

Agenda Item

Executive Board

25 June 2008

S7/12



University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document

Summary

The University of Exeter Science Park Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published for public consultation in December 2007. Two reports have now been produced: one summarising the consultation comments received and setting out the proposed responses and the second is the amended SPD incorporating the proposed changes from the draft version. The SPD is recommended to be adopted.

Recommendations

- 1. The amended University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document be adopted to form part of the Council's Local Development Framework**

a) Reasons for Recommendation

To meet the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Council's Local Development Scheme which includes the production of the Science Park SPD. The explanatory memorandum to amendment 2 to the Regulations relating to local authorities functions and responsibilities states that supplementary planning documents are to be the responsibility of an authority's executive and it therefore for the Executive Board to adopt the SPD.

b) Alternative Options

The development of a Science Park to the east of Exeter in East Devon is a proposal in the adopted Devon Structure Plan and is a key element of employment growth east of the City as recognised in the New Growth Point initiative. The alternative to producing a Supplementary Planning Document for the development to provide a basis for the grant of planning permission, would be to include the proposal in the Core Strategy and/or East of Exeter Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP). However, the JAAP has to go through the process required for Development Plan Documents and is not programmed to be adopted until 2010. This would be delaying realising Exeter's economic potential contrary to the Council's aspirations.

Members may suggest other amendments to the document in response to the issues raised.

c) Risk Considerations

The Science Park development is a proposal in the adopted Structure Plan, but it is not in the adopted Local Plan, and has yet to be included in the proposed Core Strategy or East of Exeter Joint Area Action Plan. This Supplementary Planning Document is the best way available in the short term to progress the proposal. It will provide a stronger basis for determining a planning application, and make it less likely to be the subject of challenge, than simply dealing with the proposal as a departure from the Development Plan.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The Council (in conjunction with partner bodies – Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, the Met Office and the University of Exeter) has commissioned the consultancy firm Atkins to produce the SPD. The total cost of the commission being £63,000 and the East Devon District Council contribution being £17,666 (other contributors are Devon County Council £17,666, Exeter City Council £17,666 and Exeter University £10,000) The East Devon Local Development Scheme provides policy and timetable considerations for SPD production.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Not applicable.

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 On 4 July 2007 (Minute *47) the Executive Board endorsed the UESP Business Plan and resolved, subject to conditions, to make an investment in the development of the Science Park. On 1 August 2007 (Minute *55) the Executive Board, having considered the responses received to the Issues and Options Report for the UESP, approved for public consultation the Draft UESP Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.2 In April 2008 the South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA) announced it had agreed to invest up to £19 million to enable Devon County Council to buy the land required for the Science Park and provide the infrastructure to open up the Science Park by 2010. In addition SWRDA also acquired land needed for the major M5 Junction 29 improvements which will unlock the full potential of the East of Exeter Growth Area.
- 1.3 The Draft SPD was made available for public consultation for a six week period commencing in January 2008 with comments required by 11 March 2008. An exhibition of the proposals was held at Sowton Village Hall on 7 February 2008.

2.0 Procedure for SPD Production

- 2.1 The SPD will form a part of the East Devon Local Development Framework. Having considered the comments received on the Draft SPD and a statement setting out the main issues raised in the representations and how these main issues have been addressed in the SPD the Council intends to adopt it is for the Executive Board to adopt the final version of the document as SPD.
- 2.2 The Regulations require that as soon as reasonably practicable after the Council adopt the SPD it must;
 - a) make available for inspection at the places the SPD was made available i) statement of the issues raised in representations and how these have been addressed; ii) an adoption statement, and iii) the SPD
 - b) publish on the Council website, the statement (a(i) above) and adoption statement (a(ii) above).
 - c) send the adoption statement to anyone who asked to be notified of the SPD.
- 2.3 Following adoption there is a three month period during which any person aggrieved by the SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt the SPD
- 2.4 Running in parallel and integrated with SPD production is a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SA/SEA) of the SPD. A Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment for the SPD was published in January 2006. This was the subject of consultation with statutory bodies,

Parish Councils, Ward Members and adjoining residents. A copy was placed in the members' area and was reported in The Knowledge on 27th January 2006. The responses received were considered in the preparation of Issues and Options. The SA/SEA is a formal requirement, and is designed to ensure that key environmental and sustainability issues, and potential impacts, are considered at the SPD preparation stage, and before any development proposals begin to emerge. In this way it is intended that the advice given in the SPD meets best and most appropriate sustainability standards and objectives. A copy of the Sustainability Appraisal has been placed in the members' area.

3.0 Changes to the Draft SPD

3.1 28 organisations and individuals submitted comments on the draft SPD most of which were positive and have resulted in amendments being proposed which will improve the SPD. A table of the comments received and the proposed response together with a copy of the proposed final version of the SPD is attached. The main changes proposed (with references to the paragraph numbers in the revised SPD) are set out below.

3.1.1 The main issue for local residents was the use of the local roads with some individuals wishing to see the Blackhorse Lane in particular remaining open and others seeking its closure. At a meeting with local residents and ward members in September 2007 residents were in favour of closing Blackhorse Lane and Tythebarn as soon as possible. The Area Engineer (East) wrote to Broadclyst and Clyst Honiton Parish Council on this issue but Broadclyst Parish Council thought it was too soon to take a decision and Clyst Honiton Parish Council, whilst agreeing to the closure in principle felt that more detailed information was required. The amended SPD simply states that it may be preferable that some of the lanes cease to be used as through routes for private cars in due course and sets out the procedure that would be followed if such closure is proposed.

3.2 Section 3 Development Rationale

3.2.1 **Sustainable Design and Operation.** Paragraph 3.6. Change from target of BREEAM Very Good to Excellent, and reference to other emerging assessment standards;

3.2.2 **Construction.** Paragraph 3.9. Inclusion of reference to potential to extract sand from the site to provide for the construction needs of the development.

3.2.3 **Transport.** Paragraphs 3.12 – 3.22. Additional detail and clarification concerning access proposals, Phase I, II and III Access Strategies, and bus access and the High Quality Public Transport link, cycling linkages (in particular to Cranbrook) .

3.2.4 **Development Design.** Paragraphs 3.25 – 3.35. Added references to the site as a gateway to Exeter and the potential for an iconic building or structure, to clusters of buildings at key points as a possible approach to the pattern of development, refinement of comments about building orientation and management of solar gain, added reference to the design principles for buildings reflecting the energy hierarchy (reduce consumption, increase efficiency, meet remaining demand from zero carbon or renewable sources), minimise waste for both building construction and use.

3.2.5 **Landscape Influences.** Paragraph 3.43 expanded to refer to sensitive development within the wooded ridge subject to safeguards. Paragraph 3.47 added referring to the opportunity for the ridgeline to be used as a multifunctional green infrastructure resource linking the developments to the east across the M5 and into Exeter.

3.2.6 **Phasing and Siting of Development.** Paragraph 3.49 expanded to include floorspace provided in phase 1 and 2. Paragraph 3.54 - added reference that the order of development set out is not key to the development pattern and this will respond to demand at the time. Paragraph 3.58 added reference to wildlife corridors providing links/stepping stones for species moving through the landscape and changes elsewhere in the document

to ensure consistent reference to enhancing biodiversity and landscape resources at the site;

- 3.2.7 **Circulation and Access.** Paragraph 3.63. Added reference to the High Quality Public Transport route through the site to be included in the masterplan. Paragraph 3.64. Added a reference to the floorspace that can be provided initially and after the improvements to Junction 29. Paragraph 3.69 dealing with the local roads expanded to state that it may be preferable that these roads cease to be used as through routes for private cars in due course.
- 3.2.8 **Public Access.** Paragraph 3.71. New paragraph referring to the open spaces in the development as forming an open space resource for workers and local residents.
- 3.2.9 **Parking.** Paragraph 3.72 expanded to refer to the need for a clear parking strategy linked to an ambitious modal split target and excellent public transport services from the outset.
- 3.2.10 **Lighting.** Paragraph 3.85 lighting references amended to further emphasise the need to avoid light pollution. Paragraph 3.98 - Reference to need for a Lighting Strategy to be provided with planning applications.

3.3 **Section 4 Securing the Form and Quality of Development.**

3.3.1 **S 106 Planning Obligation**

Paragraph 4.13 The references to hotel and other facilities in para 4.3 of the draft SPD are now included in this paragraph.

3.4 **Section 5 Infrastructure.**

- 3.4.1 **Access.** Paragraphs 5.5 -5.9. Expanded to refer to the UESP not being occupied until the Clyst Honiton Bypass is completed (or access from Junction 29 improvements is available) and the floorspace that can be provided at that time and the further floorspace that can be provided after the Phase 2 Access Strategy is complete. Also reference to pedestrian and cyclist access,
- 3.4.2 **Electrical supply.** Paragraphs 5.11 – 5.13 - amended to reflect Western Power Distribution comments.
- 3.4.3 **Surface Water Drainage.** Paragraphs 5.23-5.26. Text amended in light of Environment Agency comments on the Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy.
- 3.4.4 **Telecoms.** Paragraph 5.28 expanded to refer to need for the most modern and flexible ICT infrastructure required at commencement of development.

3.5 **Section 6 Phasing and Future Growth Options**

- 3.5.1 Paragraph 6.6 expanded to refer to benefits of taller buildings and need to evaluate proposals in the context of the landscape setting and key views into the site and that this issue will be addressed through the masterplan. Reference to predominately low rise (2 – 3 storey) development deleted.

3.6 **Section 7 Requirements of a Planning Application**

- 3.6.1 Reference added to inclusion of a robust phasing strategy in the Parameters Plan. Paragraph 7.7. Reference to full Transport assessment and set of workplace Travel Plans included.
- 3.6.2 Paragraph 7.9. Reference added to need for a design strategy, a detailed Sustainability Assessment, a lighting strategy and a Site Waste Management Plan.

Legal Implications

The procedure for SPD production and requirements post-adoption are clearly identified in the report and accord with the Regulations. No further legal observations.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are as indicated in the report.

Background Papers

- Reports to Executive Board 14 March 2007, 4 July 2007, 1 August 2007 about the proposed Science Park.
- East Devon District Council: University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Issues and options (March 2006).
- East Devon District Council: University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document – Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Devon to 2016 (Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016).

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Executive Board

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