

To: City Executive Board

Date: 13th April 2011

Item No: 5

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Barton Area Action Plan Preferred Options Document

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To approve the Barton Area Action Plan Preferred Options document for consultation.

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Councillors Colin Cook and Ed Turner

Policy Framework: The contribution of new housing from the Land at Barton and associated regeneration is fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan (more housing, better housing for all) and the Oxford Sustainable Community Strategy (affordable housing). The production of the AAP will fulfil a key element of the Local Development Scheme and build on the strategic policies set out in the Oxford Core Strategy. This is also one of the five major regeneration projects identified in the Oxford Regeneration Framework.

Recommendation(s): Members of the City Executive Board are asked to:

1. approve the Barton Area Action Plan Preferred Options document for consultation; and
2. authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Board Member, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document and to agree the designed version before publication.

Appendix 1 – Preferred Options Document

Appendix 2 – Risk Register

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Barton Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options document for consultation. The document is the second major stage towards producing an AAP for this major wider City Council project. Information that is gathered through the consultation will be used to shape the Proposed Submission stage that follows in the Autumn.

Background to the Barton project

2. The Core Strategy allocates 'Land at Barton' as a strategic housing site. Situated between the existing communities of Barton and Northway, the site is a once in a generation opportunity to provide large numbers of new homes – 800 to 1,200 – and associated facilities in the form of a thriving and vibrant new community that forms part of Oxford. The development also offers the opportunity to roll-out the benefits to existing neighbouring communities in the form of access to the new facilities and services, better links to the rest of the City and the surrounding countryside, and by bringing back into use pockets of neglected land. The site is being brought forward through an AAP. The AAP will form part of the Local Development Framework for Oxford.
3. The great majority of the Land at Barton is owned by the City Council. It is a large infrastructure-led project that will require significant investment before serviced land is available to deliver the first new homes in 2013. To ensure delivery the City Council is currently seeking a co-investment partner to enter in to a joint venture vehicle. A shortlist of four parties has been identified. The decision on the lead partner is due to be taken in May with the joint venture company established in June. The AAP timetable allows for the joint venture to input to the AAP process.

The Preferred Options Document

4. This Preferred Options document is the second formal stage in the production of the AAP, setting out a range of options for consultation. These options are based on technical and financial studies, collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders, and on the responses to the consultation on the first formal stage of the AAP process during summer of 2010. That first stage was publication of an Issues document. The report on the Issues consultation is available on the City Council's web site.
5. The Barton AAP has five objectives: delivering a strong and balanced community; bringing wider regeneration to neighbouring estates; improving accessibility and integration; encouraging a low carbon lifestyle; and, introducing design that is responsive and innovative.

6. The Preferred Options document deals only with those issues that need to be covered in the AAP and has been written to an appropriate level of detail given that a joint venture partner has not yet been identified. The document is structured as follows:

Context:	the strategic policy context and City-wide planning policies, and the site and its surroundings
Spatial vision:	the aspirations for the area
Objectives:	the five objectives identified in the Issues document and what they mean for the new development and surrounding communities
AAP Boundary:	the AAP boundary and the underlying rationale
Options:	the preferred options based on four themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a vibrant and balanced new community- integration- regeneration- innovative and responsive design
Strategy:	the way in which the preferred options combine together to form the suggested preferred framework
Delivery:	the key implementation and delivery issues and the ways in which they will be addressed to create certainty and ensure delivery.

A separate section of the document deals with land to the north of Ruskin College (see below).

7. The Preferred Options document explains the relationship between the AAP and the Regeneration Framework for Oxford and the associated Area Regeneration Plans that are to be prepared for Barton and Northway.
8. The preferred options combine together to form the suggested preferred strategy or framework for future development of the Land at Barton. The components are:
- residential frontages along the ring-road, Barton Village Road and a new linear park alongside Bayswater Brook
 - an at-grade signal controlled junction on the ring-road, incorporating bus-only movements to and from Northway and a pedestrian and cycle crossing
 - a cycle and pedestrian crossing at Stoke Place and connections to Barton and the surrounding countryside
 - secondary all-vehicle access between the new development and Barton
 - retention of the allotment land which is actively cultivated
 - a local centre at a point where the pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street

- a mix of housing types and sizes, with an emphasis on family homes and at least 40% affordable housing (social rent)
- a speed reduction on the ring-road to 40 mph
- design that: responds to the setting and natural assets of the development site to create a unique sense of place; makes efficient use of resources; and meets energy efficiency and low carbon targets
- a primary street linking the western end of the development site with Barton.

This strategy meets the objectives set for this Area Action Plan.

9. The preferred approach on affordable housing reflects the previous CEB decision that, given the infrastructure costs (including a primary school), the affordable housing target should be a minimum of 40%, with 100% of that requirement for social rented homes.
10. The document includes a proposal put forward by Ruskin College for between 175 and 190 new homes on fields to the north of the College and south of the ring-road. The document does not take a view on the proposals but does invite the public to comment.
11. The version of the document attached to this report is not in its final designed format. Attached to the text is a map showing the AAP boundary, a map illustrating the preferred strategy, two maps showing Ruskin College's proposals for Ruskin Fields and a number of illustrative sections showing elements of the development of the Land at Barton and their relationship with surrounding areas. These, together with additional maps and sections, will be 'embedded' within the final designed version of the document.
12. Behind this document sits an evidence base that has been compiled to provide background information and studies of the area to inform the AAP process. The background documents are listed in the Preferred Options document and will be available on the City Council website during (and after) the period of consultation.
13. Alongside production of the AAP a Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out to ensure that the plan considers the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and proposals. This is available for Members to view in the Members Room and will be published alongside the AAP.

Consultation approach

14. This is the second formal stage of consultation, and will build on that which took place on the Issues document. It will also build on the ongoing involvement of the Barton and Northway Working Group. Made up of nominated local community representatives and elected members, the Working Group has discussed and provided comments on the emerging AAP options, as well as on the wider Barton project.

15. The Preferred Options document is an important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to contribute to the future planning of the 'Land at Barton' and the adjoining areas. It is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the realistic options that are available. It is hoped that everyone with an interest in the future of the area – residents, community groups, local organisations, businesses, employers, and providers of infrastructure and services – will take the opportunity to respond to the consultation with their views about the options presented.
16. The Preferred Options document will be subject to a six week consultation period from 6 May to 17 June. The public consultation strategy will be cleared with the Barton and Northway Working Group.
17. To commence this consultation, notification will be sent to everyone that has registered an interest in planning and regeneration issues on the City Council's consultation database; those groups and organisations that have been identified as having an interest in the future of the area; and statutory consultees.
18. A wide range of different tools will be used to publicise the consultation and gather views from the community and stakeholders. These may include exhibitions, drop-in sessions, a summary leaflet, questionnaires, the City Council web site and newsletter, press release, posters, attendance at meetings with local groups and organisations and with partners and stakeholders. The Preferred Options document will be made available on-line, in local and the central libraries and sent to the statutory consultees.
19. Information that is gathered through the consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. A Proposed Submission document will be published in Autumn 2011 when there will be another opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment.

AAP timetable

20. The following AAP timetable reflects the City Council's ambition to see development on the Land at Barton commence in 2013. There have been some minor changes to the AAP timetable to allow for a more even balance between the consultation periods and to allow a better fit with the timetable for joint venture partner selection. The main periods of consultation are highlighted in bold text.

Develop issues with community/stakeholders	January – June 2010
Consult on Issues document	June – July 2010
Produce Preferred Options document	August 2010 – March 2011
Publish Preferred Options document	Beginning of May 2011
Consult on Preferred Options document	May – June 2011
Publish Proposed Submission document	October 2011
Consult on Proposed Submission document	October – November 2011
Finalise Submission document	November – December 2011
Submit the AAP to the Secretary of State	January 2012
Hold examination hearing sessions	May 2012
Receive Inspector's Report	September 2012
Adopt DPD	October 2012

Level of risk

21. The contribution of new housing from the Land at Barton and associated regeneration is a key priority for the City Council, fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Oxford Corporate Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Core Strategy and the Regeneration Framework for Oxford. Failure to deliver housing at the scale intended will lead to significant problems in meeting the City's housing targets.
22. The production of the AAP will require resources in terms of staff time, the commissioning of specialist studies and examination costs.
23. The risk register is attached as Appendix 2.

Climate change and environmental impact

24. The AAP objectives seek to encourage a low carbon lifestyle by: encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport; providing new homes and buildings that use energy and water efficiently; and, by making effective use of renewable and low-carbon energy.
25. The AAP, like all other Development Plan Documents, is subject to the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process. That process uses sustainability indicators to assess the potential impact of development options emerging from the AAP.

Equalities impact

26. A key theme of the Core Strategy and the LDS is the focus on regeneration and this is reflected in the Barton AAP objectives which seek to deliver new housing, including a significant proportion of affordable housing, and regeneration in two of the cities estates. If successful it will address the inequalities affecting existing residents.

Financial implications

27. The costs associated with the production of the AAP are being met through the current resources of the Planning Policy team and budget. It has been supplemented by funding provided by the Homes and Communities Agency for a number of the background studies that contribute to the evidence base for the Preferred Options document.

Legal Implications

28. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. There are legal requirements that must be followed through the production of the AAP which will be considered by the Inspector at examination.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 5

Appendix 2 – Risk Register

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid		Monitoring Effectiveness				Current Risk	
		I	P			I	P	Action: Action Owner:	Outcome required: Milestone Date:	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	I	P
1	<p>The AAP Preferred Options document does not receive approval from CEB to proceed to consultation.</p> <p>(More housing, better housing for all, and regeneration strategy)</p>	3	2	Lack of agreement with members and officers and political disagreement with the content of the Preferred Options document.	<p>Mitigating control: The Preferred Options document has been carefully structured and written to an appropriate level of detail. It reflects technical studies, collaboration with the local community and stakeholders and public consultation. It sets out options and principles rather than detail. No decisions on controversial issues have been taken yet. The preferred options have been shared with lead officers from key city departments in advance of the Committee. Level of Effectiveness: M</p>	3	1	<p>Action: The Head of City Development in consultation with the Executive Board Member is delegated to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document before publication. Action Owner: Alison Bailey Mitigating Control: In event that the Preferred Options document is not approved - inform the Barton Delivery Board. Revise the AAP timetable to allow a re-draft. Control owner: Michael Crofton-Briggs</p>	<p>Outcome required: Preferred Options document is approved by CEB for consultation with the community Milestone Date: 13th April 2011</p>	Q 1 ☹	Q 2 ☹	Q 3 ☹	Q 4 ☹	I	P
2	<p>Consultation responses from the joint venture partner object to vision and preferred options</p> <p>(More housing, better housing for all, and regeneration strategy)</p>	3	3	The joint venture partner does not share the vision or agree with the preferred options	<p>Mitigating control: The procurement process for the joint venture partner is based on a set of objectives that reflect those set out in the AAP. The Preferred Options document has been carefully structured and written to an appropriate level of detail. The preferred options have been shared with lead officers from key city departments in advance of the Committee. Level of Effectiveness: M</p>	3	2	<p>Mitigating Control owner: Michael Crofton-Briggs & Steve Sprason</p>	<p>Outcome required: Area Action Plan Adopted Milestone Date: October 2012</p>						