

CABINET

2 SEPTEMBER 2014

ROCHESTER RIVERSIDE – DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND MASTERPLAN

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Rodney Chambers, Leader
Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

The Council has prepared and consulted on a revised Development Brief and Masterplan for Rochester Riverside. This report sets out the comments received during the public consultation; outlines the Council's response to the comments and issues raised; notes the subsequent changes to the revised Development Brief and Masterplan; and seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the 2003 Local Plan.

Please note that the Rochester Riverside Masterplan and Development Brief, Final Supplementary Planning Document (September 2014) (Appendix 1 to the report) has been included within Supplementary Agenda No.1. This has been sent to Cabinet Members, Group Rooms and the Chatham Community Hub. Further copies are also available from the following link:

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=115>

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan establishes a set of strategic parameters and illustrative guidance to steer the future development of the site. The Development Brief and Masterplan provides planning and design guidance to developers and will be used to inform development management decisions.
- 1.2 The Development Brief and Masterplan will supplement Policy S7 of the adopted 2003 Medway Local Plan that designates Rochester Riverside as an Action Area for redevelopment. The Policy states that the 'comprehensive

regeneration of the area will be sought in accordance with a development brief approved by the council'. It is intended that, if adopted, the Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014) will replace the previously adopted 2004 Rochester Riverside Development Brief and 2006 Masterplan.

2. Background

- 2.1 The revised Development Brief and Masterplan for Rochester Riverside establishes a vision for a high quality residential living environment with a complimentary mix of uses. The Brief and Masterplan promote the development of a new neighbourhood which complements historic Rochester, ensuring Rochester's existing and future residents and visitors benefit from the area's regeneration. The Masterplan includes the development of approximately 1,400 new residential units, primarily in the form of family housing, with a range of small office spaces, a hotel, shops and restaurants, and a new 'Station Quarter' focussed around the new Rochester Station. Areas of the site will provide unique settings for high quality food and drink offer and there will be a range of new parks and public spaces. The scheme includes a new primary school as well as other community facilities. The Development Brief embraces a flexible and adaptable Masterplan that is capable of responding to market conditions and the need for a phased approach to development.
- 2.2 Details of the objectives and content of the revised Development Brief and Masterplan have been set out in previous reports to Members, specifically Cabinet on 8 April 2014, and Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 June 2014. Links to these reports and records of the meetings are set out in the background papers at the end of this report.
- 2.3 The revised draft Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan were subject to a 6-week period of public consultation from 28 April to 6 June 2014. This report outlines the comments received during the consultation and the Council's response to the comments and issues raised. The report also outlines changes made to the revised Development Brief and Masterplan in light of the comments received.
- 2.4 The final Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan, dated September 2014 (included as Appendix 1 within Supplementary Agenda No.1.) incorporates the various changes made following the consultation exercise. Cabinet is asked to consider this final version of the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014).
- 2.5 It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the 2003 Local Plan.

3. Options

3.1 It is considered that there are three options:

- To adopt the revised Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document to the 2003 Local Plan.
- To not adopt the revised Development Brief and Masterplan, and continue to use the adopted 2004 Rochester Riverside Development Brief and 2006 Masterplan to guide the development of the site.
- To enforce a market led review of the Development Brief and Masterplan, where developers will bring forward Masterplans for the whole site or each individual phase of development.

3.2 The existing Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan were adopted in 2004 and 2006. Since then there have been significant changes, including physical changes on the ground as well as changes in planning policy and the housing market. While the principles of the previously adopted Development Brief and Masterplan remain valid, some aspects are no longer considered deliverable within a spatial, social, environmental and economic context. Continuing to use the existing 2004 Development Brief and 2006 Masterplan to guide development could limit the potential to deliver the Council's ambitions for a sustainable, high quality scheme.

3.3 Enforcing a market led review, where individual developers would bring forward Masterplans for the whole site or different phases of the scheme would ensure a market led approach. However, there is a risk that the scheme would become fragmented, with different architectural styles and street scenes for the different phases. It would also make it difficult for the Council to enforce delivery of the non-market elements of the scheme – primary school, public parks, community buildings etc.

3.4 Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to adopt the revised Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the 2003 Local Plan.

4. Advice and analysis

Response to the public consultation on the revised draft Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan

4.1 The Council received 22 online responses to the consultation held from 28 April to 6 June and over 300 people attended the project exhibitions on 18, 28 and 29 May 2014. A number of those who attended the exhibitions preferred not to leave comments via the pre-prepared forms, and therefore the project teams noted their comments and suggestions instead.

4.2 A number of national, regional and local organisations also responded to the consultation including the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Rochester Cathedral and the Diocese of Rochester, the Rochester Bridge Trust, the Chatham Maritime Trust, the City of Rochester Society and the South East Regional Design Panel. The Council's Regeneration,

Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee also responded as part of the consultation.

- 4.3 The Council has analysed the comments made in response to the consultation on the revised Development Brief and Masterplan. A summary of the main issues and points raised is set out below. Those responses that were submitted online or through letter submission are set out and summarised in Appendix 2, as well as a summary of the comments received during the Project Shop and Exhibition.

Grounds of support

- 4.4 The general response to the revised draft Development Brief and Masterplan was positive, with the majority of responses being in favour of development. There was endorsement of the overarching proposals, the scale of growth and the character of the Masterplan.

- 4.5 An assessment of the comments made in support of the Development Brief and Masterplan identified a number of commonly recurrent themes. Positive comments were received in regards to:

- The overall design and character.
- The reduced density of the development (in comparison to the previous Masterplan).
- The predominance of family housing.
- The provision of bars and restaurants on the waterfront.
- The links and references to the historic town and the existing urban form.
- The provision of the new public parks.
- The traditional street layout.
- The location of the new Station – benefiting both the riverside and the Town Centre.

- 4.6 There was also recognition of the regeneration and economic benefits the scheme will bring to Rochester and Medway, particularly sitting alongside the development of the new Station.

Concerns and issues raised

- 4.7 While the general response to the Development Brief and Masterplan was positive there were some concerns and issues raised, with a number of common themes. An assessment of all the concerns and issues raised during the consultation identified the following commonly recurrent matters:

- The potential for increased traffic congestion on Corporation Street, Rochester Bridge and Strood.
- The protection of views and vistas – particularly the strategic views of Rochester Castle and Cathedral from Chatham.
- The need for adequate parking provision on site.
- The requirement for appropriate service provision – medical facilities, schools, shops to serve the existing and future community.
- Affordability of housing for local people.

- Connections between the development, river and the existing town and High Street.
- The location of non-residential land uses.
- Lack of landing facilities for visiting vessels.
- Lack of provision of pedestrian bridges over the creeks.
- Lack of clarity over the location of the riverside walk.
- Concerns regarding Castle View Business Park and the provision of a through road through the Business Park.
- Provision of outdoor entertainment/events space on the site.
- 'Back to back' distances between residential units.

4.8 These issues are considered in more detail in the following section of the report. In some cases the Development Brief and Masterplan have been redrafted in light of the concerns raised. Where a change has not been possible, or not considered viable, explanation is provided.

Response to concerns raised

4.9 The main matters raised as concerns are considered below, together with the response.

Traffic congestion

4.10 Concerns were raised that the new development at Rochester Riverside will exacerbate existing traffic congestion on Corporation Street, Rochester Bridge and Strood Town Centre.

Response

4.11 Rochester Riverside is extremely accessible, within easy walking distance of the town centre and railway station. In this context pedestrian and cycle connectivity will be a priority in considering development proposals as they come forward. The Development Brief and Masterplan actively encourage development proposals for the site that will deliver pedestrian and cycle only routes, with connections back to the railway and town centre, thus reducing the reliance on car journeys.

4.12 However, the Council recognises the concerns raised in regards to increased traffic congestion on Corporation Street and Rochester Bridge, particularly with the location of the new Station on Corporation Street. Any development coming forward at Rochester Riverside will need to consider fully the impacts on the existing highway network and junction improvements and other off site transport improvements will require consideration and mitigation. In light of the concerns raised, the Development Brief has been amended accordingly (on page 55) to note the requirement for a full highway impact assessment as part of development proposals.

4.13 The Council has also recently been awarded substantial funding from the Local Growth Fund for 'Strood Town Centre Journey Time and Accessibility Enhancements'. The project will deliver improved access to identified regeneration sites, reduced highways congestion, improve bus journey times and improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists in Strood town centre. It

is anticipated that these improvements will improve connections across Rochester Bridge and the journey times between Strood and Rochester.

- 4.14 The Council was also awarded funding through the Local Growth Fund to implement a 'Medway Cycling Action Plan' to deliver significant growth in utility and recreational cycling in Medway, resulting in reduced car trips.

Protection of key strategic views

- 4.15 English Heritage, the South East Regional Design Panel, Rochester Cathedral and the Council's Design and Conservation Team all raised concerns in regards to the scale of development in some areas of the Masterplan and the potential impact on key strategic views.
- 4.16 It was recommended that the Development Brief should be more specific in regards to the site's historic setting, including the significance of key views from Chatham to Rochester Castle and Cathedral; and that the Brief needed to include specific reference to the key strategic views contained within Medway's Building Heights Policy.
- 4.17 Particular concerns were raised in relation to the height of the two apartment blocks on Blue Boar Wharf (building heights of up to 8 storeys). English Heritage and the Design and Conservation Team felt that these tall buildings could impinge on the key strategic View 1 of the Building Heights Policy – Chatham to Rochester.

Response

- 4.18 After consideration of the comments received, and in recognition of the need to ensure protection of the key view from Chatham to the Castle/Cathedral, the heights of the apartment blocks at Blue Boar Wharf have been reduced from 8 storeys to 5/6 storeys in the Development Brief and Masterplan. The 'Views and Vistas' section of the Development Brief (page 61) has also been redrafted to include specific mention of the Council's Building Heights Policy and views contained within it. The Development Brief now notes that views will need to be considered carefully as part of any development proposals and that detailed proposals for buildings of 5 storeys and above will require a comprehensive visual analysis, and will be evaluated against impact on important views and vistas.

Parking provision

- 4.19 The Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Rochester Bridge Trust, the Chatham Maritime Trust and some members of the public raised concerns regarding the level of car parking on site for residents, visitors and commuters.

Response

- 4.20 The Council's Interim Resident Parking Standards (2010) stipulates minimum parking standards for residential schemes. The policy states that reductions to the standard will be considered if the development is within an urban area

that has good links to sustainable transport and where day to day facilities are within walking distance.

- 4.21 The Development Brief and Masterplan proposes a small reduction to the Parking Standards for Rochester Riverside. This is in recognition of the sites urban context and excellent transport links. Rochester Riverside lies adjacent to the urban core of Rochester and close to amenities and convenience stores. The majority of the site will be within 5 minutes walk of the new railway station once opened.
- 4.22 The Development Brief sets a specific parking standard for Rochester Riverside of average 1.60 parking spaces per residential unit. This is a slight reduction on the Council's Interim Parking Standards of average 1.85 parking spaces per unit. The larger family houses on Rochester Riverside will have two parking spaces and visitor parking, with a small reduction (one to 1.5 parking spaces) for the smaller houses and apartments. Every unit will have at least one parking space. This is an increase in parking provision on the previous 2004 Rochester Riverside Development Brief that included only one parking space per unit, whether they were larger family houses or one-bedroom apartments.
- 4.23 The calculation of the reduced parking standard proposed for Rochester Riverside followed an extensive feasibility and options analysis conducted by the project team, in consultation with members of the Rochester Riverside Board.
- 4.24 The revised standard (1.6 spaces per unit) ensures delivery of the optimum number of residential unit numbers and an economically viable scheme. It also encourages active street scene and quality development (i.e. houses with gardens, tree lined streets). It is considered that the revised standard offers a reasonable number of parking spaces for an urban site.
- 4.25 Adherence to the Interim Standard parking ratio of 1.85 spaces per unit would result in the potential loss of approximately 400 residential units on site (due to the resultant land grab). The substantial loss of units would significantly reduce the viability and deliverability of Rochester Riverside and would likely result in non-delivery of certain phases.
- 4.26 Adherence to the 1.85 parking ratio would also potentially affect the quality of development on site, with little or no landscaping along streets and in front of houses.
- 4.27 Given the previous substantial public investment in Rochester Riverside, the Council has a responsibility to ensure delivery of a viable Development Brief and Masterplan that will attract private sector investment. The Council is also responsible for ensuring the highest quality of development. It is considered that adherence to the Interim parking standards would result in a substantial loss of residential units, would adversely impact on the deliverability of the scheme and would potentially reduce the overall quality of the development.
- 4.28 It was originally envisaged that the Rochester Riverside scheme would deliver 2,000 residential units. The revised Development Brief and Masterplan

reduces unit numbers to 1,400. As noted in 4.25, adherence to the Interim Standards would reduce the overall unit numbers to around 1,000 and bring into question the public benefit, particularly in the context of the historic public investment in the site.

- 4.29 Due to its location near to the town centre and the new high-speed station, additional parking (especially overnight and at weekends) is readily available in the centre and station car parks. The new Station car park will accommodate 250 additional spaces but can be expanded to 400 if there is demand.
- 4.30 Accordingly it is considered that the revised parking standard for Rochester Riverside, as contained within the Development Brief and Masterplan, is the most appropriate option considering the sites urban context and the necessity to deliver a viable, high quality development.

Service provision

- 4.31 Some residents raised queries about the provision of educational and community facilities on site.

Response

- 4.32 The Development Brief and Masterplan advocate a 'mixed used' scheme with both residential and non-residential uses. The Development Brief includes provision for a new primary school, community centre and health facilities, as noted on page 59 of the Brief.

Affordability of housing

- 4.33 Some residents raised queries about the level of affordable housing within the scheme.

Response

- 4.34 The Development Brief notes that the Council's policy target is to seek at least 25% of homes to be affordable homes, and this applies to Rochester Riverside.

Connections between the Town Centre/High Street and the river

- 4.35 Some concerns were raised in regards to the integration of the development with the existing community and Rochester High Street. The South East Regional Design Panel recommended a review of the location of Limehouse Gardens and the 'ordinary' street layout on the northern edge of the site in order to create a stronger east-west grain and connections between the town and river.

Response

- 4.36 A principle objective of the Masterplan has been to establish a clear structure of east-west connections between Rochester Town Centre/High Street and

Rochester Riverside, responding to existing links off the High Street and improving connections and crossings across Corporation Street. In order to embed this sense of integration between Rochester and the waterfront, the Masterplan seeks to extend this east-west grain, forming the basis of a successful network of residential streets leading to the waterfront.

- 4.37 However, in light of the consultation feedback, and comments of the Regional Design Panel, Allies and Morrison reviewed the layout of some streets within the Masterplan, particularly those within phases to the north of the site. As a result, the street layout of phases 4b and 5 has been remodelled. Both phases still contain linear streets but the layout has been altered to create a stronger east-west grain, strengthening the connections between the town and the river, and connecting Limehouse Gardens (the pocket park) to the river.

Location of non-residential land uses

- 4.38 The South East Regional Design Panel, and some residents, questioned the distribution of non-residential uses. It was suggested that more concentrated clusters of activity around the school and new station would ensure a greater chance of success.

Response

- 4.39 The Council employed commercial consultants (GL Hearn) to work alongside Allies and Morrison (urban designers) in the development of the Masterplan. The level of commercial activity has been informed by a robust analysis of current market conditions and trends. The proposals incorporate a modest proportion of non-residential activities that will enliven the riverside and ensure the sustainability of the scheme.
- 4.40 Commercial, community and cultural uses have been carefully clustered to establish a critical mass of activities in key locations. However, in light of feedback from the Regional Design Panel, who recommended that specific uses could be strategically located to benefit from points of connection and attraction, additional ground floor retail space has been added to the cluster of commercial activity around the Station Quarter and Cory's Wharf.

Landing facilities for visiting vessels

- 4.41 Some consultees, including the City of Rochester Society, commented that access to the river should remain an important consideration for Rochester Riverside and that the provision of landing facilities for visiting vessels should be considered.

Response

- 4.42 The Council has long term aspirations to open up the waterfront for leisure and visitor use. The Development Brief has been updated (page 79) to note that there are opportunities for pontoon or landing facilities along the waterfront if it can be demonstrated that they will not adversely impact on existing natural environments.

Pedestrian bridges over the creeks

- 4.43 Some consultees, including the South East Regional Design Panel, commented that provision of pedestrian bridges at one or two key points over the creeks would usefully add to the network of movement routes.

Response

- 4.44 In light of comments received, a pedestrian bridge over Cory's Creek has been added to the Masterplan. However, responsibility for delivery of the structure will be that of the developer(s) and not the Council.

Clarity over the location of the riverwalk

- 4.45 A number of attendees of the Project Shop and Exhibition found the location of the riverwalk difficult to find on the plans contained within the Development Brief.

Response

- 4.46 The riverside walk at Rochester Riverside is a key feature of the site and it will remain in place as the scheme is developed. In light of comments raised, reference to the walk has been made clearer within the Development Brief (pages 78 and 79)

Castle View Business Park

- 4.47 A number of business owners from Castle View Business Park attended the Project Shop and Exhibition, and one business owner also responded with comments via email.
- 4.48 The business owners were very concerned about the provision of a through road through the Business Park, and the impact this could have on access and parking for employees and visitors.
- 4.49 Business owners were also concerned that the Development Brief did not include land use 'B2' within the land use plan for the Business Park. Many of the existing businesses are designated as B2 use.
- 4.50 Concern was also raised in relation to the Council's long-term plans for Castle View Business Park and its inclusion within the Rochester Riverside development.

Response

- 4.51 The Council recognises the importance of Castle View Business Park in terms of the employment it provides and its contribution to the future 'mixed use' development of Rochester Riverside. The intention is for the Park to remain an integral part of the site and for the businesses to remain. The consultation draft of the Development Brief endeavoured to outline ways that the Business Park could be 'future proofed' to ensure its long term survival,

or, if the business owners/freeholders wished to pursue, its redevelopment in the future.

- 4.52 The Castle View Business Park section of the Development Brief (page 95) has been redrafted in light of the concerns raised by the Business owners. The Brief now comments on the importance of the Business Park today, and its integral part it will play in the future success of the site.
- 4.53 Page 58 of the Development Brief (land uses) has been updated to include 'B2' use in the 'distribution of non-residential uses'. It has never been the intention of the Council to re-evaluate the permitted land use for Castle View Business Park. .
- 4.54 In response to comments received, the 'through road' proposal has also been removed from the Development Brief and Masterplan.

Provision of an outdoor entertainment/events space

- 4.55 A number of attendees at the Project Shop and Exhibition, and the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested inclusion of an outdoor entertainment/event space on the site.

Response

- 4.56 In response to the comments raised, Page 57 of the Development Brief (Open Spaces) has been redrafted and now notes that Acorn Park and Furrell's Park offer the potential for small open-air entertainment areas.

Back to back distances between residential units

- 4.57 The Council's Design and Conservation team, and the South East Regional Design Panel, questioned the consideration of 'back to back' distances of residential units and garden sizes.

Response

- 4.58 Page 26 of the Development Brief now references the principles of Medway's Housing Standards Interim (2011) including 'guidance for back to back distances and garden lengths'.

5. Summary of changes to Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan

- 5.1 The Council and its design team have endeavoured to respond to the numerous comments received during the consultation on the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan. Not all comments and suggested changes could be accommodated, as this would have entailed a complete review of the principles of the scheme. However, a number of changes to the Development Brief have been made in response to comments received. These are summarised as follows:

- The Development Brief has been amended to note the requirement for a full highways impact assessment as part of any development proposal or submission.
- The heights of the apartment blocks at Blue Boar Wharf have been reduced, and the 'Views and Vistas' section of the Development Brief has been redrafted to include specific mention of the Council's Building Heights Policy and views contained within it.
- The street layout of phases 4b and 5 has been remodelled to create a stronger east-west gain, strengthening the connections between the town and the river, and connecting Limehouse Gardens (the pocket park) to the river.
- Additional ground floor retail space has been added to the cluster of commercial activity around the Station Quarter and Cory's Wharf.
- The Development Brief has been updated (page 79) to note that there are opportunities for pontoon or landing facilities along the waterfront if it can be demonstrated that they will not adversely impact on existing natural environments.
- A pedestrian bridge over Cory's Creek has been added.
- Reference to the riverside walk has been made clearer.
- The Castle View Business Park section of the Development Brief has been redrafted in light of the concerns raised by the Business owners. The through road has been removed and land use 'B2' has been added.
- The Development Brief now includes reference to the potential for small open-air entertainment areas at Acorn Park and Furrell's Park.
- The Development Brief now includes reference to the principles of Medway's Housing Standards Interim (2011) including 'guidance for back to back distances and garden lengths'.

6. Final Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014)

- 6.1 The final Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan, dated September 2014 (included as Appendix 1 within Supplementary Agenda No.1.) incorporates the various changes made following the consultation exercise. Cabinet is asked to consider this final version of the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014).

7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Poor quality development	Development on scheme is of poor quality and does not meet expectations for high quality mixed used development.	Master plan will set out expectations for high quality development.	D2

Poor market conditions slow progress of development.	Difficult market conditions discourage inward investment in the site.	The Masterplan has been designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing market conditions.	D2
Residents opposition to development at Rochester Riverside	Opposition to plans to develop the site.	The Masterplan and Development Brief has taken account of views expressed during the consultation exercise.	D2

8. Consultation

- 8.1 A full programme of public consultation on the revised Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan took place between 28 April and 6 June 2014. This was carried out in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement that sets out the standards by which consultation on planning policy is conducted.
- 8.2 The consultation sought to provide a range of options in how people could respond.
- 8.3 The consultation included a project shop and exhibition on 18, 28 and 29 May 2014 staffed by members of the Council project team and Allies and Morrison (architects). The exhibition took place at the Rochester Farmers Market and Medway Visitor Information Centre, to ensure convenience for local people. The exhibition took place over the half term week to allow families to attend, and the Farmers Market exhibition was held on a Sunday.
- 8.4 Information on the proposals and the draft Development Brief and Masterplan were published on the Council's website and people were able to submit comments on line. Copies of the Development Brief and Masterplan were available to view at the reception desks of Gun Wharf (Council Offices) and the Medway Visitor Information Centre.
- 8.5 Statutory organisations, interest groups and businesses were notified of the consultation and invited to make their comments.

9 Financial and legal implications

- 9.1 The cost of the masterplan consultancy work and the public consultation costs were met by the Rochester Riverside capital budget.
- 9.2 Preparation of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, including the process of public consultation and consideration of representations, is regulated in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.

9.3 The Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan will be a Supplementary Planning Document, and will be a 'material consideration' in decisions on planning applications for Rochester Riverside.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That Cabinet considers the comments received during the public consultation on the draft revised Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan.

10.2 That Cabinet considers the response to the issues raised and subsequent changes to the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan.

10.3 That Cabinet considers the final version of the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan, Final Supplementary Planning Document (September 2014) (Appendix 1 within Supplementary Agenda No.1.).

10.4 That Cabinet approves the adoption of the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan, Final Supplementary Planning Document (September 2014) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the 2003 Local Plan.

11. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

11.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the adoption of the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (September 2014) as a Supplementary Planning Document to progress work in bringing forward the Rochester Riverside regeneration scheme.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Rochester Riverside Masterplan and Development Brief, Final Supplementary Planning Document (September 2014) (see Supplementary Agenda No.1)

Appendix 2 Summary of consultation responses

Background papers

Medway Local Plan, May 2003
<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Medway%20Local%20Plan%202003.pdf>

Cabinet 8 April 2014 – report and decision
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2767&Ver=4>

Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 June 2014 – report and decision

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=3056&Ver=4>

Draft revised Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan (consultation version)

http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/885_R_140424_Development%20Brief.pdf

Summary of consultation responses

Address	Resident/Organisation	Positive comments	Negative comments and/or suggested changes
St Margaret Street	Resident	Like the overall design and character.	Traffic impact on already stretched road system - Corporation St, Rochester Bridge and A2. Traffic congestion should be dealt with.
Marlborough, Wiltshire	Agent acting on behalf of business owner	Ambitions behind the brief are welcomed and supported.	<p>The Brief does not address why development has not been forthcoming in the timescale originally proposed.</p> <p>The terms by which the Council releases land ought to be debated in the brief.</p> <p>The layout of the site could be more imaginative than proposing terraces in the manner shown. Variety could be created through squares overlooking the river.</p>
Moat Homes	Registered provider	The master plan is a practical address of the opportunities on the reclaimed site. Encouraging seeing this level of investment and venturing particularly given the scope of the enabling works involved. The plan utilises the potential to link Rochester with Chatham strategically through comprehensive regeneration.	<p>Only part reference to services inclusion (primary school). Greater explanation of wider educational, NHS & dental etc facilities needed. Additionally, as the site is effectively land locked between the river Medway and the main line railway, has the interface/access with each been considered to best effect?</p> <p>Needs to be further proposal towards</p>

			traffic infrastructure given the obvious impact further to the completion of all phases.
Rochester Gate	Resident		Site lies within serious traffic bottleneck. Brief contains no thought on ameliorating the seriously increased problems.
York Road	Resident		Difficult to get a really good sense of how much space/how many shops & restaurants there will be. Need more waterside bars, restaurants and some shops.
Unknown	Unknown		<p>No reference to a supermarket being included. The current problems encountered crossing Rochester Bridge to get to the '4' supermarkets in Strood can only become worse with the number of additional households proposed.</p> <p>A new supermarket in Rochester Riverside would make life much easier for current residents as well, by not having to cross the Bridge, sometimes in horrendous traffic, thereby also easing A2 traffic flow.</p>
Ash Crescent	Resident	Welcome the concept of a riverside pedestrian and cycle route.	Seek assurances that the cycle and pedestrian facilities will meet the standards encompassed in the current Sustrans design manual. 20mph speed limit for motor vehicles should apply.

Natural England	National Agency	<p>Natural England is supportive of the reuse of brownfield sites and welcomes the Council's aspiration to provide new publicly accessible open space and links to through and across the site.</p> <p>Overall the Masterplan has covered the areas that Natural England would expect to see in such a document, and has referenced appropriate and relevant legislation.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and the natural environment in the development to ensure the borough's green infrastructure are designed to deliver multiple functions.</p> <p>There is potential to consider inclusion of green infrastructure such as green/brown roofs as well as living walls to help enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the area, which should be delivered as part any phased development.</p>
Unknown	Resident	<p>Good that the riverside is being rejuvenated and that will bring more interest to the area.</p>	<p>No mention has been made with regards to building more medical facilities.</p>
Unknown	Visitor to Rochester		<p>Need to include lots and lots of green areas including trees into the regeneration plans. Plus include many restaurants and coffee shops.</p>
Cuxton Road	Resident	<p>Like the roads being in a straight line, with the east-west structure.</p> <p>Like the idea of 'mews' type buildings.</p> <p>Pleased to see section on materials.</p>	<p>Could have more curves in the road at some places, which will add more interest and character to the overall scheme.</p> <p>Needs to be something to draw people to the riverside – jetty or jetties with boats moored.</p> <p>Great care is needed when deciding where the higher buildings will be sited.</p>

Chapel Houses	Resident		The brutalist, blockish architecture is badly out of touch with the varied rooflines of surrounding buildings and townscapes, from medieval onwards. For posterity should consider far more pitched, angled, curved rooflines.
Meresborough Road	Resident		Unclear how health services both primary and acute, are to be improved and sustained for the additional residents from the new houses. Further strain on health resources. Unaffordable housing. Road congestion.
Prospect Place	Resident		Concerned about potential lack of parking for residents and visitors. If the site is to become a sustainable community and destination in its own right then further parking must be provided.
Maidstone Road	Fund Managers		Adds very little amenity to Rochester. Will add enormous strain to the already stretched services to the area, particularly the road network. The scheme has no anchor attraction. The phasing over such a long time is poor and will end up fragmenting the overall offer. Need: An anchor attraction.

			<p>A greater variety of uses. A big multi storey car park. Better integration to the existing High Street. A wider strategy for traffic management (which needs to include Strood to clear the Medway bridge). More employment uses. More educational uses.</p>
<p>Diocese of Rochester, Rochester Diocesan Board of Education, and Rochester Cathedral</p>		<p>Welcome the Rochester Riverside development as a way of bringing regeneration and a boost to the tourist industry in Medway.</p>	<p>Concerns about interface with the rest of Rochester. Careful consideration needs to be given to how the barrier of the railway can be mitigated.</p> <p>New community must relate well to the existing community. Has to be clear how the new housing and shops will relate to the High Street. Too many straight lines on the development? Concerned that strong sight lines of the Cathedral and Castle should be available from the Riverside, but suggest that glimpses can be as interesting as full views.</p> <p>Plan does not clearly show that the riverside path/spaces are entire and coherent, and capable of allowing activity.</p>
<p>Crow Lane</p>	<p>Resident</p>		<p>Traffic from a 1400 house development will bring vehicle movement to a standstill during busy hours.</p>

Rochester Bridge Trust		The Trust is pleased to see progress being made on the redevelopment of the site, which is hoped will increase the profile of Rochester as a place to live and work, leading to a general improvement in the level of demand for property and much needed support for the High St.	Must be sufficient car parking for the full range of householders. Development must be seen as an integral part of Rochester.
Weston Road	Resident	Like the reduced density and larger units, plus the traditional street layout. Need to provide affordable, market priced family housing. Like the Artist's Impression of Blue Boar Wharf. Good idea to give visitors to the park easy access to retail outlets. Welcome the aspiration to broaden the commercial offer but this should not distract from the High Street.	No reference made to the evening economy and increasing problem of anti social behaviour on Rochester High St. References to public transport, walking and cycling within the document are weak: The proposed main north/south road should be a cycle route. The pedestrian and cycle links to the High Street should be made clear. All roads on the development should have a 20mph speed limit. Document makes no reference to how the development will link to the bus network. No reference is made to set the scheme in context of regeneration of Medway as a whole. Don't like the phrase 'best place to buy a house in Medway' as has negative connotations for other regeneration sites.
Unknown	Unknown	Brief is very aspirational – details will provide the 'proof in the pudding' for the success of the project.	The new report and artwork illustrating the "grain and connectivity" convinces no one that the need to link the development with the city has been fully

			<p>explored - the presence of the embankment and the traffic flows on Corporation Street remain as very significant barriers. Would like to see a high quality hotel on site.</p> <p>Need to make a statement that planning documents for each Medway regeneration area should be considered in relation to each other to give leeway in regards to policy development.</p>
<p>City of Rochester Society</p>		<p>The Masterplan represents a distinct improvement over earlier proposals.</p> <p>The inclusion of a good proportion of terraced housing with gardens is a particularly welcome development, offering attractive family homes.</p>	<p>Some concerns about a continuous 'wall' of development along the waterfront. Some breaks could quite easily be made into this arrangement, allowing spaces to be created adjacent to the riverwalk.</p> <p>Difficult to visualise how the connectivity between the waterfront and historic centre can be achieved.</p> <p>Architecture must be of the highest quality and reflect the diversity of styles and detailing to be found in other parts of historic Rochester.</p> <p>Access to the water must be an important consideration – potential for provision of landing facilities for visiting vessels?</p>

			<p>The Brief is ambiguous about the future of Acorn Shipyard. Shipbuilding and repair have taken place on this site for centuries; its continuation should be encouraged, not least because it can only enhance the diversity and appeal of the riverside scene.</p> <p>Roman/Medieval city wall - it is to be hoped that this structure can be permanently exposed to view as a feature of the regeneration project.</p>
High Street	Resident	Brief appears well considered and represents a significant improvement over earlier proposals. Lower density, mix of residential types and the use of a generally terraced housing model appropriate for an extension of Rochester's historic centre.	<p>Question the logic of the site being predominantly housing. An alternative vision might be of a new urban quarter which itself qualifies as a destination and which more purposefully takes advantage of its situation on the river – by accommodating a cultural destination.</p> <p>Risk that the riverside might become a housing ghetto if not.</p> <p>Does not relate well to the Corporation St Development Brief.</p>
Chatham Maritime Trust	Local Trust/Charity	A very workable design – the result should be an area which is user friendly and good to live in while fulfilling the essential design criteria. Good idea to retain flexibility of housing mix as the market can change very quickly.	<p>Reconsider the phrase 'the best place in Medway to buy a new house' as this does not reflect the numerous assets in Medway.</p> <p>Make more use of the buried Roman Wall to the NW of the site by marking it on the surface in some way.</p>

		<p>Clusters of commercial and community activity are very important in creating a neighbourhood.</p> <p>Agree that proposals should facilitate an accessible waterfront for vehicles.</p> <p>Good to see a mix of uses on the site.</p>	<p>Carports or open parking work much better than garages. There needs to be a system of parking control.</p> <p>No mention of security – the Brief should guide developers to provide a comprehensive CCTV network.</p>
Environment Agency	National Agency	<p>No objection to the revised plan. Satisfied with the flood defence and land raising that has occurred on site.</p> <p>The proposed development levels are in line with previous advice.</p> <p>Revised Masterplan adequately covers constraints related to Groundwater protection and piling design.</p>	<p>Each phase of the proposed development should include a sustainable surface water drainage strategy.</p> <p>Each plot detailed application will be required to undertake relevant supplementary assessment and foundation design having regard for groundwater protection measures.</p> <p>Would recommend a target net gain for biodiversity across the site.</p> <p>The Masterplan appears to show Cory Gardens/Square within the area previously defined as part of the intertidal habitat of Cory Creek. It has not been demonstrated in any of the document if this area has upper saltmarsh species growing here that would be an important ecological contribution to the creek, and clearly this is also in advance of bird surveys that</p>

			<p>may use this area as a high tide roost. There should be consideration to re-aligning the formal aspects of Cory's Gardens/Square outside of the Cory Creek area and stipulating that the design of public use of the land within the creek must protect and enhance the nature conservation aspects of it. This could provide an important environmental educational tool as well as a uniquely designed space that accommodates both people and wildlife.</p>
South East Regional Design Panel	Regional organisation	<p>Panel endorses the approach adopted by the Development Brief.</p> <p>Welcome the clarity the terrace housing gives the new neighbourhood helping with wayfinding and notionally connecting homes to the river edge.</p> <p>Welcome the diverse range of open space indicated in the Masterplan.</p>	<p>Need to consider how the proposed development sits in its immediate context – links beyond the site to the west and across Corporation St.</p> <p>Question usability of the document including relationship between the Masterplan and the collected framework diagrams. Should the Development Brief define what elements should be fixed and where flexibility is to be encouraged?</p> <p>Provision of bridges at one or two key points over the creeks would usefully add to the network of movement routes.</p> <p>Question the distribution of the mix of uses – focussing non-residential uses into more concentrated clusters might</p>

			<p>help ensure their success. Perhaps around the station and school.</p> <p>Design of the scheme could be more responsive to views at a local level, with certain vistas especially towards the castle and cathedral from Cory's Wharf.</p> <p>Function of certain area of public space not yet clear – the 'northern square' could be relocated to the northern point of the riverside path.</p> <p>The document envisages a prescriptive block depth, which necessitates a challenging range of homes- not least with regard to the proximity between the rear of properties.</p> <p>Larger areas of open space may benefit from consideration of how they could be used to host seasonal events.</p> <p>Creation and promotion of smaller parcels of land might help attract a wider range of developers.</p>
<p>Castle View Business Park owner</p>	<p>Local business</p>		<p>Land use section needs to include B2 as permitted land use for Castle View Business Park.</p> <p>The Brief needs to be clear that the Park will remain an integral part of the plans for Rochester Riverside.</p>

			Do not agree with the plans for a through road through the Business Park.
Regeneration, Community and Culture O&S Cttee	Council committee		<p>Officers requested to investigate provision of an open air entertainment area within the area;</p> <p>Officers to investigate the provision of mooring facilities for visiting small craft;</p> <p>The level of parking provision within the development should conform to the Council's Interim Parking Standards;</p> <p>The proposed development should include provision of a primary school on site</p> <p>Castle View Estate not be made a through road within the development.</p>
English Heritage	National Agency	<p>Support the overall conclusions of the draft SPD and think that it will be an aid to securing the quality of new development.</p> <p>Brief responds to the NPPF (2012) and note that the environmental role for sustainable development includes seeking positive improvement in the quality of the historic environment. Support the advice of the SPD for new development in order that this might</p>	<p>Content in the Brief for archaeological issues should be enhanced.</p> <p>Will be a need to consider any effects on the settings of the numerous heritage assets west of the line formed by the railway. The document needs to be more specific on with regard to views and vistas - it must be demonstrated that the taller elements of the scheme (6-8 storeys) will not cause harm to strategic views 1, 2 and 3 of the</p>

		be complimentary to but not wholly copy the strong character of historic Rochester.	<p>Medway Building Heights Policy (Chatham and Fort Pitt towards Rochester castle and Cathedral).</p> <p>Reference should be made to the former history of the site and the large amount of activity that took place around its hoards.</p>
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Broad comments noted by as part of the Project shop and exhibition:

1. Generally supportive of the overarching proposals and scale of growth.
2. Questions related to the timescales for development and phasing in relation to the railway station.
3. Some concern about impact on traffic, particularly via Rochester Bridge to Strood during peak hours.
4. Potential bridge connection across the creek.
5. Need for activity on the waterfront, with the potential for a jetty / mooring of some sort.
6. General agreement that the non-residential uses should not compromise the primacy of the High Street. However, it is important to establish some degree of critical mass on the site.
7. General agreement on design quality - aspiration to see a higher quality of development than previous schemes.