

Title: University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Lead Officer: Adam James, Site Delivery Officer / Andrew Cornfoot,
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Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris King (Place)

Wards of the District directly affected: Kenilworth Abbey and Arden

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	12/02/24	Cllr King
Finance	02.02.24	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services	02.02.24	Ross Chambers
Chief Executive	09.02.24	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change	15.02.24	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	05.02.24	Philip Clarke
Section 151 Officer	02.02.24	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	15.02.24	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No, Forward Plan item 1,375 – scheduled for 6 March 2024	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

The purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide a framework for guiding the level and broad location of growth on the main University of Warwick campus as well as design principles to be considered when assessing planning applications on the campus. The SPD provides supplementary guidance to Policy MS1 – University of Warwick - of the adopted Warwick District Local Plan and is intended to assist with the determination of future planning applications. The SPD can only be adopted as Council guidance following statutory public consultation and then subsequent formal adoption at Cabinet. This report seeks approval to commence a public consultation on the SPD.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That Cabinet note the content of the University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan SPD (Appendices A and B) and gives approval to commence a public consultation for no less than 6 weeks.
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Place, Arts and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, to make any minor amendments to the documentation prior to consultation and to agree dates for the consultation.
- (3) That Cabinet note that following the public consultation a final version of the SPD will be brought before them to formally adopt.

1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 The SPD would provide supplementary planning guidance to policy MS1 of the adopted Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029. Policy MS1 states that "development of the University of Warwick will be permitted in line with an approved Masterplan or Development Brief". There is currently no such Masterplan and Development Brief in place for the area. The SPD can therefore provide a more detailed masterplan framework and supplementary guidance to assist with the determination of future planning applications.
- 1.2 The University's main campus straddles the administrative boundaries of Coventry and Warwick District and the SPD, with the majority of the academic faculty buildings being located in Coventry and residential accommodation and sports facilities being largely located within Warwick District. It is important therefore that the SPD is also consistent with Coventry's relevant Local Plan policy. Furthermore, it should be noted that Coventry are also proposing to take a report to their Cabinet seeking approval to consult on the document.

Background/Information

- 1.3 Policy MS1 states that the Masterplan should "set out how proposals will contribute to the University delivering a world-class education campus" with four key purposes:
 - a) to identify the physical and economic context;
 - b) to identify the development principles to underpin future development proposals;

c) to identify the location of developments, demonstrating how proposals will mitigate any potential adverse impacts; and

d) identify how the proposals support the vitality of the local and/or sub-regional economy.

- 1.4 The Local Plan acknowledges the important role of the University in supporting the local economy and the need for the University to be able to grow within its existing boundaries and develop as a Higher Education facility of international importance.
- 1.5 As the document seeks to clarify the University's plans for future development on campus and their proposed location, planning consultants Turleys were appointed by the University to lead on the drafting of the document and there has also been input from a range of other consultants. However, officers representing Warwick District Council, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council have been heavily involved and reviewed various drafts of the SPD via a Steering Group. The comments have shaped the final version of the Framework Masterplan SPD.
- 1.6 The SPD begins by addressing the planning policy context (both existing and emerging) and then the current campus context by explaining existing land uses and assets. Whilst the main campus is the focus for the University's activities in the region and is the sole focus of the SPD, the University also supports the Innovation Campus at Wellesbourne, University Hospital in Coventry and a new healthcare facility at Arden Cross, Solihull.
- 1.7 The document explains that the long-term vision of the University is based on five strategic priorities; innovation; inclusion; regional leadership; internationalisation; and sustainability. The SPD seeks to give an indication of the longer-term delivery vision up to 2050, however the SPD specifies the detailed capital projects likely to be delivered by 2033.
- 1.8 The SPD covers the entirety of the main University campus, and so addresses land in both Warwick District and Coventry City Council areas. Subsequently, both Warwick District Council and Coventry City Council are intending to secure Cabinet approval with a view to holding a joint public consultation on the SPD. As Coventry have local elections in May, it is proposed that the public consultation would commence after the elections.
- 1.9 A number of key proposals are identified up to 2033:
 - a) A new Social Sciences Quarter including the new Business School (within the Warwick District area – outline application W/23/0195 already approved)
 - b) The Science Precinct – redevelopment and refurbishment of Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) facilities on central campus and creation of a new University Green (within the Coventry City area – hybrid application PL/2023/0002402/OUTM submitted but yet to be determined)
 - c) A new Energy Innovation Centre (within the Coventry City area)
 - d) Extension of Scarman House, Post Experience Centre, including additional bedspaces (within the Warwick District area)
 - e) 'Solar arrays' – two separate large scale photovoltaic installations to generate renewable energy (within the Warwick District area)

- 1.10 The SPD states that the University anticipates providing 1,200 net additional student bedspaces on or immediately adjoining the campus.
- 1.11 A number of other possible proposals are identified up to 2033. Within Warwick District, possible redevelopment of Radcliffe House is identified to create a MBA Training Centre. Other possible proposals are also identified on land within the Coventry administrative area.
- 1.12 In conjunction with the highway authorities involving extensive collaborative working, the University has modelled the traffic generation from 31,000m² of new development on campus over and above the recent approval of the Social Sciences Quarter (outline application W/23/0195), as well as previous planning applications including the Capital Plan Hybrid application (OUT/2018/2115) within the Coventry area. Allowing for known projects to be pursued up to 2033, this leaves a capacity of 13,000m² of floorspace to allow for other projects to come forward over the period to 2033. If any projects come forward resulting in additional floorspace to the 31,000m² gross/13,000m² further net floorspace, additional modelling work would be required. In the round, the University is seeking to maximise use of the more built-up areas of the campus, rather than extend into greenfield areas.
- 1.13 Alongside the specific proposals identified, there are a number of strategic design principles to guide future development on campus:
- a) Campus Core and Periphery – higher density development and taller buildings within the Campus Core, with less dense and lower storey developments on the periphery to be sensitive to the green fringe areas beyond
 - b) Axes and Hubs – a focus of activity and movement on two primary axes – i) University House to Gibbet Hill and ii) Academic Square to the Sports Hub. The hubs would be active public spaces/buildings and future mobility hubs to provide a variety of travel options, with car parking located in areas peripheral to the main campus.
 - c) Pedestrian-Focused - creating a one-way circulatory route to minimise traffic whilst maintaining essential access, supplemented by an extensive pedestrian and cycle network
 - d) Active public spaces – to help create more of a sense of community, including formal squares and greenspaces (including the new University Green as part of the STEM development), as well as more active frontages such as shops, cafes, informal meeting space and other community uses.
 - e) Landmark Design – new and refurbished buildings to reflect the character and modern vernacular of the campus, differentiating between Core and Periphery, as well as providing landmarks and visual markers to aid wayfinding and create a sense of place.
 - f) Integrating Nature – delivering development that enhances formal and informal landscapes where possible, connects habitats and ecological corridors and delivers additional tree planting.
- 1.14 The SPD breaks the campus down into 6 distinct character areas – Campus Core, Residential Fringe, Gibbet Hill, Science Park, Westwood and Green Fringe. In recognising the district characteristics of those areas, design principles are included to provide a framework for development proposals within those locations.

- 1.15 Another key ambition for the University is to continue to explore the creation of an Eco-Park combining ecological, recreational and energy generation initiatives. However, this is dependent on the return of land from HS2 Ltd, the extent of which is currently unknown.
- 1.16 The main transport and movement strategy of the SPD focuses on reducing single occupancy trips to and from campus, maintaining accessibility through and around campus for all users (especially sustainable, non-car modes) and offering choice to incentivise behavioural change and enhance the environmental sustainability of the campus. The University has been successful in recent years in implementing a number of measures to encourage walking and cycling as well as use of rail and bus and is pursuing further measures in this regard (including Demand Responsive Transport for 'last mile' journeys). The strategy also addresses the more strategic and longer-term possibilities including the potential for the campus to be served by Very Light Rail in future.
- 1.17 The trip generation and traffic modelling undertaken for the SPD has informed a Framework Section 106 Agreement and 'Monitor and Manage' approach, which have been produced in discussion with Highways officers at Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council. These provide the basis for identifying necessary mitigation measures to address the specific impacts from particular proposals up to 2033 and within the agreed floorspace limits. This is addressed on page 25 of the SPD and the Framework s106 Obligations tables included as Appendix B. Where development comes forward outside of the floorspace limits or for uses not assessed through the SPD, a separate Transport Assessment would be required.
- 1.18 The SPD also addresses the issue of the A46 Strategic Link Road project, which identified a possible multimodal transport corridor linking the A46 Stoneleigh Junction with Westwood Heath Road. This was previously explored as part of Warwickshire County Council's A46 Strategic Link Road consultation¹ (2020), of which one of the options proposed an option to serve the University Campus via a 'spur'. The Council understands that the latest Business Case analysis undertaken for the A46 Strategic Link Road has not returned a favourable cost-benefit ratio, with limited scope for capital funding from Government, and so the project has not been progressed by WCC. As things stand, based on the envisaged trip generation and traffic modelling undertaken for the SPD, the highway authorities consider that the delivery of such a corridor/spur is not necessary to support the quantum of growth specified within the SPD (i.e. the 31,000m² gross additional floorspace threshold). The SPD identifies that the Eco-Park could feasibly be impacted by the alignment of such a transport corridor.
- 1.19 The SPD also addresses other transport considerations, including a potential new railway station to serve the University of Warwick and south Coventry. This is currently an aspiration and a scheme identified as for further investigation within the Warwickshire Rail Strategy (2019) and the West Midlands Rail Executive Rail Investment Strategy. However, it is currently unfunded /not identified as a scheme to be progressed currently. This is in part due to the requirement for additional rail capacity between Coventry and Leamington (dualling of the line), as well as new highway infrastructure to facilitate strategic access to the site. Again, the delivery of such a station is not considered necessary to support the quantum of growth proposed, but it remains an aspiration and a project for further investigation.

¹ <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/major-transport-construction-projects/a46-link-road-scheme/3>

- 1.20 In terms of biodiversity and ecology elements, the University are committed to maximising the ecological value of its estate, with the approach being to safeguard existing ecological assets, enhancing biodiversity, sustaining and enhancing the Great Crested New population and encouraging site users to engage with the natural environment. It is recognized that Biodiversity Net Gain becomes a mandatory requirement in February 2024 and so the SPD commits to delivering a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity from new developments. The SPD also specifies the habitats and species from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to be prioritised.
- 1.21 The SPD also addresses the University's approach to heritage and archaeology in accordance with statutory and Local Plan policy requirements. Again, the SPD recognises the importance of safeguarding heritage assets within and proximate to the campus. Where new development proposals may impact such heritage assets, they should seek to preserve and enhance the asset and its setting. Additional heritage surveys relative to specific planning applications may be required.

Next steps

- 1.22 If approved, the Council is required to hold a statutory public consultation on the document, undertaken in a way that complies with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This requires public consultation for a minimum of six weeks, with documents available online and available for inspection at deposit points.
- 1.23 As the SPD covers land in both Warwick District and Coventry City Council areas, both Councils are intending to secure Cabinet approval with a view to holding a joint public consultation on the SPD. It is understood that the SPD is to be tabled for approval at Coventry City Council's Spring Cabinet meeting. Given the two sets of approval processes, and elections in Coventry, it is possible that minor changes may need to be made to the SPD prior to the consultation. It is therefore proposed that the start date of the consultation, and any minor amendments to the SPD, are delegated to the Head of Place, Arts and Economy in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Place. It is expected that consultation would be held in late spring or early summer.
- 1.24 Following the consultation, all comments will be considered and where appropriate the SPD will be amended. It is intended that the final version of the SPD would be brought back to Cabinet to consider for formal adoption.
- 1.25 If the SPD is adopted, it would be treated as a material planning consideration in the consideration of relevant planning applications. An SPD does not have weight as development plan policy (like the Local Plan policies), but nonetheless, the SPD would be used as guidance to assist with decision making.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 An alternative option is to not consult on the draft SPD. If major amendments are required, a revised version of the SPD could be presented to Cabinet in future, subject to further engagement with the University, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council. Cabinet also have the option of not progressing the SPD entirely. This is not recommended as there would remain a lack of planning guidance to assist with the determination of planning applications.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 The legislation relevant to the production of SPDs is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.2 As stated in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, SPDs should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. They are however a material consideration in decision-making. The Guidance also states that SPDs should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 Costs of consulting on the SPD are expected to be minimal. Any such costs are expected to be met through existing budgets.

5 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation. The proposed SPD can contribute to the delivery of some of these strategic aims:
- 5.2 Delivering valued, sustainable services – not applicable
- 5.3 Low cost, low carbon energy across the district – proposals set out within the SPD include the 'solar arrays' project, two separate large scale photovoltaic installations to generate renewable energy. An Energy Innovation Centre is also proposed which can help with the development of new, low/zero carbon technologies. The SPD proposals also seek to encourage zero and low carbon travel to, and around, the site to reduce reliance on private car. Any development proposals on campus would also be required to adhere to adopted sustainability policies in the Warwick District or Coventry Local Plan (as applicable to the site location).
- 5.4 Creating vibrant, safe and healthy communities of the future – the proposals set out within the SPD seek to sustain the University as a world class education facility, but also to 'open up' the campus to the wider community as an asset within the district for the public to visit and enjoy.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The proposals set out with SPD seek to deliver environmental enhancement and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Any future development on site would be required to comply with Development Plan Policies that address the natural environment and climate change. The SPD therefore aligns with the Council's policies and Climate Emergency Action Plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report has also been produced for the three statutory consultation bodies to review (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) and will be published as part of the consultation.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and again, will be published as part of the public consultation.

8 Data Protection

- 8.1 Statutory consultation on the SPD will be undertaken in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

9 Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 A number of the proposals set out within the SPD are likely to deliver health and wellbeing benefits to staff, students and visitors to the campus. This includes promoting active travel to and around campus, encouraging more public use for people to enjoy the facilities and surroundings, and by delivering environmental enhancements.

10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 By not producing supplementary guidance to policy MS1 of the Local Plan, there is considered to be a lack of guidance to assist planning officers with the determination of planning applications. This may cause unnecessary delays and hamper delivery of the University's capital growth programme. An adopted SPD will also help to communicate the vision for future growth to local communities and indeed the consultation will provide an opportunity for them to engage in this vision.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 It is a statutory requirement that the SPD is subject to public consultation. The Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) requires public consultation for a minimum of six weeks, with documents available online and available for inspection at deposit points. It is envisaged that all responses received will be considered in advance of producing a final version of the SPD.

Background papers:

Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029

Supporting documents:

None. There are however two appendices to this report:

Appendix A: Draft Campus Framework Masterplan SPD

Appendix B: Draft University of Warwick Transport S106 Obligations – Committed, Proposed and SPD Framework