

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

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Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document

Recommendation

To adopt the Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document (Appendix A) to the saved planning policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.

Purpose of Report

1. To update Cabinet on changes to the Botley Centre SPD since the 30 October 2015 Cabinet Meeting, and following Counsel advice and additional public consultation.

Corporate Objectives

2. Two key objectives are building the local economy and meeting housing need.

Background

3. Botley Centre is a three hectare site comprising a range of retail, residential, office and community uses, including the West Way Shopping Centre, two supermarkets, offices, community halls, a library, Botley Baptist Church, the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Elms Parade, three public car parks, a post office, bank, cafés and restaurants and elderly persons accommodation.
4. The area covered by the SPD is in a number of ownerships including Vale of White Horse District Council.

5. One of the aims of the Local Plan 2011 is to ensure that Botley is an attractive place for living, working and pursuing leisure interests. In order to achieve this, the Council seeks to safeguard and promote the vitality and viability of Botley as a local service centre alongside reducing congestion and improving conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. There are a number of saved policies in Local Plan 2011 that guide development in Botley, such as policies on retail (S1), major commercial leisure facilities (L6), tourism (T1), employment (E2, GS1, S12), housing and community uses (H10, H16, H17, H19). These are summarised in section 2.4 of the SPD. This SPD is supplementary to these policies.
6. The emerging Local Plan 2031 Part1 identifies this site under Core Policy 11, which sets a strategy for comprehensive redevelopment and improvement for the Botley central area. As there are objections to this emerging policy and we are currently in the examination process, limited weight can be applied to this policy.
7. A planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of Botley Centre, including Field House and Elms Parade was refused in December 2014.

Options

8. Feedback from local people was that they wanted a greater say in setting the policy context for any future planning application. In deciding the appropriate planning policy framework for the regeneration of Botley Centre the following options were considered:

Rely on adopted and emerging local plan policies only (do nothing)

9. There are a number of saved policies in the Vale Local Plan 2011 that support the redevelopment of Botley Centre. The emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1, contains Core Policy 11 relating specifically to the redevelopment of Botley. Local people would have an opportunity to comment on the specifics of any planning application put forward. This option was rejected as it did not meet the commitment to give local people a say in guiding new development for Botley Centre.

Prepare a development brief

10. This was the preferred option at the project outset because a development brief creates a more detailed planning framework and provides an opportunity for local people to inform the brief. A development brief is also quick and simple to produce. However, a development brief does not require formal consultation or sustainability appraisal and therefore carries less weight in the determination of a planning application compared to a supplementary planning document (SPD). This option was ultimately rejected in favour of the option below.

Prepare a supplementary planning document

11. The preferred approach was to use the work already produced for a development brief to inform the preparation of a SPD, which gave local community groups an informal input into the preparation of the draft SPD but also engaged the wider community through a formal stage of consultation. It was also subject to sustainability appraisal and therefore carries more weight in planning application decisions.

Development of Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

12. A draft SPD was prepared and consulted on in August and September 2015. The draft SPD, Sustainability Appraisal Report, consultation statement were reviewed by Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2015 and by Cabinet on 30 October 2015.
13. Cabinet, as recommended by Scrutiny Committee, asked officers to review the SPD to ensure it robustly met, in full, the requirements set out in the planning legislation.
14. A number of clarification changes have since been made to the Supplementary Planning Document and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report including refining its scope in relation to policies within Local Plan 2011. In the interests of fairness and transparency the council held an additional round of consultation so that the public could comment on the revised SPD and SA. In addition the public could review these documents in the context of information contained in the background report.
15. The consultation generated 38 respondents to the SPD. The Consultation Statement attached at (Appendix D) has been updated and sets out the key comments that were made.

The main points raised and the council's response is set out below.

16. Confusion over why the term 'study area' is now used rather than 'site'

Council's response: The term study area more accurately describes the status of the area covered by the SPD. The term 'site' could imply that everything within the area will be developed, which has been a mis-conception in consultation responses.

Strong support was expressed through the responses for the amendments to paragraphs 4.5.3 and 4.5.5.

17. Support for the removal of Figure 48 'Illustrative View of a Botley Centre redevelopment'

Council's response: This has been removed from the attached version of the SPD.

18. Comments expressed through the previous consultation have not been adequately addressed in the Revised Draft SPD or accurately recorded in the Consultation Statement produced for the November 2015 Scrutiny Committee

Council's response: All comments have been considered, although the SPD hasn't been amended in response to all of them due to the conflicting nature of comments and the scope of the SPD. The consultation statement presents a summary of the views made, however all the original comments are available in full on the council's website.

19. The Revised Draft SPD is not prescriptive enough in terms of defining the mix of land uses or the quantum of development

The scope of an SPD does not allow for more prescriptive guidance.

20. The Botley Centre SPD (November 2015) proposed for adoption is available on the council's website.

21. The SPD should also be read in conjunction with the sustainability appraisal, equalities impact assessment and the consultation statement that informed it.
22. There is also a background report setting out the development scenarios that were tested in terms of viability and transport impact in order to test the robustness of the development framework within the SPD.
23. These documents are available on the council's website.

Financial Implications

24. There are no ongoing financial implications of preparing a supplementary planning document. Existing budgets can accommodate consultants and staffing resources.

Legal Implications

25. Preparation of the SPD must be in compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Conclusion

26. The Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document will be a useful tool for drawing together, and adding further detail to, the policies in the Local Plan 2011 that relate to Botley. It will give greater clarity to the community, developers and development management officers about what could come forward on the site, and accords with the requirements of the NPPF. It is therefore recommended that the Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document is adopted.

Appendix A: Consultation statement (January 2016)

Background Papers

Botley Centre SPD (November 2015)
Sustainability Appraisal (November 2015)
Equalities Impact Assessment
Background Report (November 2015)