

Report to: Place and Economic Development Committee, 29th January 2024

Report of: Head of Property and Asset Management

Subject: SHRUB HILL QUARTER SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

1. Recommendation

That the Committee:-

- 1.1 Approves the draft Shrub Hill Quarter Supplementary Planning Document for a minimum 6 week public consultation;**
- 1.2 Authorises the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft SPD prior to publication for the purposes of the public consultation; and**
- 1.3 Subject to the outcome of the public consultation raising no significant material considerations requiring substantial amendments to the draft SPD, to authorise the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to make any necessary minor amendments and refer the draft SPD to Council for adoption.**

2. Background

- 2.1 Supplementary Planning Documents form part of the Local Development Framework and add detail to the policies set out in the South Worcestershire Development Plan.
- 2.2 At its meeting of 23rd January 2023, this Committee ratified a number of objectives and workstreams for the Shrub Hill Quarter regeneration programme including the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide future development and investment in the area in consultation with landowners, the public and other stakeholders.
- 2.3 A draft Shrub Hill Quarter Supplementary Planning Document is now ready for public consultation. The SPD builds on the initial “Spatial Blueprint” work funded by the Local Enterprise Partnership in 2022 and approved by the Shrub Hill Steering Committee comprised of City and County Council Members.
- 2.4 Members have had the opportunity prior to this meeting of attending an online briefing on the detail of the SPD and of considering the draft document online.
- 2.5 During the summer of 2023, a number of events were held to raise public awareness of the potential of the Shrub Hill Quarter and to test the principles of the emerging master planning work with various stakeholders.

These events took the form of a public display of plans at the Guildhall and online on the Council's website inviting comment via a Survey Form as well as three on line workshops with invited stakeholders run by the Council's consultants, AR Urbanism. Plans were also shared with the principal landowners in the Quarter.

- 2.6 57 responses were received via the Survey Forms providing 234 comments. The online workshops fed back general support for the plans as well as positive and constructive criticism from the likes of the Civic Society, Historic England, Network Rail and representatives of Cyclists and Disabled Ramblers.
- 2.7 A summary of these is provided in the Statement of Community Consultation in Appendix 2.
- 2.8 The Supplementary Planning Document is a mechanism for ensuring that developers are given clear guidance as to what is expected when they are considering purchasing a site and/or submitting a detailed planning application. It also provides a context within which individual parcels of land can be brought forward for development and identifies those parts of the site on which built development is not expected to take place and the ways in which these spaces will be managed and integrated into the development, thereby providing a coherent and integrated approach to the whole site. In demonstrating a coherent approach to the long-term regeneration of the area, it will also assist in any future funding applications for investment in necessary public infrastructure to overcome delivery and/or viability issues.
- 2.9 The SPD has been prepared by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority with the support of the County Council, which is the owner of the Shrub Hill Industrial Estate and is collaborating with the City Council on the regeneration of the area.
- 2.10 The boundaries of the SPD fall within the larger Opportunity Zone defined as Shrub Hill in the South Worcestershire Development Plan policy SWDP44/4 which allocates approximately 750 dwellings including student accommodation and extra care development, plus other mixed use/ commercial development to this wider area.
- 2.11 The Opportunity Zone lies east and west of the railway line. About 550 dwellings including student accommodation and residential care housing should be located east of the railway line. Mixed use / commercial development should be developed both east and west of the railway line. (Footnote 129 to policy SWDP44/4). The SPD proposals are consistent with the existing Development Plan and draft policy SWDP/44/4 in the Development Plan Review. Once the Development Plan Review is adopted, the SPD will need to be reviewed and re-adopted against SWDPR to keep it up to date and ensure full weight can be given to it when making decisions on planning applications.

3. Preferred Option

- 3.1 The SPD comprises 6 Chapters as set out in the table below with a brief description of each.

	CHAPTER	DESCRIPTION
1	INTRODUCTION	An overview of the aim and purpose of the SPD and the context of the existing planning policy and local plan framework relating to Shrub Hill. Includes a summary of the stakeholder engagement
2	CONTEXT/STORY SO FAR	A recount of the Quarter's strategic location, its transport connections, the remaining industrial heritage and new and planned developments adjacent.
3	VISION AND PRINCIPLES	Highlights the opportunities for new development as well as the constraints and sets out the 6 long term place foundations agreed by Committee last year of Connected, Distinctive, Productive, Sustainable, Inclusive and Disruptive. The creation of a main east west axis between the Station and St Martins Quarter, open spaces, connectivity, protection of strategic view corridors and mixed use employment/residential development sought rather than high street competing retail.
4	MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE	<p>Guidance provided on 7 themes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement and accessibility strategy • Public Space and landscape strategy • Built form and views, including building heights and typologies • Uses and amenity, suggested distribution of uses across the Quarter • Sustainability and Well Being strategy • Identity and Way Finding strategy • Economic strategy <p>The Chapter ends with an Illustrative Master Plan consistent with these strategies which is reproduced in the Appendix.</p>
5	CHARACTER AREAS/ PLOTS GUIDANCE	<p>Five Character Areas are proposed, for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Yard • Upper Yard • Shrub Hill Station • Retail Park • Bus Depot <p>The SPD proposes principles to be incorporated into any future redevelopment of these plots with suggested layouts.</p>

6	DELIVERY AND PHASING	A recognition that only part of the Quarter is in public sector control to be brought forward as the initial phases and that the redevelopment of significant parts is subject to landowners wishing to realise the opportunities presented by the SPD.
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3.2 The aim of the SPD is to be ambitious and aspirational, whilst at the same time being pragmatic and affording flexibility for the future. It reflects the approach taken with the City Centre Master Plan which seeks visionary and transformational development, but which acknowledges that delivery is the fundamental part of this process. Above all, the SPD aims to provide some certainty where this is needed and flexibility where this is possible in order to facilitate delivery.

4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The Council could decide not to prepare an SPD and the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) would continue to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for development within the Quarter. However, the detail provided by the SPD goes beyond the SWDP and by providing a holistic view of regeneration in the Quarter enables the Council to protect the area's heritage, deliver the land uses it is seeking to promote the potential of the quarter as a centre for innovative and productive employment as well as new housing, and preserve strategic view corridors amongst other matters. Importantly, it provides the opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in the planning of this area in a way that the SWDP doesn't and sets out the City and County's vision for the Quarter as they begin to seek developer and funding interest in its long-term regeneration.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Following approval of the draft document, an extensive consultation programme lasting six weeks will be undertaken. A press notice will be issued and explanatory plans and the SPD document itself will be available at the Guildhall and on the Council's website at [Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance - Worcester City Council](#). A series of three online workshops are being held next month with identified stakeholders. The Council's social media will raise awareness of these events and the County Council's website and social media will also provide links to survey forms for the return of comments.

5.2 The Council is required to consider all responses to the consultation and make amendments to the draft SPD where appropriate. At the end of the consultation period, a report will be produced which summarises the comments made and the changes which have been incorporated into the document and this Consultation Report will be published alongside the SPD on adoption. Further details are provided under section 6.2 below.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership has agreed to contribute £35k to the cost of developing the SPD.

In February 2023, the City and County Councils signed a Memorandum of Understanding with London and Continental Railways (LCR), a Government owned property company with a remit set by the Department of Transport for promoting regeneration around transport nodes. LCR has funded the procurement of several studies at its own cost, including the balance of costs for the preparation of the SPD, pending the development of a Business Case for wider participation in the regeneration of Shrub Hill, which will be subject to both Councils' agreement.

6.2 Legal and Governance Implications

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirement for a period of statutory public participation to be undertaken when developing an SPD. This must be in line with the authority's Statement of Community Involvement. The intention is to put the document out to full public consultation for a period of 6 weeks.

The consultation will:

- Send the SPD documents to relevant specific and general consultation bodies including statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage
- Notify the owners of the properties/land affected, neighbouring landowners and key stakeholders/partners
- Make SPD documents available for inspection at the Council's Guildhall
- Make SPD documents available on the website
- Advertise details of the consultation in local newspapers by way of public notice

Prior to the adoption of the SPD, it is necessary for all representations and issues raised to be considered in finalising the document.

As explained at paragraph 1.3, subject to the outcome of the public consultation raising no significant material considerations requiring substantial amendments to the draft SPD, any necessary amendments will be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee and then the SPD will be reported to Council recommending that the SPD is adopted. The SPD will only be reported back to the committee if in the opinion of the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance and/ or the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee, substantial amendments need to be considered.

Once adopted, the Shrub Hill Quarter SPD will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD would need to be reviewed and re-adopted once the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan has been adopted to ensure that the SPD remains up to date and carries full weight in decisions made on planning applications relating to this part of the city.

Following adoption, there is a further 3 month period in which any legal challenge must be initiated.

6.3 Risk Implications

None

6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

None

6.5 Equality Implications

An initial equalities assessment has been undertaken and it is not believed that any groups of persons are unequally affected by the SPD proposals. An analysis of persons responding to last year's consultation has been undertaken and attempts will be made to reach out to underrepresented groups.

6.6 Human Resources Implications

None

6.7 Health and Safety Implications

None

6.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

The regeneration of the area envisaged by the SPD will have significant social, environmental and economic implications through land use change and the provision of new housing and employment opportunities. The SPD emphasises the desire to achieve this in a sustainable way.

Ward(s): Cathedral
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Background Papers: Report to Place and Economic Development Committee 23
January 2023, Regeneration of Shrub Hill
Draft Shrub Hill Quarter Supplementary Planning
Document

Appendix 2 - Statement of Community Consultation to date
Appendix 3 - Illustrative Master Plan