

REPORT TO:		Cabinet	
DATE:		20 October 2021	
PORTFOLIO:		Councillor Loraine Cox, Regeneration and Wellbeing	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Mark Hoyle, Head of Regeneration & Housing	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Huncoat Garden Village – Masterplan Framework & Infrastructure Delivery Strategy	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To invite Cabinet to consider for approval the Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.

2. Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and approves the Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy as per the final document which can be viewed via the following links:
- <http://www.huncoatgardenvillage.co.uk/>
 - <https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/huncoat-garden-village-masterplan-framework/>

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

- 3.1 Huncoat Garden Village forms a major part of Hyndburn Borough Council's growth plans including a genuine and once in a lifetime opportunity to diversify Hyndburn's housing offer as well as provide new housing in a fabulous landscape setting. The Garden Village is a game changing opportunity for market making housing in Hyndburn at scale that not only helps the Borough retain those households that otherwise leave to meet their housing aspirations elsewhere, but also attract, new economic active households to the Borough.

Huncoat will be an exemplar of national significance for creating new, sustainable garden communities. At a critical point with the need to respond to climate change, the Masterplan is clear that when planning for the new housing everything must be done to protect the environment. For this reason the Masterplan sets a framework for the highest possible standards in protecting Huncoat's rich natural environment including the protection,

conservation and enhancement of existing habitats including woodland, grassland and watercourses.

The Masterplan also sets a framework for sustainability to ensure that the Garden Village draws together a range of principles that expect the highest standards of sustainable design and construction essential in creating a built environment that demands decarbonisation, making positive steps to carbon zero.

3.2 Cabinet originally gave its consent on the 18th July 2018 to undertake a comprehensive exercise to establish a Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (The Masterplan). The Masterplan has been developed and finalised under the following key stages:

Stage 1 – Evidence Base and Baseline Report - This report comprises of a series of co-ordinated studies and reports to inform a robust evidence base for the Masterplan area to ensure the constraints (e.g. ground conditions, drainage, landscape, ecological, transport, ownership) are fully understood, spatial parameters and infrastructure requirements can be fixed with confidence and a deliverable masterplan can be agreed.

Stage 2 – Option Development and Testing Report – Once the baseline work had been agreed initially three land use and infrastructure options were developed and tested. These were based on a mix of residential and employment uses comprising an existing planning policy compliant scenario, a medium growth scenario utilising more land and a maximum growth option. The testing and option development work concluded that employment uses were not viable and were not supported in the consultation that took place. Subsequently, a further 3 residential only options were tested and developed. Each option was assessed in relation to its impact on:

- the local highway networks
- existing school provision
- biodiversity and ecology
- the character and visual impact of development within Huncoat
- utilities assessment to confirm utilities requirement, costs, risks and delivery issues
- viability and deliverability
- the requirement for Green Belt release
- drainage, to confirm a drainage strategy (costs)

Following the option testing a preferred final option was agreed.

Stage 3 – Draft Masterplan and Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy – The preferred final option was worked up as a full masterplan framework with a series of individual framework plans accompanied by written guidance on the planning, design and infrastructure requirements. These include a land use framework, a movement framework and access strategy, a green infrastructure framework, character area guidance, a placemaking framework. In addition, the Masterplan framework is supported by financial viability appraisals, an infrastructure delivery strategy and report.

Stage 4 – Final Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy – The final Masterplan document collates the Stage 3 work into a composite document which also sets out future planning application requirements for Huncoat and identifies further planning policy changes required to support the implementation of the Masterplan.

3.3 In developing the Masterplan additional work was commissioned in order to ensure the Masterplan was under-pinned by a robust evidence base, including the following:-

- i) Highway Assessment – to better understand the existing highways capacity to support growth at Huncoat. The study identified key tipping points where highway interventions were required including junction improvements and the provision of a new distributor road linking Huncoat Garden Village with the A56.
- ii) Ecology Survey – A further detailed assessment of the ecological features within the Masterplan area was undertaken to further ascertain the ecological values of the former colliery and power station sites.
- iii) School Provision – A study has been undertaken to understand how the expansion of the Huncoat Primary School can be accommodated on the existing site including improvements in highway access.
- iv) Individual Site Assessment – A comprehensive site assessment was undertaken to allow clear decisions to be made on the inclusion or discounting of particular sites for future development within the Masterplan area. Considerations included:
 - alignment with Garden Village concepts, vision and design principles
 - contextual fit and impact on the existing village and community
 - transport planning and access
 - visual impact and character
 - green belt categorisation
 - site features, including environmental considerations
 - infrastructure requirements
 - viability
 - stakeholder consultation including landowners and the local community

3.4 The Masterplan has been developed alongside a review of the Local Plan including a review of the Core Strategy along with the preparation of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The Masterplan becomes a material consideration to any planning application for Huncoat Garden Village to be progressed in line with the Local Plan. The purpose of the Masterplan is therefore to guide the local planning authority, land owners, developers and house builders in respect of land use, environmental, social, design and economic objectives in creating Huncoat Garden Village.

3.5 The key components promoted by the Masterplan over the next 15 years include:

- 1,504 new homes plus an additional 312 safeguarded for the next plan period beyond 2036.
- A new residential relief/distributor road linking Huncoat Garden Village directly with the A56.
- Provision to expand Huncoat Junior School (subject to some further work including discussions with Lancashire County Council and the Huncoat Junior School)
- A new village centre to be located at the junction of Lower Gate Road, Altham Lane and Station Road. This will link the “old” Huncoat with the Garden Village area and will provide local shops, community buildings and car parking within walking distance of the new neighbourhoods as well as existing residential areas.
- Railway Station improvements including car parking facilities and cycling storage, improved access arrangements, live train information and increased security.

- Circa 40 hectares of improved open space including 24 hectares of safeguarded land for a potential Biological Heritage Site.
- In addition to the existing football / sport pitches off Bolton Avenue, a new state of the art 11 a side 4G pitch with flood lighting and a 9 a-side grass pitch
- 7 formal play areas and 7 informal play areas

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 Six options were developed and tested (refer to “3.2, Stage 2” above) finalising the preferred Masterplan option. The initial three options (1-3) included a mix of residential uses but all three were rejected because the employment uses were found to have a detrimental impact on the Masterplan and to be not viable, and with very little support from local resident consultation.

4.2 A further three residential only options were developed and tested:

- Option 4 – Small growth option (497 new homes)
- Option 5 – Medium growth option (1,110 new homes)
- Option 6 – Transformational growth option (1,793 new homes)

Option 4 was rejected because it did not satisfy the emerging Local Plan housing numbers to be delivered in Huncoat. A ‘hybrid’ of Option 5 and 6 was selected to satisfy the emerging Local Plan housing numbers and following detailed testing to produce a deliverable Masterplan framework.

4.3 Detailed analysis of option development and testing is provided within the Stage 2 Option Testing and Development Report.

5. Consultations

5.1 The Masterplan has been subject to extensive consultation, including:

- Stage 1 - Baseline Evidence – landowner and stakeholder consultation
- Stage 2 - Option Development & Testing
 - landowner consultation
 - stakeholder consultation
 - public consultation (November 2018)
 - further public consultation (March/April 2019)
 - resident transport and infrastructure workshop (14th February 2019)
 - resident green infrastructure workshop (6th March 2019)
 - Huncoat Primary School Workshop (February 2019)
- Stage 3 - Draft Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy
 - Preferred Option consultation with the public and stakeholders including landowners (May/June 21)
- Huncoat Forum – Throughout the Masterplan’s development Council officers have regularly attended the Forum to keep its members and attendees up to date with the Masterplan’s Development and progress.

6. **Implications**

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	<p>None arising from this report.</p> <p>The Masterplan will be mainly delivered by the private sector with possible Homes England funding support for infrastructure.</p> <p>The Masterplan contains high level development appraisals including viability analysis.</p> <p>Any Homes England support paid to the Council for infrastructure funding will be subject to future Cabinet reports.</p>
Legal and human rights implications	<p>None arising from this report.</p>
Assessment of risk	<p>No risks arise directly from this report.</p> <p>The Masterplan will be embedded in the new emerging Local Plan which will be subject to examination by the planning inspectorate and therefore subject to potential challenge and considerations including assessment as to whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and if it is sound. For this reason, the Masterplan is subject to an extensive evidence base, robust option testing and consultation.</p>
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	<p>None arising from this report.</p>

7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:**
List of Background Papers

7.1 Previous reports to Cabinet on the 4th January 2017, the 18th July 2018 and the 15th January 2020.

8. **Freedom of Information**

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.