

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Development and Housing

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To: CABINET

Date: 01 December 2016

Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme – preferred option

Recommendations

- (a) To authorise commencement of Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme Stage 2 including preparation of a detailed masterplan, design and strategy for the delivery of social, environmental and economic improvements sought by the community of Berinsfield, and;
- (b) To carry out a survey among local people to decide on which of the following (i-ii) will become the preferred option for level of improvement and scale of development:
 - i) either 2,000 to 2,100 new homes to make viable a range of improvements including an all-through (primary and up to 14 years) school
 - ii) or 1,700 to 1,999 new homes to make viable a range of improvements including refurbishment of current primary school and provision of a new primary school.

Purpose of Report

1. To seek agreement from Cabinet to progress the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme from Stage 1 to Stage 2.
2. To update Cabinet on recent engagement in Berinsfield, which asked local people to tell us the range of community investment projects they want carried out in Berinsfield and the scale of new housing development they would accept to pay for these projects.
3. To seek a decision from Cabinet on the 2 scenarios for potential scale of development to be put to a local survey to ask people to express a preference for development options.

Corporate Objectives

4. This proposal achieves the council's objectives of support for communities and effective management of resources. The outcomes of the work will contribute to improving health and well-being in Berinsfield.

Background

5. On 07 April 2016 the Cabinet authorised a comprehensive regeneration strategy and delivery plan to be carried out in the most cost effective and expedient manner. The council's own project team and a strong team of consultants led by AMEC Foster Wheeler have met the requirements for completion of stage 1. Stage 1 was for scoping and options analysis, which resulted in consideration of a range of scenarios for consideration by local people.
6. Through Stage 1 the team has had direct contact with more than 12 local businesses and organisations to gain a full understanding of their concerns and ambitions for the future. The public engagement in Berinsfield event 15-17 September 2016 was attended by approximately 190 local people and the Interim Feedback Report describes the types of improvements that local people told us they would want.
7. Views expressed at the September event and financial modelling by the consultant team, resulted in presentation of a range of viable scenarios on display boards at the public engagement event attended by 142 local people on 3-5 November 2016. These scenarios and the feedback from local people are summarised in Appendix 1.
8. Stage 2, the detailed masterplan, design and strategy is the major element of the commission and will cover the following key areas of technical activity:
 - complete all technical studies and surveys
 - engage with landowners and their agents to negotiate land acquisition
 - develop detailed cost plans for all components of the project
 - carry out appropriate market testing analysis for housing and other components
 - financial modelling and risk analysis including scenario testing
 - complete specific planning, housing and economic strategies
 - develop briefs and specifications for new community facilities and open space
 - provide delivery options
 - carry out governance and funding proposals
 - develop masterplan suitable to support planning application(s)

Reasons for decision

9. We are seeking Cabinet support to go forward to Stage 2. Having completed scoping and options in Stage 1 the team considers they have the support of local people in going forward in a cost effective and expedient manner to Stage 2 to establish the preferred option and carry out detailed masterplanning, design and strategy.
10. Notice of the November event, with details to cover purpose, venue and times, went to every household in Berinsfield and other stakeholders but a turnout of 142 for a village with 1,100 households is not high. However, because of the advance publicity for the event, the team is satisfied that we have captured the views of a large proportion of local people with an interest in expressing a view. The feedback forms show the greatest percentage wanting up to 1,700 new homes and development options

modelling data (see para 20 b, Appendix 1), shows the greatest number wanting 2,000 new homes. As the most residents (i.e. 68% of those who attended) favoured the higher levels of facilities provision and associated larger numbers of new housing, it is proposed to test which of the two high level development scenarios would be regarded as a “preferred option” by local residents.

11. The 2 development scenarios suggested for the survey are in the ranges shown below in i) and ii):

i.) 2,000 to 2,100 new homes and:

- viable all-through school for primary and up to 14 year olds
- large community hub (with health centre)
- protection and enhancement of green space
- street and parking upgrades
- new sports and leisure centre

ii.) 1,700 to 1,999 new homes and:

- new primary schools – refurbish current school and provide 1 new primary
- large community hub (with health centre)
- protection and enhancement of green space
- street and parking upgrades
- new sports and leisure centre.

12. Subject to approval, the team intend to carry out the survey as early as possible in 2017. This work will be undertaken by a specialist survey contractor under existing framework agreements.

Financial Implications

13. Approval to progress to Stage 2 of the scheme will allow draw-down from the overall £1.5 million budget already allocated for the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme – to commission ongoing work by our consultancy team led by Amec Foster Wheeler. Arrangements to pay for any the proposed specialist survey work will be agreed through variations to the agreed ESPO contract with Amec Foster Wheeler, and may result in a reduction of fees to existing members of our consultancy team.

14. The council has not set aside further budget other than the £1.5 million at this stage. Budgets will need to be created based on the findings and recommendations of this study if required. This would be a full council decision.

Legal Implications

15. As discussed, this report is seeking approval to go to Stage 2 only, which is the detailed strategy, not including any actual land acquisition. The current framework draw down contract covers both stages 1 and 2 and enables the council to instruct the contractor to proceed with the Stage 2 work if it elects to do so.

Communications implications

16. Prior to publishing the consultation we will agree a communication handling plan with the council's communication team to ensure that our messages about the proposals and how we are engaging residents in shaping future plans for Berinsfield are released in an effective and timely way. This will help to inform local people about the proposals

and the consultation and reduce the risk of negative and speculative comments in local press/broadcast and on social media.

Other implications

17. The Berinsfield Community Improvement Scheme is about what the community as a whole wants and therefore it is essential that we take every opportunity, for example through the proposed survey, to consult with the widest possible range of local people at every incremental decision.

Risks

18. The principle risk related to Phase 2 are as follows;

- That the survey is inconclusive or unrepresentative of wider opinion in the village.
 - *This will be mitigated by employing a professional, specialist survey company to undertake this survey and the resulting analysis and by using social media and other communications channels to encouraging as many local residents as possible to participate in the survey*
- The ability to secure continued support from local residents, if a hitherto unheard section of local residents decides that they do not want such high levels of new development. This could result in the district council facing difficulties in delivering promised improvements.
 - *This will be mitigated by maintaining close dialogue with the whole community, through local events, direct mail and social media channels, and by explaining proposals in a straightforward, open and transparent manner.*
- The ability to produce a master plan that can be funded and is acceptable to all stakeholder i.e. the District Council, residents and developers.
 - *This will be mitigated by ensuring that the master plan is thoroughly tested by our technical advisers and that it is produced through a collaborative effort involving all stakeholders and potential funder.*

Conclusion

19. Progressing to Stage 2 of the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme and allowing people to choose a preferred option, through a professionally designed survey would benefit local people in the village of Berinsfield.

Background Papers

- Interim Feedback Report – issues and opportunities stage, Berinsfield Investment Scheme. Prepared for South Oxfordshire District Council, 4 October 2016, by

Appendix 1: Berinsfield engagement event feedback 3-5 November 2016

20. At the 3-day event in November it was explained that housing development would be needed to pay for improvements and local people were given an indication of the amount of housing needed to pay for different scenarios as summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Scenarios presented to public in November 2016

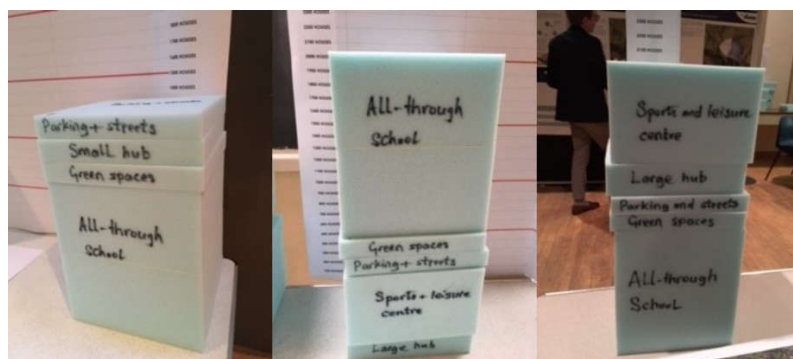
	A4704 Crossing	Green and open space	Parking and streets	Small Scale Community Hub	Additional Community Hub Provision	2 Form Entry Primary School	3 Form Entry Primary School	4 Form Entry Primary School(s)	All Through 5 Form Entry School	Small Scale Retail Offering	Medium Additional Retail Offering	Large Additional Retail Offering	Sports/Leisure Centre
Scenario A: 500 - 600 Dwellings	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Scenario B: 750 - 900 Dwellings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Scenario C: 1,500 - 1,700 Dwellings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Scenario D: 1,900 - 2,100 Dwellings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

✓ = improvement available in this scenario ✗ = improvement not available in this scenario

21. The team captured the views of local people on the balance between improvements and scale of housing in two ways at the event:

- feedback forms with tick boxes for the improvements people want and another box to select preferred scale of housing development
- determining possible development options using foam blocks, sized to reflect the comparative costs of different improvement options, for people to stack together all their preferred improvement options, and measure against a 'scale of housing' numbers.

Figure 2: photos of foam block stacks



22. Maps on display showed the approximate extent of different scenarios at a standard 30-35 homes per hectare plus infrastructure to inform discussion. Some people completed forms and stacked foam blocks and others just responded through one or the other. Photos of each individual foam stack against the scale of housing measure where collated alongside data from the feedback forms. Consultants and staff present at the event conformed that results from both methods reflected general discussion held with the 142 local people over the 3 days.

23. From 67 feedback forms we saw that:

- 93% want new school provision or refurbishment
- 85% want a community hub - shared services

- 79% want green space protection and enhancement
- 69% want parking and street improvements
- 54% want a new sports and leisure centre

24. From 27 foam stacks we saw that:

- 100% want parking and street improvements
- 100% want a community hub - shared services
- 96% want new school provision or refurbishment
- 89% want green space protection and enhancement
- 70% want a new sports and leisure centre

25. A clear majority of those completing feedback forms or stacking foam blocks for school improvements want an all-through school. And a majority of those wanting a community hub want a large hub that might for example include a new health centre.

26. The highest percentages want large scale improvements even when this was set against large scale of housing development. The feedback forms showed the most popular choice was for the range 'up to 2,100 homes'. Please see figure 3.

27. The preferred numbers of homes selected by the foam block stacking process was less clear-cut but the most popular choice, 10% of those attending the event, was for up to 1,700 homes. Please see figure 4.

Figure 3 – housing scale data from feedback forms

Scale of housing	Number of selections	% of returns	% of all attendees
Up to 2,100	9	18%	68%
Up to 1,700	14	28%	
Up to 900	11	22%	
As many as needed for 'my choice'	6	12%	12%
Up to 600	6	12%	20%
Up to 500	0	0%	
Minimum	4	8%	

Figure 4 – housing scale data from foam block stacks

Scale of housing	Number of selections	% of returns
2100	1	3.7%
2000	11	40.7%
1900	1	3.7%
1600	2	7.4%
1400	2	7.4%
1300	3	11.1%
1200	1	3.7%
1000	2	7.4%
800	2	1.4%
700	1	3.7%
200	1	3.7%

28. The purpose and details of the November event went to every household in Berinsfield and other stakeholders but a turnout of 142 for a village with 1,100 households is not high. However, because of the advance publicity for the event, the team is satisfied that we have captured the views of a large proportion of local people with an interest in expressing a view. The feedback forms show the greatest percentage wanting up to 1,700 new homes and the foam blocks data shows the greatest number wanting 2,000 new homes. However because the majority, 68% of those who attended, appear to favour the higher levels of facilities provision and scale of new housing it is proposed to present two high level development scenarios from which local people may choose a 'preferred option'.

1. The 2 development scenarios suggested for the survey are in the ranges shown below in i) and ii):

iii.) 2,000 to 2,100 new homes and:

- 29. viable all-through school - (primary and up to 14 year olds) 5 Form Entry
- 30. large community hub (with health centre)
- 31. protection and enhancement of green space
- 32. street and parking upgrades
- 33. new sports and leisure centre

iv.) 1,700 to 1,999 new homes and:

- 34. new primary schools – refurbish school to 2FE and provide 1 new 2FE
- 35. large community hub (with health centre)
- 36. protection and enhancement of green space
- 37. street and parking upgrades
- 38. new sports and leisure centre.