

Cabinet

06 November 2019



Title	Staines-upon-Thames masterplan		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Heather Morgan, Group Head Regeneration and Growth		
Cabinet Member	Cllr Harvey, Cllr Harman, Cllr Attewell, Cllr Rybinksi	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability, Economic Development, Housing		
Recommendations	Cabinet to: Agree to go out to tender for a Staines- Upon-Thames Masterplan Agree that the Deputy Chief Executive (Finance), in consultation with the Leader, be given delegated authority to enter into a contract to appoint the external advisors		
Reason for Recommendation	The production of a Masterplan for Staines-upon-Thames will help shape and develop the town alongside the new Local Plan which is being reviewed, and which will be adopted in 2021. It will set a clear vision and strategy for the transformation and regeneration of the centre of the town, focusing on deliverable outcomes and policies in an holistic way. It will set out our expectations of developers, investors and the local community and will be rooted in commercial reality.		

1.0 Key issues

1.1 The Corporate Plan 2016 – 2019 highlights four key priorities:

Housing – to strive towards meeting the housing needs of our residents, providing working families and others in housing need in the borough with suitable accommodation

Economic development - To stimulate more investment, jobs and visitors to Spelthorne to further the overall economic wellbeing and prosperity of the Borough and its residents

Clean and safe environment - To provide a place where people want to live, work and enjoy their leisure time and where they feel safe to do so

Financial sustainability - To ensure that the Council can become financially self-sufficient in the near future

- 1.2 The current emerging Local Plan will look to provide a planning policy context to help address all of the above (to a greater or lesser degree). It sits alongside other documents such as the Housing Strategy which is currently under review, the Economic Strategy, and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Together they form a suite of over-arching policy documents which aim to ensure the priorities of the Council are delivered.
- 1.3 Spelthorne is facing a number of challenges which will fundamentally affect the way that we shape future development over the next 15 years and beyond. As a borough we need to accommodate significantly more housing than we have done in the past. Our current housing requirement (as dictated by central government) is 603 dwellings each year, and one of the roles of the emerging Local Plan is to set out how and where this can be accommodated sustainably. As part of the Issues and Options Consultation in summer 2018, the Council consulted on four main ways in which we could look to meet this significant requirement for new housing:
- (a) • Brownfield development
 - (b) • Green belt development
 - (c) • Staines development
 - (d) • Combination development
- 1.4 Following a Sustainability Appraisal, the professional opinion was that the fourth option (combination) should be taken forward, but with additional safeguards to take account of the public's views on loss of Green Belt. This was agreed by Cabinet on 27 March 2018. Within this option, the focus will need to remain very much on realising the considerable latent potential of Staines-upon-Thames (but not to the absolute exclusion of housing development anywhere else in the borough). The Strategic Housing Availability Assessment (SLAA) 2018 estimates that the 5-year housing land supply in the Borough is 3,448 units on 64 sites. Over 1,420 of these units are expected to be delivered in Staines- upon-Thames, with around 420 to be delivered on Council-owned sites.
- 1.5 The principle of a masterplan for Staines-upon-Thames is referenced in the Spelthorne Local Plan – issues and Options Consultation response Document September 2018
- “Option 4: Combination*
- A combination of the above three options by increasing densities in town centres; releasing some weakly performing Green Belt land; making use of a Master Plan for Staines but with housing as one of a range of uses.”*
- 1.6 The preferred approach of focusing on Staines-upon-Thames as the major residential opportunity area requires a Masterplan, which will focus in detail on where and how this new development can best be accommodated, in order to ensure we achieve a sustainable solution for the town.
- 1.7 Masterplans provide the opportunity to look holistically at how we co-ordinate the delivery of additional housing alongside transport infrastructure (moving around the town), as well as social infrastructure, including healthcare. Successful masterplans look at issues such as sustainability, vitality, community, identity, connectivity, legibility, quality, permeability, security and longevity.

- 1.8 Government guidance is driving towards higher density developments in sustainable locations (such as Staines-upon-Thames). It is critical that the Council are clear about the broad parameters of what we expect to see within a masterplan – in terms of opportunity zones which give some focus to the town (riverfront, leisure, hotel and conference), height and massing (in what broad locations), infrastructure and how we move around the town (public transport interchange) and the public realm (spaces which make places).
- 1.9 The proposed expansion at Heathrow (if approved) will affect our communities very differently. Cabinet will be aware that we recently re-affirmed our support for a third runway and expansion that is both appropriate and proportionate subject to sixteen requirements, that our impacted communities be properly compensated via the Wider Property Offer Zone scheme and that the Heathrow West proposal be considered further.
- 1.10 There is a clear opportunity for expansion to act as a catalyst for sustainable development in the town centre. A light rail link to Heathrow would for example provide improved links for the existing community and open up opportunities for airport businesses to relocate, as well as capturing overnight stays and airline crews.
- 1.9 One of the key areas that is consistently raised by councillors, residents, and businesses is the need to address transport and infrastructure in an holistic way. Decisions on individual planning applications are only able to address the impact of those individual schemes. This severely limits the ability of the Council to deal with the more strategic issues around parking, infrastructure and encouraging alternative provision for the whole town.

2.0 Options analysis and proposal

Do nothing and continue with ad hoc decision making

- 2.1 Cabinet can decide that it does not want to proceed with a Masterplan (including transport infrastructure proposals). Decisions on planning applications will continue to be made on an ad hoc piecemeal basis, as and when large scale schemes come through. Whilst the Local Planning Authority can assess proposals individually as they do now, it will not be in the context of a larger overall vision for the town. This approach, by its very nature, is reactive.
- 2.2 The Masterplan will form an integral part of the Local Plan. It will clearly demonstrate how the Council is looking ensure we can deliver the housing numbers that government are saying we must provide. If we cannot show we have a solid delivery plan in place, then this could potentially increase the risk that landowners and developers may submit schemes on unsuitable/green belt sites arguing that our Local plan and its main strategy is unsound.

- 2.3 This option is not recommended.

Proceed with a Staines Masterplan

- 2.4 Alternatively, Cabinet can decide to proceed with a Masterplan (including transport infrastructure proposals) including an Implementation Plan. There are obvious advantages in taking this approach. It will:
- (a) Set out an ambitious and deliverable overall vision for the transformation and regeneration of the whole town;

- (b) Build in 'future proofing' - accessible, sustainable and take into account new transport opportunities and solutions;
- (c) Fully consider: densities, design; height/massing; and spatial zones;
- (d) Recognise Spelthorne's position as a strategic landowner in the town centre;
- (e) Take into account the increasing number of homes and give due consideration to the healthcare requirements;
- (f) Exploit the distinctive feature of the River Thames;
- (g) Set the design standard for developments, and take into account the opportunities the airport generates, including potential for SLR;
- (h) Identify opportunities for enhancement to the public realm;
- (i) Present a strong visual ambition, which is commercially realistic, financially viable, robust and deliverable;
- (j) Identify opportunities to enhance the town as a 'go to' destination for shopping as well as the night time economy, culture, arts and social and community infrastructure;
- (k) Include strategies for overcoming growth constraints, such as highway infrastructure challenges and congestion;
- (l) Identify ways and means to kick start further investment activity

2.3 This option is recommended

Deliver masterplan using in house resource

2.4 The Strategic Planning team are currently engaged in progressing the Local Plan which will be out to public consultation from 5 November 2019 to 7 January 2020. The Local Plan is scheduled to be adopted in 2021 and the team is focused on delivering this. In addition, as the proposed expansion of Heathrow moves forward the team will be involved in the development Consent Order process. They are working at full capacity.

2.5 Master planning is a very specialised area, and in order to deliver a successful masterplan we would need to bring on board expertise that we currently do not have in house such as urban design, transport and infrastructure specialists, landscape design and community engagement. On the basis that this expertise is in considerable demand, we are unlikely to be able to compete with the private sector market in terms of salaries for what would effectively be a 1 year contract. Securing staff would also take several months which would slow up progression of the masterplan. At best, this would put at risk our ability to tie in the examination of the Local Plan and the masterplan. At worst, it might mean that we have to delay the Local Plan examination with all the uncertainties and risks that this entails.

2.6 This option is not recommended.

Deliver masterplan using external expertise

2.7 An external team would be set up to deal with delivering a masterplan with the appropriate expertise. They would be expected to deliver the masterplan within the time frames required of them and would have to resource appropriately. They would have the resilience to deal with changes in

personnel which would not be available to us if we employed a couple of temporary members of staff. In addition, they would have access to other sets of experts should they need to be drawn on as the masterplan is developed.

- 2.8 Whilst there is a cost to using external advisors it would not be any less expensive to bring in temporary staff to sit within the Strategic Planning team. The advantages of using an external team are set out above. As such it is recommended that we procure external advisors. The specification is set out in **Appendix 1**.

3.0 Financial implications

- 3.1 The cost of the Masterplan (including transport infrastructure proposals) is expected to fall under the threshold value for OJEU (£181,302). It will be funded from the Planned Projects Fund which was set up earlier this financial year 2019/20.

- 3.2 It is worth Cabinet being aware that having a robust masterplan in place which has been through an examination process alongside the Local Plan will provide the Council with a much firmer footing on which to:

(1) actually deliver the housing and infrastructure required by using CPO powers if we are required to do so

(2) will give us greater leverage when submitting bids to government and the Enterprise M3 LEP for significant infrastructure projects which may be required to unlock housing growth. Woking Borough Council identified their town centre as a primary location to deliver housing whilst safeguarding green space when their local plan was adopted in 2012. Key to unlocking this has been dealing with the pinch point created by the Victoria Arch under the railway station. They have recently been awarded £95m by government to deliver significant road and rail infrastructure improvements that will unlock 13 future housing development sites.

4.0 Other considerations

Procurement

- 4.1 The timetable for appointing professional advisors is set out below.

	Event	Date
	Issue of Invitation to Tender	7 November 2019
	Deadline for receipt of Tenders	12 noon on 27 November 2019
	Evaluation of Tenders	w/c 2 December 2019
	Tenderer interviews (for Tender clarification)	w/c 9 December 2019
	Internal approval of Preferred Bidder	w/c 6 January 2020
	Confirm contract award (via recommended delegation)	w/c 13 January 2020

	Contract mobilisation period	13 – 24 January 2019
	Target service commencement date	27 January 2019

- 4.2 Work on the Masterplan will dovetail with the review of the Local Plan. The intention is to go out to consultation on our Preferred Local Plan in early November 2019. A number of key sites within Staines-upon-Thames have been allocated within this document as suitable for high density development to help meet our housing need. In order to ensure the masterplan is progressed in a timely manner, this report requests that Cabinet give delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Finance) in consultation with the Leader to make the final appointment.
- 4.3 A number of 'industry leaders' will be invited to tender. As part and parcel of the tender process there will be a formal presentation by the shortlisted advisors to the Leader, Deputy Leader, plus Management Team and key staff within the Council. We need to be absolutely confident that the consultants we choose to work with clearly understand our vision for the town. Advisors will need to demonstrate to the presentation panel that they have a track record of delivering masterplans which have been successfully implemented.

Stakeholder engagement

- 4.4 Stakeholder buy in will be critical, and the appointed consultants will be expected to undertake a series of workshops before producing a draft masterplan. These workshops will involve the business and retail community (including the Staines BID), as well as strategic landholders. Local knowledge will be captured by involving organisations such as Staines Town Society, and local residents in and around the town centre. The aim of these workshops will be firstly to understand issues and challenges and then to look at how we can best plan for future development using the principles of what is called a 'Planning for Real' exercise.
- 4.5 The consultants will be expected to work closely with Surrey County Council throughout on highways, transport and education, and with other strategic partners in health and community such as the North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 4.6 It is intended to set up a Member Working/Steering Group once the advisors are on board (including one ward councillor) to give strategic oversight at key points in the process. Their role will be to challenge assumptions, 'sense check' information, provide local intelligence and give constructive feedback. Inputs from all of the above will help shape and ensure that the eventual masterplan delivers an holistic solution.

Communications

- 4.7 A Communications Strategy will be developed which will sit alongside that of the Local Plan.

5.0 Timetable for implementation

Timeframe	Stage	Milestone
w/c 27 January 2020		Contract awarded

w/c 3 February 2020	0	Strategic Steering Meeting with key stakeholders
End March 2020	1	The production of a report to include the draft methodology and scoping information
December 2020	2	The production of a draft Masterplan
February 2021	3	Submission of the final Masterplan
March 2021	4	Adoption

Appendices:

1 Specification