



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
3 AUGUST 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 note the responses to the consultation on the draft Elgin South Masterplan Update, agree the final draft Masterplan be used as a material consideration in the development management process and to delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to work with Springfield Properties plc (SPL) to make any further technical amendments and proceed to adoption as non- statutory supplementary guidance upon completion of ground investigations works into the proposed primary school site at Glassgreen.
- 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) **note the consultation responses to the draft Elgin South Masterplan Update and the resultant changes made to the final draft Masterplan;**
 - (ii) **note progress with ground investigations into the proposed new primary school site at Glassgreen;**
 - (iii) **agree that the final draft Masterplan is treated as a material consideration in the development management process;**

- (iv) **agree that land currently designated as CF4 for a primary school in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 is not released for the development of alternative uses until the Council is satisfied as to the suitability of the proposed new primary school site and its inclusion in the revised Masterplan;**
- (v) **agree that if ground investigation works conclude that the new proposed primary school site is unsatisfactory that the matter is referred back to Council to consider options;**
- (vi) **note, that upon satisfactory completion of ground investigations into the new primary school site, a report is considered by Asset Management Working Group considering the merits of early acquisition of the site; and**
- (vii) **delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to work with Springfield Properties plc and proceed to make any additional technical changes required and to adopt the Masterplan as non-statutory supplementary guidance upon satisfactory completion of ground investigations into the new primary school site;**

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 at a meeting of this committee 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, a number of others factors influenced the need for an 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.

3.3 The draft Masterplan was approved at a meeting of this Committee on 23 March 2021 (para 15 of minute refers). The draft Masterplan was then made available for online public consultation from 23 March to 24 May 2021.

4. **PROPOSALS**

4.1 A total of 10 responses were received, including 4 from Council services, on the draft Masterplan which are summarised in **Appendix 1**. Since the consultation period ended SPL and Council officers have met to discuss changes required to the Masterplan and the majority of these have been actioned, including;

- A greater focus upon creating a village hub where commercial and retail space is concentrated rather than retail units distributed in different character areas
- More detail added and cross referencing to the policy requirements regarding placemaking including differentiations within each character areas
- A strategic approach to provision of affordable housing, ensuring a minimum of 25% affordable housing is provided and spread throughout the master-planned area.
- A grade separated crossing of the A941 in the form of a shared use over bridge has been included.
- An additional crossing of the gas pipeline included to improve connectivity
- Phasing changes, including bringing forward delivery of the Central Park and details of the rest of Glassgreen village coming forward in the short term
- A greater focus on reducing traffic speed through design rather than engineered solutions
- Clarification included of public transport routes and cycle parking provision

4.2 The Ground investigation works for the new proposed primary school site are currently out to tender and the Design Manager advises that it is likely to take 5 months for the investigations to be completed and reported back to the Council.

4.3 The draft Masterplan was given no status at the point of approving it for public consultation as a number of key issues needed to be addressed through the consultation process. These have now been addressed and with the changes resulting from the consultation process, officers recommend that the final draft (**Appendix 2**) Masterplan be considered as material consideration to be given weight in the development management process. Officers are consulting internally for any additional technical changes required to the Masterplan

before it is considered for adoption with some outstanding issues including phasing of key open spaces and delivery of public art to be addressed. Once the ground investigations works are completed for the proposed new, larger school site and the conclusions are satisfactory to the Council, then delegated authority is requested for officers to make any resultant text and technical changes and move to adopt the Masterplan as non- statutory supplementary guidance.

- 4.4 Planning and Education officers have discussed the likely timing and need for acquisition of the Glassgreen Primary School as further large phases of Glassgreen village are understood to be coming forward as planning applications within the next 6 months. A recommendation has been included asking members to note that the issue of need, timing and acquisition is to be considered further by Asset Management Working Group.

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, which has an agreed budget. 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

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. If ground conditions are unsatisfactory then alternative solutions will be explored.

The Design Manager has highlighted that the construction market is currently having difficulty securing resource and material prices which may impact upon tender returns for the ground investigations.

There is a risk of having limited housing land supply to meet the current very high demand levels if a policy framework through the Masterplan is not in place against which planning applications can be determined.

The changed phasing raises risks in terms of capacity at Greenward Primary School. Mitigation options will include utilising unused capacity at Linkwood Primary School rather than accelerating the Glassgreen Primary School build.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on the Elgin South Masterplan has been carried out within existing workloads of Council services. However it has created additional pressures for the Strategic Planning and Development and Transportation services.

(f) Property

The proposed changes to the phasing may result in capacity issues at Greenwards Primary School and Elgin High School earlier than projected although the timescale of provision is a matter for another Committee and may involve utilising capacity in nearby schools.

(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 Senior Project Manager (Learning Estate), the Legal Services Manager, the Senior Engineer Transportation, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Development Management and Building Standards Manager, Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) 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 condition 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 was made available for consultation and responses have resulted in a number of changes to the Masterplan. Ground investigation work is being procured for the proposed new, larger primary school site. It is proposed to treat the final draft Masterplan as a material consideration for development management purposes and upon completion of the ground investigations to then adopt the Masterplan as supplementary guidance to the Moray Local Development Plan 2020.

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Background Papers:

Ref: