

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Corporate Manager – Community Planning Heritage and Design	Report Number: R25
To: Planning Committee	Date of Meeting: 22 July 2015

STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT: BABERGH IPSWICH FRINGE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the provisions of a Strategic Master Plan Document which has been prepared and submitted by Taylor Wimpey and Building Partnerships for the Babergh Ipswich Fringe site.
- 1.2 Under the powers and duties conferred to the Planning Committee, Councillors are requested to note the content of the document which will subsequently be used to guide the consideration of future planning applications in line with the development plan and other material considerations.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, the content of the Strategic Master Plan Document, Babergh Ipswich Fringe, be noted as an informal planning document that will be used with immediate effect to guide the consideration of future planning applications on the site.

The Planning Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from the content of this report.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 There are no significant risks arising directly from the content of this report.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 In line with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Statement of Community Involvement (2014) Taylor Wimpey and Building Partnerships have hosted a series of community engagement events and briefings for Councillors and Parish Councils. These have included two 'drop in' style events in January and May 2015. The proposals have also been subject to independent Design Review. The Developers consulted statutory bodies, other organisations and local residents on the content of the Strategic Master Plan Document and first phase of the development from 18 May to 26 June 2015.
- 5.2 An account of these activities and the consultation exercises are contained within separate 'Consultation Reports' produced by Taylor Wimpey and Building Partnerships (see Background Document 'A'). The comments received in relation to the recent consultation on Strategic Master Plan Document are summarised below but they can be read in full within the Developer's report.

- Sproughton Parish Council – Comments the site was previously rejected in 1987 as a location for additional housing development because of the possible impact upon the surrounding countryside and coalescence with Ipswich. These issues remain the same.

The current proposals provide for nearly 500 dwellings on land that has been allocated for approximately 350 homes. There is no need for this additional development within the context of the current Local Plan.

In addition concerns have been expressed about the impact of the development upon bats, wildlife, agriculture, local walks and the skyline. Fears have also been raised about increased crime and the potential lack of community cohesion. The development would change the character of Sproughton and appear out of context.

The traffic issues and cumulative impact with other developments has not been adequately addressed. The potential effect of the proposals upon the B1113 which passes through the village is a major concern.

- Pinewood Parish Council - Express concern about existing traffic levels and the capacity of the highway network to cope with additional development. Notes that the Master Plan makes provision for more housing than originally envisaged and considers the cumulative effect could impact upon the quality of life of Pinewood residents.
- Local Highway Authority (SCC) - Considers the general location of the housing and employment areas to be appropriate and the area identified for a new school is well related to Pinewood. There could however be vehicular conflict if the residential and employment areas are not appropriately segregated.

The site is well located to create a new sustainable neighbourhood however safe and well located crossing points are required on the A1214 road to link with the existing network of footpaths and cycle ways in the Pinewood area. Furthermore improvements are required to provide a safe footpath link alongside the A1071. Consideration should also be given to the provision of bus services.

In the absence of a Transport Assessment the local highway authority is unable to comment at this stage upon the adequacy of the proposed access arrangements or the potential impact upon the wider highway network. Comments have however been made about pre-existing highway drainage issues that require resolution.

- Highways England - No comments received.
- Environment Agency – General comments received on the approaches that can be followed to achieve sustainable development and the importance of master planning in this process. Observations also made on adaptation to accommodate climate change, sustainable design and construction and water management.
- Anglian Water - Recommends that the Master Plan be amended to include a separate section on foul and surface water drainage and water supply.

- Historic England - Notes that the Master Plan acknowledges the presence of Poplar Farmhouse, a Grade 2 listed building, and that low density housing is proposed within its vicinity to safeguard its significance.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust - Supports the provision of the green infrastructure links envisaged by the Master Plan and indicates that future development proposals should make provision for the retention and enhancement ecological features and habitats and sensitive lighting.
- Ipswich Borough Council - No comments received.
- BMSDC Corporate Manager - Environmental Protection – Has expressed concern about potential noise levels within the proposed housing area and has indicated that some acoustic treatment is likely to be required in dwellings which are closest to the A14 and A1071 roads. It would be unacceptable for the occupants of future dwellings in these locations to be solely reliant upon the use of mechanical ventilation and alternative passive ventilation measures may be required. The noise environment within the vicinity of the suggested school site is also high.
- Interested Third Parties - Three letters of representation have been received. Comments have been made in connection with the:
 - need to maintain access to existing commercial premises,
 - provision of access to future development land,
 - inconsistency of annotations within the document,
 - increase in dwelling numbers,
 - potential traffic implications and associated noise/pollution,
 - adequacy of the proposed improvements to the A1071/Hadleigh Road and A1071/London Road junctions,
 - use of adjoining roads by vehicles,
 - cumulative traffic effects arising from other developments,
 - use of communal drives to serve dwellings off Poplar Lane,
 - management of traffic on Poplar Lane,
 - potential loss of privacy,
 - future design and arrangement of dwellings,
 - impact of construction activities,
 - absence of information,
 - extent of consultation activities,
 - impact of the development upon the surrounding area,
 - availability of services,
 - need for parking controls given the proximity of Suffolk One,
 - potentially low number of jobs that might be generated in the employment area, and
 - adequacy of the proposed surface water drainage arrangements.

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from the content of this report.

7. Shared Service/Partnership Implications

7.1 This report relates to a matter affecting Babergh only.

8. Key Information

8.1 The Babergh Core Strategy was adopted in 2014. It allocates the 'Babergh Ipswich Fringe Site' for mixed-use development comprising approximately 350 dwellings and an employment area of approximately six hectares. In line with the provisions of Policy CS7 in the Core Strategy a Master Plan is required for the site to guide the consideration of future proposals. The policy expects that any new development will have good links to existing services and facilities and will incorporate formal and informal green spaces. The extent of the allocation is shown on the attached plan (see Appendix 1).

What is expected from a Master Plan?

8.2 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework a good Master Plan should seek to ensure that new developments:

- function well and will add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of a development,
- establish a strong sense of place and create attractive places,
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate a mix of uses, including green space, and support local facilities and transport services,
- respond to local character and reflect the identity of the surroundings while not discouraging innovation,
- create safe and accessible environments where the fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life, and,
- are visually attractive as result of good architecture.

8.3 Master Plans are normally prepared by Developers to interpret adopted planning policies and are often submitted for consideration shortly before or at the same time as a planning application is made. The documents should be prepared in consultation with local people and other organisations (which has been undertaken in this case) and are used to guide the consideration of future planning applications.

How will these objectives be fulfilled on the Babergh Ipswich Fringe site?

8.4 The Strategic Master Plan Document (see Background Document 'B') seeks to establish a set of overarching principles for the Babergh Ipswich Fringe site but by its very strategic nature it purposefully does not contain any specific design details. The detailed design and layout of the proposed development along with access and drainage matters will be determined via subsequent planning applications. Councillors are therefore only being asked to consider the broad design parameters set out in the document at this stage. An extract from the Strategic Master Plan Document showing the indicative Master Plan is attached (see Appendix 2).

8.5 The guiding vision for the Ipswich Fringe site is to create a sustainable mixed-use development that will become a successful urban extension to Ipswich and a desirable place in which to live and work. The development would incorporate a mixture of dwelling types and tenures and a variety of employment activities. It is anticipated that subject to planning approval a commencement on site could be made in 2016. The development would be subsequently phased.

- 8.6 Using the requirements of Policy CS7, the Strategic Master Plan Document contains a contextual appraisal of the site and its surroundings and explains the design evolution process that has led to the production of the Master Plan. This process has been very iterative and a number of development permutations and options have been explored. As a consequence some of the original assumptions made about the capacity of the site have been reassessed in order to ensure that the proposals are realistic and capable of implementation. The 'viability' of the development is a material planning consideration that must be taken into account.
- 8.7 In line with Policy CS7 the indicative Master Plan therefore provides for the creation of a new neighbourhood that is designed around a framework of green corridors that incorporate existing site features. It makes provision for two new access points (one on the A1071 opposite Hadleigh Road and the other on London Road) and the upgrading of the Poplar Lane junction. A network of footpaths and cycle ways is also proposed.
- 8.8 In order to address existing traffic issues within the vicinity of the site while accommodating the proposals the development mix has changed. The number of new homes has increased to approximately 475 dwellings but the employment area remains unchanged, with a minimum of four hectares coming forward immediately and a further two hectares in a future phase of the development on the allocated site.
- 8.9 While the document is of a strategic nature, it does include information to demonstrate how green spaces would be formed within the development, the type of planting that would be used and the location of play areas. It also highlights the proposed movement corridors and wider connections to ensure that the subsequent development is highly accessible by all modes of transport. In addition an indicative street hierarchy has been articulated to inform the creation of character areas within the development.
- 8.10 One of the keys to creating a successful place is the importance of being able to understand and find your way around a new development. In this respect the Strategic Master Plan Document will provide the necessary framework to fulfil this objective. As such it will provide the high level guidance required for the consideration of future planning applications which could also be subject to Design Review.

What impact will the proposals have upon the local area?

- 8.11 The Babergh Ipswich Fringe site is allocated for development in the adopted Core Strategy. The principle of development has therefore been established and future proposals will be the subject of separate planning applications that are considered against the provisions of Policy CS7 and other development plan policies. It will be via the consideration of these planning applications that the suggested increase in dwelling numbers will be 'tested' since they exceed the provisions of Policy CS7. The consideration of these proposals will however be guided and informed by the Strategic Master Plan Document which provides an appropriate and flexible framework for future decision-making purposes.

- 8.12 Concern has been expressed in several consultation responses about the potential increase in dwelling numbers and the associated traffic implications. As noted above, while the precise implications will need to be considered and assessed via subsequent planning applications, the early indications are that without a modification to the quantum of development and type of employment uses it will not be possible to address existing traffic problems and achieve a proposal that is capable of implementation. In addition there are other planning requirements, such as the provision of school places that will impact upon the overall 'viability' of the scheme and need to be taken into account.
- 8.13 The local highway authority has indicated that in general terms the site is well located to create a new sustainable neighbourhood with appropriate links to existing services and facilities subject to suitable highway and footpath/cycle way improvements. In the absence of a Transport Assessment the local highway authority is unable to comment further at this stage upon the adequacy of the proposed access arrangements or the potential impact of the development upon the wider highway network. As part of the on-going discussions which have been taking place in relation to the site it has been agreed that this information will be forthcoming to accompany future planning applications.
- 8.14 The development will accommodate a network of green corridors and the objectives of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust can therefore be fulfilled. Likewise the creation of a separate character area within Poplar Lane will ensure that the significance of the existing farmhouse, a Grade 2 listed building, is safeguarded.
- 8.15 The comments made by Anglian Water are noted however the document does contain reference to the proposed drainage arrangements. While additional information could be incorporated into the document, the level of detail provided is sufficient at this stage. Like the highway considerations further details will be required to accompany future planning applications.
- 8.16 Specific discussions have taken place to address the comments received from the District Council's Corporate Manager - Environmental Protection in relation to the noise environment. Parts of the site are not ideally suited to residential development because of road traffic noise. It has been agreed that there are potentially suitable engineering solutions available that may be utilised for dwellings located in close proximity to the A14 and A1071 roads. Likewise there are potential engineering solutions that may be available for the suggested school site. These matters will be addressed through future planning applications but the design standards and principles will have to be established from the very outset and not reserved for subsequent approval.
- 8.17 In response to other comments received the Developers have made further minor changes to the document. These are detailed in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

- 8.18 The Strategic Master Plan Document contains the necessary high level design guidance required to inform the consideration of future planning applications on the Babergh Ipswich Fringe Site. It therefore fulfils the expectations of Policy CS7 as set out in the adopted Babergh Core Strategy and should be used as an informal planning document. Councillors are accordingly requested to note the content of the Strategic Master Plan Document and the principles it contains.

9. Appendices

	Title	Location
1.	Extract from the adopted Babergh Core Strategy, 2014	Attached
2.	Indicative Master Plan Drawing	Attached
3.	List of changes made to the Strategic Master Plan Document	Attached

10. Background Documents

- A. Consultation Reports
- B. Strategic Master Plan Document

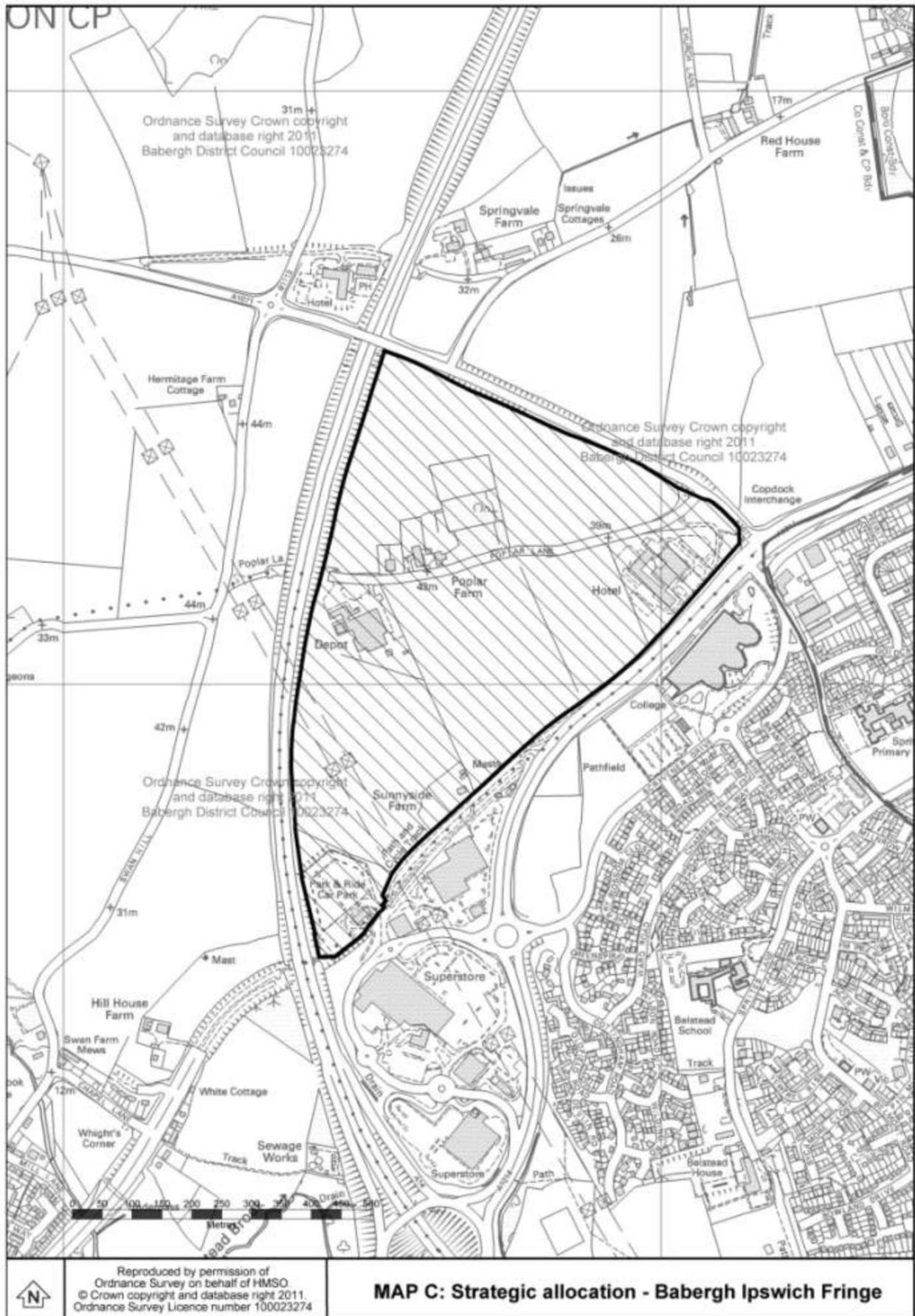
Available via link to web page (below):

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/master-plans/ipswich-fringe-wolsey-grange-master-plan/>

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Extract from the adopted Babergh Core Strategy, 2014



Indicative Master Plan Drawing



List of Changes made to the Strategic Master Plan Document

Front Cover	'Draft' and Job Code removed from Front Cover.
Page 18	'Constraints' changed to 'Threats' to reflect a SWOT analysis.
Page 19	'Potential' removed from description of Future Development Land.
Page 25	Indicative Masterplan revised. 'Potential' removed from future development land. Pedestrian/cycle link added north west of A1071 to roundabout. 'Emergency access only' west of existing properties on Poplar Lane. Pedestrian/cycle link included north of Poplar Lane, east of the existing Woodland.
Page 26 & 27	'Potential' removed from description of Future Development Land.
Page 30	Movement Plan updated as per the Indicative Masterplan to include Pedestrian/cycle link added north west of A1071 to roundabout. 'Emergency access only' west of existing properties on Poplar Lane. Pedestrian/cycle link included north of Poplar Lane, east of the existing Woodland.
Page 32	'Potential' removed from description of Future Development Land.
Page 34	New paragraph 7.4 'Further details of the drainage strategy should be discussed with the relevant statutory bodies at the detailed design stage.'
Page 36	New sentence at the end of paragraph 8.4. 'This will include a mix of 1 and 2 bed flats, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed houses, and some single storey bungalows.'
Page 37	Validation requirements updated.