

ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Planning and Regeneration

Author: Tracey Coleman

Tel: 01483 444042

Email: tracey.coleman@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Paul Spooner

Tel: 07836 753647

Email: paul.spooner@guildford.gov.uk

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Submission of Garden Village Bid for Wisley Airfield

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) has published a new Prospectus for their Garden Communities Programmes requesting submission of bids for ambitious, locally led garden villages. The emerging Local Plan is in its advanced stages of preparation and now carries considerable weight. The Local Plan includes a number of strategic sites, of which a new settlement at the former Wisley Airfield (site allocation policy A35) is one.

Given the stage of the Local Plan and the proposals for the new settlement at Wisley Airfield, which aligns with the garden village principles, it is considered appropriate to submit a bid as part of this round of garden village bids. Securing Wisley Airfield garden village (WAGV) status would enable increased funding opportunities and set a high benchmark for design quality for future development. The deadline for submission of bids is 9 November 2018.

Recommendation to the Executive:

- (1) That the preparation and submission of a Garden Village Bid for Wisley Airfield to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government be endorsed.
- (2) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised to finalise and submit the bid following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance.
- (3) That, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (h), the Executive agrees to waive the call-in procedure in respect of this decision.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- A successful bid could secure important capacity funding and cross government support allowing the delivery of the Wisley Airfield allocation and wider Council infrastructure and sustainable transport proposals.
- The waiving of the call-in procedure will enable the decision to be implemented immediately to ensure that any bid may be submitted by the 9 November 2018 deadline

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks endorsement by the Executive for submission of a garden village bid for the new settlement at Wisley Airfield. If successful, this will bring with it a number of Government supported opportunities that will help ensure the successful delivery of a high quality and sustainable new garden community.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 A successful bid will help ensure high quality and sustainable development at the new settlement proposed at Wisley Airfield. This is consistent with our Corporate Plan (2018-2023) which seeks, as one of its strategic priorities, to provide the range of housing that people need, particularly affordable homes. Through increased opportunities for capacity funding, a successful bid will also ensure the timely provision of associated infrastructure.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published a new Prospectus for their Garden Communities Programme requesting submissions of locally led garden villages. This follows on the 23 places already chosen, which will deliver over 200,000 homes. The prospectus calls for submissions from ambitious councils who see garden communities as central to their plans for housing growth. MHCLG wish to support partnerships between central government, local government and the private sector in order to deliver development.
- 3.2 The prospectus invites bids for “*ambitious, locally supported, proposals for new garden communities at scale*”. Successful bids will gain assistance from MHCLG to “*design and deliver the vision for these places*” and previously successful bids have received capacity funding.
- 3.3 The prospectus outlines a number of criteria which a bid must meet:
- **Scale** – Garden Villages (1,500-10,000 homes) which have strong benefits such as utilising brownfield land, demonstrating exceptional quality or being in an area of high housing demand;
 - **Strategic Fit** – offers the opportunities for significant long-term housing and economic growth and meets the housing need for future population growth. The development should fit with wider strategies to support economic growth and increased productivity, and deliver a variety of new jobs and infrastructure;
 - **Locally-Led** – strong local leadership in delivering a long-term vision for the new community. All proposals should have the backing of the local planning authority / county council, and where possible the LEP. Continued long-term engagement with the community is also key.
 - **Garden Community Qualities:**
 - Clear identity
 - Sustainable scale
 - Well-designed places
 - Great homes
 - Strong local vision and engagement

- Transport
 - Healthy Places
 - Green Space
 - Legacy and Stewardship Arrangements
 - Future Proofed
 - **Deliverability and Viability** – must demonstrate that proposals are deliverable with an integrated approach to infrastructure, housing, business investment, employment and development. This should include:
 - Delivery Models and Timescales
 - Infrastructure Requirements
 - Opportunities to Capture Land Value
 - Access to finance and private sector investment
 - **Delivery Timescales and Accelerated Delivery** – priority for proposals that offer strong prospect of early delivery and a significant acceleration of housing delivery
- 3.4 Securing a successful bid would achieve a number of benefits for the Council and local community. It is recommended that the proposal for a new garden community at the former Wisley Airfield (WAGV) be submitted to MHCLG as a potential development to be included within the programme.

4. The Wisley Airfield garden village bid

- 4.1 The Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (“the Local Plan”) is currently in its final stages of preparation with adoption expected in early 2019. The Local Plan includes a number of strategic sites that are crucial to the delivery of the plan’s strategy for meeting housing needs. One of the strategic sites is the former Wisley Airfield, which is allocated as a new village for approximately 2,000 homes, a number of associated uses and a package of supporting infrastructure (site allocation policy A35).
- 4.2 The Local Plan Inspector held numerous hearing sessions over June and July 2018. This included a session specifically on site allocation A35. At that time, the Local Plan Inspector had before him the decision by the Secretary of State to refuse planning application on that site. Whilst that particular scheme was refused, the Inspector did not consider that the allocation at A35 (which covers a larger site area than the refused scheme) was unsound or should be removed from the plan. The Inspector found the plan sound subject to a number of main modifications, upon which consultation has recently closed (23 October 2018). Given the stage of plan preparation and the Inspector’s interim conclusions, the plan now carries considerable weight for the purposes of decision taking.
- 4.3 Delivery of WAGV is important for the Council to meet its housing need. The Prospectus outlines the Government support available to Local Planning Authorities and their partners for successful bids. This includes:
- Resource Funding
 - The Local Plan proposes to allocate a number of sites including five strategic sites, including Wisley Airfield Garden Village (WAGV). As these sites come forward to planning application stage, this is likely to put pressure on resourcing. Resource funding would ensure that the Council is able to resource the Planning Department to enable them to manage the scale and complexity of applications efficiently, ensuring approval and

delivery can be achieved as quickly as possible. For WAGV, the additional resource funding can allow the relevant planning permissions to be achieved by March 2020 allowing for delivery of homes by June 2021.

- This would complement the Masterplanning work (the emerging Strategic Development Framework) being progressed currently by David Lock Associates on strategic sites. This will ensure the Council's vision for WAGV is achieved and that development is of the highest quality and sustainability.
- Capacity Funding
 - Initial capacity funding would support the Council in planning and delivering wider strategic proposals across the Borough linked to and including proposals within WAGV. This includes potential assistance with major strategic infrastructure, as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and wider sustainable transport initiatives such as sustainable transport corridors focusing on cycling infrastructure.
- Delivery Advice and Support from Homes England
 - The support of Homes England to assist in enabling the delivery of new homes and infrastructure by attracting private sector investments and loans would enable both homes and infrastructure to be delivered at an accelerated rate at WAGV. The prompt delivery of WAGV will realise up to 800 affordable homes, of varied tenures. The delivery of which would benefit from Homes England advice and support.
- Delivery Vehicles
- Cross Government Brokerage
 - WAGV includes some complex and strategic level infrastructure which requires cross boundary and multi-stakeholder agreement to deliver. Whilst progress has been made towards agreement through the preparation of the Local Plan and the previous application, there is work to do. The support of Homes England and wider Government bodies in order to facilitate effective and proactive engagement with Highways England and other key stakeholders would be hugely beneficial in securing the accelerated delivery of WAGV. For example, the Highways England RIS scheme for Junction 10, and the proposed DCO for early 2019 will need to be closely aligned to the delivery of WAGV.
- Peer Learning and Networking Opportunities

4.4 A bid submission would require the following:

- **Application forms** confirming the parties involved, the proposal, site area and support for the bid.
- **Plans:**
 - **Location plan** – identifying location of nearby communities or development, boundaries of the Local Planning Authority, County Council, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), site boundary and the extent of brownfield land;
 - **Strategic Framework Plan** for the proposed garden community – this should include broad location of proposed land uses and major infrastructure proposed;

- **Land ownership Plan** – proposed to be an overlay of the Strategic Framework Plan showing the extent of the different key land interests within the scheme boundary plan.
- **Vision Document** – outlining the Council’s vision and aspirations for the development including additional visual images and diagrams illustrating information for example how the proposals fit within wider sustainable transport proposals.
- **Supplementary document** responding to requirements including:
 - **Summary table** showing how the site meets the Homes England key criteria;
 - **Structure chart / organogram** of the proposed governance, legal and financing structure for the garden village which shows the role and responsibilities of key project partners including Local Planning Authority, County Council, LEP, Government agencies, landowners, developers and community trust;
 - **High level viability appraisal** based on the emerging Local Plan viability assessment undertaken by Peter Brett Associates (2016) and Porter Planning Economics (2017) highlighted infrastructure costs and overall development value;
 - Timeline of the key milestones and dependencies between now and delivery of homes at the new garden village; and
 - **Annual housing trajectory** including delivery of key infrastructure based on the emerging Local Plan trajectory and a potential accelerated delivery trajectory should the bid be successful.
- **Evidence of support** from the Borough, County and LEP

4.5 It is important to note that a bid is not a planning application. The site will need to go through the normal planning application process to receive planning permission.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 All public authorities are required by the Equality Act 2010 to specifically consider the likely impact of their policy, procedure or practice on certain groups in the society.

5.2 It is our responsibility to ensure that our policies, procedures and service delivery do not discriminate, including indirectly, on any sector of society. The Local Plan has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening. This did not identify the need of an EqIA. This bid does not constitute policy or guidance and therefore is not considered to have equality and diversity implications, or impact upon the Council’s ability to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 A successful bid will enable access to additional resource funding and capacity funding opportunities.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 Delivery of the site is supported by the allocation of the site in the emerging Local Plan. The plan is still undergoing examination and the Council is yet to receive

the Inspector's report. However, it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted before the successful bids are announced.

7.2 In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (h), the Managing Director has designated this matter to be urgent and, subject to the formal agreement of the Executive and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, shall not be subject to the call-in procedure. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has already given her formal agreement.

7.3 This means that, subject to the Executive's agreement, the decision can be implemented immediately.

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1 The HR implications associated with a successful bid are considered commensurate with the normal HR implications of progressing a planning application.

9. Conclusion

9.1 A successful bid for garden village status offers significant benefits. It will enable access to a tailored package of Government support that includes resource funding, expert delivery advice from Homes England and cross-government brokerage to resolve barriers to delivery. Experience from the current programme has shown the value of this funding in helping support the design and delivery of garden communities.

10. Background Papers

[Garden Communities – MCHLG Prospectus](#)

11. Appendices

None

Note: By reason of the special circumstances described below, the chairman considers that this item should be dealt with at this meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B 4 (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Special Circumstances: This matter requires a decision by the Executive to enable a bid to be submitted by the deadline of 9 November 2018.