

# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Growth and Development

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Director of Growth & Development

**DATE:** Thursday, 12 November 2020

**PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED:** Growth and Development

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Darwen East; West Pennine;

**KEY DECISION:** Y

## **SUBJECT:**

Land at Holden Fold, Darwen Masterplan

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Land at Holden Fold, Darwen Masterplan, Annex A, relates to land allocated for housing in Blackburn with Darwen's Local Plan Part 2 and is located at the northern edge of Darwen. The land is in multiple ownership and includes some Council owned land. Overall, it is estimated the site could accommodate approximately 430 new homes.

As part of the work to ensure the site is brought forward in a holistic manner, the landowners have been working collaboratively to prepare a masterplan which will guide the layout and form of new housing development on the site. The masterplan seeks to create a high quality, distinctive neighbourhood, identifying spatial principles for land use, transport, design and green infrastructure which need to be adhered to in bringing forward development on the site.

Fundamentally, it provides a framework to the development for the whole site and prevents it being delivered in a piecemeal and disjointed way.

An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has also been prepared to support the masterplan which sets out the necessary infrastructure requirements for each phase of development to ensure the site is brought forward in a sustainable manner and contributes proportionally to wider infrastructure.

All landowners, including the Council, have agreed to sign the Collaboration Delivery Agreement to approve the principles within the masterplan and to ensure the site is brought forward together in a comprehensive manner. The Agreement also ensures the required infrastructure contributions are provided for each phase of the development as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Phasing Plan.

In summary, both the Masterplan document and accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan are needed to bring forward the Holden Fold development site in a holistic manner. The Collaboration Delivery Agreement will primarily enable the masterplan to be realised in a cost effective manner for the Borough and landowners.

The draft masterplan was subject to a four week public consultation period between 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive Board:

1. Approve the adoption of the Land at Holden Fold Masterplan and accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan subject to all landowners signing the Collaboration Delivery Agreement;
2. Agree delegation to the Growth Programme Director and Executive Member for Growth & Development to make minor amendments to the masterplan following Executive Board approval; and
3. Approve the Collaboration Delivery Agreement between the Council and all other landowners and agree delegation to the Growth Programme Director and Executive Member for Growth & Development to finalise and sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

The Holden Fold development site is located at the northern edge of Darwen. It is made up of pastoral agricultural fields and the site of the former Darwen Moorland High School. The land is in multiple ownership, including land owned by the Council. The landowners have been working collaboratively to prepare a masterplan to ensure the comprehensive development of the site. Overall it is estimated that the site has capacity for approximately 430 new homes and identified in the masterplan.

The masterplan will guide new development on the site so that it is successfully integrated with the existing urban area, is delivered in a cohesive manner and creates a distinctive new neighbourhood. It provides spatial principles for land use, transport, design and green infrastructure. Fundamentally, it provides a structure to the development of the whole site and ensures that it is not developed in a piecemeal manner.

The masterplan will shape development on the site to achieve high quality design, to retain important features and assets and to be sensitive to its location. It also provides more detailed guidance on the anticipated built form in individual character areas and sets out a clear brief in terms of the quality of the development. It is a guide for the preparation of development proposals and a framework against which planning applications for the site will be assessed. It will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications on the site.

The masterplan seeks to create a high quality sustainable neighbourhood that is integrated socially and physically with the existing urban area. A number of detailed technical studies have been completed by the landowners, to inform the preparation of the masterplan. These include:

- Phase 1 Habitats Survey
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Transport Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Geo-Environmental Study
- Level 2 Utility Study

Another important role of the document is to coordinate the provision of critical infrastructure which is necessary for achieving the vision for the development of the Holden Fold site and the delivery of a successful, sustainable place. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is included within the masterplan which sets out the required infrastructure for developing the site and the timeframe for its delivery.

All landowners, including the Council, have agreed to a Collaboration Delivery Agreement to approve the principles within the masterplan and to ensure the site is brought forward together in a

comprehensive manner. The Agreement also ensures the required infrastructure is delivered at each phase of the development as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Consultation on the draft masterplan and supporting technical studies took place over a four week period between 7<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This included:

- Notification of the consultation on the Council's Consultation and Planning webpages;
- Letters/emails sent to relevant consultees/stakeholders;
- Letter and leaflet drop in the local area to approximately 370 properties;
- Copies of relevant hard copy documents (including technical studies) were made available at Darwen Library;
- Display / exhibition boards set up at Darwen Market;
- Details of the consultation were added to Social Media via the Council's Facebook and Twitter pages;
- Information posters displayed in public buildings in the area;
- The Consultation was advertised within the Lancashire Telegraph.

Consultation responses could be submitted either via email, post or through the completion of an online form using the Snap Surveys software. The Council received 56 responses to the draft masterplan. A summary of the key issues raised during the consultation is set out in the *Key issues* section of this report.

A record of all comments submitted through the consultation, in addition to the Council's response to these can be found in the Consultation Statement which accompanies the masterplan.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

A number of key issues were raised by consultees through the public consultation on the masterplan. The masterplan addresses these concerns as set out below:

- **Principle of housing on the greenfield site**  
The site is allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan Part 2 and as a result the principle of development has already been agreed. The masterplan ensures that development of the site happens in a comprehensive rather than piecemeal manner and that any development adheres to the principles included in the masterplan relating to transport, design, drainage and green infrastructure. It also sets out the infrastructure requirements across each phase of development, ensuring the delivery of a successful place.
- **Increase in volume of traffic and highway safety concerns**  
Predicted impacts of the proposed scheme on the highway network are set out in the Transport Assessment (TA) accompanying the draft masterplan. Impacts were modelled based on a worst case traffic scenario. A comprehensive set of improvement measures for highway infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements have been developed to help mitigate any proposed impacts in the immediate area and beyond.
- **Loss of open space and impact on wildlife**  
Over 30% of the site is proposed to be retained as green space, either informal green space or the Square Meadow formal recreation area. The draft masterplan was accompanied by an ecological appraisal and any future planning applications will have to provide net gains for biodiversity in line with national planning policy framework (para 170). The masterplan sets out the site specific requirements arising from the ecological appraisal on page 22.
- **Requirements for additional infrastructure – concerns relating to schools, doctors, dentists etc.**

The draft masterplan acknowledges the infrastructure requirements arising from the proposals and sets out how these will be delivered: this includes specific financial contributions for education, key highways improvements and green infrastructure (Appendix A to the Masterplan). Further infrastructure planning took place during preparation of the Local Plan Part 2 in which this site was allocated for future development.

- **Collaboration Delivery Agreement**

The Collaboration Delivery Agreement (“CDA”) is a non-legally binding agreement for all six landowners to work together collaboratively to address the following matters:

- 1) affordable housing delivery
- 2) enabling infrastructure delivery and apportionment of the enabling works costs
- 3) planning strategy and development timescales
- 4) marketing and disposal strategy
- 5) any outstanding reports, investigations or surveys
- 6) equalisation of costs

In summary, both the Masterplan document and accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan are needed to bring forward the Holden Fold development site in a holistic manner. The Collaboration Delivery Agreement will primarily enable the masterplan to be realised in a cost effective manner for the Borough and landowners.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Once adopted, the masterplan will be a material consideration when determining planning applications for the site’s development.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the adoption of the Masterplan. A separate report will be submitted for disposal of the Council’s land once a formal offer has been made following the marketing and tender period.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The requirements of the masterplan will be a material consideration alongside local plan policies in the consideration of all planning applications for development on this site.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no resource implications associated with the adoption of this masterplan.

## **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Please select one of the options below.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

The masterplan was subject to a four week public consultation between 7<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A total of 56 representations were received which subsequently informed the final masterplan. A Consultation Statement, which summarises the consultation process, comments received and the Council's response to these, are appended to this report.

Once adopted, the masterplan will be available to view on the Council's website.

Consultation on the Council's draft Local Plan, scheduled to take place in January 2021 will provide a further opportunity to submit comments regarding the Holden Fold development site. There will also be further opportunities for resident and stakeholder engagement in the preparation and consideration of detailed proposals on the site at planning application stage.

## **11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## **12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Simon Jones, Growth Programme Director
<b>DATE:</b>	14/10/2020
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	None