



CABINET

12 JUNE 2018

ADOPTION OF STROOD WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF 2018

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships Councillor Jane Chitty, Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation
Report from:	Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive
Author:	Beth Westwood, Principal Regeneration Project Officer Catherine Smith, Planning Manager - Policy

Summary

This report seeks approval of Cabinet to adopt the Strood Waterfront Development Brief (Appendix A) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), following the eight week public consultation.

This report summarises the key purposes and principles set out in the 2018 Development Brief, which is proposed to refresh the 2006 Strood Riverside Development Brief.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Once adopted the 2018 Strood Waterfront Development Brief (as set out at Appendix A) is intended to provide supplementary planning advice, expanding on Policy S1 – Development Strategy in the Medway Local Plan 2003. It has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Medway Local Plan 2003 is the current development plan for the authority and therefore forms part of the council's policy framework.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to adopt the 2018 Strood Waterfront Development Brief, as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). If adopted it will be part of the development plan.

1.3 The Development Brief has been prepared within existing budgets.

2. Background

2.1 The council adopted a Strood Riverside Development Brief in 2006, setting out the design principles and guidelines for land to the east of the railway line along Canal Road, and how development could come forward on the site. There have been considerable changes locally and nationally since 2006, and this policy basis needs to be updated to reflect current conditions and opportunities.

2.2 This updated policy will support the council's ambitions to realise the regeneration opportunities presented by these exceptional sites in Strood, to secure investment and deliver quality development that boosts the area's economic, environmental and community wellbeing.

2.3 The 2018 Development Brief outlines the council's ambition for two of its prime regeneration sites; the former Civic Centre and Strood Riverside sites. Kingswear Gardens, jointly owned by Moat and Orbit, is also included within the 2018 Development Brief.

2.4 The 2018 Development Brief sets principles for the redevelopment of the third party land along Canal Road and to the north-east of the former Civic Centre site. Together these sites present a rare opportunity to help establish Medway's modern waterfront, as vibrant commercial and community spaces.

2.5 The 2018 Development Brief outlines a scheme centred around sustainability, high quality housing development, public realm and connectivity to the town centre and to the rest of Medway (e.g. river walk), thereby helping Strood to realise its potential.

2.6 There are three specific objectives for the 2018 Development Brief to address:

1. Update the relevant planning policy applicable to the site- current expectations for the redevelopment of Strood Waterfront exceed those previously envisaged, with regard to quantum and design principles.
2. Establish a coherent set of land use and design parameters to guide the future regeneration of the site.
3. Facilitate and shape the redevelopment of Strood Waterfront, ensuring its long-term physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration.

2.7 The 2018 Development Brief seeks to establish a clear and positive policy context. Whilst setting design parameters, the council is aware of the need for commercial viability, ensuring market confidence and deliverability.

2.8 The 2018 Development Brief has been tested for commercial viability and transport issues have been considered. Opportunities for transport improvements will be established in the emerging evidence base for the new Local Plan.

2.9 In order to deliver a comprehensive Development Brief and Masterplan, the 2018 Development Brief has considered the current pressure on the highways

and the impact of additional housing units. A full Transport Assessment will need to be carried out by the developer, as part of the planning application stage. An analysis of the existing transport conditions has identified that:

- The surrounding road network is congested during peak hours.
- The proposed development is uniquely located within an urban area, which has good links to sustainable transport and where day-to-day facilities and amenities are within easy walking distance, therefore the development can utilise these sustainable transport links.
- Residents living in close proximity to a train station generally have lower levels of car ownership, emerging trends and technologies can be used to further lower parking provision.

2.10 A combination of infrastructure improvements can justify lower parking standards and modal shift to sustainable modes of transport could mitigate the impacts of development. This approach aligns with government guidance, as expressed in the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework. The emerging Local Plan also promotes the efficient use of land in locations well served by public transport. This supports regeneration ambitions and reduces pressure to release greenfield sites in more peripheral locations. A developer will need to consider mitigation measures fully, as part of a Transport Assessment.

2.11 The Strategic Transport Model, which has been commissioned by Medway's Planning and Integrated teams, will also play an important role in identifying and testing solutions. This model will provide the context of other developments, including Rochester Riverside, and Temple Marsh, so that a holistic approach can be taken in identifying transport solutions, informed by an understanding of cumulative development proposals and impacts.

2.12 Heritage, environment, planning principles, land use and the design of the proposed flood risk management works have also played an important role in forming the 2018 Development Brief.

2.13 The flood defences, which will commence in Summer 2018, will facilitate the redevelopment of the sites. The 2018 Development Brief has been twin tracked with the design of the flood defences, to ensure the interface can be advantageous to both designs.

2.14 Development quantum suggested in the illustrative masterplan:

- Former Civic Centre: 564 residential units, complemented with commercial and community land uses.
- Strood Riverside: 602 residential units, complemented with community land uses.
- Kingswear Gardens: 445 residential units.

3. Options

3.1 The 2018 Development Brief supports the council's aspiration to redevelop Strood Riverside and former Civic Centre sites and contributes to Medway's regeneration agenda. The Development Brief establishes the parameters in which the delivery of a high quality residential led mixed use development can be achieved. The adoption of the Development Brief as a SPD, will enable the document to provide guidance for future planning applications on the Strood Waterfront sites. Options 1 and 2 below outline ways forward for

the formal adoption of the 2018 Development Brief. Option 3 will carry no planning status:

3.2 Option 1

Adoption of the Strood Waterfront Development Brief 2018 as a SPD.

This will ensure there is minimal delay between the construction of the flood defences and the appointment of a developer. It provides an updated policy context to manage development to the expectations set by the council. The policies in the Development Brief are linked to the 2003 Local Plan, however references and links are also made to the emerging Medway Local Plan 2012-2035, bridging the gap between policies.

3.3 Option 2

Delay until new Medway Local Plan has been adopted (estimated in 2020), enabling the Development Brief for Strood Waterfront to be linked to the policies in the new Local Plan, and the guidance to be an intrinsic part of the plan.

This will delay the marketing of the site, as an SPD provides vital planning and design guidance for developers. The document will provide greater certainty to developers, which promotes confidence in bringing forward sites, and it will provide an updated policy basis for managing development.

3.4 Option 3

Produce a non-SPD Planning Guidance document.

With no planning status, this would not provide sufficient weighting to compel developers to adhere to its principles.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 In order to meet the council's objectives, to proceed with bringing forward the council sites for redevelopment, and progress Medway's regeneration programme, it is recommended Option 1 should be progressed.

Task	Dates
Submit SPD to Cabinet for adoption	June 2018
Construction of flood defences	May 2018- July 2019
Development options soft market testing	June 2018
Appointment of developer	2019

- 4.2 Option 2 would significantly impact the programme, therefore it is suggested that the Development Brief is linked to the 2003 Local Plan. However, the brief has been prepared in close collaboration between the Regeneration Delivery and Planning Services. The guidance in the new Development Brief aligns to the vision and strategic objectives in the emerging Local Plan, and the supporting evidence base.

- 4.3 Option 3 would only be a planning guidance document, instead of an SPD. Whilst it would provide guidance to development partners, it would carry no planning status, and therefore have limited weight in planning decisions. Therefore, Option 1 is the preferred approach.
- 4.4 The report recommends delegated authority is given to the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships and Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, to approve minor changes to the Development Brief prior to publication for the purpose of presentation or improving clarity.
- 4.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out (Appendix B). This supports the refreshment of the 2006 Strood Riverside Development Brief and demonstrates that the revised Development Brief advances equality and fosters good relations in protected characteristic groups.

5. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Sites not being progressed	Without appropriate and sufficient planning guidance to support the site's potential development quantum, the sites may not reach their potential value.	The adoption of the Development Brief as an SPD would provide planning guidance, de-risking the site for a potential developer and greatly assisting with the marketing of the sites, and provide increased confidence to bring forward sites.	D1
Poor quality development	Without a formal adopted planning document, it is difficult to assure a high quality development across the sites.	The adoption of the Development Brief as an SPD establishes the high quality design parameters to be adhered to, and the council's aspirations for regeneration in Strood.	D2

6. Consultation

- 6.1 A public consultation has been undertaken for an eight week period and was carried out in accordance with the Medway Statement of Community Involvement, 2014. A consultation plan was followed to ensure effective engagement with stakeholders, statutory consultees, and local residents and businesses. An exhibition was displayed throughout the consultation period at the Strood Community Hub and two public consultation events were held.

- 6.2 There were 82 respondents to the consultation survey. 83% of residents responding would like to see the regeneration of the Strood Waterfront sites. Residents acknowledged the potential of the Strood Waterfront sites and that they are currently underutilised. Many welcomed the regeneration of town centre brownfield sites as opposed to urban sprawl into rural areas. The responses from the public, gathered by the survey and consultation events, highlighted the following concerns:
- 6.3 *The redevelopment of Kingswear Gardens*
Kingswear Gardens' residents voiced concerns of Kingswear Gardens being included within the Development Brief and requested further information regarding timescales and future plans for this specific area. Officers explained that the Development Brief is not a planning application, with its purpose being to outline the aspiration and potential for the site.
- 6.4 *Transport and highways capacity*
An initial Transport Statement has been carried out in tandem with the Development Brief and the Illustrative Masterplan, providing a scoping exercise for future Transport Impact Assessments, which will accompany future planning applications. Suggested measures were strongly supported by residents.
- 6.5 *Building heights and densities*
The Development Brief is in line with Medway's Building Heights (2006) Policy, and massing studies have been carried out to ensure that the proposed building heights do not exceed the natural ridge line. Views and vistas have been considered both from and into the sites, including the cathedral and castle. The Development Brief identifies that future development proposals must complement the historic setting.
- 6.6 *Additional strain on community services e.g. schools and health care.*
The Development Brief recognises the impact of additional houses and identifies the need for S106 contributions for the expansion of schools and health care facilities and wider community services, open spaces, and the maintenance and enhancement of heritage assets.
- 6.7 Residents supported the increase in the amount of accessible and usable greenspace. A walk/cycle route along the waterfront was greatly supported with communal/public greenspace situated along the waterfront. Sport England support the active design principles and acknowledged the promotion of active travel and sustainable transport throughout the Brief.
- 6.8 Statutory consultees have been consulted along with contacts in the Local Plan database for planning policy consultations. None of the statutory consultees objected to the Development Brief, with many recognising the need for development and supporting the design principles. Any comments received by statutory consultees have been reflected in the amended Development Brief, and these have resulted in no major changes.
- 6.9 A full consultation report (Appendix C) is attached outlining the consultation methodology, findings and how comments have been reflected within the revised Development Brief.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The 2018 Development Brief has been prepared within existing budgets. The purpose of the Development Brief is to achieve high quality developments, which will realise the value of these sites, providing an income stream to the council.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Development Brief is intended to provide supplementary planning guidance, expanding on Policy S1 – Development Strategy in the Medway Local Plan, 2003. It has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the adoption of the Strood Waterfront Development Brief 2018, as set out in Appendix A to the report as a Supplementary Planning Document (Option 1).
- 9.2 The Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to the Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships and Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, to approve minor changes to the Development Strategy document prior to publication for the purpose of presentation or improving clarity.

10. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 10.1 Adopting the Strood Waterfront Development Brief as a Supplementary Planning Document, will enable the Development Brief to form part of the council's development plan, and allow the marketing of the sites at Riverside and Civic to proceed and bring forward homes at pace, through providing greater certainty to the development sector.

Lead officer contact

Beth Westwood, Principal Regeneration Project Officer, Gun Wharf, 01634 331023,
elizabeth.westwood@medway.gov.uk

Catherine Smith, Planning Manager- Policy, Gun Wharf, 01634 331358,
catherine.smith@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A - Strood Waterfront Development Brief 2018
Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)
Appendix C - Consultation Report

Background papers

1. Strood Riverside Development Brief 2006
http://www.medway.gov.uk/PDF/strood_riverside_development_brief.pdf
2. Medway Statement of Community Involvement, 2014.
<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Medway%20SCI%202014.pdf>