

**CHEQUERS COURT
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the comments made about the consultation draft Urban Design Framework for the Chequers Court area, and to agree the changes recommended following those comments. A revised document is recommended to Cabinet for adoption as Interim Planning Guidance (IPG).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Urban Design Framework amplifies the advice provided in the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit's document entitled 'Huntingdon Town Centre Vision', produced in 2000. The Framework provides more specific guidance on matters relating to site analysis, promotes high quality design and provides suggestions for redeveloping the area.
- 2.2 The adoption of the Framework as IPG is an important step towards achieving the most appropriate form of re-development for this important town centre site and it will ensure that forthcoming schemes will be of high architectural and urban design quality.
- 2.3 The draft document was approved for a period of public consultation on 6th May 2004. As part of the consultation exercise, a public exhibition was held over a 3 day period in the Commemoration Hall in July 2004. Over 200 members of the public attended and 58 questionnaire responses were received. The exhibition material was also displayed in Huntingdon library. A notice was published in the Hunts Post and residents and businesses in the immediate area were informed of the proposals by a leaflet delivered to each premises. In addition, formal consultation with the statutory agencies and the Town Council was undertaken.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 Many responses were received from statutory agencies, local organisations, businesses and members of the public. A summary of the respondents is contained within Annex 1. Many respondents have expressed positive interest in the benefits of developing the town centre but a number of significant concerns have also been raised.
- 3.2 The most significant concerns relates to the impact of any development on residents of Hartford Road and the businesses in Newton's Court. Other concerns include parking, building height, tree loss, and the impact of development on the historic character of the area. Both these and the other concerns expressed have been fully considered and will

be addressed either in the form of amendments to the document or, where amendments are not considered appropriate, in the form of a reasoned response.

- 3.3 Other concerns relate to general contents of the document. Some consultees have commented that the document's initial 3 options do not flow easily from option 1 to option 2 to the final preferred option.
- 3.4 There is insufficient urban design analysis describing the opportunities and constraints presented on the site.
- 3.5 There is also not enough information on certain elements to provide certainty to the development process (such as scale, massing, architectural articulation, sustainability and servicing), and too much information on other elements (such as the exact size of the development and exactly how many parking spaces it would provide). Greater clarity is also needed with regard to highway proposals and how they would affect residents in the vicinity.
- 3.6 Some significant changes will need to be made to the layout and content of the document if the responses to comments made are to be accepted.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the revised Urban Design Framework be adopted as Interim Planning Guidance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft Chequers Court Urban Design Framework
Report to Cabinet 6th May 2004
Civic Trust Regeneration Unit 'Huntingdon Town Centre: A Vision and Strategy for Growth and Quality' 2000

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