

Report To: Planning Committee

Date of Meeting: 19th February 2014

**Lead Member / Officer: Cllr David Smith, Public Realm/
Angela Loftus, Planning & Public Protection Policy
Manager**

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**Title: Draft LDP Site Development Brief 01: Former North Wales Hospital
Denbigh**

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report introduces the Draft Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) Site Development Brief ‘Former North Wales Hospital Denbigh’. It is accompanied by the draft Site Development Brief, Appendix I, the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening document, Appendix II, and the Equality Impact Assessment screening document, Appendix III.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the draft Site Development Brief for the former North Wales hospital site in Denbigh. To seek Members’ approval to undertake consultation on the draft Site Development Brief and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment with statutory bodies and the public. If approved, the Site Development Brief will be used in the determination of any planning application on the site.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That Members agree the draft Site Development Brief for the former North Wales hospital site in Denbigh and the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening document for public consultation.

4. Report details.

4.1 The site development brief is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance notes (SPGs) amplifying Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) policies or principles of development for individual site allocations in a format which aims to guide the process, design and quality of new development.

4.2 The Council’s SPG notes are not part of the adopted development plan. The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval, SPGs can be treated as

a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Welsh Government determine planning applications and appeals.

- 4.3 The former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh was built between 1844 and 1848 to provide care for Welsh-speaking people suffering from mental health problems. Gloucester-based architects Fulljames and Waller designed the original building, which has Grade II* listed building status and is recognised as an extraordinary example of early Victorian asylum architecture in Wales.
- 4.4 Since the closure of the hospital in 1995, the health authority and subsequent owners considered alternative uses for the site including a category C prison, army personnel centre, Welsh Government offices and education facilities. Although the Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (UDP) primarily focussed on employment as the preferred use, planning applications were submitted containing a large element of residential development. At the time of preparing this brief, neither a clear proposal for the re-use for the remaining buildings nor a valid planning permission for any kind of re-development exists.
- 4.5 The Council would like to see a single main use for the remaining listed buildings with surrounding land supporting enabling development, for example a hotel & resort complex, education facilities, offices etc, but is fully aware of previous endeavours and associated challenges to find an occupier for the entire site since closure in 1995. The document contains a masterplan framework that outlines an alternative approach to enabling development if a single use cannot be found.
- 4.6 The masterplan outlined within the Site Development Brief seeks to address and to identify individual elements of the site vision that was put forward by the Prince's Regeneration Trust in October 2011. The LDP does not contain any detailed proposals for the site but supports the principal idea of enabling development as a way forward to secure the long-term future of these special listed buildings.
- 4.6 The document's main elements are: site description, site vision, masterplan framework, design principles, and planning obligations and contributions towards infrastructure provision. Individual topics are supplemented by maps, figures and photos. The aim is to provide guidance on potential acceptable uses and layout of development on the site.
- 4.7 The public consultation period would be a minimum of 8 weeks and is anticipated to start at the end of February 2014. All City, Town and Community Councils will be consulted along with key stakeholders, conservation bodies, and people registered on the LDP database. Hard copies of documents will be available in all libraries and one stop shops as well as on the Denbighshire web site. The results of the consultation will be reported back to Planning Committee with a final Site Development Brief for adoption.

4.8 Officers will hold an exhibition event at Denbigh Town Hall in addition to the principal elements of conducting public consultation with members of the public and statutory consultees.

4.8 The draft document is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appendix II, which will be subject to consultation with statutory consultees over the same period of time.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1 Corporate Priorities 2012 – 17. The SPG will contribute positively to the following corporate priorities:

- Modernising the Council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers by ensuring that planning guidance documents are up to date

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 Approving the draft LDP Site Development Brief document for consultation with statutory bodies and the public is not anticipated to create any additional costs.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

7.1 It is considered not to be necessary to conduct a full EqIA for this SDB. The content was screened for likely adverse effects on the eight protected characteristics, and the completed EqIA template can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 The principles of enabling development at the former North Wales hospital site in Denbigh were discussed at the Local Development Plan Steering Group on 14 November 2013 and with Councillors attended the Denbigh Member Area Group meeting on 16 December 2013.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Any costs associated with the guidance should be contained within the existing budgets and therefore there are no obvious financial implications contained in the report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 Since closure of the hospital in 1995, the site and key listed buildings, Grade II and II*, have suffered from neglect and vandalism. If a new use for the

buildings cannot be found, decay will continue and key listed buildings will collapse and lost for future generations.

10.2 The Site Development Brief sets out a clear vision for future development of the site.

11. Power to make the Decision

11.1 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004).