

EPSOM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Head of Service:	Justin Turvey, Head of Place Development
Report Author	Ian Mawer, Justin Turvey
Wards affected:	Town Ward;
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 - Epsom Town Centre Masterplan Appendix 2 – Epsom Town Centre Masterplan Appendices Appendix 3 - Summary of responses received on draft Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish the Final Epsom Town Centre Masterplan. A Draft of the Town Centre Masterplan was subject to public consultation for a four-week period between the 24 November and 22 December 2023 during which 203 responses were received.

Since the Draft masterplan was published for consultation, landowners on some of the opportunity sites have commenced developing schemes for consideration through the submission of planning applications (including pre-application).

The Town Centre Masterplan will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan (Regulation 19) and will not be a statutory planning document.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve publication of the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan (Appendices 1- and 2 of this report).**

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1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan will form a key part of the evidence base for the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Licencing and Planning Committee, 'final versions of masterplans and briefs for specific areas' are required to be considered and approved by this committee. It is for this reason that this evidence base document, that is not a statutory planning document (Development Plan Document or Statutory Planning Document), is being presented to this committee for approval.
- 1.3 Once approved the document will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and will be a material consideration for decision making. The Masterplan will not be a statutory planning document (Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document) following its adoption.

2 Background

- 2.1 In May 2022, the Council commissioned David Lock Associates (DLA) to produce an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan which would form a key part of evidence for the emerging Local Plan but also to form a material consideration in the assessment of relevant planning applications.
- 2.2 In Summer 2022 a hybrid public consultation strategy was undertaken to invite local resident's and those with an interest in the borough's views on some initial proposals for the town centre. The consultation consisted of both an in-person consultation event at the Ashley Centre and the use of a virtual PropTech platform. The consultation was undertaken between the 25 July and 31 August 2022 and a total of 1,979 unique responses were received.
- 2.3 The responses highlighted local residents' interests, attachments and aspirations for the Epsom Town Centre. However, it also uncovered some inconsistent sentiments which the Masterplan has sought to address in order to deliver a suitably ambitious and practical framework for managing change over the local plan period.
- 2.4 The then emerging work on the Town Centre Masterplan informed the town centre draft site allocations (SA1 - SA4) contained within the Draft Epsom and Ewell Local Plan (2022-2040) that was consulted on between 1 February and 19 March 2023.
- 2.5 In Summer 2023, engagement was undertaken by DLA with Councillors and the landowners (freeholders) and where relevant the leaseholders of the four opportunity sites.

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- 2.6 Subsequently wider public consultation was undertaken in November and December 2023 to enable the public and other interested parties to have the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Town Centre Masterplan. During the consultation, 203 responses were received to the consultation with a range of views presented. The responses received to the consultation have been published on our consultation portal and a summary of the responses received is attached as Appendix 3.

The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

- 2.7 The Town Centre Masterplan sets out clear and comprehensive guiding principles for development of the Epsom Town Centre, centred around a holistic Masterplan, to address:
- 2.8 The parameters for the development of the four strategic sites
- The placemaking objectives that would support the development of key sites.
 - Environmental and travel improvements to the Town Centre that could be facilitated through development proposals (through development itself, CIL and S106).
 - Key principles for retention, enhancement, or repair of those parts of the Town Centre that would not be subject to major development proposals.
- 2.9 The Masterplan document itself is broken down into six sections, which are detailed below:
- Introduction and Vision – this includes a vision statement, diagram of the Epsom town centre and the masterplan principles.
 - Masterplan Evolution – this section details how the masterplan evolved from looking a range of opportunity sites before refining this list of sites down to the four sites detailed in section 5.
 - Character Areas Frameworks – ten-character areas are identified within the town centre with information provided on the character and potential development strategy for each area.
 - Public Realm and Sustainable Transport: identifies a high-level transport strategy for the Town Centre including some potential targeted interventions / additional proposals that would improve the public realm and active travel.
 - Opportunity Sites: Provides potential development options for the four opportunity sites. It is this section of the Masterplan that will inform site allocations, in the emerging Epsom and Ewell Local Plan (2022-2040).

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- Appendices: This includes a townscape and heritage view analysis and baseline report.

Summary of consultation comments

- 2.10 Appendix 3 contains a high-level summary of the comments received during the consultation and is split into two sections:
- Section A summarises responses received from landowners / site promoters and other organisations.
 - Section B summarises the responses received against the consultation questionnaire (15 questions).
- 2.11 It is evident that there were mixed views from respondents on matters such as the proposed transport strategy for the town centre to improve the public realm and sustainable travel options, the proposals for the opportunity sites (comments on design, height, and character) and on the visualisations shown in the townscape and heritage (contained within Appendix 2).

Summary of Core Changes Made

- 2.12 Whilst there have been minor amendments to the Masterplan document, this section summarises the core changes made to this final version of the Masterplan:

Chapter 1

- 2.13 Updated to reflect consultation undertaken in November and December 2023.

Chapter 4 – Public Realm and Sustainable Transport

- 2.14 This section has been updated to emphasise that the transport strategy and potential changes to the highway network to improve public realm and sustainable transport are illustrative of what could potentially be achieved in Epsom Town Centre. This section acknowledges that further detailed assessments will need to be undertaken to determine the feasibility of implementing proposals such as these, with reference made to the need to undertake a multi-modal study.

Chapter 5 - Opportunity Sites

- 2.15 The following summarises what (if any) changes have been made to the Masterplan for the following opportunity sites and the reasons why:

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- 2.16 **Ashley Centre** – The Ashley Centre submitted a comprehensive response to the Draft Masterplan in relation to potential development aspirations for the wider site, including land outside of the control of the Ashley Centre such as the Multi-Storey Ashley Centre Car Park and the Epsom Playhouse, both of which are owned and operated by the Council and are not available for redevelopment. The proposals for this opportunity site that focus on Global House and the frontage to Ashley Avenue (A24) remain unaltered.
- 2.17 **Southern Gas Networks site** – No amendments have been made to the three options presented in this scenario. This is to reflect recent planning history on parts of the site which are detailed below. The reason for this is that planning proposals for two of the three core land parcels at the site have been submitted since the masterplan project was initiated:
- **Majestic Wine and former Office Depot site** – This land parcel forms part of Option 3 in the draft Masterplan. However, since the Draft Masterplan was prepared, planning consent has been granted¹ (on appeal) for the redevelopment of this site to provide a self-storage facility. This application is anticipated to be implemented as applications for the discharge of planning conditions have been received.
 - **SGN site** – The developers published pre-application material on this site in July 2024 and a planning application² was received late August for the comprehensive redevelopment of the SGN site (Option 1 in the Masterplan). The proposals in the planning application are for a residential led redevelopment of the site (456 units) and the re-provision of the Laines Theatre Arts Building.
 - **Hook Road Car Park** - There are currently no live applications for the redevelopment of the Hook Road Car Park (which forms part of Option 2 of the Masterplan). However, the development proposals for the SGN site would enable the Hook Road Car Park site to be redeveloped as a later phase if they were to be approved.
- 2.18 **Town Hall / Hope Lodge Car Park / Clinic and Ambulance Station Site** – in the draft Town Centre Masterplan these three sites were considered as one opportunity site and the sites provided a mix of town houses and apartments. The Masterplan has been updated to split these sites into three distinct land parcels and revisit the development potential of the sites:

¹ Application reference: 22/01518/FUL

² Application reference: 24/01107/FUL

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- Town Hall – a revised scheme has been included in the masterplan which is for two block of apartments. This approach would deliver up to 91 dwellings at the site. A consultant has been employed by the Council to present an options appraisal to elected members which may mean the current proposed scheme could change.
- Epsom Clinic and Ambulance Station site – A five storey 94 bed care home was approved by Planning Committee³ (subject to a Section 106 agreement) on the former police and ambulance station sites in 2023 and therefore the Masterplan has been updated to introduce a design for a scheme that could be implemented at the adjoining Clinic site. The revised design is for two blocks of apartments that will deliver up 39 dwellings at the site.
- Hope Lodge Car Park - a revised scheme has been included in the masterplan which is a higher density development consisting of apartments. This approach would deliver approximately 35 dwellings. A consultant has been employed by the Council to present an options appraisal to elected members which may mean the current proposed scheme could change.

2.19 **Depot Road / Upper High Street Car Parks**– No changes are proposed to the designs for this site which will provide approximately 100 dwellings and a new decked multi-storey car park to make more efficient use of this land whilst maintaining some public car parking capacity.

Appendices

2.20 Appendix B – Townscape and Heritage Analysis – has been updated to reflect the revised designs contained in Chapter 5 and to improve the maps within this section to make them easier to read. This is attached as part of Appendix 2 to this report.

Summary

2.21 The Masterplan has been updated to reflect comments received during the consultation period and to reflect that at some of the identified opportunity sites development proposals have been submitted and, in some case, approved at these sites.

2.22 Chapter 5 of the Masterplan includes revised schemes for the potential redevelopment of some sites in public ownership (Epsom and Ewell and the NHS) where no planning proposals have been submitted. The result of these revised designs is that the potential number of dwellings that can be delivered on these sites has increased from approximately 90 as detailed in the Draft Masterplan to approximately 135.

³ Application reference: 22/00923/FUL

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- 2.23 Once approved, the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and will be a material consideration for decision making. However, the Masterplan will not be a statutory planning document.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared to appraise the Town Centre Masterplan to ensure that the plan itself promotes equality and does not discriminate. The work concludes that the Draft Masterplan will not impact negatively on specific groups.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 None arising from this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 None arising from this report.

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 The delivery of key corporate objectives/actions are dependent on progressing the Masterplan, including the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan.

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 None arising from this report.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Funding for the Town Centre Masterplan was secured from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership which enabled the progression of the Masterplan up until the consultation Draft Stage. Local Plan budget has been utilised to finalise that Epsom Town Centre Masterplan (as part of the Local Plan evidence base) and the updates undertaken were within the allocated budget.

- 4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 As the Town Centre Masterplan is evidence base to inform the emerging Statutory Development Plan for the borough (Local Plan), there are no legal or procedural issues to satisfy.

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5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan is a key piece of evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan which is a corporate priority.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

6.5 **Partnerships:** None

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- LPPC Report – November 2023 - <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s29292/Draft%20Epsom%20Town%20Centre%20Masterplan.pdf>