

**PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON
PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Planning & Urban Design Framework for its use in the potential re-development of the Pathfinder House site.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A draft version of this document was released for public consultation by Cabinet on 6th May 2004 and a public exhibition was held in the Commemoration Hall in June 2004.
- 2.2 As a result of comments made at the exhibition and in writing, a number of significant revisions have been made to the document. The document also reflects decisions made by the Council in the intervening period, including the decision to retain the bus station in its existing location.
- 2.3 The adoption of the Framework as Interim Planning Guidance is an important step towards achieving the most appropriate form of re-development for this important town centre site, if the office headquarters are to be relocated or rebuilt. It will help to ensure that forthcoming schemes are of a high architectural and urban design quality.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 27 written responses have been received from statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public, containing 82 separate comments for consideration. A summary of the respondents and their comments is contained within Annex 1.
- 3.2 Most comments have given rise to minor text or graphic changes. The most significant concerns related to the following issues: 1) the proposed temporary relocation of the bus station 2) the potential scale of new development 3) traffic management and parking issues. These are discussed in turn.
- 3.3 *Proposed temporary relocation of the bus station.* The relocation of the bus station no longer forms part of the Urban Design Framework. The Council commissioned an independent report into the most

appropriate location for the town's bus station, concluding with Cabinet's decision to retain it in its existing position on 3rd February 2005.

- 3.4 *The scale of new development.* It is the intention of the document to set parameters for appropriate building scale based on an assessment of context. Whilst not being prescriptive, the Urban Design Framework clearly states that new buildings must respond sympathetically to their location. There have been some additions made to the text to stress this further.
- 3.5 *Traffic management and parking.* Any future planning applications for development on the site will be accompanied by transport assessments that analyse the impact of the scheme on the local infrastructure. The applications will only be approved if the impact is acceptable, with or without associated mitigation works. Parking will be provided at a level appropriate for a sustainable town centre location.
- 3.6 These principal concerns have either resulted in changes to the document or will be taken into account at the appropriate stage of any future applications for planning permission.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The revised document incorporates a number of significant changes as a result of the public consultation process. The promotion of appropriate site analysis and a high quality design response is unchanged.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the Cabinet considers the responses to comments presented in Annex 1 and agrees to adopt the revised Planning & Urban Design Framework, incorporating the specified changes, as Interim Planning Guidance.
- 4.2 That the Cabinet authorizes the Head of Planning Services to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations necessary as a result of these changes, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

'A Vision for Redevelopment - Development Guidelines' Civic Trust February 2002.

Contact Officer: Richard Probyn
 **01480 388430**