and to assess any potential impact of growth on the quality of the environment. While supporting the overall objective of growth, responses from a wide range of stakeholders (including neighbouring local authorities, the development industry and local residents) suggested that a more realistic Plan target lay between options 2 and 3.

5.3 As a result the Proposed Housing and Employment Sites document proposes a Plan target of circa 20,000 additional homes to be built over the Plan period (2011-2031) which includes 11,885 homes on sites either with planning consent or sites identified in an adopted development plan – such as CTAAP (Central Telford Area Action Plan).

- 5.4 A Plan target of circa 20,000 is slightly higher than the assessed need currently identified as 18,600 additional homes to 2031 (Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014) and is lower than the 26,500 proposed at the Strategy & Options stage. There has been an upward trend in development in the borough; since 2011 the number of new homes completed has continued to grow with over 800 new homes projected for 2013/14 and 1,000 projected for 2014/15. Employment opportunities have similarly continued to rise over the same period. The recent report *Cities Outlook 2014* (Centre for Cities) places Telford in the top three places nationally for increasing the supply of new housing stock and the creation of private sector jobs. Taking this into consideration, together with comments received at the Strategy & Options stage, a Plan target of 20,000 is considered appropriate; striking a balance between promoting the delivery of growth and investment, meeting local needs and ensuring an attractive and green living environment is protected for all.
- 5.5 We are undertaking further technical work on housing need. This will include use of the latest national population and household projections that will be published later this year by Office for National Statistics. The use of this updated information will allow us to ensure that the Plan fully meets the need for new homes as required by government.
- 5.6 A detailed target has yet to be confirmed for the quantity of employment land required and work is continuing to identify the need for employment development over the Plan period to 2031, the borough currently has over 600 acres of land readily available for employment development.

6.0 PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SITES: SITE SELECTION

- 6.1 With a Plan target of circa 20,000 homes and 11,885 already committed through existing planning permissions, resolution to permit or in an adopted development plan, there is a need for around 8,115 homes to be allocated within the Plan. This means that we can be confident about balancing the need for development while at the same time protecting our network of interconnected green open spaces.
- 6.2 Consultation on the Strategy & Options document provided broad support for Option 3 'Growth Hub' which proposed a focus for development in the urban area with some development on the urban fringe and a low level in the rural area. This combination offers opportunities to meet locally arising need. It provides choice and flexibility to the market and will enable brownfield sites including those in the rural area to be reused. It also supports the regeneration and employment benefits that housing growth presents. The proposed sites provide the opportunity to ensure that a balance is achieved between the ambition for growth and the protection of the borough's important green open spaces.
- 6.3 The proposed housing and employment sites have been identified through a methodical process that accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

Selection of housing sites

- 6.4 The starting point for the assessment of housing sites is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2012) which identifies sites with housing potential and makes an assessment of how deliverable they are according to "availability, suitability and achievability". The SHLAA sites were assessed against a list of criteria (which accord with the NPPF, contribute to Council priorities and support the aims of the emerging Local Plan) and in consultation with Council officers representing the range of services provided by the Council.
- 6.5 The process has also been assisted by the availability of a substantial number of developable sites within the borough many of which are brownfield (ie previously developed sites) and in

public ownership (largely a consequence of the land acquired by the Development Corporation to build the New Town).

Selection of employment sites

- 6.7 The starting point for the assessment of employment sites was the Employment Land Review (Interim Report 2012 and updated to 2014). The Employment Land Review sites were considered against a list of criteria alongside comments for a range of Council services to determine what specific types of employment development would be suitable on each site if it were to be allocated in the Local Plan.
- 6.8 In addition, five potential Strategic Employment Areas (SEA) have been identified to satisfy the requirement of the NPPF to 'identify strategic sites for local and inward investment.' A SEA is an area considered best suited to attract inward investment and determine employment growth. The SEA's identified are:
- North Telford (Donnington, Hadley Park and Hortonwood)
 - Donnington Wood
 - Central Area (Central Telford and Stafford Park)
 - Telford 54 (T54)
 - Halesfield
 - Newport (North and South)

7.0 PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SITES DOCUMENT

- 7.1 Housing sites are identified by Parish/Town Council area for ease of reference using maps and tabulated information. The employment sites are set out within the sub-groupings of the Strategic Employment Areas. Identification of the sites is not intended to imply that this is the only development that can come forward within the borough over the plan period. Policies will encourage additional housing and employment development in appropriate sustainable locations which would meet local needs and support the Plan's vision and aims.
- 7.2 The proposed sites in this document total 9,986 homes, 23% more than the 8,115 new homes needed to deliver the target. This is to allow for discussions on site suitability during the consultation process and therefore help maintain some flexibility over the choice of sites taken forward to the draft plan stage. Following consultation, the sites will be refined to take into account comments received as well as more recent projections released by the Office for National Statistics.
- 7.3 **Consultation process**
- 7.4 The document will be available for comment during the six week consultation period 6th May – 17th June 2014. Stakeholders will be asked to comment on whether they agree with the selection of housing sites and the Strategic Employment Areas and preferred employment uses identified. Stakeholders will also be invited to suggest any housing and employment sites that have not been considered to date.
- 7.5 Including input from Scrutiny members it is proposed that the consultation will follow a similar format to the Strategy & Options consultation, including:
- A presentation to all Parishes and Town Councils (including neighbourhood plan front runners) at the start of the consultation period to explain the site allocations process and the aims and objectives of the consultation
 - An opportunity for all Parish and Town Councils to meet on a one-to-one basis with Council officers requested
 - Contact with all consultees registered on the Shaping Places database

- Notification through a range of media including Facebook, Twitter, local press releases, radio, Your Voice and notices in public facing Council buildings (leisure centres, community centres, First Points & libraries)
- A session with the Young Persons Forum
- Offer of support to Parish and Town Council's drop-in sessions for local people to view the potential sites identified in and around their area.
- Use of the Shaping Places online portal and paper questionnaire for submitting comments.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

8.1 The Council will consider all comments received during the consultation period. Together with the findings of further work such as updates to the housing and employment targets and further assessments such as a Sustainability Appraisal, the Council will publish a list of preferred sites for further comment.

9.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

9.1 The work identified in this report conforms with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular, paragraph 157 which states that “Local Plans should:... allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate”. Allocating sites will help provide certainty to developers and investors as well as help ensure the delivery of the Local Plan.

10.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

30 May 2013: Shaping Places Local Plan, Strategy & Options.

12 December 2013: Shaping Places Local Plan Update.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Telford & Wrekin Local Development Scheme (December 2013).

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APPENDIX 1: Proposed Housing and Employment Sites: Consultation Document

See separate enclosed document