

<b>COMT</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2010</b>
<b>O&amp;S</b>	<b>9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010</b>
<b>CABINET</b>	<b>18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010</b>
<b>ST NEOTS EASTERN EXPANSION URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK</b>	
<b>(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)</b>	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The St Neots Eastern Expansion Urban Design Framework (UDF) outlines the main planning and design factors, and the other requirements that the prospective developers, will need to address in order to deliver a sustainable urban extension to the east of St Neots.
- 1.2 Cabinet is asked to consider the principles, and consequent detail, contained within the document, to take into account the consultation responses received, and to thereby approve the revised document as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The St Neots Eastern Expansion area has been identified in the Adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (2009) as the District's major development opportunity in the plan period to 2026 and beyond. The total area has the capacity for the development of up to 5,000 new dwellings (including Loves Farm), of which some 40% will be affordable dwellings, plus associated community facilities and services such as schools, shops, recreation areas and open space. It will also provide at least 25 hectares of new employment land.
- 2.2 The area is located to the east of the East Coast main line railway track, and is bounded to the south and east by the A428 trunk road and Priory Hill. Open countryside lies beyond the development area boundaries. The area is currently in mainly arable agricultural use, with some hedgerows and streams forming field boundaries. There are also some planted shelter belts.
- 2.3 The area is mostly within the ownership of two major landowners, neatly divided into an area to the north of Cambridge Road (approximately 1/3 of the site) and an area to the south of the site (the remaining 2/3rds of the site).
- 2.4 Proactive local governance arrangements have already been put in place with a dedicated steering group, made up of elected representatives from HDC, Cambridgeshire County Council and St Neots Town Council being charged with guiding the development process.

## **3.0 THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The purpose of the UDF is to ensure that appropriate design principles are firmly established in order to ensure that the Eastern Expansion Area is a well planned new place that is designed from the

outset as a positive, and to be very well integrated, part of the town and community of St Neots.

3.2 The UDF has been prepared in conjunction with the major landowners, and the potential developers of the area, and this interaction has helped to ensure that the principles in the UDF are achievable and deliverable.

3.3 The UDF sets broad design parameters for the successful development of the site although they are intended to be flexible enough to be able to accommodate creative solutions. The UDF provides a platform for the detailed design coding and master-planning exercises that the landowners and developers will now take forward as the next stage of the development process. These in turn will provide the basis for the preparation by the developers of subsequent outline and detailed planning applications.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 A great deal of public engagement has taken place since April 2010 to support the formulation of the UDF. This has involved a wide range of local community, business and other interest groups as well as the main statutory agencies. A number of detailed presentations have been given to the Town Council and its sub-groups.

4.2 A formal consultation on the Council's Consultation Draft UDF took place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010, and this included a staffed consultation exhibition at the Priory Centre. The Draft UDF was also presented to the Council's Development Control Panel on 18<sup>th</sup> October, St Neots Town Council on 7<sup>th</sup> October, and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> November.

4.3 The responses received to the consultation have commented in respect of the following themes:

- Impacts on the town centre
- Impacts on existing town services
- Transport and congestion concerns
- Dealing with flood risk
- The need to create local jobs
- The need to protect certain natural features within the area
- The need to enable the development / operation of community facilities including premises for faith communities

The attached schedule of responses indicates how, where appropriate, these will be incorporated into the finalised document.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The production of the draft UDF has enabled a large number of individuals and community / official organisations to comment on and influence how the development and planning principles for the St Neots Eastern Expansion area.

5.2 The UDF will now play an important role in bringing forward the delivery of this highly sustainable urban extension.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 That the Cabinet authorises the revisions to the document as presented in Annex 1.
- 6.2 That the Cabinet delegates adoption of the revised document, incorporating minor consequential amendments, as Council Planning Policy, to the Executive member for Planning Strategy, in consultation with the Head of Planning Services.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD 2007

Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment SPD Sept 2007

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