

Agenda Item No: **Report No:**
Report Title: **A Masterplan for North Street, Lewes**
Report To: **Cabinet** **Date:** **23rd April 2014**
Cabinet Member: **Cllr Tom Jones – Lead Member for Planning**
Ward(s) Affected: **All, but especially Lewes Castle and Lewes Bridge**
Report By: **Director of Business Strategy and Development**
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Purpose of Report: To seek Cabinet endorsement of the Masterplan for North Street, Lewes, in terms of its planning merits. Consideration of the report within this context does not compromise any views taken by the District Council on the Masterplan, in terms of its position as a partial landowner of the North Street site.

Officers Recommendation:

- 1 To endorse the Masterplan for North Street, Lewes, which will act as a framework for guiding subsequent planning applications that are submitted and considered for this area.**

Reasons for Recommendation

- 1** To enable the Masterplan to be in place by a time that enables it to help shape the expected forthcoming planning applications for North Street.
- 1 Background**
 - 1.1** Lewes District Council are working in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority in preparing the Core Strategy. This is a strategic level plan that will guide development and change in the district up until 2030. In January 2013, the Core Strategy – Proposed Submission document was published following approval from both the District Council and National Park Authority. This document is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State, in order to commence the examination procedure, later on this year. This will follow on from representations being sought on some changes to the Proposed Submission document. Hereafter, where this report refers to the Core Strategy, it implies that this is the Core Strategy – Proposed Submission document published in January 2013.

- 1.2 The Core Strategy identifies the levels of growth planned to take place up until 2030, as well as identifying some key development sites that will help deliver this growth in the early years of the plan period. One such site is North Street, Lewes. Spatial Policy 3 of the Core Strategy sets the policy framework for the North Street site, which also includes the Eastgate area and bus station. The policy sets the broad mix of development that is planned to take place within the policy area, as well as identifying key criteria and issues that will need to be addressed.
- 1.3 Given the significance of the North Street site to the town and wider area and given that Spatial Policy 3 is quite high-level and strategic in nature, it was considered sensible for the policy to include the requirement for a Masterplan to be produced. This would apply to the whole policy area and would be used to add some more detailed guidance for shaping subsequent development proposals, which built upon policy criteria set out within Spatial Policy 3. This guidance would, in particular, demonstrate how the mix and quantities of uses proposed for the policy area could be accommodated and delivered.
- 1.4 At the time the Core Strategy was prepared it was envisaged that it would be subject to examination in advance of any planning applications being submitted for the proposed development. Therefore, the Masterplan was considered to be a useful tool to help the District Council and National Park Authority demonstrate deliverability of the scheme at examination. With the delay in progressing the Core Strategy through to examination and adoption this is no longer the case. It is now expected that planning applications will be imminently forthcoming for the area covered by Spatial Policy 3. Hence, it is deemed sensible to have the Masterplan in place as soon as possible so that it is able to influence and shape the forthcoming development proposals.
- 1.5 Although Lewes District Council are not the planning authority for Lewes town, it is still considered appropriate for the District Council to consider the Masterplan from a planning perspective. This is due to;
- the District Council being a partner with the South Downs NPA in the production of the Core Strategy, which sets the policy context for the North Street strategic site, and;
 - the District Council's statutory roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to housing, economic development and environmental protection and enhancement.

2 The content of the Masterplan and how it has been developed

- 2.1 It is important that the Masterplan is not so overly detailed that it pre-determines the detail to be addressed in subsequent planning applications for the site. However, the Masterplan should set a clear steer for how the development should proceed and demonstrate that

the mix and quantity of uses detailed in Spatial Policy 3 can be accommodated within the strategic site.

- 2.2 The Masterplan is contained within Appendix A of this report. It has been prepared on behalf of the Santon Group, who are progressing development proposals for the part of the strategic site that lies to the north of Phoenix Causeway. In accordance with Spatial Policy 3, the Masterplan has been developed through consultation with the general public and other key stakeholders.
- 2.3 The Masterplan relates to the entire policy area and therefore includes the Eastgate area to the south of Phoenix Causeway. Although the Masterplan has not been prepared by the proponents of the development proposals for this area, it is considered to reflect their ambitions for the site, as set out in their representation on the Core Strategy – Proposed Submission document, as well as the policy context for the site. Nevertheless, the Masterplan does contain more detail for the part of the site to the north of Phoenix Causeway.
- 2.4 Issues covered by the Masterplan include;
- the distribution of the uses proposed (i.e. where within the strategic site will the uses identified in Spatial Policy 3 be accommodated);
 - the design principles that will be applied to any schemes progressed for the part of the site to the north of Phoenix Causeway (these are considered particularly important due to the townscape and landscape sensitivities that arise from the site being located within a National Park, as well as adjacent to a Conservation Area);
 - the development mix for the development proposals to the north of the Causeway;
 - a phasing and implementation strategy for this part of the site.
- 2.5 On the whole, the issues addressed in the Masterplan have been considered in an appropriate manner, in terms of the planning context for the site. The distribution of the uses is considered appropriate for such a site and the policy criteria set out in Spatial Policy 3 are considered deliverable within the context of the Masterplan. It is for this reason why this report recommends endorsement of the Masterplan.

3 The role of Lewes District Council as a landowner

- 3.1 A separate report is to be considered at this Cabinet meeting on the role of Lewes District Council as a significant landowner for parts of the North Street site. Clearly the type and quantity of development that is permitted on the site may have commercial implications for the District Council. The consideration of the Masterplan within this context forms part of this other report.

4 Financial Appraisal

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation set out in this report. The Council's interest as landowner of part of the policy area is not a matter that should be taken into account when considering the Masterplan in the planning context.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. Cabinet will note that this report relates to a proposed Masterplan for use in connection with planning applications. The Council's interest as landowner of part of the policy area is not a matter that should be taken into account when considering the Masterplan in the planning context.

6 Sustainability Implications

- 6.1 The policy in the Core Strategy that sets the framework for the Masterplan has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. As the Masterplan amplifies the content of the policy, the Sustainability Appraisal sets out the sustainability implications of implementing the recommendation of this report. This appraisal can be viewed in Appendix 4 of the Sustainability Appraisal (see background reports for the link)

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 The following risks will arise if the recommendations are not implemented and the following mitigation is proposed:

Risk	Mitigation
A lack of a guidance provided on how the development proposals for the site should be taken forward result in planning applications running into difficulties when they are considered by the planning authority.	Pre-application engagement and consultation helps to mitigate this risk.

- 7.2 No new risks are anticipated if the recommendation is implemented.

8 Equality Screening

- 8.1 The initial screening has shown no potential negative impacts and a full equality impact assessment is not required.

9 Background Papers and Information

- Lewes District Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (January 2013) – http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_Core_Strategy_PSD_Jan.pdf

- Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (January 2013) - http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_PS_SA.pdf

Appendices

Appendix A – Masterplan for the North Street Quarter and adjacent Eastgate area, Lewes