



**AGENDA ITEM: 11**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:  
4 September 2014**

**CABINET:  
16 September 2014**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
2 October 2014**

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**Report of:** Assistant Director Planning

**Relevant Managing Director:** Managing Director (Transformation)

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor M Forshaw

**Contact for further information:** Miss Gillian Whitfield  
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**SUBJECT: YEW TREE FARM DRAFT MASTERPLAN**

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Wards affected: Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and to recommend the "Draft" version of the document for a period of public consultation from 9 October – 21 November 2014.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

2.1 That the content of this report, the Yew Tree Farm Options Consultation Report and the Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan document be considered and that agreed comments be referred to Cabinet.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

3.1 That Cabinet consider the contents of the Yew Tree Farm Options Consultation Feedback Report set out at Appendix A of this report.

- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan document (Appendix B to this report) for public consultation from 9 October to 21 November 2014, having regard to the agreed comments of Planning Committee (provided at Appendix C to this report) and subject to any amendments made by the Assistant Director Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, following consideration of the Draft Masterplan Document by Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as per recommendation 2.3 below.
- 3.3 That the Assistant Director Planning, be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary amendments to the Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan document, in the light of agreed comments from Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before the document is published for consultation.
- 3.4 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as this report is being submitted to Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 October 2014.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 That the content of this report, the Yew Tree Farm Options Consultation Report and the Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan document be considered and that agreed comments be referred to the Assistant Director Planning for consideration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

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#### **5.0 BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 Following the adoption of the West Lancashire Local Plan in October 2013, the Council committed to produce a Masterplan SPD to guide development on the Yew Tree Farm site in Burscough. This commitment was formalised and set out in writing within Policy SP3 of the Local Plan and a briefing report was brought to Cabinet in September 2013 to advise that work on this project was due to get underway.
- 5.2 During October 2013, contact was made with a selection of interested parties in order to establish a Stakeholder Group. The purpose of the group was to engage with every step of the production of the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD and to help shape the document and how wider consultation on the Masterplan would take place. The group consisted of local ward councillors, portfolio and shadow portfolio holders, land owners, residents, local businesses, parish council representatives, voluntary sector bodies, infrastructure providers including, highways, utilities, education, public transport and other agencies such as the Environment Agency.
- 5.3 In total the Stakeholder Group met six times for the following purposes:
- Introduction and welcome meeting

- To consider the background evidence and issues relating to Yew Tree Farm
  - Review of the Burscough context and consideration of design concepts
  - To guide the consultation process
  - To consider the feedback from the consultation on the first options document
  - To consider the contents of the proposed Draft Masterplan document and to provide any initial feedback to further shape the document before Council approval and further public consultation in Autumn of this year.
- 5.4 Whilst the Stakeholder Group have been engaged with every step of the process, they are not a decision-making body and responsibility for production and adoption of the document rests solely with the Council. All notes and evidence that was made available to the Stakeholder Group is available on the Council's website at [westlancls.gov.uk/ytf](http://westlancls.gov.uk/ytf).
- 5.5 Since commencing work on the masterplan last October, Council officers have produced a baseline report which consolidated all of the available evidence relating to the site and identified all the main issues that the SPD would need to address.
- 5.6 Once the baseline was established, an 'Options' document was produced. This gave a detailed account of all of the issues associated with the site including key concerns such as drainage, highways and access. The report then suggested a number of responses to the issues and then set out four options for how the site may look and how each of the issues could be addressed.
- 5.7 The 'Options' Report was produced to encourage feedback on all of the possible responses to such issues including how the site should be accessed, what type of open space is required and which part of the site should come forward and which should be safeguarded from development. The public were also asked how the overall design of the site should look and were presented with four options to help demonstrate this.
- 5.8 A six week consultation exercise was then undertaken on the "Options" document in February and March of this year and the feedback from this consultation, along with Council responses to the comments and recommendations to be carried forward into the Draft Masterplan, are set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 5.9 The consultation exercise included a leaflet drop to all Burscough homes and businesses, posters, emails, four drop-in sessions held at Burscough Wharf and a school engagement session between Planning Officers and Year 9 students of Burscough Priory Secondary School. Almost fifty written responses were received, along with a number of completed questionnaires. The feedback reported has been considered in moving the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD forward to the next stage.

## 6.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 6.1 Having regard to the feedback collected through the public consultation, Stakeholder Group meetings and one to ones with infrastructure providers, the Options document has been refined and a proposed Draft Masterplan has been produced and is set out at Appendix B.
- 6.2 The document sets out a high level framework to ensure the most appropriate type of development comes forward. It establishes the expectations of the site including what will be delivered, when and where on the site and this is supported by an indicative layout plan. A detailed account of the site constraints is included to ensure that all applicants are aware of the site context. The document then details a series of place-making principles which will act as criteria to assist applicants in preparing proposals for the site and the Council and statutory consultees in assessing these proposals.
- 6.3 The “Place-Making Principles” form the heart of the Masterplan and are set out under the headings Character, Connectivity, Climate and Community. Within each of these high level principles lie detailed criteria to address all aspects of the site’s delivery, including the key issues of drainage and highways that were noted by the Burscough community.
- 6.4 Character – This provides a useful starting point to the document and requires that any applications for development consider the existing landscape and features such as hedgerows, field demarcation and planting, when working up the site layout. This will help to provide a maturity to the site once development commences and will ensure a strong synergy between the new development and the existing countryside.
- 6.5 The Character Principle includes the following criteria based requirements:
- Density
  - Creative but simple designs
  - Good quality materials
  - Flexible and adaptable buildings
  - Integration – public spaces, buildings, design process
  - ‘Gateway’ to the site
  - Green corridors and water features
  - Primary Road Network – Creation of ‘boulevards’
  - Secondary Road Network – Narrower with appropriate massing of buildings
  - Access Routes – consistent street design
  - Architectural language – gradual changes
  - Contemporary interpretation of local townscape
- 6.6 Connectivity – seeks to encompass all aspects of movement around the site and the locality, addresses the local concerns with highways matters and includes the following principles:
- Overarching Connectivity Principles

- Proposed Connections
- Promoting Sustainable Movement
- Site Specific Highways and Transport Guidance

- 6.7 This portion of the document has been directly influenced by technical guidance and advice provided by Lancashire County Council as Highways Authority and includes requirements that the development is accessible to all, prioritisation of walking and cycling over car use, designing the site to access public transport, inclusion of safe vehicular access and that any proposals must be consistent with the draft West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan.
- 6.8 One of the key delivery requirements of the site is that the Ormskirk to Burscough Linear Park must be developed along with a comprehensive walking and cycling network that will connect the site to the wider area. As the network extends beyond the site, developers will be required to support the delivery of the necessary improvements to ensure junctions and existing routes are compatible for sustainable transport use e.g. toucan crossings, junction improvements, cycle path installation.
- 6.9 In terms of highways matters, the document requires that a clear and legible internal road network is provided with 2 internal east-west link roads for connectivity, rather than relief, to the A59. Whilst both routes will not require completion at the outset of development, they must be completed alongside each phase of development, with one being completed within this Local Plan period to serve the initial phase of 500 houses and 10 ha of employment land. In addition, the northern route is likely to provide some HGV relief to Higgins Lane which may facilitate closure of Higgins Lane to through traffic in the future.
- 6.10 Access to the site should be limited to three primary points, one onto the A59 opposite Lordsgate Drive which should be signalised and two onto Tollgate Road, north and south, in accordance with each respective phase. The Highways Authority have provided clear advice that vehicular access into each individual parcel of land within the site directly from surrounding roads is not recommended in order to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive development comes forward and that this is particularly relevant along the A59 which is at its most congested between Square Lane and Mill Dam Lane.
- 6.11 The document also establishes which junctions will require some form of improvement works to ensure highway capacity and flow is managed within the area. All proposals must also be supported by a full Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, both of which require early engagement with the Highways Authority and will establish the specific impacts of each phase which will drive the specific mitigation measures required.
- 6.12 Finally, parking provision should be in line with Policy IF2 and a review of all Traffic Regulation Order's in the surrounding area of influence is required to better manage network operation and efficiency.
- 6.13 Climate – This section covers overarching climate change principles, drainage matters, green infrastructure and biodiversity. The matter of drainage has been a priority to the local community from the outset so the Draft Masterplan places

important emphasis on this by requiring a Drainage Strategy at outline planning that is comprehensive to the site and includes criteria such as:

- How the proposal accords with Policy SP3 requirements to reduce flows to New Lane WWTW
- A phasing plan
- A drainage design code to ensure no phase prejudices the delivery of Sustainable Drainage on any other phase
- Technical details
- Future management and maintenance
- Offsite drainage infrastructure improvements to support development

6.14 United Utilities have had direct input into the development of this aspect of the document and consider the requirements reflect recent good practice on large major development sites within the North West. Lancashire County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, and the Environment Agency have also been engaged on this matter.

6.15 Other matters within this section include a requirement for Green Infrastructure to support recreation, biodiversity, flood alleviation, food growing (allotments), health & wellbeing and sustainable transport through a network of footways and cycle ways. Proposals must also be supported by a Habitats Regulation Assessment, Ornithology Report and must adhere to Environmental Impact Screening and Scoping requirements.

6.16 Community – This principle establishes how land use will be distributed across the site and the overarching healthy community principles which include:

- Community consultation on planning applications
- Mixture of housing tenures
- Adaptable homes - flexibility
- Variety of open spaces and links to encourage community cohesion in well-designed public spaces
- Strong connection with Burscough's existing centre
- Requirement for any new local facilities to be central to the site and easy to find

6.17 In establishing the land use principles the Council has had regard to community feedback and also the need for phasing the development and safeguarding a portion of the site from development during this Local Plan and until such a time as a need can be demonstrated to support the release. Land uses accommodated within the site include:

- Housing – 500 dwellings for this plan period and safeguarded land for a further 500 if needed in the future.
- Specialist Housing for the Elderly – land for 20% of housing to meet elderly needs.
- Employment – 11 ha of land for this plan period and 9 ha to be safeguarded.
- Local Facilities / Retail – central to the site with good access to elderly accommodation and employment area.

- Community Facilities – that cannot be delivered or supported in Burscough centre.

- 6.18 When considering which land to safeguard and which land to bring forward as the first phase of development, this has been influenced by the need to deliver important aspects of the infrastructure requirements including an internal through route within the site and the Linear Park. The land that has been identified as first phase is considered to ensure this delivery in a timely fashion with only limited parts of this land being multiple-ownership, thereby reducing the likelihood of delivery issues and conflict.
- 6.19 The layout has been designed in such a way that once the first phase of development is completed it should look and feel like a completed development within its own right. However, the overall layout allows for the safeguarded land to come forward as a potential second phase of development that links well with the first phase and will ensure that, if the whole site does ultimately come forward, it forms a single, cohesive neighbourhood.
- 6.20 The Draft Masterplan also makes reference to developer contributions and sets out clearly what the developers of the Yew Tree Farm are expected to contribute and through which mechanisms, including Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Obligations.

## **7.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 Subject to Cabinet's approval and agreed comments from the Planning Committee and Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Draft Masterplan will be published for a further period of public consultation. This consultation exercise will include activities similar to the spring 'Options' consultation such as drop-in sessions, leaflets and an invitation for written representations from consultees.
- 7.2 Following the close of consultation in November, all responses will be considered and any refinements necessary will be made to the document before the final Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD is produced. This will then be taken back to Cabinet in early 2015 for Members to consider the final document for adoption by the Council. Once adopted the SPD will form part of the planning decision-making framework and will assist applicants in preparing proposals for the site and the Council in determining such applications.

## **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 8.1 The purpose of the Local Plan is to facilitate sustainable development in West Lancashire. The Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD, referred to above, seeks to facilitate the provision of sustainable development in West Lancashire through the provision of additional guidance. The Local Plan has been prepared in such a way that its objectives are aligned with those of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## 9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD will guide delivery of development at the Yew Tree Farm site which includes at least 500 homes within this Local Plan period. This development will attract revenue including New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy and potential funding or infrastructure secured through Section 106 obligations. All of which has the potential to be used by the Council to help improve community infrastructure and local facilities. In respect of resource implications, the Masterplan SPD has formed part of the Strategic Planning and Implementation team's work programme since September 2013 and its preparation has required a significant amount of officer time, as well as Member input. However, this cost has been factored into existing planning service budgets.

## 10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 This report seeks authorisation for the Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan to go out for a period of consultation with the public. Responses received will help shape the document further before a decision is required by the Council in respect of adoption of the document. Therefore, no decisions are being made at this stage. As such, this report does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

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### **Background Documents**

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
Adopted October 2013	West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027)	

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Yew Tree Farm Options Consultation Feedback Report – Spring 2014
- Appendix B - Yew Tree Farm Draft Masterplan SPD (colour copies available via the Council Website or by request).
- Appendix C – Planning Committee minute 4 September 2014 (Cabinet only), Cabinet minute 16 September 2014 (Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee only)
- Appendix D - Equality Impact Assessment