

EXECUTIVE

6 SEPTEMBER 2007

WOODBRIDGE MEADOWS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, GUILDFORD –
DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**SUMMARY**

This report explains the context of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Woodbridge Meadows Industrial Estate, Guildford. The document is proposed to be a SPD, forming part of the Guildford Development Framework (GDF). It will replace the 2005 Woodbridge Meadows Development Guidance. Agreement is sought for the draft SPD to be subject to public consultation during October-November 2007.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The existing Woodbridge Meadows Development Guidance was adopted formally by the Executive on 22 September 2005 (see Minute EX87 – 2005/06). At that meeting, the Executive authorised the Head of Environmental Policy and Design Services to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Woodbridge Meadows, to meet the requirements of the 2004 planning legislation. This work is programmed in the GDF Local Development Scheme (LDS) and, as an SPD, the Guidance will carry more weight in planning decision-making. The Executive had also agreed that unspent money that had been allocated for consultants to prepare a Business Case for the long-term development of the estate (£18,000) should be retained in the General Reserve to fund further work associated with the production of the SPD including a sustainability appraisal, transport study and further public consultation.
- 1.2 The aim of the Woodbridge Meadows SPD is to provide a positive set of design and layout principles to assist the future regeneration of the site, which will enhance its financial value and quality. It provides guidance to inform future planning applications for sites coming forward for development. A map of the site is attached at **Annexe I**.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to update the Executive with progress made and to ask approval of the Woodbridge Meadows draft SPD, a copy of which is attached as **Annexe II**, for consultation purposes later this year.

2. MAIN CONSIDERATIONSExisting Guidance

- 2.1 As landowner and Local Planning Authority, the Council provides encouragement and guidance for applicants wishing to redevelop sites on the estate, informed by the Woodbridge Meadows Development Guidance. It is now intended that the Development Guidance be updated and adopted through the GDF to enhance its status by making it a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Recent Development

- 2.2 Sites on the estate have in recent years been coming forward for redevelopment individually and, at its meeting on 22 September 2005, the Executive agreed to follow an incremental approach towards development and defer the pro-active scenario also addressed within the Woodbridge Meadows Development Guidance. This approach is reflected in the draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD.
- 2.3 There has recently been activity and interest at Woodbridge Meadows which has led to improvements in the appearance of the estate at key gateway sites:
- No. 1-2 – Tiger Guildford Ltd has entered into a new 125-year lease, which it followed up with the construction of the Travelodge hotel.
 - No. 24-29 – No. 24 was purchased by Porsche Cars GB Ltd who incorporated it into the redevelopment of their car showroom and servicing facility.
- 2.4 Incremental regeneration has occurred through the knock-on positive effects of these major sites being redeveloped and the realisation by other lessees that, with less than 50 years left on their leases, time is of the essence should they wish to fund redevelopments of their sites.
- 2.5 Woodbridge Meadows is identified as a strategic employment site in the Council's draft Employment Needs Assessment, which will form part of the evidence base of the Guildford Development Framework.

Draft Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.6 The draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD is a revised and updated version of the 2005 Woodbridge Meadows Development Guidance.
- 2.7 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the draft document is in progress, the recommendations from which will feed into the final consultation draft, whilst the SA report will also be subject to consultation alongside the SPD. An SA is required to ensure that the draft plan meets the statutory requirement of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, including the social, economic and environmental effects. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) will also be undertaken to identify any likely significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area in line with the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Regulations require the Council, as competent authority, to undertake an AA before submitting an SPD. The flood risk assessment requirements of PPS25 will need to be complied with at the planning application stage when individual sites come forward for redevelopment.
- 2.8 At the request of Surrey County Council (SCC), additional transport work has been undertaken to look at the traffic implications of redevelopment. Scott Wilson consultants were appointed to undertake a transportation assessment. The transportation assessment looked at existing traffic management and congestion levels to assess the implications of a more intensive redevelopment of the site on the local transportation network and identified the options and costs for appropriate localised transportation improvements.
- 2.9 The transport assessment comprises two distinct parts:
- The movement assessment – a report to outline the baseline situation as it is now.

- The movement framework – a report to look at the impacts of future redevelopment and different intensifications and possible mitigation measures.

2.10 The final draft transportation assessment reports were received in March 2007. They recommended a set of mitigation measures, which would improve the general accessibility of the Woodbridge Meadows Estate. These include:

- Upgrade of Royal Mail Sorting Office footway;
- Woodbridge Meadows/Woodbridge Road junction upgrade;
- Re-opening of the Walnut Tree Close cycle/pedestrian underpass and provision of a cycle route along Woodbridge Meadows spine road;
- Upgrade of the River Wey cycle/pedestrian route;
- Footpath pedestrian improvements;
- Footpath Cycle Route;
- Improve Street Lighting throughout the whole of the Estate;
- New vehicle link along Royal Mail Sorting Office footway
- Upgrade existing footways throughout.

These findings have been fed into the preparation of the draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD.

2.11 SCC have been involved throughout this work, however some concern has been expressed regarding the extent to which the transportation assessment reports follow new DfT guidance, released on 7 March 2007, which set out a new method for transport assessments. Officers are liaising with SCC and Scott Wilson to address these concerns, which may necessitate further minor revisions to the SPD prior to public consultation.

3. TIMETABLE AND CONSULTATION

Stage	Date
Early Stakeholder and Community Engagement	October 2005 – February 2007
SA/SEA, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Flood Risk Asst/ Sequential test	May – June 2007
Draft SPD presented to Executive	6 September 2007
Public Consultation	17 October – 28 November 2007
Amendments	November – December 2007
Adoption	February 2008
Publication	March 2008

3.1 During the public consultation, the SPD will be made available for comment through a variety of means, including access via the Council’s website, viewing at the Council’s offices in Millmead and in local libraries, together with targeted mailing of consultation details to relevant parties including leaseholders of the Estate. The

high standards for public consultation on GDF documents set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be followed throughout.

- 3.2 Amendments and additions will be made to the SPD in light of responses to the public consultation. The final document will be taken to the GDF Members' Working Group with the outcomes of the public consultation for agreement, ahead of further consideration by the Executive and adoption in February 2008.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. Recent developments already show how the Estate is being assisted by the 2005 Guidance. The number of enquiries that have been received by Legal & Property Services from lessees wishing to discuss their property interests also evidences this. Gateway sites have been, or are being, redeveloped bringing positive effects to the rest of the Estate. As landlord, the Council is improving its income base and as planning authority it has been able to place conditions on planning applications that meet the requirements set out in the existing Development Guidance.
- 4.2. As such, the incremental approach agreed by the Executive appears to be working to good effect.
- 4.3. The draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD provides an up to date and clear statement on the long-term vision for the Estate and the Council will benefit from its adoption. The Executive is asked to agree the draft SPD for consultation in October, subject to any changes arising from SA, AA, flood risk work and the final comments of the highway authority.

5. DECISION

- 5.1. To approve the draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD, as set out in Annexe II, for public consultation.
- 5.2. To authorise the Head of Environmental Policy and Design Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment, to make such further changes to the draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD as may be necessary as a result of the conclusions of sustainability appraisal, appropriate assessment, flood risk work and the final comments of the highway authority prior to public consultation.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the draft Woodbridge Meadows SPD to be approved for public consultation purposes.

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