

Executive Summary

1. This report sets out the consultation that has taken place in relation to the Slate Meadow Development Brief and provides an assessment of the consultation responses received during the most recent consultation period.
2. The development brief has been drawn up following extensive work analysing the planning issues and opportunities for future development in this area which is reserved for development within the Council's Core Strategy.
3. It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the development brief which has been amended in response to the consultation responses.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

4. The Slate Meadow Development Brief has implications for the Community Strategy:
 - Growth and prosperity – The future development will provide much needed housing including affordable housing. Construction jobs will be created during the construction period. The brief proposes improvements to physical connectivity for walking and cycling.
 - Strong communities –It secures additional public open space for the local population. The process has brought different sections of the community together in the Liaison Group.
 - A great place to be – the brief proposes a landscape lead approach to development that improves the biodiversity of the site. It provides new homes, a percentage of which will be affordable. The development brief encourages a form of development that will minimise the future risk/fear of crime and therefore contribute to the creation of a safe place to live.
 - Efficient and effective – the brief has had considerable input from our Members and Officers and seeks to set out the clearly how the site can be developed in the right way. It has sought to allay the fears of the local population through an open and transparent process.

Background and Issues

5. Slate Meadow was one of five sites reserved in the Council's Core Strategy 2008 as a location for future development (Policy CS8). A major public consultation took place on the New Local Plan from February to April 2014.

This re-stated the need for the development of the reserve sites. The summary leaflet stated “*We expect to see these sites developed in the next few years*”. On November 17th 2014 the Cabinet agreed to release the five strategic development sites to contribute towards meeting housing needs. In June 2016 consultation on the emerging New Local Plan took place, which proposed the allocation of Slate Meadow for residential development in line with the draft Development Brief. The site is now formally proposed for allocation in the Publication version of the New Local Plan approved by the Council in October 2017. The Plan is due to be submitted in March 2018 for its public examination.

6. The development brief covers the whole of the site including the designated Village Green. Slate Meadow is in multiple ownerships. The majority land owners are Avant Homes, the Village Green is owned by Wycombe District Council and the third major landowner is Croudace Strategic. There are two other small scale land holdings; no development has been proposed on those holdings. The development of the site is being promoted by Avant Homes and Croudace Strategic. Wycombe District Council are not party to that promotion. Both Avant Homes and Croudace Strategic have been closely involved in the production of the development brief.
7. If and when adopted the development brief will provide up to date planning guidance for Slate Meadow. Development proposals will be expected to have regard to the contents of the brief and the brief will be a material consideration for the Planning Authority when planning decisions are made. It is not possible at this time to adopt the brief as a Supplementary Planning Document as the site has only been reserved for future development in the current Local Plan and has not been allocated for development through the plan, but the opportunity to do this will not be prejudiced by adopting the brief as planning guidance at this stage.
8. A Liaison Group, which comprises local ward Members, members of the public and other interested parties, including representatives of the Parish Council, Revive the Wye, Wycombe Wildlife Group, The Chiltern Society, local action groups and residents associations has been set up to consider the sites development and has met on a number of occasions (16 occasions in total including a workshop). The Liaison Group has received update reports on planning issues and has been discussing development issues that affect the site. The development brief has been through two rounds of Liaison Group consultation and 1 full public consultation. Therefore, individuals from the liaison group and wider public have had an opportunity to comment on the brief.

Consultation

9. The release of the Slate Meadow site and preparation of the development Brief has been the subject to extensive public engagement and consultation.

10. Following release of the reserve sites by Cabinet, which includes Slate Meadow, a public workshop took place on 14 March 2015. The workshop was managed by AR Urbanism (Urban Design consultancy) and Phil Jones Associates (Transport) and took place from 10:00 – 15:00. The workshop was attended by 98 people. The purpose of the workshop was to allow the community to identify key issues and influence thinking on the site at the earliest opportunity. Officers and the developers participated in the workshop.
11. Following the workshop a liaison group was set up, which comprised members from various locations around the site, representatives from the local community groups and elected ward and parish members (16 liaison group members in total). Representatives from the Council and development teams have been present at the majority of liaison group meetings. The liaison group met 16 times through 2015, 2016 and 2017 to discuss issues as the development brief evolved. The discussions that have taken place during those Liaison Group meetings have influenced the development brief and officer negotiations with the developers.
12. The public consultation exercise went from 21 August to 2 October 2017 and included a two day drop-in event on Friday 8 September and Saturday 9 September at St Dunstan's Church Hall in Bourne End, both days were very well attended.
13. Over the course of the preparation of the development brief the Liaison Group has had a significant and ongoing impact on the content of the Brief. In particular Liaison Group members have influenced:
 - a) The quantum of development proposed, both in terms of dwelling numbers and the extent of the developed area (the majority of the site would remain undeveloped).
 - b) The location of the Village Green, whether it should be moved to facilitate the development or retained where it is within the site. The Liaison Group wanted the Village Green to be retained where it is and this has influenced other decisions on the potential layout for the development.
 - c) The potential impact of the proposed development upon flooding in the local area and the need for robust information regarding the impact of developing the site on the surrounding area.
 - d) The retention of an undeveloped gap and the extent and nature of the gap between Bourne End and Wooburn. The gap is located along the western (Bourne End) side of the site following initial consultation with the Liaison Group, this also allows for a 'green' link from the Village Green and open countryside to the River Wye.
 - e) The decision to concentrate open space provision within the site that would provide wetland areas and improvements to biodiversity as well as informal recreation space for existing and future residents.

- f) The decision to have no development accessed from the Bourne End side of the site to reduce the impact on existing residents and the local road network.
 - g) The nature of the undeveloped area and the preference for an ecological rather than recreational focus.
 - h) The provision of a walk/cycle network on the site.
 - i) The provision of additional parking within the site to help ease congestion at school drop off and pick up times.
14. The consultation event resulted in a total of 231 consultation responses, 71 of which were via a feedback form distributed at the public drop in sessions. This included a detailed response for the Liaison Group. A summary of the responses is attached at Appendix 2, these have been categorised under 13 separate headings. The officers response to the comments raised are given adjacent to the comment. Where changes were proposed to the development brief the officer response is set out in red. Where an explanation is given as to why a change has not been made it is provided in black. Many of the comments either objected to any development, related to wider infrastructure issues and/or requests for a level of detail that simply went beyond the scope of the Brief and therefore did not lead to changes.
15. The main additions/alterations to the Brief were as follows:
- a. The updating of the diagrams to provide greater clarity and consistency with the objectives of the brief.
 - b. A requirement to, if possible, use the development to improve flood resilience in the local area by reducing post development water run off rates from the site below current run off rates.
 - c. Reducing the area of the site that could have up to 3 storey development
 - d. Clarifying that roofspans should be no greater than 9m with a 45 degree roof pitch. Wider spans may be acceptable at a lower pitch.
 - e. Requiring improvements in biodiversity and permanent wetland areas
 - f. Requiring the building line to be set back from the western edge of the development to widen the 'gap' between the development and Bourne End.
 - g. Clarification on the capacity of the access to the site and the requirements of the Transport Assessment to be submitted as part of a planning application.
16. As cabinet members will note, a large number of issues were raised through the consultation process. These are addressed in the summary of consultation response attached at appendix 2. The key issues where the public' requests could not be accommodated are as follows:
- a. To reduce the amount of development to 50 units or less.

- b. To have a gap between Wooburn and Bourne End double that proposed in the consultation draft of the brief
- c. To deal with the parking issues at the Parade in Bourne End
- d. To take the potential development at Hollands Farm into consideration and respond to it in the brief.
- e. Not to have any three storey development
- f. To have a development density of only 15 dwellings per hectare (the proposed density is approximately 32 dwellings per hectare)
- g. To deal with the existing off site flooding issues in Cores End

17. Appendix 1 contains the Slate Meadow Development Brief [February 2018]. This document is the consultation draft updated to reflect the consultation responses and is intended to be the final adopted brief. This will follow the delivery of the Cabinet papers. The version of the brief that was the subject of the public consultation can be viewed on the Council's web site (see link below).

Options

18. The options include:
- (a) Adopt the Slate Meadow Development Brief [February 2018] as recommended.
 - (b) Refer the brief back to Officers with direction for preparation of further amendments.
 - (c) Do not adopt the brief.
19. The lack of an adopted Development Brief for Slate Meadow would leave the authority without detailed planning guidance which is critical in shaping the future development of the site. Consequently, option (a) is recommended.

Conclusions

20. It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the Slate Meadow Development Brief [February 2018] as a planning document that will have weight in the future decision-making process in the planning of the Slate Meadow area.

Next Steps

21. If adopted, the brief will be published as the adopted brief and attract weight in any future decision making. Pre-application discussions are already underway and will be informed by the Brief.

Appendix

1. Development Brief [Draft for adoption].
2. Summary Comments and responses to issues raised in the public consultation draft of the Development Brief.

Background Papers

1 Slate Meadow– consultation version:

- <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/About-the-council/Have-your-say/Consultations/Consultation-on-the-Slate-Meadow-development-brief.aspx>

2 WDC web site Slate Meadow page:

- <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/Planning-and-building-control/Major-projects-and-reserve-sites/Slate-Meadow-reserve-site.aspx>

This includes documents relating to earlier workshops and consultation.