

DRAFT EPSOM & EWELL MASTERPLAN

Head of Service/Contact:	Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1:Draft Epsom & Ewell Masterplan August 2019
Other available papers (not attached):	Masterplan for Epsom & Ewell Licensing & Planning Policy Committee Report 7 June 2018 Funding for the Epsom & Ewell Masterplan Strategy & Resources Committee Report 26 July 2018

Report summary

During the Summer 2018 the Borough commissioned a Masterplan, setting out a growth strategy to deliver the housing, employment, shops and infrastructure. This document will support and be key evidence for the emerging Local Plan.

The draft report is now at a stage where Members can comment upon and influence the growth principles that will form the basis for the emerging Local Plan.

Recommendations

The Committee:

- (1) Notes the content of the Draft Masterplan and welcomes receiving the final version for approval at a future Committee;**
- (2) Subject to any additions or amendments, endorses the Vision for Growth set out within the Masterplan (under Part B, Section 3);**
- (3) Agrees the principles (under Page 40 and Page 41) that have been identified as shaping the Masterplan's Strategy and for these to be taken forward into the emerging Local Plan; and**
- (4) Agrees to the use of the proposed visualisations contained throughout the document as part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan public consultation in the Autumn 2019.**

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 September 2019

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The delivery and implementation of the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan contributes towards all of the Council's Key Priorities.
- 1.2 The Epsom & Ewell Masterplan will form part of our evidence base and will support the emerging Local Plan through the examination in public process. Following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Masterplan could continue to shape the delivery of development sites in the Borough.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Borough Council sets the vision for the future which the local planning authority takes, and harnessing that vision, enables its delivery through the Local Plan. Through a masterplan we are able to realise the full potential of the Borough, leading and inspiring, so the Borough can positively evolve and grow over the course of the forthcoming Plan period and beyond. A key responsibility of the local planning authority is to demonstrate how the Borough will accommodate the required future growth – in terms of new housing, employment, shops and infrastructure. The emerging Masterplan seeks to respond to this challenge by providing a visual interpretation of how the Borough will change as it grows.
- 2.2 Initial work started on this project in February 2018. This resulted in the production of a project specification that formed the basis of a tender exercise. The proposed Masterplan was the subject of reports to the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee (June 2018) and Strategy & Resources Committee (July 2018). These sought agreement for the project specification and funding respectively.
- 2.3 The following are the key outputs which were required from the Masterplan tender
 - A clear and coherent Vision of how the Borough will be transformed as it meets its objectively assessed housing need;
 - Mapping to illustrate the transformation of the Borough within a geographic context – identifying areas where housing might be appropriate and any areas that are considered inappropriate;
 - A visualisation of what the transformation will look like;
 - Visuals that show what the new housing types will look like and how they will deliver a locally distinctive and legible townscape;
 - Evidence that the transformation is achievable and deliverable during the local plan period;

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 September 2019

- Evidence of how much new housing will be delivered – to inform our future Housing Land Supply Trajectory and the Housing Delivery Action Plan; and
- Additional support to the Local Plan process – specifically to evidence the submission of the Local Plan.

2.4 Following approval of funding, a commissioning exercise led to the appointment of Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners to prepare and produce the Masterplan. The initial draft is enclosed under Annex 1.

3 The Draft Masterplan

3.1 The Masterplan identifies and visualises a strategy for how the Borough could positively address the challenge of future growth. This is an innovative approach, which has been taken in response to the challenges facing the Borough. By identifying a positive strategy for managing change, the Masterplan informs the development of our emerging Local Plan and is an antidote to the risks associated with indiscriminate developer led development. It will be the lynchpin to the proposals that will be taken forward for public consultation within the forthcoming Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation.

3.2 The Masterplan is a highly visual document. Through its mapping, infographic and site visualisation content it illustrates how the Borough might appear in five – ten years' time. This is the first time that such a comprehensive visualisation of the Borough's potential future growth has been applied on this scale. This is a powerful mechanism for illustrating the potential growth strategy and the positive benefits that come with it; not least the significant investment that will be made in infrastructure.

3.3 The document is divided into two parts. The first, Part A sets out the existing context in terms of the Local Plan, housing need, urban capacity (in respect of housing land supply) and the work undertaken through Future 40. It also provides a detailed overview of the Borough's visual character and identity. The latter contextualisation is essential, as it provides the canvas for the strategy that is set out under Part B. In particular, Members' attention is drawn to the infographics that illustrate how the Borough's character has progressively evolved through its history.

3.4 The subsequent Part B starts by setting out a Borough-wide Vision for Growth. This includes eight principles for growth. These are

- Delivering Design Quality
- New development that is Characteristic of the Borough
- An Emphasis on Green Spaces and Landscapes
- A Family Friendly Community
- Epsom as the main Urban Centre of the Borough

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 September 2019

- Creating Sustainable New Places and Communities
 - Accessible and Supported Communities
 - Better Growth, Better Places, and an even Better Borough
- 3.5 The above eight growth principles were identified in consultation with Officers; taking account of our existing and emerging policies, and responses made to the Local Plan and Future 40 consultation exercises. The development of the Masterplan has been helpful to the process of articulating the growth principles that will form the basis of the strategy, and emerging Local Plan policies. It is recommended that the Committee consider these eight growth principles and subject to any amendments or additions, agree that the principles are taken forward into the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.6 The Masterplan illustrates a proactive and managed approach to accommodating growth that seeks to align with local views. This includes a hierarchy for growth that identifies the most sustainable locations for future growth. Members will recognise the hierarchy reflects the preferred direction that was identified following the first Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation held in 2017. These are –
- Epsom Town Centre
 - Other Centres and Stations
 - Principal Movement Corridors
 - Strategic Employment Sites
 - Intensification of the Urban Area
 - The Urban Edge/ Green Belt
- 3.7 The Masterplan provides an overview of each of the above locations and an assessment of how changes could be achieved and the benefits that it will bring to these locations. It is essential, for the purposes of securing a sound Local Plan, that this work (along with all other technical studies informing our policy making) considers all of the potential options and opportunities for growth – no matter how unpalatable they may appear. Failure to consider and assess all possible options could result in the Council's emerging Local Plan being found unsound at a very early stage in the future examination process. Equally if the Council does not consider all of our options then neighbouring authorities may be placed in advantageous position of promoting sites within Epsom and Ewell to meet their housing needs.
- 3.8 The Committee are asked to consider the proposed strategy. Subject to the Committee's agreement it will form the basis of the Borough-wide Growth Strategy presented in the Regulation 18 Local Plan public consultation in Autumn this year.

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 September 2019

3.9 The accompanying visualisations are a key component of the Masterplan. Their purpose is to provide an approximation of how development could appear in real-life. The intention is to facilitate a greater understanding and discussion about how growth can be managed and optimised, including maximising the benefits that will be delivered through new growth. These include investment in good quality design, future transport infrastructure, open spaces, landscaping, tree planting, and vibrant public spaces, shops and places of employment. Ideally, the visualisations should provide a tantalising glimpse into a future that builds on the present; a future that can be delivered through the proposed growth strategy.

3.10 The Committee are asked to consider the proposed visualisations. Subject to the Committee's agreement the visualisations will be a key tool used to communicate, illustrate and generate interest in the forthcoming Regulation 18 Local Plan public consultation.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

4.1 There continues to be a requirement to prepare a sound local plan that is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy¹. Maintaining a robust and up-to-date evidence base is a key response to meeting that requirement. The Masterplan complements our evidence base and the emerging Local Plan; specifically by helping to demonstrate the soundness and appropriateness of our proposed growth strategy.

4.2 ***Chief Finance Officer's comments: None for the purposes of this report.***

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

5.2 ***Monitoring Officer's comments: none arising from the contents of this report.***

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 The Masterplan will contribute towards delivering the Council's objectives for maintaining and enhancing the Borough as a sustainable place to live, work and visit by providing guidance to new development proposals.

7 Partnerships

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8 Risk Assessment

¹ The four tests of soundness are set out under NPPF Paragraph 182.

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee

23 September 2019

- 8.1 The Draft Masterplan provides a visualisation of how the Borough will grow over the forthcoming local plan period and beyond. It also helps to demonstrate the optimal scale of housing that can be delivered and accommodated across the Borough during that same period. This helps us demonstrate that we have a deliverable strategy for new housing growth, which will support our case at the Local Plan examination in public. Failure to demonstrate the soundness of our strategy could result in our new Local Plan being found unsound.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to note the content of the Draft Masterplan with a view to receiving the final version for approval at a future Committee.
- 9.2 Subject to any additions or amendments, the Committee are asked to endorse the Vision for Growth set out within the document (under Part B, Section 3). In particular the Committee are asked to agree the principles that have been identified as shaping the Masterplan's Strategy.
- 9.3 The Committee are also requested to agree to the proposed visualisations contained throughout the document being used as part of the public consultation images for the emerging Local Plan.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);