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## **Strategic Planning Board**

**Date of Meeting:** 29 August 2018

**Report Title:** Supplementary Planning Document – The Garden Village at Handforth.

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

**Senior Officer:** Sean Hannaby, Director of Planning & Environment

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. This report seeks approval to consult on a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Garden Village at Handforth. It will be subject to a six week consultation period alongside the Site Allocations & Development Policies Document and Statement of Community involvement.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To consider the draft Garden Village SPD as attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2. That the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the Draft SPD for consultation

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The SPD should be the subject of consultation before it is finalised. The Handforth Garden Village is a large and complex development site – and it is beneficial that guidance is prepared to direct its future development. Consultation and engagement is obligatory when preparing a SPD as set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. A Design Guide and Master Plan are a requirement of Local Plan strategy Policy LPS33. Whilst these could be prepared and submitted as part of a

planning application, the preparation of an SPD is the most appropriate means of ensuring the planning guidance applying to the new village receives full and open consideration.

## **5. Background**

### Context

5.1. The Local Plan Strategy allocates land East of the A34 in Handforth for the development of a new Village. Referred to as the “North Cheshire Growth Village” in the plan, the new settlement is now referred to as the Garden Village in Handforth – being one of a series of Garden villages recognised nationally by the Government..

5.2. When the LPS was adopted in July 2017 the Site was identified as a Strategic Site under reference ‘Site LPS33 North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East’. The allocation states:

*The North Cheshire Growth Village presents an opportunity to deliver a high quality, comprehensively masterplanned new settlement, embodying sustainable development principles and incorporating the highest quality of design to represent an exemplar sustainable community, contributing to the identified housing, employment and infrastructure needs of the borough.” (LPS paragraph 15.395)*

5.3. In addition, in January 2017 the Site was announced by the Government as one of 14 new ‘Garden Villages’ to be created across the UK. The Government’s support to deliver new homes through the creation of new settlements was set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and further supported by the announcement of a new wave of garden villages, towns and cities in the 2016 Budget. The 2016 Budget was accompanied by the Garden Villages, Towns and Cities Prospectus (March 2016) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government which set out the Government’s proposed approach to facilitating the delivery of the new garden villages, towns and cities. The inclusion of the Site in the first tranche of Government-backed new garden villages reflects a clear commitment and expectation that this new settlement will deliver a distinctive and very high-quality place.

### The Structure and purpose of the Document

5.4. The SPD is intended to provide the over-arching guidance for the development of the site. It will need to be supported by a more detailed design code which will flesh out much of the detail necessary to achieve the desired quality.

5.5. The Core Objectives are:

- Establish the Vision and Strategic Objectives as a foundation for the delivery of the Site.
  - Identify the Strategic Requirements which all development proposals must adhere to.
  - Identify the Planning Application Requirements which planning applications must include.
  - Provide a Comprehensive Masterplan to spatially demonstrate how all development proposals must adhere to.
  - Provide a Design Guide to set out the framework for achieving quality design in green infrastructure and built development throughout.
  - Provide a framework which the Council can consistently follow in determining all planning applications on the Site.
- 5.6. Once adopted, although it is not part of the Development Plan, the SPD carries weight in decision making as a Local Development Document.

#### The Challenges & Benefits of the site

- 5.7. The potential challenges of creating this new Garden Village are significant and complex. Some of these constraints and influences are broadly reflected in the 'Site Specific Principles of Development' under Site LPS33 in the LPS. They are also reflected in the Supporting Plans and Technical Studies in Appendix C of this SPD. There is extensive ground contamination requiring remediation and re-profiling; vehicle access points need upgrading and traffic capacity on the strategic highway network (A34 and A555) requires mitigation works.
- 5.8. Natural features (trees, hedgerows and ponds) need to be retained where possible; existing public rights of way need protecting; barriers to pedestrian, cycle and bus routes connections to the local area should also be overcome; important habitats and compensatory habitats for protected species must be designed to support and enhance the biodiversity of the Site; heritage assets (Dairy House Farm and farm outbuildings) must be preserved and refurbished
- 5.9. However development of the site also brings with it a significant opportunity. The concept of a new settlement was first mooted in response to concerns over the impact of sporadic development, disconnected from necessary infrastructure. In contrast, by concentrating development in a single location, it is possible to plan comprehensively for the community's needs. The new settlement provides the economies of scale necessary to plan properly for public transport, education and other community facilities.

- 5.10. Central to this is the garden village ideal. Pioneered over a century ago, garden villages, suburbs and towns balance the provision of homes, employment and infrastructure with a carefully designed environment. Many such settlements are now highly successful and desirable places – and the same ambition for legacy and quality informs the current SPD.

#### The proposed Village

- 5.11. The form of the proposed settlement centres on a traditional village High Street. It is proposed that this is anchored at its eastern end by a small existing mound on which a distinctive community feature can be located. Alongside the high street will be the main community facilities – the proposed primary school, a village hall as well as new retail / commercial activity. New Employment areas will mainly be located to the north of this main street.
- 5.12. Aside from this core area it is proposed that the village be developed in the form of a series of character areas and neighbourhoods. Each of these have their own distinctive form and characteristics – and these will be further reinforced by the subsequent design code.
- 5.13. Green Infrastructure is integral to the design concept of the Garden Village. Wrapping around the settlement framework extensive green infrastructure is planned, including corridors that inter-mingle with the residential areas. Wherever possible these will maintain existing trees and other features. In part this act as mitigation for the habitat loss on parts of the site but it will also provide new greenspace amenities such as allotments.
- 5.14. Connectivity is also important to the village concept. By having facilities in an accessible central location it is hoped that the opportunity for local journeys by walking and cycling can be maximised. To improve linkages to Handforth town centre and the railway station it is proposed to replace the existing pedestrian bridge with a more accessible design. This could also act as major 'gateway' feature to the village.
- 5.15. Further afield it is acknowledged that the site is located within a busy transport corridor at the transect of the A34 and A555. Current improvements to the A555 (A6MARR) will be completed before the village comes on stream, but its development will need to be accompanied by a comprehensive package of transport measures.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

6.1.1. Supplementary Planning Documents are guidance which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. They must be consistent with national planning policy, must undergo consultation and must be in conformity with policies contained within the Local Plan.

- The process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is similar to a Local Plan document. However, they are not subject to independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. There are four main stages in their production as follows:
  - Preparation and informal consultation
  - Consultation
  - Consideration of representations and completion of final draft of the SPD
  - Adoption of the Supplementary Planning Documents

6.1.2. Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing Supplementary Planning Documents.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

6.1.3. Strategic Environmental Assessment involves evaluation of the environmental impacts of a plan or programme. The requirement for SEA is set out in the European Directive 2001/42/EC adopted into UK law as the “Environmental Assessment of Plans or Programmes Regulations 2004”.

6.1.4. The SEA Directive sets out a legal assessment process that must be followed. Often within the planning context, the SEA requirements are met by incorporating it within a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which is a requirement for Development Plan Documents.

6.1.5. There is no legal requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents to be accompanied by Sustainability Appraisal, and this is reinforced in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG ref: 11-008- 20140306). However, “in exceptional circumstances” there may be a requirement for SPDs to

undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment where it is felt they may have a likely significant effect on the environment that has not been assessed within the SEA/SA of the Local Plan

## **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. The cost associated with consultation can be met by existing budgets – and the SPD will follow the same consultation timescale as the Site Allocations DPD and Statement of Community Involvement. There are efficiencies to be gained by consulting on the SPD at the same time as these other policy documents.

6.2.2. The direct costs are mainly related to officer time with printing and distribution costs estimated at no more than £500.

## **6.3. Policy Implications**

6.3.1. The SPD will expand and amplify existing development plan policy.

## **6.4. Equality Implications**

6.4.1. The Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equalities Act to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a “*relevant protected characteristic*” and persons who do not share it; foster good relations between persons who share a “*relevant protected characteristic*” and persons who do not share it.

6.4.2. SPD provides guidance on the creation of a new community. Accordingly it seeks to address the needs of all future residents.

## **6.5. Human Resources Implications**

6.5.1. There are no direct implications for human resources

## **6.6. Risk Management Implications**

6.6.1. There are no direct implications for risk management

## **6.7. Rural Communities Implications**

6.7.1. As the SPD deals with just the planned new settlement there are no implications for rural communities. .

## **6.8. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.8.1. The SPD includes guidance on the planned new school for the site. This is centrally positioned so as to maximise its accessibility and role in the new community.

## **6.9. Public Health Implications**

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. The Site is located within Handforth Ward – but the scale of the new settlement is such that it will have an impact on adjoining areas as well.
- 7.2. Around 70% of the site is owned by Cheshire East Council. The creation of a successful new settlement at Handforth will require leadership and ongoing involvement of Council functions and services over a number of years. In this regard the SPD is but the first step towards the delivery of a new village community.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. It is proposed that the draft SPD be subject to six weeks consultation to run concurrently with the consultation on the second stage of the Local Plan – the Site Allocations & Development Policies Document. Following this, all comments will be considered and revisions made as appropriate before a final version of the SPD is prepared for approval.

## **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. The Council's website includes a section on [planning guidance](#) and a series of supporting documentation is published in this location to support the SPD. The main Documents are listed in appendix 2

## **10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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## **APPENDIX 1 - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

(circulated as a separate document with the agenda)

## **APPENDIX 2 - Supporting Documentation**

Agricultural Land Classification

Air Quality Assessment

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Ecology Assessment

Economic and Social Impact Assessment

Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Sustainability Assessment

Existing Uses Plan

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Assessment

Framework Travel Plan

Heritage Statement

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Noise and Vibration Constraints Assessment

Ordnance Survey Site Location Plan

Parking Study

Phase 1 Desk Based Ground Conditions Assessment

Sports Need Assessment

Topographical Survey

Transport Assessment

Utilities Statement

These are published on the Council's [website](#)