

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Wilton Park Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Public Consultation</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Sustainable Development</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

### 1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- to outline the content of the Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- to summarise documents prepared in support of the draft SPD; and
- and to recommend that the draft SPD is published with supporting documents for a six week period of public consultation beginning early in 2014.

## 2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The draft Development Brief SPD for the Wilton Park Opportunity Site relates directly to the delivery of Core Strategy Policy 14. Wilton Park is designated as a Major Developed Site (MDS) in the Green Belt and Core Policy 14 establishes a positive framework for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to deliver a high quality mix of residential and employment uses, community facilities, open space, sport and recreation facilities and other necessary infrastructure, including a new vehicle access off the Pyebush Roundabout (or an alternative appropriate access). The draft SPD also relates directly to a number of other Core Strategy policies, including Core Policy 7 which recognises the problem of existing traffic congestion to the east of Beaconsfield and states that this will be addressed by measures which could include provision of an A355/A40 relief road later in the Plan period. The supporting text indicates that the first part of a relief road would be achieved by a new access into Wilton Park from the Pyebush Roundabout.
- 2.2 The draft SPD also directly supports delivery of each set of priority action areas set out in the South Bucks Sustainable Community Strategy:
- A sustainable environment
  - A thriving economy
  - Safe communities
  - Health and well being for all
  - Cohesive and strong communities.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Wilton Park is currently occupied by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) School of Languages. The School is due to close at the end of 2013 and the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has indicated that it will be disposing of the whole of the Wilton Park site in 2014.
- 3.2 Core Policy 14 requires a Development Brief to be prepared for the Wilton Park Opportunity Site by the landowners / developers in conjunction with the Council, prior to a planning application being submitted. The draft Development Brief will be adopted as a SPD. In November 2012, South Bucks District Council (and Buckinghamshire County Council) entered into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with Inland Homes plc in connection with the preparation of a Development Brief for Wilton Park. Inland Homes plc is the DIO's 'preferred bidder' for the site.
- 3.3 Inland Homes plc has carried out extensive stakeholder engagement and informal public consultation, the scope and results of which were reported to the Sustainable Development PAG meeting on 6 June 2013 with a summary report published shortly afterwards by HardHat (the communications consultants for Inland Homes plc). Inland Homes plc also commissioned a range of technical studies from specialist consultants. The District Council has provided planning policy advice throughout, and Bucks County Council has provided advice on matters related to County

functions and responsibilities, including highways and education issues. The draft SPD presented to Members today has been finalised by South Bucks District Council with input from Bucks County Council.

#### 4. Discussion

##### **Purpose, scope and status of the Wilton Park Development Brief Draft SPD**

- 4.1 The purpose of the SPD is to establish more detailed principles that will guide the future redevelopment of Wilton Park. The SPD aims to ensure that the new development is comprehensive, of exceptional quality, respects its location and setting, delivers benefits to the local community and that the necessary infrastructure is put in place within agreed timescales. The draft SPD is not a masterplan for the site; rather, it explains how the redevelopment will be delivered sustainably and in full accordance with policy requirements, acting as a 'stepping stone' between the policy framework established in the Core Strategy and the detailed work that will need to be undertaken in support of future planning applications.
- 4.2 Members should note that a slightly larger area of land than the MDS is currently owned and occupied by the MOD, with the MOD ownership including Minerva Way and a small area of land within Chiltern District. The draft SPD relates only to the redevelopment of the land located entirely within the South Bucks District.
- 4.3 Also, as required by the Core Strategy, the draft SPD deals with access for vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport (including the mitigation of transport impacts on the strategic and local road networks), and with other necessary infrastructure. The draft SPD also explains how issues such as landscape, water quality, biodiversity and new school places should be dealt with in future planning applications. The scope of the document therefore covers matters that relate to a wider area than the MDS boundary where they are relevant to the redevelopment of Wilton Park.
- 4.4 Inland Homes plc already owns land immediately to the north of the A40 between Wilton Park and the Pyebush Roundabout. This land is not within the MDS and is subject to national and local Green Belt policies. As such there are no proposals in this draft SPD for development of the land other than to provide vehicle and sustainable transport access as set out in Core Policy 14.
- 4.5 Although the draft SPD is the result of collaborative work between South Bucks District Council, Bucks County Council and Inland Homes plc, ownership of the document lies with the District Council (subject to the approval of the Portfolio Holder following the PAG meeting). The draft SPD reflects Bucks County Council's advice on a range of matters, including highways and education issues.
- 4.6 The draft SPD does not include new policies and does not form part of the Council's Development Plan. The final SPD will however form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and will be considered alongside Core Policy 14 and other local planning policies. When adopted, the SPD will be a Local Development Document (LDD) and will form part of the South Bucks Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 4.7 The Council has prepared the following documents alongside the draft SPD:
  - Public Consultation Statement
  - Sustainability Appraisal Report
  - Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report
  - Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report.

The findings and conclusions of these documents are summarised in the following paragraphs.

### **Public Consultation Statement**

- 4.8 The Public Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and outlines the way in which the community and other stakeholders have been engaged in the preparation of the draft SPD. The informal public consultation and stakeholder engagement has made a very positive contribution to the content of the draft SPD. Table 1 of the Public Consultation Statement (also reproduced as Appendix 1 of the draft SPD) summarises the main issues raised during the preparation of the draft SPD and explains how those issues have been addressed in the draft SPD. The comments received have been very carefully considered. In nearly all cases, the draft SPD directly reflects the majority of responses on a particular issue. In the small number of cases where the draft SPD does not reflect the overall preference expressed through the consultation, the alternative approach and the reason(s) why are explained.

### **Sustainability Appraisal Report**

- 4.9 In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the draft SPD has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. The Appraisal considers the sustainability implications of a number of alternative options, as well as the implications of implementing the draft SPD itself. The Sustainability Appraisal report considers that the draft SPD is in full accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy 14 and that by implementing the SPD a number of significant positive effects could be expected. In general, the options considered through the Appraisal and which support the most number of Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal objectives have been taken forward in the draft SPD. The Sustainability Appraisal report also notes that it will be important to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD once adopted. This monitoring will be undertaken as part of the Council's established annual monitoring procedures.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report**

- 4.10 A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) screening exercise has been undertaken to identify the potential effects that redevelopment at Wilton Park could have on Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation. The HRA screening concludes that the proposals set out in the draft SPD, alone or in combination with other projects, are unlikely to cause significant adverse effects on the Burnham Beeches SAC. Because, with the implementation of mitigation measures, the proposals are unlikely to have a significant effect on the interest features of Burnham Beeches SAC, an appropriate assessment in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 is not required.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment Report**

- 4.11 The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) examines whether the draft SPD is likely to cause an adverse impact or discriminate against a particular group or groups in South Bucks with protected characteristics. Overall, the EqIA has identified that the draft SPD is unlikely to result in negative impacts on a particular group or groups, and that in certain instances there may be positive benefits for a particular group. The EqIA also concludes that the draft SPD is not in conflict with any aspect of the Council's duties or wider equality responsibilities and therefore a full EqIA is not required.

### **Development and design principles**

- 4.12 Chapter 6 of the draft SPD establishes a set of development and design principles that respond to the site context, relevant planning policies, results of the stakeholder engagement and public consultation and the principal constraints and opportunities. The emphasis is on a high quality approach to all aspects of design and implementation, and the draft SPD makes it very clear that the Council will be looking for exemplary and imaginative proposals that will deliver a redevelopment scheme of an exceptional standard. The overall vision is to provide a sustainable, well connected development of new homes and employment uses set within a rural landscape with a new community building, sports facilities and local park for Beaconsfield at its heart.

- 4.13 **Land uses:** The new development will comprise around 300 new homes, with the precise number arising from a well designed scheme. There may be potential for a new building of the scale and style of the original Wilton House. In accordance with Core Policy 3, 40% of the homes will be affordable. It is expected that a significant proportion of the affordable homes will be provided on-site, but there may at the Council's discretion be scope for a financial contribution in lieu of a proportion of the on-site affordable housing provision at Wilton Park. The development will also incorporate commercial floorspace. Acceptable uses would be B1 office, a care home, crèche and small scale local retail. There will be a new multi-functional community facility (or 'hub') located towards the western end of the site that will be managed as a shared facility for a range of activities. It will include new sports changing facilities. Car parking at the community hub will be managed so that it can help relieve week day parking issues elsewhere in Beaconsfield.
- 4.14 Both areas of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) will be retained by the MOD in the short-term, with SFA west expected to be released at the end of 2015, followed by SFA south in mid-2017. The homes in SFA west will be demolished, but the homes in SFA south are likely to remain (albeit no longer in MOD use) to be enhanced.
- 4.15 All other existing buildings on the site, including the tower, are likely to be demolished, though English Heritage has received an application to assess buildings and other features at Wilton Park for potential inclusion on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The bunker is thought by English Heritage to be of possible historic interest, though informal officer advice from the District Council to English Heritage is that the bunker should not be listed. The final decision on listing will be taken by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport based on recommendations by English Heritage and following consultation with the District Council. The draft SPD acknowledges that retention of the bunker would inevitably have an impact on the layout and design of development on part of the site.
- 4.16 **Green Belt:** The new development must have no greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing development. This means that the largely open character of the site must be retained. In accordance with Core Policy 14, the draft SPD recognises that the location of the new development within the site is unlikely to be exactly the same as the existing development. The general principle of retaining the same amount of floor space is accepted. New development could potentially be located on currently undeveloped areas provided that, overall, there is no greater impact on the Green Belt and all other objectives of the SPD and the Core Strategy are met.
- 4.17 **Open spaces:** There will be at least 17 hectares of accessible open space. Formal open-air sports pitches will be provided at the western end of the site. The draft SPD makes no assumptions about the use to which the pitches will be put or the local clubs which will use them. However, it is expected that the pitches will be used to the maximum benefit of the local community. Alongside the sports pitches there will be a local park. Elsewhere on the site there will be two large areas for informal recreation: the woodland in the southern part of the site; and an area of open space at the far eastern end of the site.
- 4.18 **Vehicle access:** Consistent with the expectations set out in the Core Strategy, the vehicle access serving the new development at Wilton Park should be a new road taken from the northern section of the Pyebush Roundabout. It should be carefully designed so that, in accordance with Core Policy 14, it is capable of future upgrading and extension to form an A355 Relief Road, whilst also helping to deliver a development that is accessible and well linked to its surroundings. The access road will form part of the first phase of the new development, allowing it to be used by the Wilton Park construction traffic. The route of the access road across the site should run broadly parallel with the western boundary of Wilton Park towards Minerva Way.
- 4.19 **Cycle and pedestrian access:** Minerva Way will be retained and enhanced as a safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle route. It will be closed to private vehicle access, save for the existing houses located near to the London End Roundabout. It is expected that London End Roundabout itself will be reconfigured or remodelled to make improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists whilst maximising the performance of the junction for vehicles.
- 4.20 **Bus access:** The use of Minerva Way for two-way bus operation is constrained by its width and by the geometry of the junction with London End Roundabout. Although the draft SPD acknowledges that there may be scope for one-way bus use of Minerva Way, this is unlikely to present an adequate

public transport solution for Wilton Park. Other options will be bus access from an A355 Relief Road (by re-routing existing services) or via the Pyebush Roundabout.

- 4.21 **Infrastructure delivery:** Prior to the granting of planning permission, the applicant will need to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure can be put in place within agreed timescales. As well as those elements referred to above, and utilities and essential services, the developer will be expected to meet the demands for new school places arising from the proposals for Wilton Park. The scale of development will not require a new school, but additional primary school places will be required for Beaconsfield and additional secondary / grammar school places in the wider area serving South Bucks. If additional health care facilities are required to support the new development, these may be provided either on-site (as part of the community hub) or off-site, funded through Section 106 contributions.
- 4.22 The applicant will also be required to demonstrate the arrangements that have been put in place for the management and maintenance of sports, recreation, open space and community facilities. It is anticipated that the developer will construct the facilities and that these will be transferred into a separate management company (not the local authority) which will then be responsible for long-term management and maintenance.

#### **Next steps**

- 4.23 Subject to the Portfolio Holder approving the Wilton Park Development Brief Draft SPD, it is intended that a 6 week period of formal public consultation will commence early in 2014. This is longer than the minimum 4 weeks now required by the latest (2012) Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The longer consultation period reflects the significance of the site for Beaconsfield and for South Bucks District as a whole and the exceptional level of public interest in the exhibition held earlier this year.
- 4.24 There will be information about the consultation on the Council's Web Site, and those on the Council's planning policy consultation database will be informed of the opportunity to comment. A response form will be provided for people to record their comments. Copies of the draft SPD and supporting documents will be placed in local libraries, with Beaconsfield Town Council and Gerrards Cross Parish Council and at the District Council offices.
- 4.25 At the end of the consultation period, the consultation responses received will be duly considered and amendments will be made to the draft SPD where appropriate. It is intended that a revised SPD will then be presented to a future meeting of Sustainable Development PAG. Following that, subject to the views of Members of the PAG and the Portfolio Holder's approval, Cabinet will be asked to consider the SPD for formal adoption.

#### **5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications**

- 5.1 The Wilton Park Development Brief Draft SPD has been prepared within the framework of a PPA between South Bucks DC and Inland Homes plc and between Buckinghamshire County Council and Inland Homes plc. The PPA has ensured that sufficient resources have been available to the District Council to support the preparation of the draft SPD. The scope of the work required by the District Council on the draft SPD has increased substantially as a result of the extended work programme and because the Council took a much greater role in drafting the draft SPD than originally envisaged in the PPA (dated November 2012). The PPA between South Bucks DC and Inland Homes plc was therefore extended in October 2013 to cover the period until July 2014.
- 5.2 The cost of the consultants work to prepare the Sustainability Appraisal Report, Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report, Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report and Consultation Report, and the costs of the design work on the draft Development Brief SPD, have been met by Inland Homes plc within the terms of the Planning Performance Agreement.
- 5.3 Officers will liaise with Legal Services to ensure that the consultation arrangements comply with the relevant Regulations and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

## 6. Summary

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Sustainable Development PAG advise the Portfolio Holder to approve the publication of the draft Wilton Park Development Brief SPD (subject to any further amendments required and agreed in consultation with the Head of Sustainable Development) for a six week period of public consultation, starting early in 2014.

<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Alison Bailey, Principal Planner - Policy, 01895 837247</b> <a href="mailto:alison.bailey@southbucks.gov.uk">alison.bailey@southbucks.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>Available in the Members Room and to be published alongside the Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation</b>  Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document - Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report (November 2013)  Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document - Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report (November 2013)  Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document - Public Consultation Statement (December 2013)  Wilton Park Development Brief Draft Supplementary Planning Document - Sustainability Appraisal Report (November 2013)