

**29 July 2015**

**ITEM: 6**

**Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Thames Enterprise Park**

**Wards and communities affected:**

Corringham and Fobbing

**Key Decision:**

Non key

**Report of:** Sean Nethercott, Growth and Strategy Team Manager

**Accountable Head of Service:** Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth

**Accountable Director:** David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation

**Executive Summary**

Following discussions with the owners of the former Coryton Oil Refinery and the Council it was agreed that a Masterplan should be prepared to guide the development of Thames Enterprise Park. The starting point for this work was the presentation of an outline vision for the development of Thames Enterprise Park at the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th November 2013. This was followed in May 2014 by the preparation of a Masterplan Opportunities and Scoping Report which subsequently formed the basis of a report taken to the Cabinet on 2nd July 2014. At this meeting the Council resolved:

1. That the Joint Venture's emerging vision for the Thames Enterprise Park site be endorsed.
2. That authority to the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide detailed input into the developing Masterplan, as required be delegated.

The Final Interim Masterplan now before the Committee sets out the development strategy and planning considerations for creation of Thames Enterprise Park, a site comprising approximately 405 acres of previously developed land at the former Coryton refinery.

The Final Interim Masterplan notes the potential for energy and other environmental technology schemes that have clear synergies with the Thames Oilport operation on the adjacent former refinery complex, and existing energy-related facilities that are also present. A range of other uses, such as logistics, storage and distribution and complementary ancillary services, will also be considered appropriate, given the scale and location of the site, providing scope to both respond to market demand

and to create an attractive environment within which to invest and to work. Once completed Thames Enterprise Park will form one of the largest developments of its kind in Europe and provide a major boost to future growth and prosperity of the Borough and the wider Thames Gateway South Essex area.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

### **1.1 The Committee is invited to endorse the emerging Final Interim Masterplan for the Thames Enterprise Park.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 Following the closure of the Petroplus Coryton Oil Refinery in June 2012 with the loss of over 700 jobs the site was acquired by a consortium comprising Vopak, Shell and Greenergy. The objective of the partners was to demolish the refinery, develop and invest in a fuel import and distribution terminal called Thames Oilport to be managed by Vopak, and to sell surplus land for development. The ultimate redevelopment of the whole site could lead to the establishment of up to 2,000 new permanent jobs. This objective will require good planning on the training and development of key people capabilities which has been supported through a workforce planning study jointly sponsored in 2014/15 by the Council and the joint venture with Energy & Utility Skills.

2.2 Following discussions with the site owners and the Council it was agreed that a Masterplan should be prepared to guide the future planning and development of Thames Enterprise Park. The starting point for this work was the presentation of an outline vision for the development of Thames Enterprise Park at the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013. This was followed in May 2014 by the preparation of a Masterplan Opportunities and Scoping Report which subsequently formed the basis of a report taken to the Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014. At this meeting the Council resolved:

1. That the Joint Venture's emerging vision for the Thames Enterprise Park site be endorsed.
2. That authority to the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide detailed input into the developing Masterplan, as required be delegated.

2.3 In November 2014 an Interim Masterplan and Sustainability Assessment, including associated technical reports, were submitted to the Council for consideration. These documents were then the subject of consultation with a range of stakeholder groups with the feedback received through this process being used to inform the refinement of the Final Interim Masterplan.

2.4 The Final Interim Masterplan sets out a development strategy and key planning considerations to guide the future development of Thames

Enterprise Park. The Masterplan sets out a vision for the overall development of Thames Enterprise Park, followed by seven key principles that further explain what the Masterplan and development as a whole are seeking to achieve. The overarching vision for Thames Enterprise Park is:

“To provide a framework of infrastructure – land, services, utilities, assets – to offer attractive opportunities for investment, business and development primarily within the energy and industrial sectors, including potential environmental technologies, that maximises the value of the location and its available facilities and the connectivity to surrounding businesses on Thames Enterprise Park, Thames Oilport and adjacent areas.”

- 2.5 In order to deliver the vision for Thames Enterprise Park, the Masterplan identifies the following strategic objectives, stated as key development “Principles” which will help guide the development of the site:

**Principle 1 : The Design Concept:** To provide a framework for development of Thames Enterprise Park in a manner which creates an environment that is attractive to inward investment, as a place to work, and enhances the visual appearance of the site;

**Principle 2: The Use of Land and Mix of Uses:** To offer guidance on appropriate land uses and scale of development and to provide an illustrative development framework for an identified range of primary uses compatible with the future Thames Oilport facility, and complementary ancillary support services, having regard to constraints associated with COMAH regulation restrictions;

**Principle 3: Open Space, the Creek and Ecological Mitigation:** to establish key principles and potential land areas for the provision, enhancement and management of open space and ecological resources, including a strategy for the future role of Shellhaven Creek as well as to protect and enhance landscape, ecology and heritage assets;

**Principle 4: Employment, Learning and Skills:** To create the right circumstances for reinstatement of the site as a major employment hub, with associated job opportunities for local people, and access to training and skills development to service the needs of key sectors specified in the developing Masterplan;

**Principle 5: Access, Movement and Transport:** To ensure that the developing Masterplan identifies a strategy for the future transportation infrastructure of the area including provision of appropriate access arrangements in respect of highway capacity, whilst seeking to maximise advantages offered by the availability of multi-modal infrastructure and encourage sustainable modes of travel;

**Principle 6: Sustainable Development:** To ensure an appropriately balanced approach towards the achievement of sustainable development,

prioritising the delivery of jobs and economic regeneration, alongside consideration of social and environmental issues.

**Principle 7: Strategy:** To assist the Local Planning Authority in the consideration and determination of future planning applications in the area, through the provision of a clear and usable guidance document.

2.6 The Masterplan expands upon the vision for Thames Enterprise Park and provides guidance on the form that the development of the site for a range of commercial, energy and industrial uses could take consistent with the development principles identified above. Although the final mix of uses to be accommodated on site will in part reflect future market demand, it is intended that the site will be developed in the main for the following core uses:

- Renewable energy, such as solar and wind
- Energy from refuse derived fuels (RDF) and other waste feedstocks
- Power generation
- Combined heat and power (CHP) plants
- Fuel storage, processing and trading
- Energy supply chain and support activities
- Energy research and development centres
- Upstream waste processing to provide EfW feedstock on site
- Non-energy industrial production
- Logistics and storage (B8 Warehouse and Distribution)

2.7 In addition to these core uses, it is considered that a number of further ancillary uses would also be appropriate, subject to acceptable siting relative to the application of COMAH Regulations. Such uses could include facilities and services to meet the needs of a sizeable workforce, including food and drink outlets and restaurants, small scale convenience retail, or other support facilities such as vehicle servicing. Other compatible uses could also include office space as well as training and education facilities.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 The emerging Masterplan has also been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in order to assess and identify the high level economic, environmental and transport impacts arising from the future development of TEP. Reflecting this approach the SA process has identified a range of potential infrastructure requirements, mitigation measures and additional assessment work that could be undertaken either prior to the completion of the master-planning process or at the planning stage. Among the areas where there is a need for further work and agreement between the parties is the need for the landowner/developer to:

- Prepare an ecology mitigation and enhancement strategy to focus on Shellhaven Creek, Manorway Fleet Reedbed LWS, area to the north of

roundabout and scope to incorporate appropriate habitat and species planting within a street hierarchy landscaping structure and SUDs;

- Maximise solar electricity generation and internal energy and heat capture across TEP;
- Training and skills development;
- Multi-modal freight strategy and other sustainable transport measures – including the river and rail for freight and public transport and cycling for employees;
- Potential highway mitigation measures – including the need for works to increase junction capacity or the re-phasing of signals towards the later phases of development along the Manorway;
- Air quality mitigation – including routing of deliveries to avoid AQMAs and the voluntary use of high Euro category HGVs;
- Noise mitigation associated with increased road traffic generation and on-site processes;
- Landscaping strategy to recognise the openness of the site boundaries;
- Further archaeology and ground conditions assessments to inform the consideration of individual planning applications;
- Prepare a flood risk management strategy including the development of flood warning and evacuation plans and the progression of a site-wide SUDs strategy for surface water drainage;
- Ensure that further assessments against the Water Framework Directive is undertaken as necessary; and
- Review and update COMAH zones associated with the storage of hazardous substances.

3.2 It is important to note that the Masterplan itself is not intended to form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Thurrock, and will not be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It is anticipated, however, that upon completion of the Masterplan it will represent a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications. It is also intended that the site will continue to be allocated for employment uses through the Local Plan review that is now underway and that the Interim Master Plan, and its associated background studies, will provide an important part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

- 3.3 Since acquisition of the site by the joint venture partners in September 2012 work has focused on the “make safe” and decommissioning of the refinery processing plant, the reconfiguration and refurbishment of the future Thames Oilport import terminal, and the demolition and clearance of redundant above ground infrastructure. Going forward it is anticipated that the development of Thames Enterprise Park will take place over many years on a phased basis with the redevelopment of the West Site (105 acres), which lies to the south west of the former oil refinery land and adjacent to the London Gateway port likely to come forward first (2015/16 onwards), with Phase 2 (refinery and central area) from 2017/18 onwards and Phase 3 (Eastern area) from 2019/20 onwards. A key consideration around this timetable is the ability to agree new permitting and/or surrender of the existing Part A1 environmental permit (originally required for the former refinery and crude oil storage operations) with the EA.
- 3.4 On the 25th June 2015 Vopak and its partners announced their intention to offer up for sale 403 acres of surplus industrial development land, making Thames Enterprise Park one of the largest strategic brownfield redevelopment sites around London. Against the backdrop of the site’s impending sale, it is therefore important that the Final Interim Masterplan is agreed and endorsed by the Council in order to ensure that the prospective owners and/or developers of Thames Enterprise Park have a clear understanding of the key planning, environmental and transport considerations that will need to be met in bringing forward the development of the site.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 To ensure the proper planning and development of the Thameside Enterprise Park.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Due to the nature of this report no formal consultation has been undertaken by the Council. However, the joint venture, supported by officers of the Council, has presented the Masterplan to a number of local community forums and local educational establishments.

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The future development of Thames Enterprise Park in accordance with the vision and principles set out in the Final Interim Master Plan is fully aligned with the adopted Thurrock Core Strategy and other key corporate strategies and priorities. The successful redevelopment of the site will have a significant impact in terms of future economic and employment growth.

#### **7. Implications**

## 7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Strategic Resources Accountant**

There are no financial implications associated with this Report

## 7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart**  
**Principal Solicitor**

There are no legal implications associated with this Report

## 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**  
**Community Development Officer**

There are no diversity or equality implications associated with this Report

## 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other implications associated with this report.

## 8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

## 9. **Appendices to the report**

- Thames Enterprise Park Final Interim Masterplan May 2015

### **Report Author:**

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Planning and Transportation