

Agenda Item No: 17

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 13TH September 2017

Report Title: Adoption of the draft WYE3 Masterplan

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Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Clokie (Planning & Development)
Portfolio Holder for:



Summary: This report sets out the content of the draft Wye3 masterplan that has been prepared to establish the mix and quantum of uses appropriate for the redevelopment of the former Imperial College campus at Wye and the outcomes of the recent public consultation exercise on the draft Masterplan.

The Wye 3 masterplan will be a useful guidance for Development Control purposes when designing and analysing detailed planning applications for the many parts of the site. The Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendation of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group seeking support for the Wye3 Masterplan (including any amendments deemed necessary) to be adopted as informal guidance for Development Management purposes when determining Planning Applications within the Wye3 site boundary.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: Wye

Recommendations: The Cabinet is recommended to:-

Adopt the draft masterplan for the WYE3 as informal guidance for development management purposes subject to the following amendments:-

- i) Change wording to the appropriate Planning & Design Principles section to include further general principles sections on drainage/SUDs in accordance with the items set out in paragraph 57 of the report;**
- ii) Confirm that the area known as the 'Strawberry Field' should be retained free from built development and all references to future development should be omitted;**

iii) Any other minor amendments considered necessary by the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development.

Policy Overview:	The process for developing and preparing a masterplan from this site is derived from policy WYE3 of the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD and policy WNP11 of the Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Plan.
Financial Implications:	None.
Legal Implications:	The proposed status of the masterplan as informal guidance means that it will not have full Development Plan status and therefore should be used to guide decision-making on subsequent planning applications for development within the area of the masterplan.
Equalities Impact Assessment	N/a.
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wye3 Masterplan Document- Landscape Study- Strategic Transport Assessment- Foul & Surface Water Drainage Strategy- Masterplan Consultation Report- Schedule of consultation comments
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Report Title: Adoption of the draft WYE3 masterplan

Introduction and Background

1. The process leading to the subject of this report, the draft masterplan for the land that formed part of the former Imperial College campus in Wye that was allocated in the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD in 2010, has been the subject of much debate and discussion over recent years. In fact, the issue of the potential future use of the land is covered as long ago as the 2008 in paragraph 6.27 of the Core Strategy where “the fluctuating and uncertain situation regarding the Wye campus will be reviewed in the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD and policy guidance brought forward on how the aim of retaining a high-quality knowledge based presence in the area can best be achieved.”
2. By the time of the examination of the DPD in 2010, the situation had not progressed sufficiently far in order to establish a definitive set of uses that would be suitable for allocation and hence the WYE3 policy primarily sets out a process to follow that would eventually lead to that position.
3. Initially, following Imperial College’s decision to end their educational use of the campus, the policy objective was to establish whether there were any alternative educational or related research and business uses that may be willing and able to take over all or part of the campus. This involved a marketing campaign for such uses undertaken on behalf of Imperial College but overseen by a ‘steering group’ involving the Borough and Parish Councils.
4. The WYE3 policy then went on to require, in the event of the marketing campaign being unsuccessful, “a masterplanning exercise....to establish the nature, scale, location and mix of any alternative uses to deliver a high quality, mixed use development.” Eventually, it was agreed that the marketing campaign had adequately demonstrated that a viable educational or related use for the site was not going to emerge and so the need for a masterplanning exercise for the site should be undertaken.
5. The WYE3 policy in the DPD makes no comment or indication of what appropriate ‘alternative’ uses may comprise, or the scale or mix of such uses. The supporting text to the policy acknowledged the context of the site, including the heritage importance of the College site and the environmental and landscape sensitivity given the AoNB status of the land within which the village lies. These matters were therefore in effect delegated to the masterplan.
6. The DPD policy envisaged the masterplan informing policy in the first review of the Core Strategy or a review of the policy itself or adoption as SPD. However, the policy was adopted in advance of the preparation of the subsequent Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

7. The Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Plan was formally 'made' in 2016. It includes a dedicated section on the WYE3 site which includes descriptions of the constituent elements that make up the wider site and policy guidance in policy WNP11 which sets out the following:-

Policy WNP11 - The former Imperial College London campus at Wye

As outlined in Core Policy WNP6, the former Imperial College London landholding at Wye (WYE3) is proposed for a mix of uses, including education, business, community infrastructure and housing. In this regard development proposals for this site shall, subject to viability:

- a) Provide for the continued use of part of the site for education through the establishment of a secondary school or equivalent activity on the site.***

Any such development should include the adoption of a travel plan to limit the use of cars to bring staff and students to and from the site prior to the commencement of any such development. Detailed design should be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority and the highways authority for the entrance to the school and the Occupation Rd/Olantigh Rd junction in agreement with the developers of the remaining Occupation Rd site prior to the occupation of the buildings for this use.

- b) Redevelop part of the site as a business hub (B1 Office or A2 Research and development).***
- c) Retain and enhance the existing commercial land use along the southern side of Occupation Road for employment use (B1).***

Renovation of the properties here would improve the appearance of the entry route into the village from the North Downs Way.

For (b) and (c), adequate parking provision for such commercial floorspace should be provided as part of any such redevelopment.

- d) Incorporate the continued use of the land south of Occupation Rd for horticultural businesses.***
- e) Achieve the positive re-use of the Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed, and other unused Edwardian buildings of the former Wye College by a mix of community, residential and business uses***

Such development would require provision of a new pedestrian and vehicular access route into the site.

Small scale B1 use, live/work units and some residential change of use would also be supported here to encourage the development of a thriving community hub in these historic buildings in the heart of the village.

- f) Retain the Withersdane site for institutional, residential (C2) use, subject to traffic generation being compatible with the highway***

constraints of Scotton Street and the upgrading of footpath links between the site and the village to ensure mobility scooter access.

g) Re-develop areas of land not used by the school or business hub for approximately 50 dwellings.

h) Achieve appropriate reuse of the site of the former ADAS buildings, having regard to the concept of the walkable village.

i) Pay particular attention to the potential for innovation in materials and form in the design of new buildings, and should where possible embody elements such as green roofs and non-reflective materials to limit the visual impact of additional development here on the surrounding AONB. Any development should provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by Southern Water.

j) Ensure that all additional landscaping provided across the site is of high quality given its setting within the AONB, is comprised of species native to this area of the Kent Downs and of a design, scale and format appropriate to its setting close to the SAC. Applications should demonstrate how proposed landscaping has been designed to enhance views from the AONB.

k) Where appropriate, having regard to the statutory requirements, development of WYE3 will be subject to Section 106 agreements to support traffic calming on Olantigh Rd., Scotton Street and Oxenturn Rd., improvement to the village hall complex and the establishment of a day care centre for the elderly (see Appendix B).

8. The NP policy reinforces the aspiration of a high quality, mixed use redevelopment embedded with policy WYE3. The inclusion of education, within the list of suitable uses reflects the establishment in 2013 of the Wye Free School at the site, initially in the Kempe Centre and now also to be in expanded new-build accommodation on the site. The policy also includes the Withersdane site on Scotton Street which formed part of the WYE3 designation in the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD but which has subsequently been converted this area does not form part of the draft masterplan for the remainder of the campus.
9. Other policies contained within the NP also provide the background against which the draft masterplan should be considered. Most notable amongst these are policies WNP6 and WNP9.
10. Policy WNP6 provides an overarching policy for the WNP11 (WYE3) site and reflects the mix of uses outlined in WNP11 above and the need for a phased approach to the masterplanning of the site. It also makes reference to the adoption of the masterplan as SPD which is dealt with later in this report.
11. Policy WNP9 sets out the scale of housing development anticipated in the NP on the various allocations in the NP and on windfall sites within the parish. For the area covered by the draft masterplan, policy WNP9 indicates a total of approximately 50 units, subject to the masterplan. However, there is also a

separate indicative total for 'change of use' (35 units) which potentially could apply to some of the proposals contained within the draft masterplan.

12. Criterion (h) of the WNP11 above refers to the former ADAS site on Olantigh Road which forms the northern extent of the masterplan area. The site contains vacant and dis-used offices within a wooded area and lies outside the 'walkable' village envelope identified in the NP. However, the site benefits from a 'prior approval' for the conversion of the buildings to 52 flats under the permitted development rights for such changes of use introduced several years ago.

Draft Masterplan

13. The draft Masterplan proposes the following:-
 - Land North of Occupation Road - 40 new dwellings with; "Strawberry Field" shown as grazing land; Existing former orchard retained; new public footpaths provided; New public car parking area for North Downs Way users
 - Land South of Occupation Road - In the short term it is anticipated that existing commercial uses will continue, but ultimately it will be redeveloped for a series of single storey buildings in a "model farm" layout; car parking is largely enclosed within courtyards, plus new single storey buildings on the triangular site fronting the North Downs Way and two existing houses retained.
 - ADAS site (Olantigh Road) – 20 new detached family homes with "donkey field" limited to residential gardens or green space.
 - Wye School – The school and its grounds have expansion plans currently under construction so the Masterplan does not set out any proposals for this part of WYE3.
 - Former College Buildings – This application for conversion to residential and community uses was reported to Planning Committee in June 2018 and members sought to agree to support the proposals subject to amendments to include more community use and further negotiations on section106 contributions. These discussions are still ongoing.
 - Former Science Laboratories site, Olantigh Road - Proposed Residential Care Home/Extra Care Housing for up to 50 units. Access to car parking to potentially be provided off the car parking courtyard of the former college building immediately adjacent to the south of this site.
 - Former Russell Laboratories, Olantigh Road - Proposed for conversion to New Small Business Centre, with car parking provision to the full commercial vehicle parking standard. A flexible range of potential uses might include Offices, Artist studios, Health or alternative health practitioners, Craft workshops, Café, Retail, Gym, Education/training, other small business uses.
 - Covenanted Land south of Occupation Road – No change proposed and is to be retained but open to discussions with community for any potential change.

14. A hard copy of the masterplan is available on request and one hard copy will be available in the Members room. Alternatively it can be downloaded from the following link:
<https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.ti/WYE3/consultationHome>
15. The supporting documents that were available as part of the original consultation process earlier this year, and are available to download from the link above. Hard copies of these documents will also be available in the Members Room. The suite of supporting documents include the following:-
 - Transport Assessment
 - Drainage Strategy
 - Landscape Study
 - Public Consultation Report
 - Report on workshops and exhibitions.
 - Note on Consultation & Approval Process - Next Steps.
16. Although the wider context to the masterplanning of the site has been ongoing for several years, the process for establishing the draft masterplan contained in this report commenced in earnest in early 2017 with a stakeholder workshop held in the College buildings.
17. Although the draft masterplan has been drawn up by the site's owners (Telereal Trillium), the masterplanning process has been collaborative and has involved representation from both the Parish and Borough Councils in a Steering Group that has held various meetings and workshops over the course of the last 18 months. The process has also included several public workshops and exhibitions to enable community input to the emerging masterplan. The key milestones are set out below:-
 - January 2017: Workshop 1 – to explore context, constraints, the placemaking options and potential, key strategic design aspirations for WYE3 Masterplan and start to explore actual development opportunities.
 - May 2017: Workshop 2 – to test and explore the various emerging Masterplan opportunities and options in more detail.
 - May 2017: Public Exhibition 1 to comment on and influence the emerging options to inform the WYE3 Masterplan.
 - September 2017: Exhibition 2 to comment on and shape the final content and options Masterplan options.
 - November 2017: Draft WYE3 Masterplan for consideration by WYE3 Steering Group.
 - January 2018: Informal Presentation of Masterplan to elected members, Ashford Borough Council. Wye Parish Council were invited to attend.
 - April 2018: Draft Masterplan published for six week consultation period.
18. During the public consultation, an approximate total of 60 representations were received raising in excess of 2000 comments. A full schedule (400+ pages) of the representations and ABC responses to these points is available

in the Members room along with copies of letters from key consultees (and is a Background Document to this report).

Consultation Undertaken

19. The main issues raised during the 6 week public consultation are discussed in this section of the report.

a) Conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan

20. A number of responses received regard the masterplan as conflicting with the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of the quantity of new residential development. The Neighbourhood Plan gives an indicative housing figure for the whole village of 150 units and for WYE3 approximately 50 units, plus approximately 35 units from change of use proposals and approximately 15 units from other windfall schemes. The Neighbourhood Plan states these should be provided between 2020 and 2030.
21. In gross housing terms, the draft masterplan proposes a total of 60 new dwellings plus the conversion of the former Science Labs to a 50 unit extra care facility. This would be in addition to the conversion of the listed former college building to 39 units which has previously been approved. On its face this appears to be significantly more residential development than envisaged by the Neighbourhood Plan policy.
22. However, the context of the masterplan area needs to be fully considered in meeting the wider aspirations of the DPD and Neighbourhood Plan policies for the area. This includes the recognition of how much of the new residential development would be on previously developed land (which is particularly important within an AONB) as well as any lawfully implementable schemes already within the masterplan area. This factor especially applies to the former ADAS site where there is a prior approval scheme to convert the buildings there to 52 flats.
23. The re-use of the ADAS is discussed more fully below but the position there indicates that a more rounded assessment of the appropriate housing capacity for the masterplan area is needed.
24. Of the dwellings proposed in the masterplan, only 40 units are shown on the purely greenfield area of the site (north of Occupation Road) with the remainder either as conversions of existing buildings or redevelopment of redundant buildings (ADAS).
25. Even if the proposals for an indicative maximum of 50 extra care or residential care units on the former Science Labs is classed as new residential development (which will depend on the level of care provided in any scheme that eventually comes forward), this form of residential development is considered appropriate for a village such as Wye and clearly generates less activity and traffic movements than 'traditional' housing units.
26. In total, it is accepted that the total of residential units proposed in the draft masterplan would exceed the indicative quantum referred to in policy WNP6 of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, once the specific material

considerations that apply to the various elements of the site are fully considered, a similar, if not greater, quantum of residential development could be lawfully or acceptably brought forward against prevailing local and national planning policies. Therefore, if there is any conflict with the letter of the NP policy on the housing quantum for the site, this should not be regarded as significant or prejudicial to the wider aims for the redevelopment of the site.

Conflict with concept of a 'walkable' village

27. The 'walkable' village concept is embedded in the Neighbourhood Plan as one of the principles that governed where the village 'envelope' for the village was drawn. It seeks to retain new development within a walkable (i.e. 400-800 metre) radius of the main shops and services within the centre of Wye. A number of representations felt that the masterplan's proposals (in particular for the redevelopment of the former ADAS site) were not consistent with this principle.
28. Due to Wye's geography and range of local services spread across the village, tying this principle to a fixed place is difficult. The Neighbourhood Plan examiner stated many of Wye's services, amenities and facilities are dispersed throughout the village beyond what are perceived as basic walking distances and this should not prevent the principle of development in the WYE3 site.
29. There is no fixed concentric pattern or distance on how far people will walk to use different facilities just some general guidance and research principles. Between 400-800metres is regarded as the maximum average distance people may be willing to walk for shopping, schools, commuting via public transport, or personal business but each of these distances vary considerably according to a very wide range of personal circumstances and factors.
30. In relation to the WYE3 land, the most well used day to day facility in the village is probably the Co-op supermarket in the High Street. This is between 450 and 600m from any new housing accessed from Occupation Road or the employment or residential redevelopments on the western side of Olantigh Road. This is not a distance that will put off staff or residents from walking or cycling when using this shop. The ADAS site is further (approximately 850m) from the supermarket but as modest sized windfall exception site of 20 units on balance when compared to the original use and the prior approval for 52 converted units, any traffic accessing the day to day village amenities would be very limited.
31. In any event, the principles set out in the WYE3 Masterplan emphasise the importance of enhancing the network of legible streets, footpaths and cycleways in order to support walking to the village for those residents and employees in the masterplan area.

Treating the site as a series of piecemeal plots

32. Applications relating to the extension of the Wye Free School and subsequently the former Wye College buildings conversion was criticised by some respondents as being premature and resulting in a piecemeal development. However it was clear that, as WYE3 Masterplan has evolved, it

was apparent that the area was quite heavily constrained by geography and landscape features, existing streets and buildings as well as ownership and policy requirements.

33. The Wye Free school proposals came forward on a large area in the middle of WYE3 defined boundary. The site boundary was fixed by the Educational Funding Agency as they wanted to secure a quick delivery of an extension to the school facilities and new sports field. This meant that the WYE3 masterplan had to embrace this educational use to ensure the Masterplan was best integrated with other uses and the community. Criterion (a) of the WNP11 policy specifically provides for the continued use of part of the WYE3 masterplan area for education through the establishment of a secondary school. In particular, the sports fields provide a suitable transition from the village to the countryside beyond.
34. The listed building conversion came forward before the WYE3 masterplan for various reasons. There was a strong urgency to consider the restoration of these deteriorating listed buildings to secure their future. It is also a compact site with public rights of way dividing it and residents parking required on the doorstep. This self-contained small scale development of the type proposed was felt to have no obvious implications for the wider WYE3 Masterplan and layout and would not prejudice the future development of the rest of WYE3. There were very few alternative solutions spatially for the College Buildings that this part of the WYE3 site could seriously address in the WYE3 Masterplan layout.
35. The remaining parts of WYE3 are less constrained and there is considered to be plenty of space to achieve a mix of uses based on good placemaking principles. Therefore, dealing with the College and Wye Free School proposals first was pragmatic rather than piecemeal and has not prejudiced the ability to deliver a quality WYE3 Masterplan. The Masterplan has genuinely attempted to look holistically at regenerating the place to create a more vibrant and active part of the village.

b) The principle of the use of the former ADAS site for housing

36. As stated above, a number of representations were received objecting to the masterplan's proposed use of the former ADAS site for housing as it lies outside the village envelope identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.
37. The planning position of the ADAS site means that whilst 52 converted units could be erected under current planning consents through the evolution of the WYE3 Masterplan, a reduction in the number of units to 20 was felt to be much more appropriate given its location on the very edge of the village.
38. The Masterplan has had to balance the walkable village concept with the planning status of the ADAS site. The site lies beyond the indicative 400m distance from the centre which the concept of the walkable village is based on in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, a low density, high quality residential scheme here that replaces the derelict existing buildings on the site has the opportunity to improve the environment subject to appropriate detailed planning, in particular in respect of the views of the site from the north and east. The principle of housing development here is already established

through the prior approval and so the scheme shown in the masterplan reflects a much more appropriate solution than the 'prior approval' scheme.

c) C2 residential care home or extra care housing is not appropriate on the former Science labs site

39. Some representations have questioned the suitability of introducing this type of use on this site and that insufficient studies had been done to test demand. However, there is also a lot of support for it as there was perceived to be a demand for this form of accommodation use given the slightly older demographic of the village as it would give people the opportunity to stay in the village. Locating this type of use relatively close to the shops and services available in the village represents a sustainable form of redevelopment which is also likely to attract demand.
40. The Masterplan is therefore written flexibly to look at either residential care home or extra care housing and this option is considered appropriate for this part of the WYE3 Masterplan area.
41. If there is commercial interest in this type of accommodation it will need to be looked at in terms of its design, layout, appearance, landscaping, access, impact on traffic (amongst many other factors) at an application stage when a clearer idea on an operator's requirements can be tested. There is a potential opportunity for integrating the access with the adjoining former college buildings car park and access.

d) No evidence to support B1 business use in converted Russell Laboratories and former Student Union Buildings

42. Some representations have stated that there is a need at the Masterplan Stage to demonstrate market evidence that there is demand for such commercial use in these buildings.
43. However, the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site supports the principle of a business hub as part of the WYE3 redevelopment and the re-use of these buildings on sustainability grounds would make a valuable contribution to the local economy and employment offer in the village without the need to expand onto land beyond the edge of the village. Furthermore, the developers indicate that advice from local commercial agents indicates there is demand for such accommodation at moderate market rents and their initial costings indicate that business re-use of the existing buildings can be viable, subject to the detailed requirements of potential future occupiers and applicable market rents.
44. The Masterplan takes a flexible approach to the conversion of these buildings for a commercial business uses. I consider that requesting evidence of commercial market interest and an analysis of the viability of the commercial buildings would be too onerous at this stage. That level of detail would need to be tested with the market subsequently as specific interest and proposals emerge.

e) Impact of the proposals on the AONB and the character and heritage of the village

45. As the whole of Wye village sits within the AONB, it is inevitable that any redevelopment here will have some impact upon it. The Masterplan and associated Landscape strategy highlight the importance of the AONB and seeks to respond appropriately to the landscape character of the AONB.
46. The proposed pattern of development has responded to the local context, for example, in the potential layout and structure of any new build housing north of Occupation Road, and sets out clear principles for ways to create distinctive places, spaces and buildings that enhance the AONB and the village's setting within it. It should be noted that the Kent Downs AONB unit have supported the content of the Masterplan.
47. Any forthcoming detailed proposals will be required to respond carefully to assess the impact on the AONB landscape character and how to protect or enhance its setting. It is expected that the applicant will work in partnership with the Kent Downs AONB unit on these detailed matters.
48. The Masterplan has carefully assessed the local historic context of the village and sets out clear principles for the detailed design and conservation of heritage issues that any forthcoming schemes will be required to meet. The Masterplan is considered to have fully considered the need to protect and enhance Wye's heritage assets.

f) Additional congestion on the roads in the village

49. A number of the responses to the masterplan highlighted concerns over the additional congestion that would be created in the village as a consequence of the new development exacerbated by a lack of sufficient on-site parking which would create additional parking on the local roads to the detriment of traffic flow through the village.
50. A Transport Study accompanies the WYE3 Masterplan which proposes some highway works to Olantigh Road at the junction with Occupation Road, to enable this constrained and busy junction to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Some widening of the footways in parts of Olantigh Road is proposed in the Masterplan where sufficient space exists, particularly on the west side of the street. Some further traffic calming works are also required to the north of this junction to slow vehicles approaching the village from the north, and which formed part of the proposals for the Wye Free School application. It concludes that the WYE3 proposals will be acceptable in traffic impact grounds. In particular, the junction of Olantigh Road and High Street/Scotton Street was felt to be acceptable along with the impact on queues at the rail crossing at the busy main entrance to the village.
51. The Masterplan has satisfactorily considered the car parking requirements for the residential, care home, business and commercial horticultural parts of the scheme to test that the indicative ideas for layouts work successfully. The Masterplan also sets out the importance of meeting current parking standards set out by Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council.
52. Kent Highways & Transportation (KH&T) agreed with the conclusions of the Transport Study and the analysis of the highway capacity impact. Kent

Highways concluded that as long as the current rail timetable operated then all the development proposed in WYE3 would not have a detrimental effect on queuing times for vehicles at the crossing as waiting vehicles would be able to clear the crossing between trains. KH&T supported the principle of the highway works elsewhere in WYE3, the traffic calming works and aspirations for indicative parking provisions. Some further minor works and detailing may be required but this would be resolved at any future detailed application stage.

53. A document by GTA Civils (Parking & Traffic Assessment, Impact of Proposed Development in Wye, Ashford, Kent) was commissioned by the Parish Council and submitted to the Borough Council after the consultation deadline. It has been circulated to KCC Highways & Transportation for comment but it is understood that they do not consider it raises any new issues not previously addressed.

g) Need for the Masterplan to support and retain existing businesses in WYE3

54. There was some considerable support given to the need to support and retain existing small businesses based in the WYE3 Masterplan area should these businesses wish to remain in the village. For instance, it has been suggested that Celis/BCP have recently reluctantly relocated and that Wye Bugs want to remain in Wye. It is important that the Masterplan can support this and offer new affordable accommodation that fits in with the welcome aim to improve the appearance and quality of the horticultural premises.
55. The WYE3 Masterplan rightly keeps the option open for any horticultural businesses to occupy new premises in the area south of Occupation Road. It's also accepted that other commercial business could relocate to the converted Russell Laboratories and former Student Union buildings west of Olantigh Road.

h) Concerns that the development lacks integrated SuDS and will worsen the drainage and flooding situation in the village

56. The Drainage Strategy which supports the WYE3 Masterplan demonstrates that the associated development will not exacerbate any existing problems in Wye. This Strategy highlights the importance ensuring a reduction in the overall impact on the existing foul drainage network. It seeks to encourage all developments to assess the sewer capacity by reducing the outflow of foul water discharge into the existing sewer network, and to consider the scope for upgrading sewage capacity. The comments of the sewerage undertaker has not highlighted any fundamental issue with the Wye3 site but this will need to be addressed at a detailed application stage.
57. The Drainage Strategy and Masterplan stresses the importance of utilising the SuDS to minimise the impact of the surface water runoff. Clearly SuDS form an important aspiration of the Masterplan but it is felt by consultees that it needs to be emphasised slightly more as a key design principle potentially with some basic outline ideas on how to integrate SuDS into the development. The amendments being sought include:-

- a) How SuDS measures should maximise the use of infiltration within the development site and therefore minimise impact of surface water runoff from development/ redevelopment;
 - b) Confirmation that Surface water will not leave the site as infiltration should be viable as part of overall approach to surface water management across the site;
 - c) Ensure that quality of water run-off from the site does not degrade the quality of local watercourses or groundwater supplies
 - d) Foul and surface water drainage must ensure that quality of water run-off from the site does not degrade the quality of local watercourses or groundwater supplies;
 - e) Include some reference to “green roofs”
58. This should be added to the relevant design principles section of the Masterplan to ensure these SuDS and drainage issues can be delivered effectively.
59. The KCC SuDS team and Southern Water, as key stakeholders, support the scale of development and the approach set out in the Masterplan and recommend addressing these issues at the detailed application stage.
60. Subject to the minor amendments listed above, it is considered that foul water, surface water drainage and SuDS are adequately dealt with in the Masterplan.

i) Inadequate engagement with stakeholders

61. Some comments received considered that the masterplanning process had not been sufficiently collaborative and there had not been adequate engagement with local stakeholders during its preparation.
62. As referenced in para 17 of this report, there has been an on-going dialogue for over a considerable period between the Borough Council, Parish Council and the landowner/developer. The Masterplan has resulted from a dialogue and analysis with stakeholders to understand the development constraints and potential of the site. As stated in this report this was based on a rigorous process of collaborative workshops, exhibitions and meetings that have taken place over the last 2 years. These pro-active events attempted to set out how different ideas, options and solutions upon which to base the Masterplan could be accommodated and a wide range of stakeholders and consultees were able to learn and influence its evolution. Some of this background information is explained in the Masterplan and set out in the appendix to the Masterplan.

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

63. The Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group considered the draft masterplan at its meeting on the 31st August. Members of the Task Group endorsed the content of the masterplan subject to there being a clear statement that the

'Strawberry Field' area to the east of the proposed new housing north of Occupation Road should be retained as 'pasture'. Also Members endorsement was subject to a request that any future developments should explore the potential for including grey water recycling measures. These changes were in addition to the other minor proposed amendments set out elsewhere in this report.

Implications and Risk Assessment

64. The Council has assessed whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) should be carried out for WYE3 Masterplan. This might be necessary if it were setting new policy but its intention is to act as informal guidance. Both the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD and the Wye Neighbourhood Plan have been subject to the SEA process.
65. It may be the case that any forthcoming major planning applications in the masterplan area have to go through an Environmental Impact Assessment screening test to needs to check if an EIA is required in this location. This will depend on the scale and nature of the proposals. In any event, even if the application doesn't needs to go through an EIA process all the statutory bodies can make the points they need to as part of the determination of any planning applications which come forward.

Equalities Impact Assessment

66. Not applicable.

Other Options Considered

67. At the various community events, a considerable number of creative ideas for alternative uses were proposed and explored. Clearly the historic use of the college in its heyday when it was a vibrant place with community access to the facilities, was looked upon fondly by the community. However, this would not be a practical option today and the re-use of the campus for educational uses was previously explored in depth prior to the masterplanning exercise.
68. The Masterplan proposes a deliverable option of residential uses, residential care or extra care accommodation and a mix of commercial uses. This is no doubt based to some extent on commercial decisions but these uses are appropriate in this location within the village.
69. The presence of the Free School retains an educational element to the site and there is potential for some more community uses to be introduced through the conversion of the listed buildings. One idea to safeguard part of the WYE3 site for a future village hall was not supported by the Parish Council due to its perceived peripheral location, and alternative locations are being investigated.

Status of the masterplan

70. The implication from policy WNP6 of the NP is that the masterplan should be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by the Borough Council. However, it is not clear whether it is open for the Borough Council to adopt SPD against a Neighbourhood Plan prepared by a different body. Even if this is the case, as discussed above, the draft masterplan involves a departure from the strict interpretation of some elements of the NP. Although these are considered to be justified in the circumstances, there is some doubt as to whether it would be appropriate to label the masterplan as 'supplementary' to any of the NP policies. Consequently, adopting the masterplan as SPD would not be appropriate.
71. However, it is still possible to give appropriate 'status' to the masterplan in order to meet the spirit of the policy so that it may be regarded as the proper guide for the consideration of future planning applications on the WYE3 site. In essence, it should be seen as a development brief for the site and the recommendation is that it should be adopted as 'informal guidance for development management purposes'.

Next Steps in Process

72. If the Cabinet adopts the recommendation, the masterplan will be adopted for development management purposes with subsequent planning applications expected to comply with the principles established within it.

Conclusion

73. The need for a clear masterplan to guide the future development of this key site in Wye has been evident for some considerable time. Balancing the development opportunities presented by the site against the constraints presented by the context of the high quality landscape that provides the setting for Wye, the heritage assets that form part of the WYE3 site and the wider character of the village, has providing a challenge for the masterplan to address.
74. It is acknowledged that the scale of development, in particular the quantum of residential development across the masterplan, potentially exceeds that envisaged in the NP. However, the site is complex and a significant proportion of the residential element constitutes the re-use of existing buildings or is on brownfield parts of the site. The residential element on the greenfield land to the eastern side of Olantigh Road where the potential impact on the AoNB and the views from the Downs is greatest, is limited to 40 dwellings. The inclusion of extra care or residential care homes slightly distorts the housing numbers too.
75. The concerns raised over the redevelopment of the former ADAS site are also reasonable when looked at in isolation but the presence of the 'prior approval' scheme means there is a legitimate fallback position the developer could pursue. On balance, a much lower density, high quality residential redevelopment of that part of the site should be preferred to the potential flatted scheme which the 'prior approval' scheme would entail.
76. The Masterplan successfully sets out a clear vision for a very constrained site that resulted from a collaborative community and stakeholder consultation

process. It should be supported as it will provide an excellent strategy for the regeneration of the largely unused former college land much of which is derelict and detracting from the perceptions of the village. The Masterplan provides a strong rationale for creating a mixed use scheme with a predominantly residential and commercial focus but with sufficient scope for interesting other ancillary uses to come forward. It is a template that should bring further vibrancy to the economy, culture and community life in Wye.

77. Given the context, the Masterplan adopts good place-making principles and establishes clear design principles for the integrated design of buildings, streets and open spaces. The Masterplan layout respects the AoNB and this unique landscape setting based on a good understanding of the distinctive context, character and heritage of the place. The supporting Transport Study demonstrates that the local concerns over traffic and parking can be overcome and the Drainage Strategy forms a basis for addressing local concerns over flooding and sewer capacity.
78. In conclusion, the draft masterplan represents a sound and proportionate response to the challenges provided by this site. The mix of uses is considered to be acceptable and in broad accordance with the WYE3 and WNP11 policies referred to above whilst any departure from the policy basis in respect of scale is limited and can be justified by the material considerations applicable at this time.

Portfolio Holder's Views (Cllr Clokie)

79. I believe the draft masterplan represents a sound basis upon which to consider the future development of the WYE3 site. I am happy to recommend that the Cabinet adopts it as informal guidance for development management purposes and the future consideration of planning applications in Wye.

Contact and Email

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WYE3 MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS