



**REPORT TO: PLANNING & REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
19 APRIL 2016**

**SUBJECT: DRAFT ELGIN SOUTH LONG MASTERPLAN
SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the draft Elgin South LONG Masterplan and asks that the Committee agree the Masterplan as draft supplementary guidance for public consultation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the review and preparation of strategic and local plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) note the content of the draft Elgin South LONG Masterplan;**
- (ii) approve the draft Masterplan, with the additions set out in Appendix 5, as draft supplementary guidance for public consultation for an 8 week period; and**
- (iii) agree that responses to the consultation be reported to a future meeting of this Committee along with the final Elgin South LONG Masterplan Supplementary Guidance for approval.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site subject to the draft Masterplan is identified in the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 (LDP 2015) as "LONG 2 South", one of two long term designations identified to provide a strategic view of the future direction of growth for Elgin and allow for infrastructure and landscaping enhancement/mitigation measures to be progressed. The site extends to approximately 205 hectares and represents a significant long term expansion of the city. LONG sites are embargoed from development during the period of the LDP 2015,

unless the Council is convinced that their early release is justified, which is assessed annually against the triggers agreed at this Committee on 24 June 2015 (para 4 of minute refers) and set out in the Technical Note in **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 In addition to the triggers for release of LONG sites, the LDP 2015 identifies a number of more site specific requirements for Elgin LONG2 South;
- A masterplan must be prepared through collaborative work with the Council. The masterplan will include a vision for the whole site, a spatial framework, broad design principles, landscape and open space proposals, a transportation and accessibility strategy, including offsite improvements to the existing network, details of infrastructure requirements and a delivery strategy, a phasing plan.
 - Developer/landowner must prepare a landscape and planting strategy, to be agreed beforehand and planting must be established before development commences.
 - The open areas to the west of the A941 should be shown as a final phase to allow for the establishment of robust structure planting.
 - Proposals should be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and watercourses should have a 6 metre buffer from development.
- 3.3 The masterplanning of large development areas reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to raise urban design standards, which the Moray Council supports through the introduction of PP3 Placemaking as a primary policy in the LDP 2015, the Council's Urban Design Guide and a programme of masterplans and development briefs.
- 3.4 A Steering Group was set up to co-ordinate the preparation of the masterplan with regular meetings convened to review the proposals. A workshop with a wide range of stakeholders was held on 14 August 2015 and facilitated by Architecture and Design Scotland. The report from the workshop is included as **Appendix 2**.
- 3.5 The draft Masterplan Supplementary Guidance is available to view on the Members Portal and in the Members Lounge. A presentation on the draft Masterplan was made by Springfield Properties to elected members on 9 March 2016. Extracts from the draft Masterplan are included in **Appendix 3** and a full version is included as **Appendix 4**.

4. SUMMARY OF DRAFT ELGIN SOUTH MASTERPLAN

- 4.1 The vision for Elgin South is to create a fully accessible, high quality community which will fit into the landscape setting. The vision seeks to deliver three distinct village forms, designed to complement each other and offer scope for a well-planned, logical programme of phasing.
- 4.2 The proposals have evolved from the stakeholder workshop through an iterative process with the delivery of a new primary school for the south of

Elgin and the proposed Moray Sports Centre being the key drivers for progressing the masterplan. The proposal to establish a new primary school in south east Elgin was strongly supported through the recent consultation carried out by the Education and Social Care service with 91% of respondents supporting this proposal. The potential educational benefits of a new school have been recognised by Education Scotland, including support for the full delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in purpose-built accommodation which is accessible and inclusive to all learners.

4.3 The Masterplan aims to avoid urban sprawl and to deliver approximately 2,500 housing units, 2 primary schools, sports centre, extensive green spaces and community facilities within three new villages in accordance with the requirements of LDP 2015 Policy PP3 Placemaking. The draft Masterplan incorporates the following elements;

- The main village **Linkwood** will provide the key land uses, including the new Moray Sports Centre located immediately west of Linkwood Road and to the east of the former railway line, which is a core path forming a key access spine to the proposed development. Sharing the sports facilities will be a new primary school for the south of Elgin. The primary school and regional sports centre are identified as short term developments in the first phase. A new linear parkland will be developed with a series of greenspaces running along transportation corridors and a Central Park located to the west of the former railway line. The remaining land uses within Linkwood village will include a broad range of residential properties, including affordable homes and a community hub complementary to existing facilities in New Elgin.
- **Easter Linkwood** will be based upon a traditional Scottish village with a hard landscaped town square as a formal space offering scope for all year round activities. The square will be of traditional materials with limited specimen tree planting to provide focal points. The square will be “book ended” with community buildings/facilities with provision in the village for retail uses on ground floors. A new and much needed cemetery for Elgin will be provided to the east of Linkwood Road. Lower density woodland villas will be provided along the south east of the village offering a transition from urban to rural areas.
- **Wester Linkwood** is planned to have 2 central greenspaces linked by a series of green corridors. This village will be a lower density and have more of a soft landscape approach than the other two villages. A second primary school will be provided for, to be built in accordance with future catchment area and school roll forecasting requirements.

4.4 Longer term growth of the scale proposed will require significant improvements to the transportation network, including the following;

- A road access will run from the A941 eastwards connecting to Linkwood Road with a future connection to the A96. The west/east route will be designed to avoid it becoming a rat run and the intersection between this route and the former railway line will be designed to give pedestrians and cyclists the priority over vehicular movements.
 - As details of the A96 and Elgin bypass emerge, future connections will be adapted accordingly.
 - Reducing dependence upon cars and offering choices in terms of public transport, walking and cycling will be key aspirations for the development, with local facilities provided to support a reduction in car dependency.
 - The draft masterplan sets out a car parking hierarchy to ensure a range of parking options are delivered to ensure that the street scene is not dominated by parked cars.
 - The use of cul-de-sacs on the public road network will be avoided to ensure good connectivity throughout the site.
 - A new roundabout will be provided on the A941 and the Council will consider relocating the national speed limit southwards. Similarly, on Linkwood Road and Birnie Road, consideration will be given to relocating the national speed limit southwards. The relocation of the speed limits will be subject to the design of the development, which must enable self-enforcing speed limits.
 - Improvements will be required to Linkwood Road, the junction of Linkwood Road and Reiket Lane and other offsite improvements. The requirement for Linkwood Road is to provide a 6m wide carriageway with continuous dedicated provision for cyclists and pedestrians.
- 4.5 All of the transportation network improvements required will be assessed through a Traffic Modelling exercise which would support and inform the Masterplan. Individual Transport Assessments would be submitted with future planning applications. The phasing of when road linkages and improvements are required will be informed by traffic modelling in support of Masterplan and subsequent detailed planning applications.
- 4.6 Mixed uses are catered for in the three villages with a number of buildings identified for a variety of potential non- residential uses. The mix of uses will encourage activity and support a sense of community. Easter Linkwood will include a mix of retail, commercial, leisure and community activities.
- 4.7 The draft Masterplan identifies a hierarchy of open spaces, both formal and informal ranging from formal parkland at Central Park, to a network of green corridors including allotments, small play areas, structural planting, enhancement of the Linkwood Burn walkway and gateway planting, paddocks and meadows.

- 4.8 The draft Masterplan is considered to support the Council's aspirations for creating high quality and successful "places" in support of policy PP3 in the LDP 2015 and the Council's Urban Design Guide. The 3 village concept leads to a good sense of legibility, which is further established through the design codes and proposed green spaces, road layout, land uses and public art.

Next Steps

- 4.9 Further work is required before approving the final Masterplan as supplementary guidance, this includes;
- Traffic Modelling for the Masterplan, which has yet to be initiated by the developer. The modelling is primarily concerned with the impact of the development on the surrounding road network and identifying improvements that will be required for offsite junctions and other constraints, but will also determine the timing for the provision of a vehicular connection from the A941 to Linkwood Road and the link to the A96.
 - Further detail on design codes to ensure the three different characters of the village and associated spaces are delivered through the life time of the masterplan.
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy to the satisfaction of the Moray Flood Risk Management Team and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

However, it is considered that the draft provides enough information, subject to the additions identified in **Appendix 5**, for consultation purposes. It is proposed that the consultation consists of:-

- A drop in exhibition in Elgin, venue to be confirmed.
- Notification of the draft masterplan and consultation arrangements to go to all relevant stakeholders.
- Press release, internet and social media awareness raising.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Moray 2023: A Plan for the Future/Service Plan

Masterplans will assist in delivering the Council and Community Planning Partnership priorities, such as providing affordable housing, developing a sustainable economy, healthier citizens and safer communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

The preparation of a Masterplan is required for strategic designations such as Elgin LONG 2 South, set out in the LDP 2015. The Masterplan will become Supplementary Guidance and eventually form part of the statutory LDP which planning applications will be assessed against.

(c) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any emerging financial implications will be considered as part of the Council's financial planning process.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on the Elgin South Masterplan supplementary guidance will be carried out within existing staff workloads of the Planning and Development, Development Management and Transportation teams along with other Council services. It is recognised that a significant amount of time has been and will continue to be invested in this masterplan by Council Officers which inevitably impacts on other priorities. However, this "front loading" should reduce the amount of staff resources needed at the pre-application and planning application stages and will improve the quality of outcome delivered on the ground.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities

The Equalities Officer has advised that an Equalities Assessment is not required for the draft Masterplan supplementary guidance.

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Director (Economic Development Planning & Infrastructure), The Head of Development Services, The Legal Services Manager (P&C), The Equal Opportunities Officer, Lorraine Paisey (Principal Accountant), The Transportation Manager, Senior Transport Development Engineer, The Development Management Manager, The Educational Resources Manager, Paul Watson (Senior Education Adviser), The Lands and Parks Officer, Grant Wilson (Waste Monitoring Officer) and Darren Westmacott (Committee Services

Officer) have been consulted, and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

The Housing Strategy and Development Manager has commented that he welcomes the commitment to masterplanning the Elgin South Long designation as a collaborative process between the developer, the Council and other stakeholders. Support the aims of the masterplan to create a high quality, mixed-use neighbourhood and a sustainable, successful community based on the placemaking principles set out in the Urban Design Guide. The proposed status of the Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance will ensure that all future development must adhere to the key design principles of quality and sustainability. As required by planning policy, 25% of the housing provided should be affordable and the affordable housing should be integrated with the other housing tenures. Also expect that the developer will meet policy requirements to provide a proportion of the housing as accessible.

The Moray Access Manager supports the approach outlined for the transportation network to have walking and cycling as key aspirations. The creation of an integrated and fully accessible paths network within the development and linking northwards to the centre of Elgin is essential if reduced dependency on car usage is to be achieved. Suggest that the Moray Local Outdoor Access Forum be targeted as a specific consultee.

Katie Cruickshank (Engineer - Flood Risk Management) has indicated that there are significant outstanding issues in terms of flood risk and drainage which remain unresolved and further technical work has been requested to inform that process as outlined earlier in this report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A draft Masterplan for Elgin South has been prepared by Springfield Properties. Elgin South is identified as a LONG term site in the Moray Local Development Plan 2015.**
- 6.2 The draft Masterplan proposes the development of approximately 2,500 homes, 2 primary schools, Moray Sports Centre and a range of retail and community uses. This will be provided in the form of 3 linked villages, each with their own character and sense of place.**
- 6.3 Significant transportation network improvements will be required to support the level of growth proposed, which it is anticipated will take over 30 years to be fully developed.**

6.4 The draft Masterplan will be made available for public consultation with the final version becoming Supplementary Guidance forming part of the statutory Local Development Plan.

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Background Papers:
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