

Funding for Epsom & Ewell Masterplan

Head of Service/Contact:	Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	None
Other available papers (not attached):	Report to Licensing & Planning Policy Committee 7 June 2018 (Item 8)

Report summary

The Borough Council has initiated work on a new Borough-wide Masterplan. This document will function alongside the new Local Plan to provide a supplementary planning policy framework that will facilitate the transformation of Epsom & Ewell into the 2040s. It will play a key role in responding positively to our objectively assessed housing need.

The Masterplan was the subject of a recent report to the Borough Council's Licensing & Planning Policy Committee who approved its preparation and agreed that funding be sought from the Strategy & Resources Committee. It is anticipated that this project will take twelve months to complete.

Recommendation (s)

That the Committee agrees:

- (1) The production of the Masterplan, at an estimated cost of up to £85,000;**
- (2) That the £85,000 budget be funded from the Corporate Projects reserve.**

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. The Local Plan also plays a key role in implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy through the planning process.
- 1.2 The Transformation Masterplan will support the emerging new Local Plan through the process of examination in public. Following the adoption of the Local Plan it is intended that the Masterplan will itself be adopted and serve to support the delivery of new housing across the Borough during the forthcoming Local Plan period and beyond.

Strategy and Resources Committee

26 July 2018

2 Background

- 2.1 As the local planning authority we have the responsibility to demonstrate leadership and instil confidence that the Borough will positively evolve and grow over the next twenty years. We have demonstrated this responsibility through the delivery of our current housing targets.
- 2.2 The scale of our future objectively assessed housing need is such that we need to adopt a new and innovative approach towards housing delivery. A key part of our emerging housing strategy will be a new Masterplan that identifies and visualises transformation taking place as new homes, employment, retail and community uses are developed across the entire Borough. The Masterplan will provide us with the necessary tools to shape the future of the Borough. It will help ensure that we, as the local planning authority, maintain our leadership role in respect of how the Borough looks and functions into the twenty first century.
- 2.1 The Masterplan will also be used to support the emerging new Local Plan. It will form part of an evidence base for the Local Plan Inspector to demonstrate the Borough Council's vision for its area and how proposes to meet the scale of future housing need.
- 2.2 The Masterplan was the subject of a report to the Borough Council's Licensing & Planning Policy Committee on 7 June 2018. The Committee approved the production of the Masterplan and agreed that a further report be prepared for Strategy & Resources Committee, which would briefly explain the utility of the proposal and seek the release of appropriate funds to undertake the work.

3 The Transformation Masterplan

- 3.1 Work started on this project during February 2018. During this period the Borough Council has explored the scope and content of the work to be undertaken. This has resulted in the production of a project specification, which will form the basis of the proposed tender process.
- 3.2 The Transformation Masterplan will require input from a wide variety of different technical professions, including architects; urban designers; master-planners; economists and town planners. The Borough Council is seeking to secure this expertise from external consultants.
- 3.3 Visualising the transformation process will be a key output from the Masterplan. The visual content will range from basic urban design treatments illustrating intensification (at appropriate locations) – comprised of projections showing mass, bulk and scale; through to detailed treatments that identify specific new housing types that will be recognised as being distinctive to Epsom & Ewell. It is anticipated that these typologies could form the basis of a future Design Code for the Borough.

Strategy and Resources Committee

26 July 2018

3.4 The following are the key outputs anticipated from the Masterplan –

- 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;
- 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.

3.5 The Masterplan will contribute towards a number of objectives. It will help us pass through the Local Plan examination and secure a sound Local Plan. Beyond that it will provide us with a framework that we can deploy to manage how and where growth takes place across the Borough into the 2040s. It will also provide us with the necessary material to demonstrate and promote the benefits of sustainable growth – to our residents, our business communities and the development industry. In that respect it has the potential to maintain and enhance our reputation both as an organisation that responds to growth and in terms of the Borough continuing to be a great place to live, work and visit. These outcomes can only be realised through proportionate and timely investment.

3.6 Subject to the Committee's agreement to commit resources to the Masterplan process we could be in a position to appoint consultants to undertake the work during late Summer 2018. The proposed project timetable envisages that the preparation and production of the Masterplan would require twelve months from inception through to the final report – which would come before the Borough Council's Licensing & Planning Policy Committee.

3.7 The initiation stage of this project included a market testing component. That process has provided an overview of the potential cost of producing the Masterplan.

Strategy and Resources Committee

26 July 2018

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The preparation and production of the new Transformation Masterplan will require the Borough Council to allocate greater financial and staff resources than have previously been committed to a single planning policy document. This is in part due to the nature of the finished document. It will have a high visual content with associated cost implications. The production of the Masterplan will require the commitment of up to £85,000. Of that amount, £15,000 will be held as a contingency fund with the majority committed to the production of the Masterplan as outlined above.
- 4.2 The Local Plan is funded through its own separate budget. An appropriate level of funding is already in place to ensure that the key stages of the Local Plan process can be progressed in a timely manner. The Transformation Masterplan is an extraordinary project that is unlikely to be repeated within the context of the Local Plan process. It is proposed to fund the Masterplan from the corporate projects reserve – by way of a one-off allocation.
- 4.3 The management of the Transformation Masterplan proposal will require the deployment of internal staff resources. It is envisaged that this will be met through existing resources available within the Planning Policy Team.
- 4.4 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** *The estimated £85,000 cost of the Masterplan could be met from the Corporate Projects Reserve, which at 30/06/18 holds a balance of £2,574,390.*

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 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

- 8.1 The development of the Masterplan will provide a visualisation of how the Borough will transform over the forthcoming local plan period and beyond. It will also help to demonstrate the optimal scale of housing that can be delivered and accommodated across the Borough during that same period. This will help us demonstrate that we have a deliverable strategy

Strategy and Resources Committee

26 July 2018

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 is asked to agree to the commitment of £85,000 from the corporate projects reserve to for the production of a Borough-wide Masterplan that positively responds to the scale of our objectively assessed housing need through transformation.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);