



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Cabinet

9 November 2021

Report of: Councillor Nick Robins

Cabinet Member for Planning and
Planning Policy

Rectory Farm Development Brief

To consider the Rectory Farm Development Brief and make recommendations to full Council.

Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Growth and our Economy	Non-Key	Two or more Wards

Reviewed by:	Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning)	18 October 2021
Approved by:	Nicola M ^c Coy-Brown (Director of Growth and Culture)	18 October 2021
Signed off by:	Cllr Nick Robins (Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy)	22 October 2021

Recommendation to the decision makers

1. That the Cabinet endorses the Rectory Farm Development Brief and recommends its adoption by full Council.

1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan is the overarching strategy that underpins the direction of South Kesteven District Council for 2020 to 2023. The Corporate Plan aims to ensure the delivery of high-quality housing that meets the needs of all residents, creating healthy and strong communities, a clean and sustainable environment and achieving economic growth.
- 1.2 Aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area, the South Kesteven Local Plan adopted in January 2020, commits to the preparation of the Rectory Farm, Grantham masterplan. This will make sure that high-quality proposals are brought forward, provides guidance to assist applicants and decision makers, and aims to ensure the development of the North West Quadrant Phase 2 is planned in a comprehensive manner. The masterplan will supplement the Local Plan Policies GR3 – H2 and GR3 – H3.
- 1.3 The Rectory Farm Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) set out in **Appendices 1 and 2** sets out the Council's expectations for a high quality, inclusive and sustainable place which reflects and responds to local character, alongside the design process to achieve these.
- 1.4 The North West Quadrant (of which Rectory Farm forms the western half) was allocated for a sustainable urban extension in the (now superseded) 2010 Core Strategy. It was originally intended that the Core Strategy would be accompanied by a 'Grantham Area Action Plan' which would include detailed development principles and masterplans for all allocated sites in Grantham, including Rectory Farm. The Grantham Area Action Plan was subsequently prepared, consulted on, and submitted for examination. However, a decision was taken to discontinue work following significant issues raised by the Examining Inspector.
- 1.5 In the absence of the Grantham Area Action Plan, several planning applications by different developers were received which were substandard and without a comprehensive masterplan fit for purpose.
- 1.6 It was considered that due to the fragmented landownership at Rectory Farm, it was unlikely that properly masterplanned development, led by developers, would come forward on its own. It was decided that the best solution for delivery of a suitably coordinated and masterplanned development was for the Council to take the impetus and commission a masterplan to be adopted as an SPD.
- 1.7 The Rectory Farm SPD was commissioned by the Council and prepared by infrastructure consulting firm AECOM in 2018, following an independent design support review by OPUN (now Design:Midlands) and stakeholder workshops.
- 1.8 The Rectory Farm SPD has been through public consultation dated January to February 2019. A summary of responses is provided in **Appendix 3**, together with a schedule of proposed changes to the final document.
- 1.9 Once adopted, the Rectory Farm SPD will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 1.10 The guidance should be used by applicants, designers and officers working in collaboration. The Rectory Farm SPD is intended to be used by:
 - Applicants and their design teams preparing development proposals;

- Planning officers, to negotiate with applicants and agents as proposals are developed through pre-application discussions at both outline and reserved matters stage, and to assess the quality of development proposals when determining planning applications;
- Councillors when assessing development proposals both in advance of, and at Planning Committee;
- Statutory and other consultees providing commentary on applications; and
- Local communities as they are consulted on applications.

2 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny

2.1 A review was carried out by the Design Midlands (now OPUN) Design Review Panel. Several workshops were held with landowners, developers and stakeholders during 2017-2018. The recommendations of the Design Review Panel and stakeholder workshops were followed through in the preparation of the draft Rectory Farm SPD.

2.2 A public consultation on the draft Rectory Farm SPD was carried out January to February 2019. The Rectory Farm SPD has been amended to reflect feedback from the public consultation along with changes in national and local planning policy.

2.3 The four main issues raised in the public consultation concerned:

- The general principle of development;
- Perceived lack of infrastructure;
- Amount of traffic generated and highway safety issues;
- Concerns raised by Natural England that Green Infrastructure and biodiversity net gain should be given more prominence in the document.

2.4 A few specific issues including pollution control, renewable energy and retention of trees were raised which are already covered in the SPD or policies of the South Kesteven Local Plan. These issues will be further considered at the detailed planning application stage in which the public will have further opportunity to make representations.

2.5 Detailed comments on issues raised during the consultation are set out in Appendix 3.

3 Available Options Considered

3.1 To adopt the Rectory Farm Development Brief as an SPD.

3.2 To adopt the Rectory Farm Development Brief as a guidance note rather than an SPD.

3.3 To do nothing and not adopt the Rectory Farm Development Brief either as an SPD or as a guidance note.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 The preferred option is to adopt as an SPD as this would have significantly more weight in planning decisions than a guidance note. Non adoption would risk incremental, uncoordinated development without an overall masterplan.

5 Reasons for the Recommendation

5.1 It is important to seek to achieve the Council's ambitions for improving the quality of large-scale strategic developments. These ambitions are set out in both the Council's Corporate Plan and the South Kesteven Local Plan.

- 5.2** Given the scale of future growth at Rectory Farm, it is important that the Council has a robust set of guidelines to guide the sustainable and coordinated development of Rectory Farm and the wider NW Quadrant and to avoid incremental and uncoordinated development with no overall masterplan.
- 5.3** The land is in multiple ownership and individual parcels are likely to come forward at different rates. In the circumstances, it is considered that the most effective tool to guide development in a coordinated and masterplanned way is via this planning brief. As an SPD this would have significant weight in planning decisions.
- 5.4** Adoption of the SPD would ensure the delivery of a high-quality sustainable development meeting the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Plan.

6 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

- 6.1** Following adoption by Full Council, the Council (in its role as Local Planning Authority) will use the SPD as a material planning consideration in planning decisions relating to Rectory Farm.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1** The Council's retained consultants were commissioned to draft the report in consultation with officers and stakeholders. The total cost was £24,870 which was funded from existing budgets. There are no further financial implications.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Assistant Director of Finance and s151 Officer

8 Legal and Governance Implications

- 8.1** There is a requirement for public participation prior to the adoption of an SPD by a local planning authority as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

9 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 9.1** The Rectory Farm SPD, read together with the South Kesteven Local Plan, includes proposals to make places and developments more accessible and inclusive which will have a positive impact on equality. See **Appendix 4**.

10 Risk and Mitigation

- 10.1** Should the SPD be adopted, there are no significant risks identified at this stage. The risk of not adopting would be incremental or stalled development through potential non-cooperation of landowners and the Council would have reduced ability to resist inferior quality development.

11 Community Safety Implications

- 11.1** The Rectory Farm SPD, read together with the South Kesteven Local Plan, includes proposals to address community safety within the design of new development.

12 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

- 12.1** The Rectory Farm SPD, read together with the South Kesteven Local Plan, recognises the challenges faced by the changing climate and seeks to provide guidance on how new development can reduce its carbon footprint in terms of design, construction and use. Adoption of the SPD will have a positive impact on Climate Change by assisting the delivery of a sustainable development that helps the Council meet its stated aims regarding climate change.

13 Other Implications (where significant)

- 13.1** None.

14 Background Papers

- 14.1** South Kesteven adopted Local Plan available online via:
<http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14904>

15 Appendices

- 15.1** Appendix 1: Rectory Farm Planning Brief
- 15.2** Appendix 2: Rectory Farm Planning Brief Masterplans
- 15.3** Appendix 3: Summary of Responses to Public Consultation
- 15.4** Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment