



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
23 MARCH 2021**

SUBJECT: ELGIN SOUTH MASTERPLAN UPDATE 2021

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to agree the draft Elgin South Masterplan Update for public consultation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;

- (i) agree the draft Elgin South Masterplan Update for public consultation;**
- (ii) note the remaining Traffic Modelling work and primary school ground conditions work which will inform the final version of the Masterplan; and**
- (iii) agree that the consultation responses, the outcomes of traffic modelling and primary school ground conditions work are reported back to a future meeting of this Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Elgin South expansion area provides a strategic long term planned growth area to the south of the city. The Elgin South Masterplan was approved in May 2017 as statutory Supplementary Guidance forming part of the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 (para 6 of the minute refers). A report to this Committee on 15 September 2020 (para 16 of minute refers) highlighted the need to review and update a number of Supplementary Guidance documents to ensure compliance with the new MLDP 2020.

3.2 In addition to the need to review the Masterplan to ensure compliance with the MLDP2020, there are a number of other factors which influence the update;

- The size of school site required in the west for Glassgreen Primary School has increased to 2.5 ha, larger than the 1.8 ha reserved in the 2017 Masterplan.
- Areas of flood risk extent have been clarified and encroach into some areas further than originally considered.
- Poor ground conditions and issues with the landowner on the east being unwilling to sell the land at this time have prompted revised phasing, with greater growth in the next 10 years to the west of the A941.
- Stand-off distances for a high pressure gas pipeline which bisects the site have been clarified and impacts upon the original layout.
- Very high demand for housing at Elgin South is being experienced, echoing feedback from developers throughout Moray.
- Large scale housing sites at Bilbohall and Findrassie have been slower to progress than anticipated by the respective developers.
- The proposed A96 dualling Aberdeen to Inverness route has been identified which shows a junction immediately to the south of the site, changing access to the wider area.
- New employment land has been identified in the MLDP2020 immediately south of the site.
- National and local planning policy place a greater emphasis upon net zero emissions, 20 minute neighbourhoods and biodiversity.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The Masterplan has been revised and updated to reflect the issues outlined above. A summary of the main changes is set out below and the full draft Elgin South Masterplan Update has been uploaded to CMIS along with the agenda under additional documents;

- Phasing- longer term phases have been moved to the east due to landownership and ground condition issues and shorter term phases moved to the west. Work is well advanced at South Glassgreen and the developer proposes to complete work at North Burnside between 2022 and 2024, which is subject to a current planning application. The next phase proposed would be to continue within Glassgreen Village to develop the Crescent South, the Square and Birnie Wood West.
- An enlarged site for the proposed Glassgreen Primary School has been identified, immediately south of the designation in the MLDP2020. This results in a more centrally located site with immediate access to the “Arc Park”, providing better active travel connections. The Council will need to undertake ground investigation works to ensure the site is suitable and discussions with the acting Head of Housing and Property have taken place to progress this work.
- A review of flooding and pipeline constraints has resulted in revisions to the layout and an enlarged pipeline corridor or “Arc Park” will be the main focus for active travel across the villages to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling.

- A renewed focus on Placemaking through the details provided of the Character Areas to comply with the requirements of the MLDP2020. This includes a Character Areas Manual showing how phases of the Masterplan will be broken down into clearly identifiable and distinctive phases.
- Changes have been made to enhance the Masterplan requirements regarding climate change, biodiversity and car parking to comply with MLDP2020.
- The Masterplan recognises and aspires to create a 20 minute neighbourhood in the spirit of the National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement, including a range of community facilities, networked greenspaces, active travel connections and access to employment opportunities. Potential mixed use buildings in Glassgreen village will be designed to have flexible ground floor spaces.
- Opportunities for key buildings have been identified which will be highlighted through a mix of location and orientation, massing, form and scale, material changes, gable emphasis, different ground floor uses, landscaping and wayfinding features.

4.2 The phasing and delivery of the road linkages associated with the Elgin South Masterplan will be informed by a detailed traffic modelling exercise which considers vehicular movements across the wider area and will identify mitigation measures and impacts on the A941, Birnie Road, A96 and across the local road network. The modelling work is anticipated to be completed by the end of April. Council Transportation officers will require time to review the outputs of the modelling exercise and consider whether the Masterplan can be finalised and move towards adoption or whether further work is required.

4.3 The draft Masterplan will be subject to online virtual consultation for a minimum period of 8 weeks and afterwards the responses will be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee to consider, along with the details of the traffic modelling and ground conditions work for the proposed primary school site and a final version of the Masterplan. If approved, the final Masterplan will then be submitted to the Scottish Government with a request to adopt it as Supplementary Guidance forming part of the Moray Local Development Plan 2020.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Elgin South Masterplan provides a framework for a new neighbourhood, with associated infrastructure and in doing so providing employment and affordable housing which are priorities for the Council.

(b) Policy and Legal

The preparation of a Masterplan is required for large scale development sites such as Elgin South. Once approved the Masterplan will become Supplementary Guidance forming part of the statutory Local

Development Plan which planning applications will be determined against.

(c) Financial implications

Glassgreen Primary School ground investigations for the revised area are estimated to cost around £40,000 and the acting Head of Housing and Property is progressing this work. The implications of the changes for Glassgreen Primary School and Elgin High need to be considered by the Asset Management Working Group, before the full implications are considered as part of the School Asset Management Plan.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk that the changes to the phasing could adversely impact upon the school roll at Greenwards and while options have been explored to use current capacity at Linkwood Primary School for growth west of the A941, these are not considered to meet the requirements of a Safe Route to School. Further work exploring the build out rate, options and impacts upon school rolls will be carried out between planning, property and education services prior to the final Masterplan being considered.

Risk regarding the ground conditions at the proposed primary school site will be mitigated through ground condition investigations being completed before any decision is made regarding the site for the primary school.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on the Elgin South Masterplan has been carried out within existing workloads of the Strategic Planning and Development section. However it has created additional pressures for the Transportation service. The Head of Direct Services is aware of these pressures and is seeking to fill the current vacancy in Transportation and to support the team to do this work.

(f) Property

The proposed changes to the phasing may result in capacity issues at Greenwards Primary School and Elgin High School earlier than projected.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None at this stage.

(h) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive Economy, Environment and Finance, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Education Resources and Communities, the acting Head of Housing and Property, the Legal Services Manager, the

Senior Engineer Transportation, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Development Management and Building Standards Manager and Paul Connor (Principal Accountant) and their comments incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Elgin South Masterplan has been updated and revised to take account of landownership and ground conditions constraints with a greater focus in the shorter term of development in the west side rather than the east side.**
- 6.2 The draft Masterplan provides a strategic framework for a large new neighbourhood, planned as three connected villages, to the south of the City, including a mix of uses, a network of green and blue spaces and well connected to adjacent employment land facilities.**
- 6.3 The draft masterplan will be subject to public consultation using virtual methods and the final version will take account of consultation responses, traffic modelling and school site ground investigations and then be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.**

Author of Report: Gary Templeton, Strategic Planning and Development Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: