

**CHEQUERS COURT
PLANNING BRIEF
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the attached Planning Brief which is intended to encourage, guide and shape the redevelopment of Chequers Court, to discuss the comments made by interested parties, and to agree the changes recommended following the consideration of those comments. This revised document will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.2 This brief expands upon and updates the existing approved Interim Planning Guidance for Chequers Court (which dates from 2005), and it is now coming forward as a direct result of the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy being found sound and adopted in 2009. The adopted Core Strategy strongly advocates the development and improvement of retail facilities at Chequers Court.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning Brief amplifies the earlier advice outlined in the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit's document entitled 'Huntingdon Town Centre Vision', produced in 2000, which clarified the District Council's aspirations for the regeneration of this important part of the town centre. This brief 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 this brief as SPD will be an important step towards encouraging the most appropriate form of re-development for this significant town centre site and it will ensure that any forthcoming development schemes will be of an appropriate high architectural and urban design quality.
- 2.3 This Brief has been subject to lengthy and considerable consultation. It was presented to the Development Management Panel on 16th November, discussions took place with the Huntingdon Town Partnership on 17th November 2009, and subsequently it was published for wider general engagement on 24th November. Local businesses and residents were informed of the publication and specifically asked for their views. A presentation was made to the Town Council's Planning Committee on the evening of 26th November, and an exhibition outlining the scope of the proposed brief was displayed in Huntingdon library from 26th November until 23rd December 2009.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 Responses were received from interested members of the public as well as several planning agents acting for the primary landowners. A summary of their comments is outlined within Annex 1, alongside the Council's considered response to the issues raised. Many respondents have expressed positive interest in the benefits of developing the town centre but a number of other issues have also been raised.
- 3.2 The most raised issues relate to the potential impact of any 'multi storey' car park on the town and the impact of development on the historic character of the area. Some have commented on re-opening the gate at St Germain Street. Others have commented on a perceived lack of public engagement regarding these proposals.
- 3.3 It is also felt by some that there is not enough information on certain elements to provide sufficient certainty to the development process (such as scale, massing, architectural articulation, phasing, servicing and car parking numbers). Greater clarity is also needed with regard to the highway proposals and how they could affect residents in the vicinity.
- 3.4 These and other concerns expressed by respondents have been fully considered and they will be addressed either in the form of amendments to the document itself or, where amendments are not considered appropriate, in the form of a reasoned response.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Cabinet notes the comments from the consultation and endorses the proposed responses to the issues raised.
- 4.2 Delegates to the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy, the making of the necessary revisions and minor amendments to the Brief and that the revised, finalised, document be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Civic Trust Regeneration Unit 'Huntingdon Town Centre: A Vision and Strategy for Growth and Quality' 2000
Interim Planning Guidance for Chequers Court 2005
Huntingdonshire District Council Core Strategy 2009

Contact Officer: Mike Huntington
Team Leader – Urban Design, Trees and Landscape
 **01480 388404**