

# Cheshire East Council

## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Report of:** Executive Director - Place

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

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

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Royal London site has been allocated in the adopted Local Plan Strategy as part of site LPS 54.
- 1.2. The Development Framework has been prepared in collaboration with Royal London. It is in accordance with the policies in the adopted Local Plan Strategy and is designed to give further detail to help guide future planning applications within the wider allocated area.
- 1.3. Following a decision by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to publish and consult on the draft document, full public consultation was carried out for a 6 week period.
- 1.4. A full report of consultation is attached as Appendix 2 and a number of changes have been made to the development framework as a result.
- 1.5. This report requests that Cabinet endorses the revised Development Framework.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Cabinet is recommended to endorse the revised Royal London Development Framework to help guide future planning applications for development within the site.

### 3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. That the revised Development Framework is not endorsed. The wider site is allocated in the adopted Local Plan Strategy which is the starting point for considering any planning applications. The Development Framework gives further detail and an indicative masterplan to help guide development of the site to achieve the highest quality of development. Endorsement will

allow the development framework to be a material consideration in the determination of any future planning application.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1. The Royal London Campus at Wilmslow is a significant existing employment site, home to a number of companies. It encompasses a variety of buildings in a wooded setting. In 2016, outline planning consent was granted for a modern replacement for Royal London House. The Council has recently received a reserved matters application for the office scheme and further applications for development of the remaining parts of the site are expected in the relatively near future.
- 4.2. The site covered by the Development Framework is part of the wider site LPS 54, which was removed from the Green Belt upon adoption of the Local Plan Strategy on 27 July 2017. The adoption of the Local Plan Strategy provides the opportunity to establish further guidance for this important site.

#### **5. Background/Chronology**

##### Context

- 5.1. The site is a major employment site in the north of Cheshire East. A number of companies are based on the site, including Royal London which relocated here from historic buildings in central Manchester in the 1980s. The company currently employs over 1200 staff at the site.
- 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 proposed for allocation for mixed use development in the Submitted Local Plan Strategy of May 2014. A further allocation of land west of Alderley Road was added in the Proposed Changes Local Plan Strategy of March 2016. The examination of the Local Plan Strategy has now concluded and this land was removed from the Green Belt on adoption of the plan on 27 July 2017.
- 5.3. In 2015 Royal London 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. The company is currently considering options for the location of its new office facility, which include land within the Local Plan Strategy site.
- 5.4. Following an application in 2016, outline 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. A reserved matters application (17/3747M) has recently been received, which seeks permission for the matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale in line with the Development Framework.

## The Proposed Master Plan

- 5.5. The site has been removed from the Green Belt and is allocated in the new Local Plan Strategy. 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 site. 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 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 support 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.

#### Consultation on Draft Document

5.9. The draft Development Framework was approved for publication and consultation at a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning on 19 June 2017. Following this decision, consultation on the draft framework took place between 23 June and 4 August 2017, and there was a well-attended 'drop-in' session on 4 July at Wilmslow Leisure Centre where representatives from the council and Royal London's planning advisors were on hand to talk through the document and answer any queries.

5.10. During the consultation period, 53 responses were received.

5.11. The responses received broadly related to the following:

- Support for the development
- Development need
- Highways, vehicle access, traffic and parking
- Pedestrian & cycle access
- Loss of Green Belt/countryside/landscape
- Capacity of local infrastructure (not including highways)
- Heritage
- Trees, ecology and green infrastructure
- Amenities & ancillary uses
- Air quality & noise
- Consultation
- Housing type, mix & density
- Flood risk and drainage
- Supply chain opportunities
- Royal London relocation

5.12. The following changes have been made a result of consultation:

- Masterplan amended to move the indicative northern access southwards away from the boundaries of properties on Whitehall Close;
- Masterplan amended to include enhanced green infrastructure to the extend along the northern boundary; and to the north of Fulshaw Gate property;
- A new objective under the key theme 'adopting a collaborative approach' has been inserted to state that Development Framework will "explore opportunities to encourage the resourcing of local labour and supply chain option in order to support the local economy";

- Reference added to the Development Framework to reflect the climate change policies in the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, to highlight the importance of consideration of the impacts of climate change;
- Text in the Development Framework has been strengthened to make clear that the framework supports links from the site to the Alderley Edge footpath network (via Alderley Road);
- Text in the Development Framework has been strengthened to highlight links to the north of the site and how these could improve connectivity to existing public rights of way that surround the site, and wider public rights of way such as the Bollin Valley Way.

5.13. In addition, amendments have also been made to the Development Framework to update references to the adopted Local Plan Strategy and site allocation reference, as well as reference to the new reserved matters planning application.

5.14. The full report of consultation is attached as Appendix 2 to this Report.

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

6.1. All Wilmslow wards

## **7. Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1. Policy Implications**

7.1.1. The Development Framework is intended to guide future planning applications and will be a material consideration in their determination. It is in accordance with policies in the adopted Local Plan Strategy.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

7.2.1. The adoption of the Local Plan Strategy provides a clear statutory framework for the development of this site. The Development Framework gives more detail and guidance on the application of policy in the statutory development plan.

### **7.3. Financial Implications**

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

#### **7.4. Equality Implications**

7.4.1. The Development Framework has been subject to full and unfettered consultation and the Local Plan Strategy policies, with which it accords, have been subject to Sustainability (Integrated) Appraisal incorporating an equalities impact assessment.

#### **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 includes proposals to enhance formal and informal leisure facilities. This will have a positive benefit in terms of mental and physical well being.

#### **7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)**

7.9.1. No other implications identified.

### **8. Risk Management**

8.1. The Development Framework reduces uncertainty connected with the development of this area and provides further detail to the Local Plan Strategy policy to give a secure framework to guide the future development of this area.

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

9.1. The following information is attached as appendices:

- Revised Royal London Development Framework (Appendix 1)
- Report of Consultation (Appendix 2)

## 10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

**Name:** Jeremy Owens  
**Designation:** Development Planning Manager  
**Tel. No.:** 01270 685893  
**Email:** [localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk)