

Purpose of the Board

- 1 The purposes of the Strategic Planning Project Board (“the Board”) are to support:
 - The implementation of Policy SP9 Design & Sustainability in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (“the Local Plan”) in relation to:
 - Strategic Housing Sites (Policies SP14 to SP19 of the Local Plan);
 - Local Housing Allocations (Policy HS1 of the Local Plan) that fall within the definition of significant development [generally taken to be schemes of 100 homes or more]; and
 - Any comparable, speculative proposals or planning applications for significant or strategic housing development on sites not allocated in the Local Plan;
 - The wider implementation of the Local Plan including, but not limited to, the provisions of Policy IMR2 in relation to its proposed early review; and
 - Co-ordination of planning policy and delivery with wider corporate strategy and the implementation of priorities and actions relating to climate change and sustainability (including biodiversity, waste and green space).
- 2 The Board will be advisory and established under normal internal meeting project management principles. The meetings of the Board are not public meetings, but in the interests of openness and transparency minutes will be taken and made available on request.
- 3 The Council will continue to exercise its statutory function as local planning authority through the existing decision-making routes and structures but with the added benefit of clear reporting and recommendations from the Board. The recommendations and/or views of the Board will be reported to the appropriate committee(s) either in writing or by the Chair.

Masterplanning

- 4 Policy SP9 of the adopted Local Plan states (inter alia):

[The Council will] require Strategic Masterplans to be produced for Strategic Housing Sites and significant development.

[And] Encourage the submission of Strategic Masterplans for the Council’s consideration and agreement before the submission of a planning application...Planning applications must be accompanied by a Strategic Masterplan. Where applications have already been submitted to the Council a Strategic Masterplan should be agreed with the Council prior to or as part of the grant of planning permission.

- 5 The consideration and approval of Strategic Masterplans (or any matters relating thereto) by the Board will not prejudice the consideration of planning matters at planning application stage. The Strategic Masterplan is requirement of the Council set out in Policy SP9 of the Local Plan.
- 6 Any approved Strategic Masterplan will be a material consideration in the assessment and determination of any future planning applications at both officer level and at planning committee that would help demonstrate how the policy requirements of Policy SP9 have been met.

Core Functions

- 7 The advisory role of the Board is to:
 - Inform place specific visions for the Strategic Housing sites that support sustainable communities;
 - Provide corporate oversight and strategic direction to the implementation of strategic site project delivery and wider strategic planning matters;
 - Ensure consistency of corporate direction, policy & strategy and decision-making from the strategic to the site-specific and over time;
 - Support consistency and complementarity of projects, strategies, priorities and decisions between Directorates and relevant Cabinet portfolios and between the District and County Councils on matters relating to strategic planning, climate change and sustainability;
 - Ensure effective use of and sufficient resources to support project delivery;
 - Receive and consider progress reports and recommendations for approval of Strategic Masterplan documents;
 - Agree approval process and timing for Strategic Masterplans;
 - Help with the resolution and or co-ordination of strategic issues, including identification and prioritisation of green, social and physical infrastructure and s106 obligations;
 - To provide, where applicable, a recommendation to the Service Director: Regulatory on the draft masterplan documentation to be subject to formal public consultation;
 - To provide, where applicable, a recommendation to the Service Director: Regulatory on the final draft Strategic Masterplans and recommending their formal approval by the Council to Cabinet and Full Council (where this applies);
 - Oversee the initial review of the Local Plan required by Policy IMR2 by the end of 2023; and
 - Provide strategic guidance and oversight of any formal review of the Local Plan (in whole or part) which follows from the above.

Membership

- 8 Strategic planning matters, including the planning, design and delivery of strategic sites are long-term projects. They are highly likely to span a number of political cycles and leaderships. Cross-party representation with a political balance on planning matters is therefore required. This will ensure a consistent approach to delivering a place-based vision and sustainable and well-designed new communities.
- 9 The political membership of the Board will consist of two Members for each political Group elected to the Council. This will be the Executive Member for Planning as Chair and the shadow(s) / spokesperson(s) or equivalent for this portfolio from the remaining Groups.
- 10 The Executive Member for Environment will also sit on the Board as an additional member together with the shadow(s) / spokesperson(s) or equivalent for this portfolio from the remaining Groups, to support the co-ordination of planning activities with the responsibilities of this portfolio.,
- 11 Officer membership of the Board will consist of the Managing Director, Service Director - Place¹ and Service Director – Regulatory.
- 12 Officers from the Strategic Sites Steering Group (or any nominated deputy in their absence) will attend meetings of the Board supported by other members of the planning service as required to deliver reports and updates.
- 13 Administration of the group including the taking of minutes will be the responsibility of officers from within the planning service.
- 14 In consultation with the Chair, other Council officers (including Hertfordshire County Council) and members will be invited to meetings as and when required. This may include other Executive Members, Ward Councillors for specific sites or schemes, Ward Councillors from affected adjacent Wards, senior managers, officers, consultants or where appropriate an external body representative.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 15 Board Members:
 - Should implement the core functions of the Board;
 - Who are councillors have the responsibility to represent their Group and as such feedback to their Group and represent the views of their Group to the Board to aid in the Board's decision making. They will also feedback information to other relevant individuals/groups;
 - Should act as 'champions' for:
 - high quality design and place leadership in new communities and new development;

¹ Including in their capacity as the Council's lead officer for climate change

- the co-ordination of planning activities and Council-wide approaches to climate change and sustainability; and
- effective collaboration and partnership working with Hertfordshire County Council and key stakeholders;
- Should promote the recommendations and views of the Board as appropriate; and
- Will make every effort to prioritise attendance at scheduled meetings and to ensure a substitute is nominated and attends from the same Group where they are unable to do so.

Chairing

- 16 The Chair will be the relevant Executive Member for Planning. In the absence of the Chair at any meeting, where the Chair has not nominated their deputy to be Chair or their fellow Executive Member, then the Board may elect someone to preside over the meeting.

Meetings

- 17 Meetings will be scheduled monthly.
- 18 The agenda for each meeting will be prepared by the Strategic Sites Steering Group and circulated to Board members at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated within 2 weeks of the meeting.

Decision Making and Reporting Lines

- 19 Whilst the Board has overall responsibility for
- recommending the approval of Strategic Masterplans to Cabinet and Full Council where applicable; and
 - informing approaches to strategic planning matters that will be reported to Cabinet and / or Full Council (supported by officer advice and recommendations where this is relevant),

it has no statutory decision-making powers. However, the Board is of the view that in order to aid decision making by Cabinet and Full Council, the following approach should be taken in conjunction with normal protocols and policies:

- That all-member briefings, where feasible, should be offered prior to presentation at Cabinet;
- That a short summary of the masterplan(s) are provided as an appendix to the report;
- That a more visual approach is taken with regard the reports for Cabinet and Full Council;
- That the report includes a section on integration of the site(s) with the existing settlement(s);

- That attendance by the applicant's team at Cabinet and Full Council is expected;
 - That the Executive Member for Planning supported by other Board Members and officers will cover the key areas as agreed by the Board at Cabinet and Full Council;
 - That the Board will, where appropriate, recommend the use of 'special' meetings to aid decision making. Factors that will be considered include: likely time spent on speakers and debate, where more than one masterplan (typically only one masterplan is recommended at each meeting) may be presented at a meeting, the 'balance' of these applications and any impact they may have upon each other.
- 20 The Board will seek to make recommendations on a consensus basis. Where Board consensus is achieved, the recommendation will, where required, be presented or reported to Full Council or other relevant committee(s) by the Service Director: Regulatory.
- 21 Where consensus is not achieved, the outcome will be noted and, where required, reported to the appropriate decision-making committee.
- 22 The Board will receive reports and progress updates from the Strategic Sites Steering Group which will focus on the day-to-day resourcing and management of the Strategic Masterplan process and outcomes.
- 23 The Board will be asked to consider pre-application/pre planning permission Strategic Masterplan material at the draft and final draft stages as identified in the Core Functions.
- 24 The Board will receive reports and / or be asked for views upon (i) the Local Plan Review and (ii) wider Strategic Planning matters including those with climate change and sustainability implications as identified in the Core Functions.