

## **CABINET**

**15 DECEMBER 2020**

### **INNOVATION PARK MEDWAY MASTERPLAN – REQUEST TO ADOPT**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Leader  
Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, Inward Investment,  
Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships  
Councillor Jane Chitty, Planning, Economic Growth and  
Regulation

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

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#### **Summary**

This report seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Innovation Park Medway masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Innovation Park Medway masterplan proposes a high quality, flexible scheme to encourage a wide range of high-value technology, engineering, manufacturing and knowledge-intensive businesses. Public consultation was undertaken in 2018 and minor relevant amendments have been made to the masterplan as a result.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 The Innovation Park Medway masterplan 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. As it is intended to adopt the masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), this will be part of the development plan.
- 1.2 The masterplan was publicly consulted on for six weeks from 17 September to 29 October 2018. This report seeks approval to adopt the finalised masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Rochester Airport masterplan (2014) has been reviewed and refreshed as part of the Innovation Park Medway masterplan.

- 2.2 The masterplan outlines a scheme that will deliver a high quality innovation park, with flexible plots to encourage a wide range of high-value technology, engineering, manufacturing and knowledge-intensive businesses.
- 2.3 In order for the masterplan to be adopted, in line with Cabinet decision number 110/2018, public consultation was undertaken for a six week period. The masterplan outlines the ambition for a prime regeneration site; an area of land previously in use by Rochester Airport Ltd. The masterplan also covers land leased to BAE, and Woolmans Wood Caravan Site which is privately owned. A small part of the BAE-owned site is also included.
- 2.4 The masterplan seeks to establish a clear policy context that sets parameters but allows for flexibility to support market interest and deliverability.
- 2.5 A number of supporting studies and surveys have been undertaken to establish and support the masterplan principles, including transport and ecology.
- 2.6 A total of 42 responses were received through the 2018 public consultation. Two public events were held; one on a weekday evening and one on a weekend during the day. Only a small number of local residents/businesses attended. Comments are summarised in section 6 of the report below.
- 2.7 Throughout the development of the masterplan, discussions have been held with Highways England in relation to the traffic impacts the scheme will generate. In March 2019, Cabinet were advised that the masterplan could be adopted subject to Highways England comment, with final adoption to follow.
- 2.8 Further work has since been undertaken to demonstrate the impact of Innovation Park Medway on the strategic and local road network, including modelling and mitigation design. Highways England suggested a monitor and manage approach would be appropriate for the site, to be delivered through conditions in the proposed Local Development Order (LDO). Highways England's response to the LDO consultation ensures that the highways impact can be dealt with in a way that does not have a significant impact on the strategic road network, considered in combination with future development (as proposed in the draft Local Plan through the Strategic Transport Assessment).
- 2.9 HE have now responded removing their objection, enabling Medway Council to fully adopt the masterplan, taken forward as the 'Innovation Park Medway Masterplan (2020)'. No changes to the masterplan document itself have been made since the recommendation to adopt subject to Highways England comment in 2019.
- 2.10 It was previously recommended that the preferred option for taking forward the masterplan is a Local Development Order (LDO). This allows plots to come forward with speed and ease for developers and/or businesses. A separate report is presented to Cabinet (item 5) to seek Cabinet recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Local Development Order, following a successful public consultation.

### 3. Options

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Innovation Park Medway Masterplan (2020) is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Once adopted, the masterplan forms guidance for the Local Development Order, which is the appropriately identified planning mechanism to fast track development on the site and achieve a high quality result.
- 3.2 The alternative option is to adopt the masterplan but not proceed with adoption of the Local Development Order. This option requires more upfront work for potential developers and/or occupants of the site and will increase their investment in both time and cost, which would limit the viability for third parties. This is not a recommended option.

### 4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 In order to meet the council's key objective of bringing forward regeneration at Rochester Airport through the development of Innovation Park Medway, the masterplan should be adopted as an SPD.
- 4.2 The masterplan includes principles for sustainable development which are considered and detailed further in the Design Code and Local Development Order.
- 4.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out for the project and is attached at Appendix B to the report.

### 5. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Privately owned or leased land not coming forward in line with the strategic ambitions for IPM	Woolmans Wood and land leased to BAE are included in the masterplan, as these comprise part of the North Kent Enterprise Zone. If these are not developed in line with the ambitions for IPM the site could become disjointed and will not have a clear identity.	The masterplan outlines aspirations for all land within the Enterprise Zone, but is flexible and does not tie third parties to development. Phasing is considered carefully to ensure the site can function without all privately owned or leased land coming forward in the short- or medium-term.	D3
Densities or parking standards not accepted	Parking standards are policy compliant, however future modal shift and sustainable transport improvements could decrease parking requirement and	A Transport Assessment has been undertaken with a carefully considered Travel Plan. The masterplan allows for flexibility with the potential to fix the detail further at a later stage.	D3

	increase the quantum of development.		
Poor quality development	Without a formal adopted planning document, quality will not be assured on this high priority site.	The adoption of the masterplan establishes high quality parameters that must be adhered to.	E2

## 6. Consultation

- 6.1 The previous Rochester Airport masterplan (2014) was consulted on publicly, and this document has been used to inform the development of the Innovation Park Medway Masterplan (2020).
- 6.2 Public consultation on the Innovation Park Medway Draft Masterplan was undertaken over a six week period from 17 September to 29 October 2018. Public comments have been taken into account when producing the final draft for adoption by both Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.
- 6.3 A mix of positive, negative and constructive feedback was received. In a number of cases, a completed questionnaire set out overall support for the principle of the redevelopment or a positive comment regarding an element of the proposals but went on to express a concern regarding a different element.
- 6.4 Concerns focused on highways, traffic and parking provision, impact on Rochester Airport, ecological impacts, impact on nearby residents, proposed heights and scale, community need (relating to jobs/use of the site), and noise and air quality. Positive comments related to the general principle of redevelopment, open space provision, and design principles. Overall, 42 responses were received.
- 6.5 Further consultation has been ongoing with Highways England through the development of the Local Development Order to address their concerns relating to the masterplan. Their formal LDO consultation response acknowledges how the highways impact of the development will be monitored and mitigated.

## 7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The masterplan has been prepared with funding from the SELEP Sector Support Fund (SSF) and match funding from Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. If adopted there will be costs associated with delivering the proposals set out in the masterplan; infrastructure works are to be funded through the Government's Local Growth Fund round 3 (£3.7m) and 3b (£1.5185m) from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). However, development of the site will generate income through sale or lease of the site and business rates receipts.

## 8. Legal implications

- 8.1 In order for the masterplan to be adopted, the document was publicly consulted upon for a six week period, after being approved by Cabinet for consultation.
- 8.2 As the site crosses the boundary with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, the masterplan must be adopted by both Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.
- 8.3 [If the masterplan is adopted, Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have the preferred approach of developing a Local Development Order in line with the masterplan, to support businesses looking to locate at Innovation Park Medway.

## 9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Cabinet is asked to agree to adopt the Innovation Park Medway Masterplan (2020), set out at Appendix A to the report as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), in line with paragraph 3.1 of the report.

## 10. Suggested reasons for decision

- 10.1 Adoption of the masterplan as an SPD formally sets a standard through planning policy for high quality development to come forward at Innovation Park Medway.

## Lead officer contact

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## Appendices

Appendix A - Innovation Park Medway Masterplan (2020)  
Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment

## Background papers

[Rochester Airport Masterplan 2014](#)

[Medway Statement of Community Involvement 2014](#)

[Tonbridge & Malling Statement of Community Involvement](#)

[Section 9 of Appendix A refers to several technical summaries, which can be accessed on the Council's website](#)