

Report of: Planning Services Business Manager

To: Executive Board – 17th July 2006
Special Council – 24th July 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To approve for public consultation, the Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan and to approve a consequential amendment to the Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Goddard

Deputy Responsibility: Environment

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by

Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Goddard

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Finance: Emma Burson

Strategic Director: Sharon Cosgrove

Policy Framework: The production of this document fulfils a commitment of the Local Development Scheme. It will build on policies set out in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016. It will also support the City Council's vision by improving the environment where we live and work.

Recommendation(s):

That Executive Board recommend to Council that they:

1. approve the Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan for public consultation;
2. approve the draft amendment to the Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State;
3. authorise the Planning Policy manager to make any necessary editorial corrections to the Preferred Options document.



That Council:

1. approve the preferred options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan for public consultation;
2. approve the draft amendment to the Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State;
3. authorise the Planning Policy manager to make any necessary editorial corrections to the Preferred Options document.

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan (AAP). A preferred options document is a consultation document rather than a draft AAP. It is an important step towards the production of a draft AAP. Once adopted the AAP will form the planning policy and spatial framework for the development of the West End.
2. Executive Board are asked to recommend that Council approve the Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan for public consultation and to approve a draft amendment to the Local Development Scheme. Council is asked to approve the Preferred Options document.

Oxford's West End

3. Currently, the West End quarter of the City centre is under-utilised and does not match Oxford's worldwide reputation, or live up to its potential as an urban quarter of the highest quality. However, the area is part of the centre of our historic City, and its renaissance is key to the overall long-term success of the City as a whole.
4. The renaissance of Oxford's West End presents the opportunity for change on an unprecedented scale within the City, bringing with it potential for a wide spectrum of regeneration benefits. The development of the Oxford Castle site is the first step in the renaissance of this area, and shows the potential for creating attractive new developments that enhance the whole City centre and that make the most of previously neglected features.
5. There is an opportunity for radical improvement to the environmental quality of the West End, to create a sense of place, the type of place that people enjoy living in, working in, and visiting. A vibrant mix of new

homes, retail and employment uses, community facilities and cultural attractions that meet the needs of Oxford's residents and visitors will be created. There is also an opportunity to improve access and movement, to create a good network of routes and connections that allow safe and efficient movement for all modes of travel. This should all be provided in an environmentally responsible way.

The AAP and its preferred options

6. The AAP will develop a series of principles and design concepts to guide and control developments and to resist schemes that conflict with the overall vision for the West End. It will also identify site-specific and area-based proposals to stimulate regeneration in areas where it is most needed. Once adopted, the AAP will form part of the Local Development Framework and will be used in the determination of planning applications under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
7. The Preferred Options document (Appendix A) details the options and suggestions generated so far in the production of the AAP and indicates those that will follow. At the initial stages of producing the Preferred Options document, issues and options for the West End AAP were generated by consultation with the community and other stakeholders. The City Council has already undertaken a considerable amount of background work and collaboration with partners, local people, businesses, visitors and others with an interest in the future of Oxford City centre. This background work has enabled the City Council to put forward draft development principles, policies and options for consultation.
8. The most promising options that were identified for the AAP have been included in the Preferred Options document. They have been assessed in a Sustainability Appraisal report, which will be published in September alongside the preferred options document as part of the consultation.
9. Alongside the consultation on this document and the Sustainability Appraisal work, technical and financial studies will be carried out to assess which options or combination of options are most appropriate for the West End.
10. Before the Preferred Options document is made available for public consultation it will be produced professionally by a graphics team. A version of this document has already been checked by the Plain Language Commission.

The AAP timetable

11. Once approved by Council, the preferred options document will be taken out for a six-week period of public consultation commencing in September (to avoid the holiday period). This will involve exhibitions, workshops, use of the website and publicity in the press. The comments and responses collected will then be used to help draft an Area Action Plan for Oxford's West End.
12. The Area Action Plan once drafted will be reported to Executive Board and Council, be made available for public consultation and be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in Summer next year.

Update to the Local Development Scheme

13. The City Council have committed to the production of the West End AAP in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) as approved by Council and by the Secretary of State. The LDS originally programmed the Preferred Options consultation to begin in June/July. However, as a result of the May elections and the timings of committees, it was considered that the June deadline was unrealistic and that it would be better to begin consultation in September, which avoids the summer holiday period.
14. An amendment is required to the timetable included in the LDS so as to commence the consultation in September. In order to make this change, an approved amendment to the LDS must be submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval. Appendix B contains the draft amendment to the LDS. Discussions have been held with the Government of Office for the South East (GOSE) and their preliminary view is that this amendment would be acceptable. Executive Board and Council are asked to consider the amendment and to approve it for submission to the Secretary of State.

Appendices

15. A – Preferred Options document for Oxford's West End Area Action Plan.
NOTE: Appendix A has been circulated to members as a separate document
B – Draft amendment to the Local Development Scheme.

Name and contact details of author: Mark Jaggard, 01865 252161
mjaggard@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None

