

Cabinet
Council

5 November 2024
3 December 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Councillor N Akhtar

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of City Services and Commercial

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title:

University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Consultation Update and Proposed Adoption

Is this a key decision?

No – although this affect all wards of the city, the proposals are not expected to have a significant effect on communities

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide a framework for guiding the level and broad location of growth on the main University of Warwick campus as well as design principles to be considered when assessing planning applications on the campus.

The SPD provides supplementary guidance to Policy JE1 (Overall Economy and Employment Strategy) and CO1 (New or Improved Social, Community and Leisure Premises) - of the adopted Coventry Local Plan and is intended to assist with the determination of future planning applications.

The SPD can only be adopted as SPD following statutory public consultation and then subsequent formal adoption at Cabinet and Council. Following initial Cabinet Member approval in April 2024, a public consultation was held from Friday 24th May to 5th July 2024. It is intended that the SPD is now adopted so that it can be used to help assist with decision making on planning applications.

Recommendation:

Cabinet is requested to recommend that Council:

- 1) Note the Statement of Consultation Report at Appendix 1 to the report and the Schedule of Proposed Amendments at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 2) Adopt the amended University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at Appendix 3 to the report.

Council is recommended to:

- 1) Note the Statement of Consultation Report at Appendix 1 to the report and the Schedule of Proposed Amendments at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 2) Adopt the amended University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at Appendix 3 to the report.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Statement of Consultation

Appendix 2: Schedule of Proposed Amendments

Appendix 3: Amended University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers:

None.

Other useful documents

Adopted Local Plan 2017 - <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/planning-policy/coventry-local-plan-2011-2031>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes – Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – 16 April 2024

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=739&MIId=13166>

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 3 December 2024

Report title: University of Warwick Campus Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Consultation Update and Proposed Adoption

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The SPD would provide supplementary planning guidance to policy JE1 of the adopted Coventry City Council Local Plan 2011-2031. Policy JE1 (Overall Economy and Employment Strategy) states that 'The Council will work positively and proactively with the business community in the city, inward investors, the City's two universities, key public sector employers, the CWLEP and neighbouring local authorities to support sustainable economic growth and job creation', part h of the policy specifically references supporting tourism and visitor related development including the campus and Warwick University, and part i of the policy supports the continued growth of the universities. Policy CO1 (New or improved social, community and leisure premises'), Part 3 states: 'Where proposals are in accordance with the approved Masterplans for Coventry University or the University of Warwick they will normally be approved subject to high quality design proposals'. There is currently no such Masterplan in place for the area.
- 1.2 SPD's are non-statutory documents which can be used to cover a wide range of issues giving detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in the development plan documents will be implemented. Accordingly, they can take the form of a design guide, development brief, masterplan or an issue-based document. The SPD proposed in this report will provide a more detailed masterplan framework as well as the supplementary guidance to assist with the determination of future planning applications made in relation to the University of Warwick campus.
- 1.3 The University's main campus straddles the administrative boundaries of Coventry and Warwick District, with the majority of the academic faculty buildings being located in Coventry and residential accommodation and sports facilities being largely located within Warwick District. It is important therefore that the SPD is also consistent with Warwick's relevant Local Plan policy. Furthermore, it should be noted that Warwick are also proposing to adopt the SPD with a report being taken to their Cabinet meeting on 17 October 2024.
- 1.4 The Coventry Local Plan acknowledges the important role of the University in supporting the local economy and the need for the University to be able to grow within its existing boundaries and develop as a Higher Education facility of international importance.
- 1.5 As the document seeks to clarify the University's plans for future development on campus and their proposed location, planning consultants Turleys were appointed by the University to lead on the drafting of the document and there has also been input from a range of other consultants. However, officers representing Warwick District Council, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council reviewed various drafts of the SPD via a Steering Group. Specific sub-groups were also used to progress certain matters such as ecology and heritage and there was engagement with external bodies including National Highways. The comments shaped the consultation version of the Framework Masterplan SPD.

Scope and content of the SPD consulted upon

- 1.6 The SPD addresses the planning policy context (both existing and emerging) and then the current campus context by explaining existing land uses and assets. The SPD

covers the entirety of the main University campus, and so addresses land in both Warwick District and Coventry City Council areas.

- 1.7 The document explains that the long-term vision of the University is based on five strategic priorities: innovation; inclusion; regional leadership; internationalisation; and sustainability. The SPD seeks to give an indication of the longer-term delivery vision up to 2050, however the SPD specifies the detailed capital projects likely to be delivered by 2033.
- 1.8 A number of key proposals are identified up to 2033:
 - a) A new Social Sciences Quarter including the new Business School (within the Warwick District area – outline application W/23/0195 already approved)
 - b) The Science Precinct – redevelopment and refurbishment of Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) facilities on central campus and creation of a new University Green (within the Coventry City area – hybrid application PL/2023/0002402/OUTM approved 9th July 2024)
 - c) A new Energy Innovation Centre (within Coventry)
 - d) Extension of Scarman House, Post Experience Centre, including additional bedspaces (within Warwick)
 - e) ‘Solar arrays’ – two separate large scale photovoltaic installations to generate renewable energy (within Warwick).
- 1.9 The SPD also proposes the potential creation of an Eco-Park combining ecological, recreational and energy generation initiatives. However, this is dependent on the return of land from HS2 Ltd, the extent of which is currently unknown.
- 1.10 The SPD states that the University anticipates providing 1,200 net additional student bedspaces on or immediately adjoining the campus.
- 1.11 In consultation with the highway authorities, the University modelled the traffic generation from 31,000m² of new development on campus over and above the recent approval of the Social Sciences Quarter (outline application W/23/0195), as well as previous planning applications including the Capital Plan Hybrid application (OUT/2018/2115) within the Coventry area. Accounting for known projects to be pursued up to 2033, this leaves a capacity of 13,000m² of floorspace to allow for other projects to come forward over the period to 2033. If any projects come forward resulting in additional floorspace to the 31,000m² gross/13,000m² further net floorspace, additional modelling work would be required.
- 1.12 Alongside the specific proposals identified, there are a number of strategic design principles to guide future development on campus focusing on delivering higher density development in the Campus Core, providing pedestrian-focused development and active public spaces, delivering landmark design to aid wayfinding and integrating nature by connecting habitats and corridors.
- 1.13 The SPD breaks the campus down into 6 distinct character areas – Campus Core, Residential Fringe, Gibbet Hill, Science Park, Westwood and Green Fringe. In recognising the distinct characteristics of those areas, design principles are included to provide a framework for development proposals within those locations.
- 1.14 The main transport and movement strategy of the SPD focuses on reducing single occupancy trips to and from campus, maintaining accessibility through and around campus for all users (especially sustainable, non-car modes) and offering choice to incentivise behavioural change and enhance the environmental sustainability of the

campus. The University has been successful in recent years in achieving a modal shift of travel movement by implementing a number of measures to encourage walking and cycling as well as use of rail and bus and is pursuing further measures in this regard (including Demand Responsive Transport for 'last mile' journeys). The strategy also addresses the more strategic and longer-term possibilities including the potential for the campus to be served by Very Light Rail in future.

- 1.15 The trip generation and traffic modelling informed the proposed Framework Section 106 and associated 'Monitor and Manage' approach. The 'Monitor and Manage' approach is an alternative to the traditional 'predict and provide' approach of using past trends to determine future need (it is noted that the traditional 'predict and provide' approach is criticized in the government's recent consultation¹ on reforms to the planning system). Instead, the 'Monitor and Manage' approach allows travel behaviour to be monitored, allowing identification of necessary, and more targeted, mitigation measures to address the specific impacts from particular proposals. This was addressed in the SPD and the Framework s106 Obligations tables appended. Where development comes forward outside of the floorspace limits or for uses not assessed through the SPD, a separate Transport Assessment would be required.
- 1.16 The SPD also addresses other transport considerations including the A46 Strategic Link Road project, which is not considered necessary to support the quantum of growth specified within the SPD. The potential new railway station and transport interchange to serve the University and south Coventry is also addressed and whilst is currently unfunded, it remains an aspiration and a project for further investigation.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal.

2.1 Do Nothing (Not Recommended)

An alternative option is to not adopt the SPD. This is not recommended as there would remain a lack of planning guidance to assist with the determination of planning applications and it would also prevent decision making on how s106 monies could be spent via the Monitor and Manage Transport Sub Board and University of Warwick Transport Board.

2.2 Adopt the SPD (Recommended)

This would enable further elaboration on adopted Local Plan policy in line with its commitments. It will provide the necessary guidance and clarification to developers and applicants so that they are clear about what needs to be provided, how much and when. They will also be clear about the mitigation measures which will be required to address any issues associated with the impact of developments.

This SPD will strengthen the Council's negotiating position in seeking to ensure that the infrastructure provision and mitigation measures, which have been identified as a direct result of the proposal, is fully justified. It will also provide greater clarity in respect of the negotiation process and assist in accelerating the process of determining planning applications.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. Appendix 1 to the report provides the Statement of Consultation, including the consultation process, methods of engagement and summary of issues raised.
- 3.2. A total of 42 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including statutory consultees, local residents and planning agents. Specifically, responses were received from 19 local residents, 5 planning agents/developers, The Coventry Society, the Coal Authority, the Environment Agency, Guide Dogs, Historic England, Kenilworth Town Council, Natural England, the NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board, Transport for West Midlands, a Warwick District councillor, Warwickshire County Council (Strategic Planning & Infrastructure and Archaeology Services), Warwickshire Fire and Rescue, Wellesbourne and Walton Parish Council, and West Midlands Police.
- 3.3. A number of residents raised concerns regarding higher concentrations of student houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), and associated issues of antisocial behaviour, noise and litter. It should be noted that there is an Article 4 Direction in place for parts of Coventry which have removed permitted development rights for changes of use of a house or flat to a small HMO. The University predicts that 1,200 additional bedspaces are required to support the level of growth proposed up to 2033 and the SPD states that these are intended to be provided on, or immediately adjacent to, the campus. The SPD also states that there has been a downward trend in terms of the number of students residing in Leamington and this is expected to continue. No amendments are therefore proposed to the SPD, however any issues relating to noise, anti-social behaviour or refuse should be reported to the relevant authority for further investigation.
- 3.4. The Warwickshire County Council Strategic Planning & Infrastructure team have requested further detail in relation to the quantum and types of additional floorspace and numbers of expected staff and students that were accounted for in the modelling. They also raised some concerns in relation to the Framework s106 and 'Monitor and Manage' approach. Further discussions have taken place with WCC to better understand the concerns and they have requested additional clarity in relation to the Monitor and Manage approach. Further still, they have sought confirmation that monies will be index linked from the date of SPD adoption, and requested that the 'Framework s106' references are removed, but confirmation provided that the 'Monitor and Manage' approach is legally binding and to be progressed by a Monitor and Manage Transport Sub Board. Terms of Reference have been drafted for the Monitor and Manage Transport Sub Board, with representation from Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council and the University of Warwick. The purpose of the group is to monitor, co-ordinate and implement the 'monitor and manage' principles and to propose recommendations as to how the s106 monies are to be spent. These recommendations are then considered by the University of Warwick Transport Board comprising senior representatives from the University, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council for formal consideration and decision making. Corrective or preventative action at trigger points is therefore determined by the Transport Board following recommendations from the Monitor and Manage Transport Sub Board. This includes monitoring and expediting the obligations and requirements set out in any s106 agreements. These amendments have been carried forward into the final version of the SPD.
- 3.5. In terms of other transport issues raised, there was widespread support for measures to promote sustainable transport and the principal of a new railway station and transport interchange to serve the university over the longer term, albeit the delivery and funding challenges were noted.

- 3.6. A number of respondents requested additional clarity in relation to the Eco-park proposal and there was a specific request that the Eco-park supports, and helps extend, reconnected areas of ancient woodland like Black Waste Wood, Broadwell Wood, Whitefield Coppice, Roughknowles Wood and Crackley Wood. Whilst the University are aware of the interest in the Eco-park and are committed to its delivery, the project will be contingent on the return of land from HS2. The University note the aspirations and will give further consideration to the proposal, issuing additional detail in due course. If planning approval is required, there would of course be the option of inputting at that stage.
- 3.7. The Guide Dogs charity also raised concerns with the principle of shared surfaces and shared pedestrian and cycle lanes, owing to difficulties and potential dangers faced by the blind community. The concerns have been raised with the University. All parties are committed to ensure that the campus is safe and navigable by all students, staff and visitors. If shared surfaces or shared cycle lanes are proposed, they will be subject to detailed assessment and audit and all efforts will be taken to ensure that any schemes are designed and engineered in a way that does not pose risks to members of the blind community. Planning permission is likely to be required for such schemes and there would be an opportunity to input further, and suggest amendments, at that stage.
- 3.8. A number of technical consultees requested the addition of references to particular studies and these have been added where necessary.
- 3.9. A number of planning consultants submitted representations in support of 'call for sites' submissions as part of Local Plan processes, all of which were beyond the confines of the SPD area but were within broad proximity of the campus. The site allocation process is clearly outside the scope of the SPD, therefore these submissions could be considered as part of plan making processes.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The decision will be implemented as soon as practicable.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report

5.2. Legal implications

The legislation relevant to the production of SPDs is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The SPD has been produced in accordance with the relevant planning regulations and if adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, it would become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

6. Other implications

- 6.1. **How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan**
(<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>)

The SPD will accord with the One Coventry Plan, particularly in terms of supporting and articulating the role of the University of Warwick in increasing economic prosperity, improving outcomes and tackling inequalities in communities and tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

An internal risk log has been developed and will be updated as progress is made or changes occur and will be reviewed at the monthly Plan Review meeting held between officers and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

There will be a staffing and resource impact from these proposals in order to deliver upon the stated timelines, however these are anticipated to be absorbed within current staffing provision.

6.4. Equality/ EIA

An Equality and Impact Assessment (EqIA) was produced and was published as part of the public consultation – see Appendix 4 to the report.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

The proposals set out in the SPD seek to deliver environmental enhancement and mitigate the effects of climate change. Any future development on the site would be required to comply with Development Plan Policies that address the natural environment and climate change. A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening report was also produced for the three statutory consultation bodies to review (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) and was published as part of the consultation.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

This SPD is being produced jointly with Warwick District Council and aims to further articulate policy masterplan detail for the University of Warwick.

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