



KEY DECISION REPORT

SERVICE AREA:	ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT Housing, Planning and Economic Regeneration
SUBJECT MATTER:	Ashton Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
DATE OF DECISION:	29th January 2010
DECISION TAKER	Councillor Alan Whitehead Councillor Kieran Quinn
DESIGNATION OF DECISION TAKER;	Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services Cabinet Deputy for Economic Services
REPORTING OFFICER:	Huw Davies – Assistant Executive Director (Housing Planning and Economic Regeneration).
REPORT SUMMARY:	<p>This report explains the steps taken to develop the Ashton Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document and seeks approval to adopt the document as planning policy.</p> <p>The document provides advice and guidance for developers wishing to develop within Ashton Town Centre. It sets out criteria by which the Council will assess planning applications. It also highlights areas of future project work that will aid the growth and regeneration of the town.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That the Ashton Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document appended to this report be adopted along with the analysis of comments at appendix 7. (2) That the Sustainability Appraisal Report at appendix 2 be adopted. (3) That the determination that no environmental assessment is required because (a) the SPD is a minor modification of a plan or programme; (b) is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and (c) the Sustainability Appraisal fully incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive be approved. (4) That the Habitats Screening opinion at appendix 4 be adopted.
JUSTIFICATION FOR DECISION:	As required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Ashton Town Centre SPD has been deposited for a 4 week period of public consultation. Views and comments received during this period of consultation have been considered and appropriate amendments have been

	<p>made to the SPD.</p> <p>Having under gone its period of public consultation and associated revisions, the SPD requires final approval to be adopted as planning policy guidance.</p>
<p>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED (if any):</p>	<p>The preparation of this Supplementary Planning Document was listed in the approved Local Development Scheme and the Council has a responsibility to meet that publicly stated obligation or amend the Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>Not producing the Supplementary Planning Document would result in the Council not having any specific planning guidance to assist developers wanting to develop in Ashton Town Centre and would reduce the extent to which the council could coordinate development / regeneration taking place in Ashton Town Centre.</p> <p>The Council could have included different provisions in the Supplementary Planning Document but those presented in the document are considered to be the most appropriate to meet the development needs of the area, in the light of comments received..</p>
<p>CONSULTEES:</p>	<p>All Ashton Members were consulted on the draft SPD. During June & July 2009 workshops were arranged and draft SPDs emailed out to provide Members with an opportunity to comment on the draft document.</p> <p>Numerous officers from services within Economy and Environment have been consulted at various stages in the production of this Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>The SPD and its accompanying documents were subject to a 4 week period of public consultation from 21st September to 19th October. Details of this are outlined in the Consultation Statement in appendix 3</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Treasurer)</p>	<p>Costs associated with production of the Supplementary Planning Document will be met from existing budgets.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: (Authorised by Borough Solicitor)</p>	<p>The report sets out how the draft supplementary planning document fits in with national and local planning policies and also other key documents such as the community strategy, the regional economic strategy and the regional spatial strategy.</p> <p>The legal process for adopting a supplementary planning document is prescribed by law and it is crucial that the process is followed correctly. It is also important that Councillors fully consider the objections and whether or not any changes should be made to the draft Supplementary Planning Document. The objections are fully set out at appendix 7</p>

	Well set out planning policies can help the council deliver the objectives of the community strategy by the co-ordination of development.
RISK MANAGEMENT:	The purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document is to manage risks around ensuring that development within Ashton Town Centre is appropriately designed and contributes to the regeneration of the town.
LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN:	The Supplementary Planning Document will have a key role in fulfilling the objectives of a prosperous society and an attractive borough, with direct and indirect links to the other Community Strategy objectives.
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:	<p>Tameside Adopted Unitary Development Plan (2004)</p> <p>Tameside Approved Local Development Scheme (2009)</p> <p>Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004</p> <p>The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer,</p> <p> Telephone: 0161 342 2750</p> <p> E-mail: stuart.wiltshire@tameside.gov.uk</p>

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to describe the work undertaken in developing the Ashton Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document and to seek a Key Decision to adopt the document as planning guidance.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development or redevelopment of land in Ashton Town Centre is currently controlled by the Council using policies contained in the adopted Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2 Prior to the current recession, Ashton was receiving increased interest from private investors wishing to develop in the town. It is hoped that this will continue when the economic up-turn begins. Allied with this, the Council realised that it was important to have a planning document in place that could help guide developers and ensure developments across the town centre contribute towards a wider desire to regenerate and strengthen the town.
- 2.3 Once in use the document will provide design guidance to developers wishing to submit planning applications and criteria against which the Council will assess these applications.
- 2.4 In March 2005 Full Council resolved to adopt the Local Development Scheme which schedules the production of Local Development Documents (including Supplementary Planning Documents). The Executive Cabinet resolved to delegate authority for approving amendments to the Local Development Scheme to the Executive Director (Economy and Environment), in consultation with the Cabinet Deputies for Technical Services, Economic Services and Community Services. A revised version of the Local Development Scheme was approved by the Executive Director (Economy and Environment) in July 2009 which scheduled the production of this Supplementary Planning Document.
- 2.5 As Supplementary Planning Documents do not form part of the Development Plan, the document does not introduce new policies, but gives additional information and advice on the implementation of Unitary Development Plan Policies, particularly policies S1 Town Centre Improvements, S2 New Retail Developments in Town Centres and S9 Design of Retail and Leisure Developments. Once adopted, the Supplementary Planning Document will complement the national framework of planning policy and guidance, conform with the Regional Spatial Strategy and support the saved policies of the adopted Tameside Unitary Development Plan. Guidance in adopted Supplementary Planning Documents can be viewed as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications.

3.0 SUMMARY OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 3.1 The Ashton Town Centre Strategy SPD presents a vision for the town centre that will help encourage investor and user interest in Ashton. In establishing this vision the document outlines centre-wide issues that through positive development / intervention will play a key role in aiding the regeneration of the town and its ranking across Greater Manchester. This section does not outline specific development guidance, but its commentary illustrates to developers proposals and needs of the town centre in terms of land uses, transport, car parking, public realm and the historic environment.

- 3.2 The SPD divides the town centre into nine character areas ('quarters'). For each 'quarter' the document details the key assets and aspirations for the area together with policies for that specific 'quarter', providing developers with guidance on what is expected of their development proposals. Their role is to ensure key principles of urban design and local character are considered by new development, ensuring high quality urban environments are created. Guidance relates to car parking, public realm, design, scale & mass, urban grain, street frontage and gateways & views.
- 3.3 Allied with design guidance for each 'quarter' the document also highlights potential development sites that through appropriate redevelopment could contribute towards achieving the aspirations of the 'quarter' and the wider vision for the town centre.
- 3.4 The document will lead to other more focused project work such as development briefs, masterplans, guidance and further studies; building on the aspirations of the SPD.
- 3.5 In use it is anticipated that the guidance detailed for each quarter will help ensure developers and designers create development proposals that align and where appropriate enhance the character of the town centre. If applied correctly it should also aid proposals achieve planning approval. The wider context of the 'town centre wide issues' and the 'potential development sites' sections of the SPD will provide developers with an understanding of the town's wider issues, aspirations and opportunities.

4.0 STATUTORY PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The Ashton Town Centre Strategy SPD has been prepared in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004. During its preparation, the document has also had regard to the following:
- National planning policy
 - The regional spatial strategy (RSS) for the North West and the East Midlands
 - The Council's community strategy
 - The strategy prepared by the Regional Development Agency
 - The local transport plan
 - Policies prepared under Section 108(1) and (2) of the Transport Act 2000
 - Tameside Retail Study
 - Draft Greater Manchester Town Centres Study
 - Other Tameside local development documents.
 - The resources likely to be available for implementing the policies
 - The objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of them.
 - The National Waste Strategy
 - Maintaining appropriate distances between establishments and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, major transport routes, recreational areas and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.
- 4.2 The document conforms with and makes specific reference to national Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres, which focuses on creating vital and viable town centres.
- 4.3 The SPD conforms with a number of the policies outlined in the North West RSS, specifically policies DP2, DP3, DP5, RDF1, W1 and W5. Policies DP2 & DP3 focus on promoting sustainable communities and sustainable economic development, principles that underpin much of the Ashton SPD. Policy DP3 focuses on reducing the economic gap between the North West and other areas of the UK, a principle developed further

by policy W1. Promoting the regeneration of Ashton will obviously contribute to the North West's economy. Guidance in the SPD aligns closely with elements of policy DP2 by promoting a sustainable mix of town centre uses, improving the town's built environment and encouraging exercise through a well connected public realm. Allied with policies DP2 and DP3, policy DP5 focuses on reducing the need to travel and improving accessibility. By encouraging the development of a diverse town centre use mix, allied with the proposed metro link, the bus routes running from the town and the rail station, Ashton and the SPD aligns with this policy well. Policy W5 promotes appropriate retail development with towns and cities across the region. With other towns Ashton is highlighted as a centre where comparison retailing should be enhanced and encouraged. A principle supported by the guidance within the SPD.

- 4.4 Planning legislation requires the Local Development Framework (LDF), of which the SPD is part, to take full account of the Community Strategy. This is a document, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership, which is focused around six key themes, of which 'A Safe Environment', 'A Prosperous Society' and 'An Attractive Borough' will be aided by the adoption and implementation of the Ashton SPD.
- 4.5 Tameside borders the East Midlands region, as such the East Midlands RSS must be considered when preparing an SPD. There will be residents of the East Midlands who work and / or shop in Tameside and equally there will be Tameside residents who work and / or shop in the East Midlands. Therefore, by encouraging the regeneration of Ashton Town Centre, we will be improving the employment, leisure and retail opportunities for residents of Tameside and the East Midlands. In turn this aligns with core objectives in the East Midlands RSS, which include 'to promote the health and mental, physical and spiritual well being of the Region's residents' (policy 1(d)) and 'to improve employment opportunities' (policy 1(e)). Policy 9 of the East Midlands Regional Plan, 'Spatial Priorities outside the Peak District National Park' focuses on meeting local needs, whilst supporting the regeneration of the nearby conurbations. As such, it supports the regeneration of Greater Manchester and in turn Ashton Town Centre. Policy 8 of the Plan outlines the requirement to protect and enhance the Peak District National Park. While SPD will not directly affect this, it supports this policy.
- 4.6 The Tameside Retail Study and the Draft Greater Manchester Town Centres Study both highlight the need to improve and develop the quality and offer of Ashton's retail provision, as promoted by the SPD.
- 4.7 The Ashton Town Centre SPD supports the objectives of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan. By promoting the development of a mixed-use town centre the SPD is helping to reduce the need for car based journeys by providing a range of services, homes and retail and employment opportunities within the town centre. The SPD also supports specific objectives detailed in the 'Tameside Appendix' of the document such as the Ashton Northern Bypass, the Metrolink and initiatives to promote cycling and walking, which will be aided by the SPD's promotion of public realm improvements.
- 4.8 In addition to the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, the SPD aligns with the requirements of Section 108(1) and (2) of the Transport Act 2000 by promoting the development of a high quality, sustainable town centre; core elements of which relate to creating a complementary uses mix, high quality mode of public transport and the creation of safe, efficient public realm. Coupled with these elements a number of developments will require a transport assessment and / or travel plan to accompany their planning application.
- 4.9 The SPD aligns with the aims and objectives of the Tameside Employment Land SPD in relation to 'achieving high quality design' and 'enabling employment generating development to take place in the best locations'. Ashton Town Centre contains St Petersfield, designated as a high quality employment site together with a number of

middle ranking sites in Portland Basin and Delamere which the Ashton SPD highlights for potential improvement. The southern part of the Portland Basin quarter is identified in the Unitary Development Plan as being a development opportunity area with residential, leisure, arts and culture, office, light industrial and supporting retail highlighted as acceptable uses.

- 4.10 The Regional Economic Strategy 2006 prepared by the North West RDA has three aims, one of which is to create the right conditions for sustainable growth and private sector investment – through investing in the region’s environment, culture, infrastructure and communities. This underpins everything in the SPD; it is therefore fully consistent with these aims.
- 4.11 The policies detailed within the SPD focus on developers and architects designing and delivering developments in Ashton Town Centre. As such, the resources likely to be required to implement these policies will be found or funded by the developer, with existing Council resources used to assess these development proposal through the planning system. If the Council proposes to undertake additional studies, as detailed in the SPD, these will be undertaken by existing Council Officers requiring no additional resources.
- 4.12 The SPD has no direct influence on land uses that could utilise hazardous material, resulting in the potential for major accidents. As such the SPD does not make specific requires related to limiting the consequences of such things. However, the SPD promotes the development of ‘town centre’ uses, which in there nature should not involves processes that could lead to major accidents. If a major accident did occur, the town’s network of streets and public spaces would enable efficient evaluation and access by emergency vehicles.
- 4.13 The Council’s waste and recycling policies align with the National Waste Strategy’s aim of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and increasing the amount of waste recycled. The SPD does not have specific guidance related to waste and recycling, but in promoting high quality design waste storage facilities will be assessed. Allied with this, the SPD supports the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document, which sets out the planning strategy for sustainable waste management across Greater Manchester.
- 4.14 The SPD does not contain guidance related to maintaining appropriate distances between establishments and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, major transport routes, recreational areas and areas of particular natural sensitively or interest. However it does outline what is considered appropriate land uses within the different ‘quarters’, which considers the existing uses, infrastructure and green spaces in these areas. Allied with this, any development adjacent to a residential use must adhere to the adopted minimum privacy distances.
- 4.15 The Council is also required to produce a sustainability appraisal report assessing the sustainability of the proposals. A report is appended to this report at appendix 2.
- 4.16 The Council is required to determine whether a policy (the SPD) is likely to have environmental effects. In coming to this view the Council consulted with:
- Natural England
 - English Heritage
 - Environment Agency
- 4.17 The sustainability appraisal report sets out the responses of these consultees and the Council’s reasoning why the supplementary planning document does not require a full strategic environmental assessment.

- 4.18 Under the Habitats directive the Council is required to formally assess whether the site will impact on any EU designated site. The opinion is attached at appendix 4.
- 4.19 Lastly the SPD is required to be in conformity with existing formal planning policies. The Strategic Planning Manager formally confirms that in his opinion the policies in the DPD do conform with the RSS, UDP and other planning policies adopted by the Council.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Supplementary Planning Document was subject to a 4 week statutory period of formal consultation which ran from 21st September to 19th October. This period of consultation gave the public and a range of organisations and groups the opportunity to make comment on the draft SPD and its accompanying documents. Prior to this period of public consultation all Ashton Ward Councillors, Councillors Quinn, Whitehead and Oldham, and key Council Officers were consulted on the document. Details of this are included in Appendix 3.
- 5.2 The Supplementary Planning Document and all supporting reports were deposited at all Council Libraries and Customer Service Centres and placed on the Council's website for the four week period. A formal 'Public Notice Inviting Representations' was placed in local newspapers. A letter or email referring to the website, libraries and Customer Service Centres was sent to all relevant stakeholders and agencies on our prescribed list of consultees, informing them of the consultation period and deadline for comments.
- 5.3 At the end of the consultation period, all comments received were read, assessed and considered by officers.
- 5.4 All representations are set out at appendix 7 along with the suggested analysis and any suggested changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Document. The recommended draft Supplementary Planning Document incorporates all these recommended changes.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the Ashton Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document appended to this report be approved and adopted along with the analysis of comments at appendix 7.
- (2) That the Sustainability Appraisal Report at appendix 2 be adopted.
- (3) That the determination that no environmental assessment is required because (a) the SPD is a minor modification of a plan or programme; (b) is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and (c) the Sustainability Appraisal fully incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive be adopted.
- (4) That the Habitats Screening opinion at appendix 4 be adopted.

Appendix 1: Ashton Town Centre Strategy SPD

Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal Report

Appendix 3: Consultation Statement

Appendix 4: Habitats screening opinion