

Title: Masterplanning framework for land to the north & east of Kenilworth/South of Coventry  
Lead Officer: Andrew Cornfoot 01926 456203; Philip Clarke 01926 456518  
Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Cooke  
Wards of the District directly affected: Kenilworth Abbey and Arden; Kenilworth Park Hill; Cubbington and Leek Wootton

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### **Summary**

This report highlights the committed developments and significant development pressures in the area to the north of the District and immediately to the south of Coventry. The report proposes an approach by which the Council works collaboratively with key partner organisations to better understand opportunities and challenges in the area and develop a masterplan framework. The masterplanning, whilst not predetermining any decisions relating to the development strategy in the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan, will provide useful evidence to inform the preparation of the Plan.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- (1)** That Cabinet notes the progress to date in discussing the desirability and potential benefits of this work with partner organisations.
- (2)** That Cabinet agrees to the Council progressing the masterplanning work with the three partner organisations stated in this report and agrees to delegate agreement of the study area (broadly in accordance with the area shown in appendix 1 attached), detailed scope, and governance arrangements to the Head of Place & Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Council's Monitoring Officer, noting that there will need to be mutual agreement of these matters with the partner organisations through a Project Board that will be formed.
- (3)** That Cabinet agrees to release an initial £56,000 from the Community Project Reserve to meet the costs of the Council's contribution to this work and notes that this will, in part, be used to create a Site Delivery Officer post within the Place & Economy service area on a 2-year fixed-term contract.

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## **1 Background/Information**

- 1.1 The area immediately to the south of Coventry has experienced significant development pressures in the recent past and is expected to do so in the future.

- 1.2 At the present time there are many developments that are being implemented and new potential projects emerging. These include several major housing and employment sites allocated through the adopted Warwick District Local Plan (2011-2029) and major employment sites/institutions with growth aspirations (University of Warwick and Stoneleigh Park) as well as HS2.
- 1.3 There are also several planned or potential schemes under consideration including the Gigafactory at Coventry airport and the A46 strategic link road and sustainable transport proposals.
- 1.4 Furthermore, there is considerable growth pressure in this area, and this can be seen in sites that are already being promoted in the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) being prepared jointly by Warwick and Stratford District Councils.
- 1.5 It is important to explore with partner organisations how we can work together to better understand and plan this important area. We are proposing that we work collaboratively with partners to develop a strategic masterplan framework for the area.
- 1.6 The masterplanning work will enable all parties to collectively understand and consider the significant opportunities as well as challenges in the area. This will include how improvement and linkages can be made to green infrastructure across the area and how more robust business cases for projects and proposals which local authorities are seeking to deliver (particularly in terms of infrastructure) can be developed.
- 1.7 Moreover, should the SWLP process identify this as a potential area for further growth, the masterplan framework will provide a place where the evidence for this can be gathered and considered.
- 1.8 **Discussions with partner organisations**
- 1.9 Senior officers at the Council have discussed the desirability and potential benefits of this work with three key partner organisations: Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council and University of Warwick.
- 1.10 In January of this year a proposal to develop a masterplanning framework was circulated to each Council for consideration. Senior management representatives of each organisation have subsequently expressed their support for undertaking this work and have committed to financially contribute to the work.
- 1.11 It is envisaged that a Project Board will be formed (likely to involve member and senior officer representation) and that will agree the detailed scope of the work and a timetable for delivery.
- 1.12 **Purpose of the masterplan**
- 1.13 The purpose of the masterplanning process can be kept under review by all the participants and is yet to be formally agreed. However, officers have proposed to partners that it might be as follows:
1. To map and understand the various planned and emerging developments in the area
  2. To explore how to maximise community benefits including through improvements to green and blue infrastructure and connectivity

3. To assist partner organisations in preparing their own masterplans for specific sites and to reflect their aspirations in the wider planning of the area
4. To understand how the climate emergencies declared by Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority and the University of Warwick should inform the future planning of this area
5. To provide a focus for considering how best to engage with HS2 in terms of how this project can bring improvements to the area (including by linking with the HS2 Context Integration Study)
6. To provide a context for considering travel and transport improvements in the area, which should prioritise active and sustainable travel but also consider the purpose, justification and business case for the A46 Strategic Link Road
7. To provide a framework and rationale for future business cases and bids to deliver transport infrastructure projects (e.g. road, VLR, South of Coventry/University of Warwick Railway Station)
8. To enable, subject to wider work on growth options across South Warwickshire and any agreement within the South Warwickshire Local Plan as to the development strategy, consideration of whether, where and how this area may be suitable for further growth as part of the Local Plan.

#### 1.14 **Extent of study area**

1.15 The suggested study area would be agreed by the key partners and kept under review. Broadly it incorporates all land to the immediate north and east of Kenilworth/south of Coventry, lying predominantly within the administrative boundary of Warwick District. It will be important that the area includes the following:

- All sites allocated in the current Warwick District Local Plan on the south side of Coventry (land at Kings Hill and Westwood Heath) and the safeguarded land which has been removed from the Green Belt to the east of the Westwood Heath allocation
- University of Warwick land within Warwick District
- The area being considered for various local transport infrastructure proposals within Warwick District
- Coventry airport, Whitley South sub-regional employment site and Middlemarch Business Park
- Stoneleigh Park and Abbey Park (Stareton)
- Land safeguarded for the delivery of HS2 within Warwick District in this general area.

1.16 It is proposed that Kenilworth is not included within the study area, however the masterplan will need to recognise the relationship between proposals in this area and Kenilworth and any opportunities and benefits that could be realised in Kenilworth. Similarly, it is not proposed that the area includes land within Solihull MBC although there needs to be recognition of the wider impact of possible links to the HS2 Interchange Station.

- 1.17 A plan showing the suggested extent of the masterplan area is shown in Appendix 1. However, please note that it is envisaged that the precise boundaries of the subject area will be agreed by the key partners.
- 1.18 **Key stakeholders, governance and timescales**
- 1.19 It is proposed that the key stakeholders form a Project Board (PB) to oversee the management of this project. These stakeholders will all be funding contributors to the cost of the work (see resourcing below).
- 1.20 Membership of the PB is suggested to be as follows:
- Warwick District Council
  - Coventry City Council
  - Warwickshire County Council
  - University of Warwick.
- 1.21 The Terms of Reference of this PB will be agreed by all partners, however it is proposed that the PB operates in a simple streamlined way to oversee the project, ensure that any key agreed deadlines are met and monitor the use of resources invested in it. It is not suggested that the PB will be delegated any decisions that should properly rest with their parent bodies. The PB will have the authority to determine how any resources allocated to the project are spent (see section on resourcing below).
- 1.22 Representation at the PB is proposed to be at member and senior officer level.
- 1.23 Beyond the PB it is likely that a wider stakeholder group(s) would be involved at key stages in a consultative role. This may include local parish councils, residents groups, Stoneleigh Park, HS2, local major landowners/developers and Solihull MBC and Rugby BC.
- 1.24 It is envisaged that Terms of Reference will be agreed by the key stakeholders prior to the first meeting of the PB. Then, once the PB is formed, detailed discussion will take place to consider in more detail the scope of the work, outputs and timetable for delivery. However, it is hoped that significant progress will be achievable during 2022, albeit this is subject to being able to commit appropriate staff resource to the project swiftly.
- 1.25 The timetable for the SWLP, recently approved by the Joint Cabinet/Executive Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> March indicates an Issues and Options consultation will be held in Autumn 2022, a Preferred Options consultation in summer 2023 followed by further consultation and an examination in public leading to adoption by the end of 2025. The Issues and Options consultation will develop initial options for growth in South Warwickshire following the earlier Scoping Consultation. It is then envisaged that at the Preferred Options stage officers will have a clearer understanding of the likely growth strategy for the Plan and therefore at that stage we will better understand whether the area that is subject to this masterplanning work is deemed appropriate for growth through the Plan. As indicated earlier in this report, the masterplanning work can provide useful evidence to inform the SWLP process.
- 1.26 **Resourcing the masterplanning work**
- 1.27 The Council does not have the capacity or budget within existing resources to undertake this work. For this reason, and to provide collective ownership of the

masterplan, each of the four stakeholders will be funding contributors to the cost of the work.

- 1.28 It is anticipated that there will be several technical studies that will need to be commissioned to develop the evidence base and there will need to be a budget for these. An initial budget of £100,000 has been identified for this although it may be necessary to request further contributions if this proves insufficient.
- 1.29 In order to provide the capacity to drive this work forward, a full-time officer resource is also required. It is proposed that this is hosted by Warwick District Council and funded from all Board member partners. Warwick District Council has already developed the role of 'Site Delivery Officer' within Place & Economy. This is a senior post and would be ideally suitable for undertaking the range of duties and responsibilities of this role.
- 1.30 The annual cost of the Site Delivery Officer role (including all on-costs) is £53,000. It is proposed that the post is created as a 2-year fixed term contract.
- 1.31 In addition to the Site Delivery Officer leading on this work, it is likely that support and involvement from management tiers will be required, including involvement on the PB.
- 1.32 In total it is anticipated that delivery of this work may cost in the region of £206,000 (£100,000 for technical studies; £106,000 staffing costs). Officers have requested that Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council and University of Warwick all make a contribution of £50,000 to this work. Senior management at each partner organisation has agreed to this level of contribution subject to obtaining the relevant approvals. This leaves a balance of £56,000 for Warwick District Council to contribute and given that the study area will be primarily within Warwick District this slight uplift above the contributions requested from partners is considered to be reasonable.

## **2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet**

### **2.1 Alternative Option 1 – No masterplanning of area**

Cabinet could determine that they do not wish to support the masterplanning work as set out in this report and ask officers to 'do nothing' with regards to comprehensively considering the challenges and opportunities in this area.

- 2.2 This, however, would potentially result in missed opportunities to better understand the potential of the area for connecting green and blue infrastructure, for biodiversity enhancements, for transport connectivity and infrastructure and for considering what development might be suitable, where and how it might relate to other development in the area.

- 2.3 A masterplan framework for the area will provide a stronger case for infrastructure funding bids as it will demonstrate that the area has been positively planned.

- 2.4 Without a masterplan, should preferred options for growth in the South Warwickshire Local Plan suggest that this may be a suitable area for growth, there will not have been any initial comprehensive work undertaken looking at whether, where and how this area might be suitable for further growth.

### **2.5 Alternative Option 2 - Masterplanning without involvement of key partners**

- 2.6 Cabinet could decide that they wish for officers to prepare a masterplan without the input and direct involvement of the three key partners.

- 2.7 However, given the location of the study area and its relationship to the city of Coventry, the importance of transport infrastructure and connectivity and the presence of Warwick University, a major institution in the area, it is logical and sensible to undertake this work with the three partners identified. The involvement of each party also ensures buy in to the process and eventual outputs of the work.
- 2.8 Furthermore, were the Council to undertake this work in isolation, then the financial resources that would need to be found by this Council would be significantly higher (roughly four times the amount currently requested).
- 2.9 **Alternative Option 3 - Masterplanning involving more partners**
- 2.10 Cabinet could decide that a greater number of parties should be part of the Project Board and take a key role in the delivery of this work.
- 2.11 As previously identified, it is likely that a wider stakeholder group would be involved at key stages in a consultative role. However, to bring more parties, with potentially disparate aims, into the core group, this would make governance of the project more challenging and most likely extend the timescales for delivery of the work. There would also be challenges around the extent of financial contributions each organisation would be prepared or able to contribute.
- 2.12 **Alternative Option 4 – Masterplanning only once spatial growth strategy of SWLP has been determined**
- 2.13 Cabinet could conclude that to undertake the masterplanning work at this stage is premature and might unduly lead or prejudice work to determine the growth strategy of the SWLP.
- 2.14 Officers are of the view that this work can be undertaken in tandem with progression of the SWLP and that the growth strategy for the local plan will be arrived objectively based on various layers of evidence. This work does however have the benefit of helping identify the potential for development or challenges in bringing forward further development in this area, which will be useful evidence to inform the SWLP.

### **3 Consultation and Member's comments**

- 3.1 Whilst there has been no wider consultation to date with members about the content of this report, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Place & Economy have both expressed their support to officers for an approach that positively plans and considers the development of this area in a comprehensive manner and explore opportunities and challenges.

### **4 Implications of the proposal**

#### **4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications**

- 4.1.1 There are no legal or human rights implications of the proposal.

#### **4.2 Financial**

- 4.2.1 As set out in paragraphs 1.25-1.31 in the section titled 'Resourcing the masterplanning work' the proposal, it is estimated that there will be costs associated with staffing a position to lead on this work and further costs associated with undertaking technical work as part of the masterplanning exercise.

- 4.2.2 In total it is anticipated that the work will cost a little over £200,000 over a two year period. However, as set out in the aforementioned paragraphs, officers have agreed a position with other key stakeholders that will mean that this Council will require £56,000 of this to deliver the proposal. This contribution, combined with contributions of £50,000 from each of the other partners, will enable the Council to create a two year fixed term Site Delivery Officer position and also provide funds to commission work as part of the masterplanning process.
- 4.2.3 The staffing structure within Place & Economy currently includes three permanent Site Delivery Officer posts. However, one post has remained vacant since summer 2020 and that is a post that previously had focussed geographically on the proposed area for study. The salary saving from that post is now committed to part fund this Council's contribution to the South Warwickshire Local Plan team, formed in September 2021. Therefore, whilst the current structure suggests three Site Delivery Officer posts, there is only sufficient budget available for two of these positions.
- 4.2.4 The Council's 2022/23 budget created a Community Project Reserve of £300,000 of which £25,000 has been committed, leaving a balance of £275,000. It is proposed that officers draw down £56,000 from this account to contribute towards the delivery of this work. This draw down would only take place in the event that the other funding partners noted in this report make a contribution to enable to project as a whole, to proceed.
- 4.2.5 Whilst the contributions of all parties are likely to provide sufficient funding to deliver the masterplanning work, it is possible that the Project Board during the course of the project collectively decide that a further contribution is needed to deliver the outputs that may be required. Should that be the case, then officers may bring a report to Cabinet requesting additional resource if there are no suitable existing sources of funding available.

#### 4.3 **Council Plan**

##### 4.3.1 **Fit for the Future (FFF)**

4.3.2 The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District making it a great place to live, work and visit. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The section below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

##### 4.3.3 **FFF Strands: External Impacts**

##### 4.3.4 **People – Health, Homes, Communities**

4.3.5 The masterplanning work will look at opportunities for sustainable travel in the area, for the creation of greenspaces and will also consider opportunities for new homes (including affordable homes) and the creation of new communities.

##### 4.3.6 **Services – Green, Clean, Safe**

4.3.7 The masterplanning work will be undertaken in the context of the Climate Emergency declaration made by the Council in June 2019 and this will be a key consideration in the delivery of this work stream.

##### 4.3.8 **Money – Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment**

4.3.9 The delivery of this workstream seeks to positively plan for potential infrastructure delivery and growth in the area and will cover the sites of major

employers.

#### 4.3.10 **FFF Strands: Internal Impacts**

#### 4.3.11 **People – Effective Staff**

4.3.12 The appointment of an additional Site Delivery Officer will provide an opportunity to ensure that staff can be effectively utilised to support this work.

#### 4.3.13 **Services – Maintain or Improve Services**

4.3.14 Undertaking this work will support and improve the delivery of services in this area by identifying opportunities for improvements to support communities in this part of the district.

#### 4.3.15 **Money – Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term**

4.3.16 No impact.

#### 4.4 **Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

4.4.1 A key consideration in the masterplanning exercise will be the Climate Emergency declaration made by this Council. Two of the other key partners have also declared such emergencies, further emphasising the importance of this issue to the partner organisations.

4.4.2 Any decisions relating to the growth strategy for the SWLP and future growth in this area will be taken through the Local Plan process and the strategy will be developed with tackling climate change as being an overarching objective.

#### 4.5 **Analysis of the effects on Equality**

4.5.1 There are no equality impacts associated with the proposals in this report.

#### 4.6 **Data Protection**

4.6.1 There are no Data Protection implications associated with the proposals in this report.

#### 4.7 **Health and Wellbeing**

4.7.1 The proposed masterplanning of this area will help best consider how developments and communities can be best connected, including through sustainable travel. Well designed and planned communities can also have positive impacts upon health and wellbeing.

### **5 Risk Assessment**

5.1 Section 2 of this report considered alternative options to undertaking the masterplanning exercise that is currently proposed. However, each of the alternatives were considered to be less preferable than the proposal in this report for the reasons set out in Section 2.

5.2 A risk is that this work could be seen to be pre-determining whether this area should be supported for growth through the emerging SWLP. However, as explored in paragraph 2.14, it is considered that this work can be undertaken without unduly predetermining the SWLP and it has the potential to provide useful evidence to inform the preparation of the Plan.

5.3 There is a financial risk that the initial contributions from the Council and other parties may be insufficient to deliver a meaningful output which may result in further request for funding. However, if the project is well managed through the Project Board, this will reduce the likelihood of this risk becoming a reality.



## **6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 6.1 This report highlights the committed developments and significant development pressures in the area to the north of the district and immediately to the south of Coventry. The report proposes that the Council works collaboratively with key partner organisations to better understand opportunities and challenges in the area and develop a masterplan framework.
- 6.2 Officers have sought the input and views of key partners on the progression of this work, its possible scope, governance, and cost. All three partner organisations (Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council and University of Warwick) have agreed in principle to take part in the masterplanning work and have confirmed that the financial contributions sought are acceptable.
- 6.3 Officers request that £56,000 is released from the Community Project Reserve to meet the Council's contribution to this work. It is also proposed that a Site Delivery Officer post within Place & Economy is created, on a two year fixed term contract, to lead on this work.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Proposed study area

## Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

<b>Committee/Date</b>	20/04/2022	
<b>Title of report</b>	Masterplanning framework for land to the north & east of Kenilworth/South of Coventry	
<b>Consultations undertaken</b>		
<b>Consultee *required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Details of consultation /comments received</b>
<b>Ward Member(s)</b>	N/A	
<b>Portfolio Holder WDC &amp; SDC *</b>	18/3/22	Happy with report
<b>Financial Services *</b>	11/3/22	
<b>Legal Services *</b>	11/3/22	No notable legal implications
<b>Other Services</b>	11/3/22	
<b>Chief Executive(s)</b>	11/3/22	Various comments made
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	11/3/22	Comments made relating to recommendations and the relationship to the SWLP
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	11/3/22	
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	11/3/22	Comments made relating to recommendations and governance arrangements
<b>CMT (WDC)</b>	11/3/22	Various comments made including regarding financial information
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)</b>	28/3/22	
<b>Other organisations</b>	18/03/22	Report sent to 3 partner organisations (WCC, CCC, University of Warwick). CCC - Comments relating to study area; University – support given for report
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Ctte/Council?</b>		Final decision
<b>Contrary to Policy/Budget framework</b>		No
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>		No

<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>		Yes, Forward Plan item 1278 – scheduled for Cabinet April 2022
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	File/Info/Inspect Document/Check Accessibility

## Appendix 1: Broad extent of the study area

Note: This is a rough plan of the proposed study area and detailed boundary alignments would be decided by the Project Board. The land is predominantly within Warwick District Council's administrative area, although small pockets are within Coventry City Council's administrative boundary.

