

ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 110

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Lewes Road (Preston Barracks and University of Brighton) Planning Brief		
Date of Meeting:	10 March 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Alan Buck	Tel: 29-2287
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to consult on a draft planning brief (attached as an appendix to this report) that has been prepared in respect of the former Preston Barracks site and adjacent University of Brighton sites (Moulsecoomb Campus and Mithras House).
- 1.2 The brief has been prepared to take into account the informal partnership between the council and university in bringing forward development that will meet the planning policy objectives of development that will contribute towards employment opportunities in the city (as set out in the adopted Local Plan) along with emerging Local Development Framework policies, such as place-making in the Lewes Road area and providing for local housing and higher education in the city.
- 1.3 Public consultation will be undertaken over a six week period. The results of the consultation will inform changes to the brief and will be reported back to the Cabinet member in the summer.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the draft planning brief as forming the basis of a public consultation exercise.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Background

- 3.1 The draft planning brief has been prepared by Brighton & Hove City Council together with the University of Brighton, in order to guide the future development of the former Preston Barracks site, along with land on the university's adjacent Moulsecoomb campus and nearby Mithras House site. Before forming a partnership with the university, the council as owner of the site had previously been focussing on the Preston Barracks site as a stand-alone project and

seeking its development for a mixture of employment floorspace, housing and ancillary retail – albeit with an emphasis on employment.

- 3.2 The University of Brighton has been an important stakeholder throughout the process to date, an involvement that predates site acquisition. The university is an adjacent land owner, with a keen interest in the site and its successful development, but more importantly is a leading education establishment that makes a direct and substantial contribution to the city's growth and prosperity.
- 3.3 Following the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGBH 14, adopted in 2003) the council worked in partnership with a preferred development consortium in seeking an acceptable development proposal on the Barracks site. Despite the considerable efforts of the preferred developer and the examination of numerous scheme options aimed at assembling an acceptable and financially viable scheme, the council concluded in March 2009 that it was unable to support the developer's final scheme proposals. At a council cabinet meeting on 12 March 2009, it was agreed that preferred developer status should be withdrawn and that it was now appropriate for the council to explore alternative delivery arrangements with interested parties.
- 3.4 The university and the council decided to form a relationship that cast a wider net to include the university's landholdings in the area, which would have the potential to meet both organisations' needs, whilst creating a unique sense of place where higher education, employment floorspace, student housing, residential and commercial uses could combine to create an exciting land use mix that would benefit the local area as well as the city as a whole. Following an exercise to determine the physical capacity of the three sites to accommodate development and a series of workshops with the university this draft planning brief has been prepared as a basis for wider public consultation.

Reason for preparing planning brief

- 3.5 This brief has been prepared in order to provide a means of interpreting adopted planning policy in respect of the Preston Barracks site as set out in the Local Plan and the Preston Barracks Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPGBH 14) within the changed context of considering its development as part of a wider development package that includes the university's Moulsecoomb campus and Mithras House site.

Summary of draft brief

- 3.6 The draft brief seeks a mixed development across the three sites that will provide a strong and identifiable city quarter for the benefit of all. This will help to achieve the aspirations of the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy (policy DA3). The main thrust of the policy for the Lewes Road Development Area is to promote and enhance the role of the area for higher education in Brighton & Hove, secure significant environmental benefits by way of townscape and sustainable transport improvements and provide for various quantum of new development including employment, housing, and education. The draft brief also seeks to provide the unique sense of place promoted in the London Road Lewes Road Regeneration Strategy (the 'LR2' study that forms a background document to the Local Development Framework) which envisages the development area as part of a 'Neighbourhood of Knowledge', a balanced

community in which the university complex and its students are integrated with the wider community and which creates a vibrant residential neighbourhood rather than an insular village. The draft brief includes objectives and development scenarios to provide for the following:

- A coherent and distinctive neighbourhood that integrates and links with the surrounding area, including the Hollingdean and Coombe Road neighbourhoods and Moulsecoomb Station.
- A range of land uses that provide for a mixture of employment floorspace, around 300 residential units, university buildings including a new business school and 750 units of student housing, along with retail and community uses (with prioritisation for the delivery of the business school and some of the employment floorspace)
- A landmark development cluster to act as a north eastern gateway into the urban area.
- Phased development that provides a viable and successful community at each stage of completion, with each subsequent phase enhancing and contributing to the overall development.
- A creative design approach to respond to the challenge presented by the sloping topography on either side of the valley, to create an accessible and visually attractive environment.
- Development that improves pedestrian and cycle linkages across the Lewes Road, including the potential for a new bridge or building spanning the road, to improve accessibility and act as a distinctive local landmark.
- Development that opens up public access and improves the Watts Bank 'greenway', including the creation of a parkland walk that connects with Moulsecoomb Station.

Next stages

- 3.7 The brief will be the subject of a six week consultation period that will inform the contents of the final version of the brief and which will form the subject of a future report for agreement by the Cabinet Member.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Capital Projects Team Manager responsible for the Preston Barracks site has been involved in all planning workshops with the university that have informed the preparation of this brief.
- 4.2 A workshop with Economic Development and Housing Officers has informed the contents of the land use mix within the draft brief and officers comments have been taken on board in the draft brief.
- 4.3 Sustainable Transport officers' comments have been taken on board in the draft brief.
- 4.4 The Preston Barracks project benefits from a cross-party Project Board on which each of the four main political groups are represented. The Board provides the projects overall direction and is responsible for agreeing reports before referral to Cabinet or Cabinet Member Meetings. The Board last met in July 2010, when it supported the site capacity assessment referred to in 3.4 above. Arrangements are now being made for the Board to meet to receive the draft planning brief before it progresses to this Cabinet Member Meeting. A verbal update can therefore be given at the meeting.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs of preparing the draft planning brief have been met from within existing Planning revenue budgets. The full cost of the consultation to be undertaken in 2011-12 will have to be met from within the allocation of budget to City Planning for that year.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw Date: 03/02/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Although the Brief is subject to consultation it cannot be accorded full statutory weight insofar as it will not have gone through the full statutory process required of development plan documents and local development documents under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, once adopted the Brief will nonetheless be a material planning consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications, as referred to in Section 3 of the draft Brief.

- 5.3 No adverse human rights implications arise from the Report.

Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward Date: 07/02/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The draft brief seeks an accessible and safe environment that will benefit existing local neighbourhoods.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 The draft brief seeks a sustainable that will provide jobs, homes and facilities for local people and students and benefit the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 The draft brief seeks the creation of a safe and successful neighbourhood.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 The Preston Barracks site has remained undeveloped for many years. Through providing for a partnership approach between the council and the University of Brighton across a wider area than the Preston Barracks site alone, the brief sets out a range of uses in development phases that should attract funding to enable some elements of development to take place in the shorter term, which will act as a catalyst towards ensuring the longer term completion of the relevant sites.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 As a large brownfield site, Preston Barracks is of significant importance to the council. With precious few such sites available in the city, it offers a rare opportunity to deliver a genuine mixed-use development capable of generating substantial employment and inward investment opportunities. It was the strength

of this case, together with the risks posed by potentially unacceptable development, which led to the city council's decision, supported and funded by SEEDA, to take up the opportunity to purchase the site from the Ministry of Defence.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The council and university have had two clear options to consider in the development of these sites. The first of these options was to consider accommodating university-related development wholly or largely on the university's landholdings, with employment, residential and other development being focussed on the Preston Barracks site. From a logistical perspective, this approach would be easier to achieve and would not necessitate the need for a partnership.
- 6.2 The alternative approach that the council and university have chosen to adopt is to work together to provide a far more mixed development across the three sites that more physically integrates the university into the wider community, to provide a strong and identifiable city quarter for the benefit of all. This will better help to achieve the aspirations of the LR2 strategy, referred to earlier in this report.
- 6.3 An alternative to preparing a planning brief would have been to prepare a supplementary planning document (SPD). Although they do not carry the same statutory weight as SPDs, planning briefs can be prepared more rapidly in response to development pressures and changes in situation. The fact that this planning brief will be the subject of widespread community and stakeholder consultation should afford it status as a valid material consideration in the planning process. It takes due account of national planning guidance, adopted and emerging development plan policies and applies them to the development aspirations of the council and the university with regard to the Preston Barracks, Moulsecomb Campus and Mithras House sites.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Public consultation in respect of planning documents is an integral element in ensuring that wide ranging views are taken into account and inform the council's decision-making process.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Planning Brief: Lewes Road (Preston Barracks and University of Brighton)

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Preston Barracks Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGBH 14)
2. Brighton & Hove Local Plan
3. London Road & Lewes Road Regeneration Strategy
4. Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Proposed Submission Feb 2010)