

# Cheshire East Council

## Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

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**Date of Meeting:** 19 June 2017

**Report of:** Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

**Subject/Title:** Royal London Development Framework

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Ainsley Arnold, Housing and Planning

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report requests that the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning approves the Royal London Development Framework for publication and consultation. This follows the allocation of the Royal London site within the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.
- 1.2. The Development Framework has been prepared in collaboration with Royal London and is designed to guide future planning applications for development within the wider allocated area.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning approves the Royal London Development Framework for publication and consultation.

### 3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. That the Council does not publish a master plan for the area.

### 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The Royal London Campus at Wilmslow is a significant existing employment site, encompassing a variety of buildings in a wooded setting. In 2016, planning consent was granted for a modern replacement for Royal London House, the principal office facility for the company.
- 4.2. In December 2016 the Local Plan Inspector confirmed his agreement in principle with the proposed allocation of a wider area east of the current buildings for mixed use development. Alongside the allocation of land east of Alderley Road for housing, the whole area will be removed from the green belt once the Local Plan Strategy is adopted this summer.
- 4.3. The forthcoming adoption of the Local Plan Strategy therefore provides the opportunity to establish further guidance for the site.

## 5. Background and Summary

### Context

- 5.1. Royal London are a major employer in the north of Cheshire East, having relocated to their current Wilmslow site from historic buildings in central Manchester in the 1980's. The company currently employs over 1200 staff at their Wilmslow base.
- 5.2. To facilitate future expansion and further employment development in the area, the land between Alderley Road, the Railway Line and A34 dual carriageway was allocated for mixed use development in the Submitted Local Plan of May 2014. A further allocation of land west of Alderley Road was added in the Proposed Changes Plan of March 2016.
- 5.3. In 2015 the company announced that it would undertake a wider site search for a new state of the art office facility. The current Royal London House, though relatively modern, pre-dates the digital era and is hard to adapt for contemporary office use.
- 5.4. In response, planning permission was granted for a new office facility on land to the east of the existing main buildings. At the time the area was still within the green belt.

### The Proposed Master Plan

- 5.5. With the forthcoming allocation of the wider site and its removal of the green belt it is now timely to provide more detailed guidance as to how the area will be developed in future. This will provide a framework to shape planning applications for a variety of uses and activities within the Royal London Ownership. This will not only facilitate future developments, but will also protect the valued characteristics of the site, which include a number of historic, landscape and aboricultural assets.
- 5.6. The Development Framework envisages development of the Royal London site in accordance with policy set out in the Local Plan Strategy and a core component will be the office accommodation consented in 2016. The vision of the Development Framework is to create a 'living campus' that delivers a mix of uses as part of a dynamic business-led environment. It encapsulates a quality of place and provides a thriving environment for business, with a distinct identity offering an integrated approach to living, working and relaxing. It will be well-connected and accessible to residents, workers and the local community.
- 5.7. A set of five key themes has been developed to inform the Development Framework:
  - A thriving location to live, work and relax;
  - A highly accessible and connected campus;

- Creating a quality of place built on landscape and heritage strengths;
- Providing an offer that meets need; and
- Adopting a collaborative approach.

5.8. The Development Framework and Illustrative Masterplan will enable the delivery of:

- New high quality office space that will support the growth of the knowledge economy, provide accommodation of a type and quality that will attract and retain major investment to Wilmslow, and support the vision to create a dynamic and modern business location.
- High quality housing and other forms of residential development that will underpin the live/work aspirations of a living campus and provide the type and quality of homes to meet the needs of Wilmslow and the Borough.
- A wide range of amenities including a hotel and restaurant to support future occupiers of the living campus and provide attractive facilities for the local community.
- Plentiful green infrastructure and biodiversity links within an established high quality, landscape setting.
- Long term effective use of Listed Buildings including Fulshaw Hall and the Coach House.
- Access to high quality open spaces and new recreation provision.
- A high level of connectivity and accessibility, including improved bus services and enhanced pedestrian/cycle links to Wilmslow Town Centre, Wilmslow Station and the wider area.

### Next Steps

5.9. Following consideration by the Portfolio Holder it is proposed to consult on the Development Framework for a period of six weeks. During this time comments will be invited on the form and content of the Plan. These representations will then inform the final version of the document.

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

6.1. All Wilmslow wards

## **7. Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1. Policy Implications**

7.1.1. The Master Plan is intended to guide future planning applications and will be a material consideration in their determination.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

7.2.1. The adoption of the Local Plan will provide a clear statutory framework for this site which the master plan will then expand in more detail.

### **7.3. Financial Implications**

7.3.1. The cost of preparing and publishing the Development Framework for 2015/16 is covered by the existing revenue budget for Planning & Sustainable Development.

### **7.4. Equality Implications**

7.4.1. The Development Framework will be subject to full and unfettered consultation.

### **7.5. Rural Community Implications**

7.5.1. The Impact of the Development Framework will primarily be within the town of Wilmslow and its immediate environs.

### **7.6. Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. There are no additional implications for Human Resources arising from this report.

### **7.7. Public Health Implications**

7.7.1. The Development Framework includes proposals to enhance formal and informal leisure facilities. This will have a positive benefit in terms of mental and physical well being.

### **7.8. Implications for Children and Young People**

7.8.1. The Development Framework intends to create a safe and pleasant environment for all ages. A new child care facility is envisaged on the site.

## **8. Risk Management**

8.1. The Development Framework reduces uncertainty connected with the development of this area and provides a secure framework within which the company can grow.

## **9. Access to Information/Bibliography**

9.1. The following document is attached as Appendix 1 – Royal London Draft Development Framework.

## 10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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