

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: Cllr Dennis Smith

**DATE:** 21 November 2017

**REPORT OF:** Business Manager Strategic Place

**SUBJECT:** NA1 Houghton Barton, Newton Abbot - Development Framework Plan

### PART I

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Committee is recommended to:

#### Resolve

1. That the NA1 Houghton Barton, Newton Abbot, Development Framework Plan Supplementary Planning Document (attached to this report as Appendix 1) is recommended to the Executive meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December for adoption.
2. That the findings of the Strategic Environmental Screening Report (attached as Appendix 2) which determines that no Strategic Environmental Assessment is required is noted.
3. That the findings of the Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report (attached as Appendix 3) which determines that the Development Framework Plan will not have a likely significant effect on the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC), subject to appropriate mitigation, is noted.

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the final version of the Development Framework Plan (DFP) for Houghton Barton, Newton Abbot allocation in the Teignbridge Local Plan (Policy NA1), and to recommend its adoption to the next meeting of the Executive.

### 2. BACKGROUND

#### *Teignbridge Local Plan*

- 2.1 The Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 allocates land at Houghton Barton, Newton Abbot for at least 1,800 homes, combined with new employment opportunities, essential transport links, education facilities and community spaces (Policy NA1 of the plan).

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- 2.2 The site covers an area of approximately 160 hectares of land to the west of Newton Abbot. It stretches from Forches Cross on the A382 (Bovey Tracey Road) on the northern boundary of the town, westwards towards the Seale Hayne campus and then south across to the current development site at the former Hele Park Golf Course on the A383 (Ashburton Road). The site is divided into two development areas, separated by a large green corridor.
- 2.3 The Hele Park estate has planning consent for 650 homes which forms the first phase of NA1. The DFP is concerned only with the remainder of the allocation.

### *Planning Applications*

- 2.4 There are a number of relevant extant planning applications which relate to the NA1 allocation but these are not considered to affect the overall delivery of the DFP. There are also four live applications on small parcels within NA1 which are currently pending determination.
- 11/01270/MAJ - extant planning permission at Seale Hayne campus for a mix of uses including: student, respite and staff accommodation; education, medical, administration, function, entertainment, health, sports, rehabilitation and performance facilities; workshops; microbrewery; studios; hotel; galleries and retail; and parking. A start on the works has been made but the permission remains largely unimplemented.
  - 12/00301/MAJ and associated reserved matters applications for up to 650 homes comprising the Hele Park development which forms part of the overall NA1 allocation. This site is currently under construction.
  - 16/02083/FUL – full planning application for two dwellings on the edge of Houghton (hamlet in the north of the allocation). The application is not yet determined.
  - 17/00618/MAJ – outline application at Western House, Howton Road for erection of 32 dwellings. The application is not yet determined
  - 17/02166/MAJ - outline application for up to 20 custom build dwellings on land off . The application is not yet determined.
  - 17/00562/OUT – outline application for three self build dwellings in garden of Main Bow Farm. The application is not yet determined.

### *Preparation of the Development Framework Plan (DFP)*

- 2.5 The preparation of the DFP has been Council-led. It has involved close and continuous liaison with a dedicated Infrastructure Delivery Officer, relevant infrastructure providers, Devon County Council, ecologists, specialist landscape, green infrastructure and heritage officers, representatives from Newton Abbot Town Council, Ward Councillors, and site promoters. The Council also appointed independent expert masterplanners to bring together evidence from ecological surveys, topographic surveys and detailed design work relating to taking the main road linking the A382 and A383 through NA1 to develop a concept masterplan.

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- 2.6 The DFP has evolved through this process and has been further refined following a six week public consultation carried out between 27 February and 10 April 2017.
- 2.7 Two major housebuilders control approximately 90% of the development area of the site. The remainder comprises small parcels of land on the peripheries of the allocation and the employment land at Forches Cross which can come forward independently of the wider site. All parties have been involved in the preparation of the DFP and have confirmed the availability of their land for development.
- 2.8 The DFP has been prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The final version of the SPD, once approved by Executive, will be a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications relating to NA1. The SPD is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, Teignbridge Local Plan and Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2.9 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report have been prepared alongside the DFP and conclude that there will be no likely significant effects of implementation of the plan, subject to necessary mitigations being in place. These are attached to this report in Appendices 2 and 3.

### *Finalising the Development Framework Plan*

- 2.10 The public consultation carried out earlier this year generated 49 responses from a mixture of local residents, interest groups, landowners, developers, statutory consultees and local infrastructure providers. The comments raised have been carefully considered and, where appropriate, changes have been made to the final version of the DFP. All changes are highlighted in a tracked changes version of the DFP appended to this report as Appendix 1.
- 2.11 There are a number of key issues which were raised during the consultation and which have resulted in amendments to the DFP. These are summarised below:
- **Illustrative masterplan:** during the public consultation exercise it was evident that there was some confusion as to the status of the Illustrative Masterplan included within the draft DFP as Appendix C. For clarification, the purpose of the Illustrative Masterplan is to simply provide an interpretation of how the policy requirements and principles set out in the DFP can be delivered on site. However, it should not be considered to be entirely consistent with the final layout agreed at the planning application stage. This is because more detailed surveys and studies will be required at the planning application stage which may result in more effective layouts being negotiated which respond to site specific detail, such as drainage channels, ecology, protection of heritage assets and landscape etc. The status of the Illustrative Masterplan has therefore been clarified in paragraph 1.12 of the DFP which emphasises that some variations in layout can be achieved whilst still meeting the requirements of the DFP.

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- **Houghton:** There were various responses which raised concern about how the development would impact on the setting of the hamlet of Houghton and the listed buildings within it. References were made to earlier draft versions of the Local Plan which indicated a stronger green buffer separating the hamlet from the new development. Following conversations with the residents and local County Councillor, it has been agreed that for the purposes of respecting the setting of these existing properties and the heritage assets contained within Houghton, green spaces encircling the hamlet will be supported. This is therefore expressed in paragraph 5.2 of the final DFP and reflected in the Illustrative Masterplan.
- **Employment land provision:** there were concerns raised about how draft DFP did not plan for the full amount of employment land within the development area and therefore the proposal to meet the shortfall off site. This was proposed in the draft DFP based on an understanding of site capacity and the need to incorporate other policy requirements on the site. Following the consultation we have further explored on site employment opportunities to reduce the amount of off-site employment land provided. By proposing an area of c.1ha within the southern part of the Seale-Hayne campus by the sports hall for smaller format workshop and SME premises and by acknowledging that the school will provide a source of employment, the amount of employment land proposed on site has increased from 10.6ha to 13.5ha. This leaves a remainder of 4.5ha to be provided on suitable land off site. Table 2 of the DFP has been updated accordingly.
- **Heritage assets:** through the consultation, Historic England requested that greater emphasis was given to the historic assets of Stover Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) and the Parish Church of All Saints, Highweek (Grade 1). It was recommended that further consideration was given to these in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer. The Heritage section of the DFP at paragraph 5.7 has been redrafted accordingly.
- **Play provision:** achieving good quality and access to play and open spaces was seen to be of greater importance than the overall quantity provided on site. As such, paragraph 4.31 of the DFP has been reworded to remove reference to a specific number of Locally Equipped Areas of Play. Instead, the DFP emphasises the need to provide three larger Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play with other smaller areas of play to be provided throughout the site linked to the network of foot and cycle paths and within 240m walking distances to provide suitable coverage for access to facilities.
- **Greater Horseshoe Bats (GHBs):** various comments were received relating to the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report which accompanied the draft DFP. The comments mainly related to uncertainty about the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures and the evidence on which the HRA was based. Following consideration of

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these comments, the HRA has been revised in consultation with Natural England and the Council's ecologists and a final version is appended to this report at Appendix C. The final version of the HRA has explained that the mitigation measures are based on the creation and maintenance of habitats that are known to be associated with GHBs and that the level of detail available for the purposes of carrying out the screening of the DFP is commensurate with this stage of the plan making process. Both the HRA and DFP are clear that further surveys will be required at the planning application stage alongside a Bespoke Bat Mitigation Plan to ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided as part of the development.

- 2.12 A full response to each of the comments made will be provided on the Council's website (<https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planning/local-plans-and-policy/development-framework-plans/na1-houghton-barton-newton-abbot/>).

### *NA1 Policy Criteria*

- 2.13 The following section sets out the allocation requirements and how they are clarified and amplified in the DFP. An Illustrative Masterplan has been prepared which is included in Appendix C of the DFP.

**“A site of approximately 160 hectares is allocated at Houghton Barton to deliver a sustainable, high quality mixed-use development which shall:**

- a) **Include a comprehensive landscape and design led masterplan for the strategic site allocation, produced with meaningful and continued input and engagement from stakeholders;...”**
- 2.14 The DFP comprises the ‘masterplan’ referred to in criteria a). Its preparation has involved meaningful and continued input and engagement.
- b) **deliver 18 hectares of land for employment development, for office, general industrial or storage and distribution uses as appropriate to the site and its wider context, ensuring that there is also a mix of unit size to enable businesses to start up and expand; support will also be given to employment generating uses provided that they are compatible with the immediate surroundings and do not conflict with town centre uses;**
- 2.15 On site employment totalling 13.5ha is proposed within NA1 at Forches Cross, the southern area of the Seale-Hayne campus (close to the sports hall) and within the neighbourhood hub. This is in addition to support for additional employment uses at Seale-Hayne and 0.9ha employment land already permitted at Hele Park. The employment uses will primarily comprise use class categories B1 (business), B2 (general industrial), B3 (storage and distribution), with a smaller proportion of A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services) and other employment generating uses.
- 2.16 Any shortfall in on site provision of the 18ha required by Policy NA1, or at less than the equivalent of 100 jobs per hectare, is proposed to be delivered through

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S106 financial contributions to fund the delivery of serviced employment land offsite, or suitable land provided off site in lieu of on site provision.

**c) deliver at least 1,800 homes with a target of 20% affordable homes;**

2.17 The Hele Park development has permission for 650 houses which leave 1150 to be delivered on the rest of the site. The Illustrative Masterplan (see Appendix C of the draft DFP) demonstrates that this can be achieved. The DFP confirms the target of 20% affordable housing and the requirement for 5% of the plots to be available for custom build.

**d) secure delivery of 24 Gypsy and Traveller pitches;**

2.18 The amount of land required for pitch provision affects the capacity of the site to deliver other policy requirements which need to be accommodated on site. As such, it is proposed that where an applicant has identified a more suitable and available alternative site option(s), the provision of the 24 gypsy and traveller pitches offsite will be considered. A location for these pitches has not therefore been identified as part of the Illustrative Masterplan.

**e) provide land and buildings for social and community infrastructure accessible to all, including land for a children's centre, local shops, community facilities and a site of 1.9 hectares for one new 420 place primary school including early years provision;**

2.19 A neighbourhood hub is proposed towards the centre of the allocation to include the following uses:

- 1.9ha primary school site including early years provision and an outreach children's centre facility;
- 'high street' comprising food and non-food retail units;
- Neighbourhood square;
- Multi-purpose community building (incorporating primary healthcare provision);
- Car parking;
- Multi Use Games Area;
- Bus stops, cycle parking and electric car charging points;
- A2 and B1 employment units.

2.20 The neighbourhood hub will be the focus for bringing together community, education and retailing facilities in a central location to provide important services for residents.

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**f) create a vehicular route connecting the A382 with the A383;**

2.21 A main road will pass through the development connecting the A382 with the A383. A preferred alignment for the road has been determined through feasibility and design work undertaken by Devon County Council (DCC) and it is the intention that an application is submitted for the road in 2018.

2.22 In order to facilitate the delivery of the new main road, the Council has secured ownership of a small area of land central to the development, linking the south western parcel to the north eastern parcel. This has been secured via a funding agreement with the Government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which enables delivery of this critical road infrastructure alongside a small development of 20 homes. Securing this land has enabled a better route for the road in terms of appearance landscape impact, achievability and viability. The route effectively cuts off a corner of a field which results in a suitable site for a small housing development. This development will be surrounded by the new main road and areas allocated for housing that form part of the NA1 site. This area of land is currently the subject of a live planning application (17/02166/MAJ).

2.23 Sibelco have raised concerns about the alignment of the main route at Forches Cross due to their minerals interests in the area. The Framework text has been amended at paragraph 4.22 to indicate that alternative road alignments may be appropriate where the allocated uses at Houghton Barton remain viable and deliverable. If this is the case, it may be appropriate to implement a more southerly alignment across the employment land at Forches Cross than the option shown on the illustrative masterplan at Appendix C.

2.24 A network of secondary, tertiary and mews streets will feed off the main road to serve different parts of the development. Notably, the DFP requires dedicated links to the Seale-Hayne campus and the primary school which are suitable for coaches and larger vehicles accessing the sites.

2.25 Walking and cycling routes will connect different parts of the development as well as link the development to the town centre. These will consist of both on and off road cycle routes.

**g) provide high quality designed landmark developments as the gateways to the town along the A382 and A383;**

2.26 The development will be expected to comprise a layout, design and density that accords with the Council's emerging Design Guide SPD to achieve a high quality development. This will involve a mix of densities across the site, varying from 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) towards the edge of the development to higher densities of between 40-60 dph within the neighbourhood hub and on frontages to green and public spaces.

**h) create a network of green infrastructure that contributes to the overall strategic network; and**

**k) create areas for local food production;**

**m) provide formal and informal recreation space within the development;**

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2.27 The DFP makes provision for green infrastructure, public open space, allotments and play and recreation facilities across the site. The key spaces proposed are:

- Houghton Barton Common - forming an area of parkland in the western area of the site;
- Houghton Valley Park - forming an area of publicly accessible natural green space with a biodiversity function within the central 'wedge' of green infrastructure;
- 23 full sized allotment plots to the north west of Mead Farm; and
- A combination of young people and children's play areas and other play facility opportunities, including a minimum of three Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPS) and a number of smaller Locally Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP). These will be provided throughout the site linked to the network of foot and cycle paths.

- i) **protect and positively enhance biodiversity habitats for greater horseshoe bats sustenance zones and flyways; and**
- o) **a bespoke Greater Horseshoe Bat mitigation plan for Houghton Barton must be submitted and approved before planning permission will be granted. The plan must demonstrate how the site will be developed in order to sustain an adequate area of non-developed land as a functional part of the foraging area and flyway used by commuting Greater Horseshoe Bats associated with the South Hams SAC. The plan must demonstrate that there will be no adverse effect on the SAC alone or in combination with other plans or projects.**

2.28 There is a presence of Greater Horseshoe Bats (GHBs) on the site which are protected by European legislation and form part of the South Hams SAC. A Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening has been carried out and recommends a number of mitigations to ensure that there will not be a 'likely significant effect' on the SAC. These include maintaining and optimising commuting habitat for GHBs and a requirement for a Bespoke Bat Mitigation Plan alongside applications for development.

- j) **maximise opportunities for either the generation of on-site renewable energy at a domestic scale or community scale renewable energy generation;**

2.29 The development will be required to put in place a Carbon Reduction Plan to minimise energy use and secure carbon emission reductions on the site.

2.30 Additionally, the development may seek to supply the development through a district heating network. A technical assessment has been undertaken which concludes that the provision of such could be feasible but this will need to be considered against other policy requirements for the development at the time an application is submitted.

- l) **support proposals that protect the long-term use and setting of the listed buildings at Seale Hayne and enable the campus and uses on site to form part of the new community;**



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2.31 Seale-Hayne is the campus to the north of the allocation and the base of the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust. The DFP proposes a new dedicated access to the site via the 'main road' and supports the types of uses which form part of the extant planning permission as well as the sensitive conversion or redevelopment of parts of the site for a mix of residential, employment, commercial and community uses.

n) **avoid sterilisation of ball clay resources or prevent future extraction and areas for tipping of spoil;**

2.32 The allocation lies in the Bovey Basin, known for its deposits of rare Ball Clay. Only a small part of the site, at Forches Cross, is affected and as such falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. Employment use on this land has been approved in principle through the adoption of the Local Plan because of its overriding importance as part of the delivery of a wider strategic development but any future applications relating to this area would nevertheless need to be considered against Policy M2 of the Devon Minerals Plan.

2.33 The site partially surrounds Ringslade Quarry which is currently being worked. The DFP requires appropriate design solutions to mitigate the quarry's amenity impacts and to ensure security for the quarry and its operations.

### Other Matters

2.34 In addition to the policy criteria set out above, the DFP covers matters relating to existing properties, landscape, archaeology, flood risk and drainage, heritage and parking.

2.35 An infrastructure delivery schedule is included in section 6 of the DFP and sets out what infrastructure and utilities provision is required, indicative costs, and timings and mechanisms for delivery.

### Supporting Documents

2.36 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the DFP is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. The screening concludes that there are no new significant effects likely to arise through the implementation of the DFP that have not previously been identified through the full SA/SEA of the Teignbridge Local Plan.

2.37 A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening of the DFP is attached as Appendix 3 to this report. The screening concludes that, subject to mitigation, the DFP will not have a likely significant effect on the South Hams SAC.

## 3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Piecemeal development of the site through a series of unrelated planning applications would risk undermining the necessary provision of infrastructure, the site's contribution to sustainable development and the availability of local

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facilities. The DFP will help to ensure that the development is brought forward comprehensively, meeting the Local Plan objectives.

- 3.2 There are a few aspects of the DFP which vary slightly from the detail contained in the Local Plan. These variations relate to the provision of some elements of the development offsite and are justified by further work and discussions, including changes in advice from expert consultees and detailed masterplanning work. It is not considered that these variations lead to any conflict with higher tier policy and that, overall, the DFP sets out a framework for meeting the requirements of the Local Plan.

### **4. GROUPS CONSULTED**

- 4.1 Policy NA1 was subject to public consultation and independent examination for the preparation of the now adopted Teignbridge Local Plan. Discussions have since been held with Ward Councillors, Newton Abbot Town Council, site promoters and infrastructure providers, with technical advice from Devon County Council and other specialist officers in the preparation of the draft DFP. The draft DFP was then subject to a formal six week consultation period in February – April earlier this year during which time local residents, businesses and statutory consultees were invited to comment on the draft DFP. Copies of the DFP and its supporting documents were made available at Newton Abbot Library, Newton Abbot Town Council Offices and the Teignbridge District Council office at Forde House. A drop-in event was held at Highweek Village Hall during the consultation period. All comments made during this consultation period have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the final DFP.

A summary of the main issues raised in the consultation are set out in the Statement of Public Participation (Appendix 4).

### **5. TIMESCALE**

- 5.1 The final version of the DFP will be reported to Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> December to seek formal adoption of the DFP as a Supplementary Planning Document.

### **6. JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.1 The DFP will support decision-making to bring forward appropriate development in this location, implementing the Local Plan policies and supporting the provision of a five year supply of housing land within Teignbridge.

**Simon Thornley**  
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