

## Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Ash South & Tongham, Ash Wharf, Burpham, Clandon & Horsley, Lovelace, Shalford, Stoke, Worplesdon.

Report of Director of Strategic Services

Author: Stuart Harrison

Tel: 01483 444512

Email: Stuart.Harrison@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Jan Harwood

Tel: 01483 444001

Email: Jan.Harwood@guildford.gov.uk

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# Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document

## Executive Summary

This report recommends the adoption of the Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD). The SPD provides further guidance to the Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites (“the Local Plan”) relating to the development of the strategic sites namely;

- Policy A24 - Weyside Urban Village (former Slyfield Area Regeneration Project);
- Policy A25 - Gosden Hill Farm;
- Policy A26 - Blackwell Farm;
- Policy A29-A31 - Land to the South of Ash and Tongham; and
- Policy A35 - Former Wisley airfield.

The SPD provides detailed formal guidance to assist future masterplanning of the strategic sites as required by Policy D1 (13) which in turn will guide the planning applications for the sites.

This SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals. It provides guidance to planners, developers, urban designers and decision makers on the design principles that underpin the masterplanning of the strategic sites.

This document does not provide further policy, it provides guidance to existing policy. It is primarily concerned with design and the development of sustainable, high quality places. The document makes clear that good placemaking and design are achieved through adhering to common design principles, which stem from best practice and evidence of successful places, and which are informed by policies at national and local levels.

Part 1 provides background and context. Part 2 of the document describes what the

design principles are and provides detailed guidance under the following headings; Building in Sustainability, Context and Local Identity, Making Connections, Strategic Masterplanning and Urban Design Principles. Part 2 is applicable to all the sites.

Part 3 of the document then seeks to bring together the individual site allocation policy requirements, as set out in the Local Plan, with the unique site characteristics to create a set of masterplan / development principles for each site. A series of framework plans and figures illustrate how these site-specific principles could be applied to achieve a successful masterplan. However, these illustrative framework plans should not be seen as a 'blueprint' against which applications must conform. Instead, any subsequent site promoter masterplan and planning application will be expected to achieve the policy requirements and demonstrate how the design principles described in this guidance have been met.

Initial consultation was carried out through a series of workshops and the comments and issues received through these workshops were all considered in the preparation of the draft initial document.

Formal consultation was undertaken for 5 weeks in early 2020. The SDF SPD has been updated in light of the comments received. All the main issues that have been raised are contained within the Consultation Statement (**Appendix 2**) that accompanies this report. The Consultation Statement also includes the Council's response to each main issue raised.

### **Recommendation to Executive**

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (1) adopts the Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (included at **Appendix 1** of this report) as a Local Development Document;
- (2) authorises the Policy Lead – Planning Policy, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Change, to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the adopted Supplementary Planning Document as they may deem necessary.

### Reasons for Recommendation:

- (1) To enable the adoption of the SPD as a Local Development Document, which will add weight to this guidance as a material consideration in the assessment of relevant planning applications.
- (2) To allow for minor modifications to the SPD should they be necessary prior to publication.

**Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No**

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests the Executive to adopt the Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD) as included at **Appendix 1** for the reasons set out in this report.

## 2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The SPD assists in achieving the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, particularly 'place making.' Through the application of its guidance, it will support the delivery of the Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites (2019) and help to provide the range of housing that people need, particularly affordable homes. It will also contribute to sustainable travel across the borough and enhance sporting and recreational facilities.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Consultants David Lock Associates (DLA) were appointed to produce the SPD. They carried out initial consultation with stakeholders (which is referred to below) and in discussion with internal stakeholders produced the consultation draft document. The consultation itself, responses to the comments received and post consultation changes to the document have been undertaken by officers.

### Purpose of the SPD

- 3.2 The SDF SPD does not set out new policy. It is one of a series of SPDs which aim to provide further guidance to the Guildford borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019). Specifically, it provides additional guidance in relation to the site allocation policies for the following strategic sites/location contained within the Local Plan:
- Policy A24 - Weyside Urban Village (former Slyfield Area Regeneration Project);
  - Policy A25 - Gosden Hill Farm;
  - Policy A26 - Blackwell Farm;
  - Policy A29-A31 - Land to the South of Ash and Tongham; and
  - Policy A35 - Former Wisley airfield.
- 3.3 The objective of the Local Plan is not simply to meet housing targets, but to plan for the long-term delivery of sustainable communities and associated infrastructure and amenity space. The SPD is considered to be important in achieving this by establishing high expectations for design and placemaking and reinforcing Local Plan policies as they relate to these sites.
- 3.4 The SDF SPD provides detailed formal guidance to assist future masterplanning of the strategic sites as required by Policy D1 (13) which in turn will guide the planning applications for the sites. The SPD is a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications and seeks to provide a consistent and fair basis for the assessment of the impact of development proposals on the strategic sites/location.

- 3.5 The key elements of the SPD are:
- design principles aimed at delivering a high-quality scheme;
  - an illustrative set of plans which should inform the applicant's starting point for masterplanning the strategic site;
  - provide key considerations for addressing sustainable design;
  - provide key considerations relating to the scheme's phasing and delivery; and
  - requirements which should be met at the Outline planning application stage and beyond, including any Hybrid applications, to ensure adequate and consistent approaches to quality and delivery.

#### How the guidance is intended to be used

- 3.6 As stated above this document does not provide further policy, it provides guidance to existing policy. It is primarily concerned with design and development of sustainable, high quality places. The document makes clear that good placemaking and design are achieved through adhering to common design principles, which stem from best practice and evidence of successful places, and which are informed by policies at national and local levels.
- 3.7 Part 1 of the SPD provides background and context whilst part 2 of the document states what those important design principles are and provides detailed guidance under the following headings;
- Building in Sustainability
  - Context and Local Identity
  - Making Connections
  - Strategic Masterplanning
  - Urban Design Principles
- 3.8 Part 3 of the document then seeks to bring together the individual site allocation policy requirements, as set out in the Local Plan, with the unique site characteristics to create a set of masterplan / development principles for each site. A series of framework plans and figures illustrate how these site-specific principles could be applied to achieve a successful masterplan. However, these illustrative framework plans should not be seen as a 'blueprint' against which applications must conform. Instead, any subsequent site promoter masterplan and planning application will be expected to achieve the policy requirements and demonstrate how the design principles described in this guidance have been met. The design process on each of the sites is an ongoing process. Further evidence will be provided as this process moves forward and this evidence will of necessity shape the final design for the sites. This evidence could include detail on flooding, landscape considerations, heritage assessments etc.

## **4. Consultations**

### Initial consultation

- 4.1 The initial preparation of the draft SPD was undertaken by DLA. This process was preceded by a series of technical and community workshops held in late 2018. The aim of these facilitated workshops was to explore, in broad terms, the

potential opportunities arising from each site and the existing assets and challenges that can help shape a strategic framework for each site. The workshops involved a range of stakeholders, representatives from public sector agencies, landowners, officers and councillors. Topics covered included Community Wellbeing, Green and Blue infrastructure and Transport Infrastructure.

- 4.2 The comments and issues received through these workshops were all considered by DLA in the preparation of the draft initial document and, where relevant, informed the SPD.

#### Formal consultation

- 4.3 A 5-week consultation period was undertaken on the draft SDF SPD between 20 January and 24 February 2020. The SDF SPD has been updated in light of the comments received. All the main issues that have been raised are contained within the Consultation Statement (**Appendix 2**) that accompanies this report. The Consultation Statement also includes the Council's response to each main issue raised. These either identify what changes have been made to the final SPD as a result of the comments made or explains why no change has been considered necessary in spite of the comments received.

#### Scale of changes to the draft SPD

- 4.4 Whilst there have been numerous amendments made throughout the SPD, these are not, either cumulatively or individually, considered to be so significant as to warrant further consultation. The changes in the main either reflect factual changes, ensure consistency within the document or improve the clarity within, and purpose of, the document.
- 4.5 The primary change has been additional clarification as to the role that the SPD will have in informing the subsequent masterplans for each of the strategic sites. The draft SPD included a set of 'masterplan principles' for each site that explored both opportunities and constraints for each site in delivering the quantum of uses and requirements set by each site allocation policy. These principles were then illustrated spatially in a set of framework plans for each strategic site. This illustrative framework plan for each site identifies the location of various land uses together with the extent of open space/ landscaping with the intention that this is used to inform the site promoter masterplans.
- 4.6 Concerns were expressed that the SPD might be seen as setting a rigid framework or blueprint for each site which did not allow for variations. This was not the intention of the SPD, nor should they be viewed as such. Variations in the subsequent masterplans may be fully justified by the necessary further detailed work that will need to be undertaken as part of the planning application process. The SPD has therefore been amended to indicate that the 'masterplan principles' are to be given greater emphasis in informing individual masterplans and that the site-specific framework plans and figures are illustrative only and indicate one way in which these sites might be configured. In doing so, masterplans that

reflect alternative spatial solutions can be developed so long as any changes are justified by reference to the 'masterplan principles', technical studies and the achievement of sustainable high quality development.

## **5. Executive Advisory Board comments**

- 5.1 The draft consultation version of the SPD was considered at a meeting of Place Making and Innovation Executive Advisory Board on 17 February 2020.
- 5.2 The issues raised by the Board together with officer responses are provided in **Appendix 3**.

## **6. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies. The SPD is not policy but provides guidance to existing adopted policies within a local plan. As such it cannot impact on equality issues in any material way beyond the impact of the policies it supplements. Those policies have been subject to an EqlA screening and therefore it is not necessary to test the implications of this guidance.

## **7. Key Risks**

- 7.1 Whilst the Local Plan: strategy and sites is adopted there are serious implications for the Council should housing delivery fall below the housing requirement. These are outlined in the NPPF<sup>1</sup> and associated planning guidance<sup>2</sup> and include:
- a 20% buffer on a local planning authority's 5-year land supply if housing delivery in the preceding three years falls below 85% of the requirement; (the five-year housing land supply calculation in the LAA already includes a 20% buffer for past persistent under-delivery); and
  - (application of) the (NPPF) presumption in favour of sustainable development if no 5-year housing land supply can be demonstrated or housing delivery falls below 75%, once transitional arrangements have ended – indicated as from November 2020. (This threshold is 45% for the currently published 2019 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measurement results – GBC achieved 83% but will need to achieve 75% or more for the 2020 HDT).
- 7.2 The delivery of housing on the strategic sites is fundamental to housing delivery in this borough. The production of this SPD will provide a reference point and confidence to the site promoters to progress their site-specific masterplans and embark on the planning application process. Whilst this will take a number of years to complete, future housing delivery is primarily dependant on these strategic sites having secured the necessary planning permissions so delivery

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<sup>1</sup> See [NPPF](#) paragraph 73, paragraph 215 and paragraph 11 read with footnote 7

<sup>2</sup> See [Guidance: Housing and economic land availability assessment](#):: Paragraph: 062 Reference ID: 3-062-20180913.

can commence. To not adopt this document risks delaying the delivery of these sites.

- 7.3 The adoption of this SPD will help to clarify expectations in terms of the design quality that schemes should seek to achieve. This plays a significant part in ensuring the development of policy compliant schemes, specifically in terms of design aspects. Policy compliant schemes are more likely to be acceptable to the LPA which is necessary in securing the grant of planning permission. Any delays in the grant of planning permission will impact on housing delivery.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 No financial implications apply as a result of the adoption of this SPD.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 In order to fulfil the statutory criteria for a Local Development Document (LDD), an SPD has to have been prepared in line with the requirements of section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 9.2 SPD's should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. They do not form part of the development plan and therefore they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. As detailed in the report above officers have been very careful to ensure this does not happen with the SDF SPD.
- 9.3 Once adopted as an LDD, the SDF SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.
- 9.4 Pursuant to section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000, the Executive of the Council has the power to adopt the SPD as a LDD.

## **10. Human Resource Implications**

- 10.1 There are no Human Resource implications associated with adopting the SPD. The SPD will assist in the assessment of masterplanning and planning applications, and officers do not consider that additional staff resources will be necessary as a result.

## **11. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

- 11.1 All Supplementary Planning Documents help to explain and support the policies within the Local Plan. In doing so they improve the quality of planning applications and decision making. The policies in the Local Plan have undergone a Sustainability Appraisal which includes consideration of their impact on environmental objectives. The policies in the Local Plan contribute widely to climate change objectives and are of necessity in line with national planning guidance in relation to climate change objectives.

- 11.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening has been undertaken for the SDF SPD. This has been subject to consultation with the statutory consultees. The SEA Screening has concluded that the SDF SPD does not require a full SEA to be undertaken whilst the HRA screening concludes that the SDF SPD will not lead to likely significant effects on European sites.

## **12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 Officers consider there are sound reasons for adopting the Strategic Development Framework SPD. It will carry material weight and will help the applicants and decision makers in submission and determination of the largest planning applications in Guildford's history. It provides the necessary guidance to ensure this process proceeds in a timely manner which is imperative if housing delivery targets are to be achieved and the policies in the Local Plan to continue to be considered up to date.

## **13. Background Papers**

- 13.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report<sup>3</sup>.

## **14. Appendices**

Appendix 1: [Strategic Development Framework SPD](#)

Appendix 2: SDF SPD Consultation Statement

Appendix 3: EAB comments and responses

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<sup>3</sup> Available online at: [www.guildford.gov.uk/strategicdevelopmentframeworkspd](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/strategicdevelopmentframeworkspd)