

NOTE BY GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL REGARDING:

DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR GREATER HOUSING PROVISION ON TOWN CENTRE AND URBAN / BROWNFIELD SITES

1. During the examination, reference has been made on a number of occasions to the need to ensure greater focus on supporting increased housing supply within the urban area and Guildford town centre in particular, and to the need for modifications to the Plan to reflect this.
2. GBC has, in the limited time so far available, drafted a further strategic policy which is intended to fill the gap identified (see Appendix 1) and to reflect the work of the Major Projects team, to which reference was made in week 2. A note is produced giving more details as to that team (see Appendix 2).
3. This note may be relevant to the hearing on Thursday afternoon (28th June) on Guildford urban area sites and to the session on 3rd July.

Appendix 1: Proposed draft new policy S3

Appendix 2: Town centre note – Major Projects team

Draft Policy S3: Delivery of development and regeneration within the Town Centre and urban areas

Introduction

- 4.1.12 The Council is committed to ensuring that the policies and allocations within the Local Plan are deliverable and its objectives are realised over the plan period.
- 4.1.13 The Council is enabling this delivery of development through a range of proactive measures. These include:
- Driving and unlocking key development projects that form a basis for the delivery of the Local Plan (such as the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project / SARP, A24; North Street, A6; Guildford Park Road and Bright Hill car parks, A11 and A12);
 - With its delivery partners, playing a lead role in catalytic infrastructure interventions that realise growth and regeneration opportunities (such as the Sustainable Movement Corridor, new railways stations at Guildford West (Park Barn) and Guildford East (Merrow) and the new road bridge and footbridge over the rail line near Ash Station;
 - Advancing and collaborating on key regeneration opportunities as part of the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, which include leveraging its own landholdings as part of efforts to promote mixed use and higher density development supporting the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.
- 4.1.14 In undertaking and further to these actions, the Council will explore the use of a range of mechanisms at its disposal to support regeneration and the accelerated development of housing and mixed-use schemes. These include using, where appropriate, compulsory purchase powers, granting permission in principle, assisting in land assembly and playing a coordinating role with its development partners around development opportunities.
- 4.1.15 The borough's town centre and urban areas will form the key focus for these measures to support and accelerate growth in these sustainable locations and maximise the use of previously developed land. This will occur with careful attention to the Local Plan's design policies, Development Management policies, the provisions of any possible future Area Action Plan, as well as relevant SPDs including guidance on strategic views into and out of the town centre which will help to guide the appropriate location, form, scale and massing of development in the town centre and urban areas.

DRAFT POLICY S3: Delivery of development and regeneration within the Town Centre and urban areas

Coordination of development in the Town Centre

- (1) Development proposals will be encouraged to seek opportunities to enable the future development potential of adjacent sites. In this regard:
 - (a) Submissions for planning permission will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate consideration of surrounding properties and their development potential as part of reflecting on the wider design context of the scheme;
 - (b) Where proposals undermine such development potential, they will be refused.

More efficient use of land and the acceleration of housing delivery

- (2) The inclusion of residential development as part of mixed-use schemes will generally be supported.
- (3) Schemes that seek to make more efficient use of land for housing development, including as part of mixed-use schemes, will generally be supported. Active ground floor uses will be encouraged on busier streets.
- (4) In seeking to achieve more efficient use of land and/or accelerated housing delivery, the Council will where appropriate utilise mechanisms such as its compulsory purchase powers.

Reasoned justification

- 4.1.16 Our Corporate Plan (2018-2023) identifies regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas as one of three strategic priorities supporting its “Place Making” theme. Key projects to support this and the delivery of the Local Plan include:
 - (a) Facilitating the delivery of a major new mixed development in North Street
 - (b) Implementing the vision of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
 - (c) Improving the public realm, including surfaces, in key town centre areas
- 4.1.17 Whilst the Council will play a key coordinating role aimed at achieving delivery of development and regeneration, the private sector is central to this process. It is important that schemes that seek planning permission are conceived and designed in a manner that considers regeneration opportunities beyond the boundaries of the site. Collaboration between adjacent and surrounding property owners in the Guildford town centre, including efforts that seek to maximise regeneration opportunities through mutually supportive design elements, uses and access arrangements are supported.
- 4.1.18 The delivery of housing in the town centre adds to its vitality and vibrancy. The Council regards the town centre as critical in terms of meeting needs for main town centre uses. However, the creation of new housing opportunities in this location (and in urban areas more generally) is also regarded as desirable. Whilst the Local Plan has allocated sites for a wide variety of homes, as part of regeneration efforts more housing is likely to come forward over the plan period. It is important that this occurs in a manner that makes the most of its

central location and is thus developed at a density that is appropriate, bearing in mind heritage, design and flooding considerations.

- 4.1.19 Furthermore, mixed use development, which may retain or re-provide retail, leisure and employment uses in the town centre, in line with Local Plan policies, holds the potential to increase the intensity of development on sites. Including housing as part of careful redevelopment presents an opportunity to enhance the vitality of the town centre and increase delivery of homes in sustainable locations.

Appendix 2: Town centre note

Major Projects team

Background and purpose

1. Established by decision of the Council's Executive in January 2016, Guildford Borough's Major Projects Team (MPT) has been set up to 'proactively' deliver sustainable regeneration of previously developed land (PDL) in the Guildford town centre, and to bring forward the infrastructure necessary to support the ambitious growth agenda set out in both the Council's Corporate Plan and emerging Local Plan.
2. The MPT is part of the permanent establishment and sits within the Council's Planning & Regeneration Directorate. It comprises a Portfolio Manager, Programme Manager, 4no. Project Managers (one a shared post with Surrey Council) and a Support Officer. It has a substantial revenue and capital budget and takes a commercial approach to delivery and growth.

Supporting the Local Plan

3. The MPT currently is providing a positive supporting role in ensuring strategic housing and mixed-use allocations in the Submission Local Plan (2017) are brought forward, including:
 - project managing a joint venture for the redevelopment of the North Street site (A6) including a substantial quantum of retail, leisure and residential uses;
 - leading on delivering the comprehensive regeneration of a strategic site in Slyfield through the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (SARP), providing new waste treatment infrastructure, new Council Depot and waste site, employment space and unlocking the delivery of around 1500 new homes on PDL – 1000 of these within the plan period (A24);
 - commissioning a capacity study for Guildford Railway station to establish future platform requirements within the Plan Period and beyond (up to 2043) to accommodate anticipated growth in services and passengers. To identify any operational land at this high value and sustainable town centre location that is surplus to Network Rail's requirements and which could therefore be released for housing and/or employment commercial uses (A8). The MPT would then seek to work collaboratively with Network Rail to bring such development forward; and
 - delivery of a new MSCP and 160 new homes on PDL at Guildford Park Road surface car park in the heart of the town centre, close to the mainline rail station (A11)
4. Additionally, the MPT is supporting the growth proposed in the emerging Local Plan through necessary infrastructure interventions aimed at facilitating a modest modal shift and mitigating the principal transport impacts of future planned growth in the borough, such as:
 - leading the design and, where appropriate, the implementation of the Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC) to provide a priority pathway through the urban area of Guildford for buses, pedestrians and cyclists, including serving the new communities at Blackwell Farm, SARP and Gosden Hill Farm, the new rail stations and town centre (including site A10) and securing external funding towards its delivery;
 - managing the project to deliver a new railway station to the west of the town at Guildford West (Park Barn) (site A59). The new railway station will serve the Blackwell Farm site (policy A26) and provide improved access to rail for the existing residential

area of Park Barn and north-west Guildford more generally. It will provide a vital rail link for this economically active area of Guildford embracing the Royal Surrey County Hospital, the University of Surrey's Manor Park campus including the Surrey Sports Park, and the Surrey Research Park. The MPT has successfully taken the project through Network Rail's GRIP2 (Feasibility) stage and is now commencing the GRIP3 (Option selection) and GRIP4 (Single option development) phases with the station planned to be operational in 2024 and around 420,000 passengers a year (central forecast) anticipated to use it; and

- managing the delivery of the new road bridge over the railway close to Ash Station that will enable the closure of the existing level crossing and provide road capacity in connection with the Policy A29 strategic allocation in the Submission Local Plan.

Delivering additional growth and regeneration beyond that identified in the Local Plan

5. The MPT has been established primarily with a commercial focus and is not constrained in the same way as the Local Plan in terms of the sites it can consider for redevelopment. This is because it does not need to demonstrate deliverability within the identified Plan Period (or part thereof) and can therefore explore the 'art of the possible' in terms of potential regeneration opportunities – albeit constraints such as flood risk, possible contamination and viability do, of course, need to be fully considered.
6. Building on the visioning work undertaken by Allies & Morrison in their Guildford Town Centre and Hinterland Masterplan Report (2015) [GBC-LPSS-SD-046], the MPT has developed the 'Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy' [GBC-LPSS-SD-047], which the Council's Executive approved, together with the associated regeneration work programme, as setting the overarching strategic objectives for the ongoing work of the MPT in January 2017.
7. The Regeneration Strategy is an aspirational document and includes provision for an Action Plan identifying key projects and interventions that are envisaged in the short and medium term. The Strategy is intended as a living document that will be revisited and refreshed on a regular basis to reflect changes in the market, corporate priorities or policy focus and to embrace any new development opportunities that may arise.
8. Guildford Borough Council has substantial landholdings in the town centre and it is a key role of the MPT to bring forward regeneration projects and schemes where the Council is landowner. Much of this work is commercially sensitive at the current time, however, the MPT are currently liaising closely with other public bodies and the private sector regarding a range of redevelopment opportunities on previously developed land within the centre, such as that around Bedford Wharf and the Millbrook and Portsmouth Road car parks, amongst other sites. This feasibility work includes consideration of the following town centre uses, either in isolation or in mixed-use developments:
 - High density residential;
 - Commercial – particularly grade A office space
 - Retail and F&B
 - Leisure (Cinema, Hotels, Gyms, etc.)
9. The team is also working closely with the Council's Parking Manager to deliver a Parking Supply & Demand Study that will identify whether there are any surface car parks within the town centre that are surplus to requirement and could therefore potentially be released for

future redevelopment for housing purposes, either by the Council itself or by private developers.

10. To facilitate regeneration and growth, the MPT is undertaking due diligence and preparatory work in terms of the Council's own town centre landholdings through commissioning topographical and geotechnical surveys, flood risk modelling, ground water quality assessments, land valuations and viability assessments and development briefs/master planning work. This work is intended to de-risk projects and will ensure that certain sites not identified as proposed allocations in the Submission Local Plan could be brought to market relatively quickly at the appropriate time either through public/private partnerships or by releasing land for private investment.
11. A townscape visual impact assessment is also being undertaken to identify key views within the town that need to be protected (for example of the Castle, Cathedral and other important landmarks). This will help inform where taller buildings (and hence increased development densities) could be accommodated to maximise the efficient use of precious space within the town centre delivering more housing on PDL whilst ensuring adequate protection of the historic environment and intrinsic character of Guildford.
12. Through the MPT, the Council is also leading on transport schemes, working closely with and on behalf of, the local highway authority (Surrey County Council) to scope transport schemes within the town centre and beyond, secure sources of funding and to work them up into deliverable projects. Examples include the Sustainable Movement Corridor, the replacement Walnut Bridge providing enhanced links between the railway station and the retail centre for pedestrians and cyclists, enhancements to town centre approaches, quality bus corridors and an improved cycle network.

Levering in external funding

13. The Council has identified a substantial level of capital investment that it is prepared to either fund from existing reserves or to borrow to put towards delivering regeneration and growth in the town centre. However, the vision as set out in our Corporate Plan is an ambitious one and many of the projects/actions identified for delivery by the Major Projects Team will be reliant on securing, to a greater or lesser extent, funding from external sources.
14. To the above end, the MPT has established strong working links with a range of outside bodies, such as the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Homes England, DfT, Highways England and Network Rail and has achieved substantial funding in a number of areas, including:
 - **£90m** loan at Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates from Homes England to fund moving the Thames Water sewerage treatment works to a new site in Slyfield, thereby facilitating the delivery of SARP and its associated housing;
 - successful EOI for **£52.8m** forward funding grant from Homes England under the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – currently at co-development phase;
 - Provisional **£10m** marginal viability HIF grant from Homes England towards delivering the Ash Road Bridge unlocking and accelerating housing delivery;
 - **£1m** of grant funding towards Phase I of the Clay Lane Link Road

- **£6.55m** of grant funding from EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership under Local Growth Fund Round 2 for a town centre transport package (including Walnut Bridge replacement & cycleway enhancements)
- **£20m** of grant funding – some secured outright and some provisionally – from EM3 LEP under Local Growth Fund Round 3 (£12.5m to the 'Unlocking Guildford' infrastructure package and £7.5m towards land remediation at SARP).

15. The Council and its development partners are also providing a substantial amount of match-funding and the MPT are leading the delivery of the various projects.