

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12February 2015

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Diamond Place Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document- Draft for public consultation

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To approve the draft Diamond Place Supplementary Planning Document for consultation

Key decision:No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price, Board Member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning

Policy Framework: The SPD will assist in the delivery of the allocation policy for this site in the Sites and Housing Plan

Recommendations: That the City Executive Board:

1. Approves the Draft Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation
2. Endorses the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report
3. Authorises the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication in consultation with the Board Member

Appendix 1: Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix 2: Interim Public Involvement Statement

Appendix 3: Background Paper 1: Character Appraisal

Appendix 4: Risk Assessment

Appendix 5: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 6: Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction and Policy Background

1. The Diamond Place site includes the Summertown car park and the Ferry car park, which are both public car parks owned and managed by the City Council. They have an important role in supporting the district centre and local facilities such as the Ferry Leisure Centre. The site also includes Ewert House and its associated car park. This is owned and used by the University of Oxford for, amongst other things, examinations, courses of the Department of Continuing Education and Isis Innovation Ltd.
2. The site is in the designated district centre and offers an excellent opportunity for development. The site has been allocated in Local Plan documents for a number of years. Most recently the site was allocated under Policy SP14 of the Sites and Housing Plan, adopted by Council in February 2013. This policy allocates the Diamond Place and Ewert House site for a retail-led mixed-use development. As well as retail, other potentially suitable uses for the site are listed by the policy as being residential, employment, student accommodation and other town centre uses.
3. Because of the importance of the site to the local area and the significant potential of the site to bring benefits to the area if developed carefully, the City Council has chosen to publish a development brief in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document. It is to give further detail to existing adopted policies. It seeks to provide guidance for whoever develops the site and provide certainty for the public and developers. It should help make any planning application move smoothly through the planning process because the potential for conflicts and objections is minimised.
4. There is to be 6 weeks of consultation on the draft Diamond Place Development Brief SPD. This is attached as Appendix 1. CEB is asked to approve the draft SPD for consultation.

Consultation

5. It is important that the SPD evolves a vision for the site that is shared by the local community and the City Council. Consultation on a draft document is the first statutory round of consultation for an SPD. However two rounds of consultation have already taken place because of the desire to involve the local community, including the Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum, in the development of the SPD. The first consultation helped to identify options for development of the site. The second consultation asked for comments on a document that set out preferred options. Officers have been in contact with other stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council about highways issues, Local GPs who are interested in the potential to relocate to the site, Summer Fields School which neighbours the site and the University of Oxford. The Interim Public Consultation Statement at Appendix 2 provides further detail on this stage of consultation.

Content of the SPD

6. The SPD is informed by the early rounds of public consultation, local and national planning policy and an understanding of the site and its context.

The City Council's Character Appraisal Toolkit was used to aid understanding of the site. The results of this are shown in a background paper, which is attached as Appendix 3.

7. The SPD sets out a framework for uses that could be provided on the site; access and movement into and around the site; and the design and layout of the site. An indicative block plan is included to show how the proposed uses fit together on the site and where they will be best located, as well as the proposed routes into and around the site.
8. Some of the key expectations set out in the SPD are outlined below. The draft SPD (Appendix 1) should be referred to for full details.

Uses

9. The draft SPD says that the site should include:
 - approximately 1000m² of ground floor retail in more than one unit;
 - Extension of the leisure centre, replacing community facilities and creating a community hub;
 - a health centre. GPs at the two practices on Banbury Road wish to locate to a modern new centre;
 - replacement of the existing number of public parking spaces, with additional spaces in a multi-storey car park;
 - residential development with potential for some elderly persons' accommodation;
 - other uses may be acceptable, including potentially new employment to replace that in Ewert House or new further education facilities.

Access and movement

- Diamond Place forms the main access into the site, and is extended across the site to give access to Summer Fields School's site to the east of the Ferry car park;
- new development should be connected to the surrounding area, including the pedestrian access to Cherwell School;
- to include vehicle access to a potential temporary car park and future housing development on Summer Fields School's site to the east of the Ferry car park (currently the school's athletics field).

Design and layout

10. The SPD sets out principles to be followed in the design of the development,

- ensuring a high quality public realm.
- The location of a 'town square', which would be a multi-functional space designed to appeal to all ages.
- 10% of the housing site area should be provided as public open space.

Next stages

11. Following approval of the draft SPD by City Executive Board, the draft SPD will undergo a public consultation for 6 weeks. The City Council will invite comments from the Neighbourhood forum, the local community, local interest groups, people on our consultation database and statutory consultees.

12. Following the close of consultation, comments will be considered and changes made to the SPD as appropriate. The SPD will then come to City Executive Board a second time with a recommendation for adoption.

Level of risk

13. A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached (Appendix 4). All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

Climate change / environmental impact

14. Sustainability Appraisal is no longer required for SPDs under UK law; however to comply with European regulations, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report has been produced to identify whether the SPD would have any significant environmental impacts. This is available at Appendix 5.

Equalities impact

15. Consideration has been given to the public sector equality duty imposed by s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Having paid due regard to the need to meet the objectives of that duty in connection with the production of the draft SPD the view is taken that the duty is met. It is acknowledged that the duty is an on-going one and due regard will be had to the duty throughout the SPD process. An Equalities Impact Assessment is at Appendix 6.

Financial implications

16. The costs associated with the production of the draft SPD have been met through the current resources of the Planning Policy team and budget. Approximately half of the site is owned by the Council. By having an SPD to help deliver the site, the Council's Corporate Asset team will have greater certainty over the development likely to be supported by the Council as local planning authority and will be able to realise the capital value of these assets in a timely fashion subject to joint working with the landowner of the remainder of the site. For the avoidance of doubt it is noted that this is an incidental consequence. The ownership of the site

was not a consideration save as is relevant to the plan making process (e.g. in connection with the likelihood of delivery).

Legal Implications

17. Any person may apply to judicially review the adoption of the SPD upon adoption and must be made promptly and in any event within three months. The level of risk of a successful judicial review is considered to be acceptably low.

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Background Papers: none

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