

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	I115428
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1. **TITLE:** Approval to consult on the Town Centre Masterplans Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Place, Planning & Regeneration

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

To agree to consult upon town centre masterplans to guide development at the Southern Gateway and the Eastern Gateway in line with the emerging Local Plan.

4 **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive

6. **DECISION:**

RESOLVED that:

- i. A public consultation on the Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans SPD Consultation Draft (Appendix 1) and supporting documents is agreed, beginning on 8 April 2024 and ending on 20 May 2024 as set out in section 7 of this report.
- ii. Authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to agree any necessary minor amendments to the Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans SPD Consultation Draft, and supporting documents, prior publication for public consultation.

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

- i. The emerging BFLP contains site-specific strategic policies that allocate the Eastern Gateway (Policy LP 9) and Southern Gateway (Policy LP10) sites for comprehensive well-designed mixed-use development.
- ii. The sites are Council-owned, sustainably located and form key gateways into the town centre, and their development will make an important contribution to the town centre's continued regeneration.
- iii. The Council has committed to ensuring that development is plan-led, that achieves a high standard of design that positively contributes to placemaking. Policy LP28 – 'Design principles' in the emerging Local Plan states that for larger, complex and more sensitive developments to be delivered in a structured and coherent way, a masterplan and design code would be required to be produced and agreed with the Council to establish an overall vision and strategy for a development as a whole. The policy specifically requires these of the Eastern Gateway and Southern Gateway sites. Further to this, both policies LP9 and LP10 make specific reference to a forthcoming 'Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans' SPD. This SPD provides the Masterplan element, and a design code would be required to submitted as part of

subsequent planning applications for these sites.

- iv. The High Street Car Park has recently been closed and, for structural reasons, can no longer function as a car park; the site will therefore require redevelopment. This site is not specifically allocated in Local Plan policy but falls within the town centre area on the Local Plan Policies Map. Guidance for this site is included in the SPD given its proximity and significance as a natural continuation of the Southern Gateway development. It also provides an opportunity for a key connection between the town centre to the east, and Market Street and Peel Centre to the west.
- v. Given that the emerging Local Plan is anticipated to be soon adopted as part of the Council's development plan, it is important for the masterplans to be progressed ready for the submission of planning applications on these sites.
- vi. A statutory stage in the production of an SPD is public consultation on a draft document. Therefore, an effective consultation on the Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans SPD will ensure it can be adopted and become a material consideration in determining planning applications affecting the sites. The SPD will allow the comprehensive masterplanning of the site through the planning application process.
- vii. The preparation of the SPD contributes towards the Council Plan (2023-2027) priority for a 'Thriving and connected economy' to ensure that 'Bracknell town centre continues to thrive and be a destination of choice'. This is to be measured by increasing visits and the development of new homes within the town centre.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- i. Production of the SPD could be delayed, however this would result in a lack of guidance to support emerging Local Plan policies LP9 and LP10, and to guide the beneficial redevelopment of the High Street Car Park site. Given that a masterplan is required to be agreed with the Council prior to the submission of any planning applications for the gateway sites (Policy LP28), delay to SPD adoption would also have knock-on delays for the development of these strategically important sites.
- ii. The Council could opt not to take a lead on the production of masterplans for these sites, and instead leave this for future developers to undertake. This approach would put the Council in a weaker, more reactive position to control development on these sites.
- iii. The absence of an adopted up to date SPD would make the Development Management process more difficult to implement if planning applications are received, potentially leading to uncoordinated, piecemeal development. This is a particular concern for these strategically important sites that are key components of the continued regeneration of Bracknell town centre. Production of the SPD will assist potential developers by providing clarity on the Council's expectations and requirements for the sites.

9. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Report of the Executive Director: Place, Planning & Regeneration

10. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Final Day of Call-in Period
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19 March 2024	26 March 2024
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