

**COMT
CABINET**

**9TH MAY 2006
18TH MAY 2006**

**URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN
ST MARY'S URBAN VILLAGE, ST NEOTS
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Urban Design Framework and Masterplan examines the redevelopment opportunities on land to the west of St Mary's Church, between High Street and Brook Street, St Neots. It presents the planning policy context for the comprehensive redevelopment of this area, which may involve the creation of a new mixed use development for this part of St Neots, together with improved car parking and pedestrian linkages.
- 1.2 Cabinet is asked to consider this draft document and approve it for consultation purposes. Once representations have been considered and reported to Cabinet, it is intended to adopt the document as Interim Planning Guidance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Most of the site has been in poor repair for many years. Various redevelopment schemes have been proposed over the years, and as the site is split between several owners it has been difficult to assemble.
- 2.2 The site is currently used for a number of different uses, including a DIY shop, storage buildings, a garage mechanics, a tanning studio, a tattoo parlour, a church hall, and formal and informal car parking.
- 2.3 There are several interesting buildings within the boundaries of the site, some of which are listed. Among those listed is Brook House, one of the finest buildings in St Neots, its setting unfortunately let down by the garage mechanics' buildings next door.
- 2.4 Part of the site has been allocated for residential development for a number of years, but there has been little chance of it being implemented in the past for the reasons stated in paragraph 2.1. As a result, parts of the site have gradually deteriorated.
- 2.5 There is currently agreement amongst most of the landowners to bring forward their land for redevelopment, but without all of the landowners agreeing, then redevelopment will not take place, unless the Local Planning Authority undertakes measures to unblock those obstacles to site assembly.

3.0 THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN

- 3.1 The purpose of this document is to ensure that a well planned and appropriate development can take place on site, something which contributes to improving the built environment of the town.
- 3.2 Particularly important is removing the inappropriate uses that currently exist, detracting from the setting of Brook House and St Mary's Church.
- 3.3 The Masterplan sets design parameters for the successful development of the site, ensuring that future proposals achieve imaginative and distinctive solutions. Indicative layouts are shown that illustrate what could be achieved, although the implementation of any individual element would be dependent on appropriate resources being identified.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Production of a Masterplan is best practice and will help to secure the most appropriate form of development over this site. If Cabinet approves the document, there will be a period of consultation with the local and statutory bodies. Any comments or changes will be brought back to Cabinet before it is adopted.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the Cabinet approves the Masterplan as a basis for further discussion and consultation before adoption as Interim Planning Guidance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations June 2002
Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPG Sept 2004
Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment SPG Sept 2004
St Neots Town Centre – The future, Civic Trust May 2004

Contact Officer: Mike Huntington
 01480 388404