

CABINET

2 AUGUST 2011

DRAFT LODGE HILL DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth
Report from:	Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration Community and Culture
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Summary

This report seeks approval to undertake consultation on a draft Development Brief for development at the MOD site at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. The draft Development Brief expands on Policy CS33 of the Publication Draft Core Strategy; see separate item on this agenda.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The costs of preparing the Development Brief and the consultation can be met from the Planning Policy and Design budget and are being recharged to the prospective developer through an existing agreement.
- 1.2 The draft Development Brief expands on Policy CS33 of the Publication Draft Core Strategy, which is the subject of a separate report on the Cabinet agenda. The Local Development Framework forms part of the council's Policy Framework. Pending adoption of the Core Strategy the development brief cannot be adopted as a supplementary planning document. At this current stage Cabinet approval is sought to publish a draft development brief for consultation.

2. Background

- 2.1 Policy CS33 of the Publication Draft Core Strategy makes a strategic allocation of an area of land at Lodge Hill. This land is allocated for a new settlement to include:
 - Up to 5,000 dwellings

- At least 43,000m² employment floorspace
 - At least 5,000m² retail floorspace
 - Supporting infrastructure, community facilities and open space
- 2.2 This is a strategically important site for regeneration and growth in Medway. It will meet a significant portion of the area's housing need, including family housing, and has significant potential for higher-value employment uses that will contribute to meeting the aims of the Council's Economic Development Strategy. It can also create a step-change in the delivery of sustainable development in Medway and the wider Kent Thames Gateway.
- 2.3 Because of the importance of this site it is necessary to provide a more detailed planning policy framework than is possible in the Core Strategy. This draft Development Brief expands on Policy CS33 to provide further detail on the strategic principles set out in that document. It sets out the Council's expectations for the development and also addresses the relationship of Lodge Hill with the surrounding rural areas and smaller villages.
- 2.4 Once adopted, the Development Brief will become a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications for the Lodge Hill site. The development of Lodge Hill is expected to take at least 15 years and the Development Brief will provide a consistent guide and framework for developers over this time period.
- 2.5 The draft Development Brief and its appendices have been circulated separately to Cabinet Members, Group Rooms, Ward Members (Strood Rural and Peninsula) and Chatham Contact Point Reception. They can be accessed online via <http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2332&Ver=4> Alternatively, additional hard copies are available upon request from Democratic Services (telephone: 01634 332509/332008 or email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk).

3. Options

- 3.1 The alternatives to preparing a Development Brief for Lodge Hill are to:
- Prepare a formal Area Action Plan
 - Not prepare any detailed planning policy for the site and to rely on the draft Core Strategy Policy
- 3.2 In the first case, an Area Action Plan has greater weight and status within the planning system. However, it has a more complex and time-consuming procedure that must be followed for production. This would significantly delay the production of any detailed planning policy for the Lodge Hill site. This would cause a consequent delay in the delivery of the regeneration and growth that the development can provide, or increase the risk of early and/or speculative planning applications coming forward before a full development policy framework for the site is in place.

- 3.3 In the second case, not producing any more detailed policy would reduce the amount of guidance and control that the Council would have over future development. It would also undermine confidence in the development among the local community, where there are a number of concerns about the development that can best be addressed at this more detailed policy stage. It would not have any advantages in terms of timescale, as the Core Strategy's adoption process is longer than that for a Development Brief and in the absence of either there would be no policy justification to support any planning application on the site.
- 3.4 Accordingly it is not considered that either of these options would be a suitable alternative, given the importance of this site.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 The draft Development Brief has been produced with the input of the prospective developers of Lodge Hill and the assistance of a considerable evidence base produced in support of the Publication Draft Core Strategy. Statutory agencies, particularly Natural England, have also provided advice on key parts of the Development Brief. It is therefore considered that it represents a comprehensive document that will assist in the delivery of a high-quality development that meets the Council's and local community's aspirations.
- 4.2 The draft Development Brief takes the vision of Lodge Hill from the parent policy, CS33, in the Publication Draft Core Strategy and expands on this. In particular, the aim for the development to be an exemplar of sustainability is fully considered in the Brief and standards are set that define what this should mean on the ground.
- 4.3 The input of the community is essential to ensure that the Development Brief is able to achieve its objectives. A full programme of consultation will need to take place to enable community input to influence the final form of the Development Brief.
- 4.4 Procedurally, the draft Development Brief cannot become a full Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at this stage because there is no adopted parent policy for it to hang from. However, an adopted document that has been through the same full consultation and assessment procedures as an SPD would still be given weight in determining planning applications. When the Core Strategy has been adopted, it is the intention to upgrade the Development Brief to a full SPD status.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 There are considered to be limited risks associated with this work. The main risks are associated with failure to proceed or with legislative change. These are considered below:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Failure to proceed	Failure to proceed with the Development Brief would lead to a lack of control over future development and could lead to a loss of community confidence.	Strong support from Members and officers will enable ongoing community involvement and create certainty for future developers
Legislative and/or national policy changes	Resulting in revisions to the process or new legal requirements	Careful monitoring of national policy and its implications for Medway. Ensure that evidence base and policies are robust so they can be adapted to alternative procedures if necessary.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 No consultation has been carried out specifically on the Development Brief to date. The purpose of the current draft is to enable this to take place. A six week period of public consultation is planned to run concurrently with the Publication Draft Core Strategy, from 30 August to 10 October 2011.
- 6.2 However, a number of comments have been received on the parent policy from the pre-publication draft Core Strategy and these have been taken into account in the drafting of the Development Brief. Some local groups are opposed to the development or want the scale to be significantly reduced. This would require a complete revision of the overall spatial strategy in the draft Core Strategy and is therefore not recommended. However, the vast majority of comments relate to matters of detail such as transport or ecology concerns, and it is considered that these are best addressed through the production of the development brief. Those received to date are, where relevant reflected in the draft brief.
- 6.3 The prospective developer has also carried out a series of consultations on their proposals for the site. The results of these are summarised in Appendix 1 of the document.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 Because the Development Brief cannot become a full SPD at this stage, it will have slightly less weight in the planning system. However, its approval by Cabinet will enable it to be a significant 'material consideration'. Government guidance in PPS12 stresses the importance of full public engagement in the production of planning policy and by applying the same principles to this document its status can be maximised.

7.2 The prospective developer is meeting all costs associated with the production of the Development Brief.

7. Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the draft Development Brief for public consultation.

8. Suggested reasons for decision

8.1 A Development Brief for Lodge Hill will provide greater certainty for future developers and the local community and will assist in securing Medway's regeneration and growth.

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Background papers

Publication Draft Core Strategy (see separate item on this agenda)

Statement of Community Involvement (see separate item on this agenda)

Core Strategy and Lodge Hill evidence base: this is extensive and is available at

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/developmentplan/localdevelopmentframework/ldfevidencebase.aspx>)