WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL	**EXECUTIVE** **6th April 2016**	**Agenda Item No. 6**

Title	Proposed Public Consultation on a Masterplan for St Mary's Lands, Warwick
For further information about this report please contact	Chris Elliott chris.elliott@warwickdc.gov.uk (01926) 456003
Wards of the District directly affected	Aylesford, Warwick
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive meeting 3rd September 2015, min ? Full Council 19th November 2014, min 50 Executive meeting 1st October 2014, min 56 Executive meeting 16th April 2014, min 189 Executive meeting 11th September 2013, min 55 Executive meeting 19th June 2013, min 13 Executive meeting 12th December 2012, min 107
Background Papers	See above reports plus Submitted Version of Local Plan 2015; SML Management Plan 2006; SML Regeneration Masterplan 2004; and SML Strategy 1998

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	**Date**	**Name**
Chief Executive	18.03.16	Author
CMT	18.03.16	Author, Bill Hunt, Andy Jones
Section 151 Officer	18.03.16	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	18.03.16	Andy Jones
Heads of Service	18.03.16	Tracy Darke, Rose Winship, Robert Hoof, Marianne Rolfe, Richard Hall, Andy Thompson
Legal Services	18.03.16	Barry Juckes; Sian Stroud
Portfolio Holder(s)	18.03.16	Councillor Cross
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Consultation with the St Mary's Lands Working Party		
Final Decision?		
No, the response to the public consultation on the masterplan will come back to the Executive for consideration.		

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates Members on the work the Council commissioned for a review of the overall strategy, regeneration master plan and management plan of St Mary's Lands in Warwick.

1.2 A set of proposals have now been developed by the Working Party and they are now at a stage to go out to wider public consultation. This reports sets out those proposals and sets out the proposed means of consultation.

1.3 A further report will be presented to the Executive with the results of the public consultation and any revisions that may arise as a consequence to the master plan**.**

1.4 In the meantime some actions are proposed to maintain momentum by seeking funding for practical next steps; project management; and design consultancy

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Executive notes the work of the St Mary's Lands Working Party to date and thanks the constituent members of the St Mary's Lands Working Party for their work.

2.2 That the Executive agrees that the proposals set out at Appendix 3 be subject to a public consultation in the manner set out at Appendix 4.

2.3 That the Executive receive a report for its consideration on: the outcome of the public consultation; and a finalised version of the proposed masterplan; and, any implementation, actions.

2.4 That the Next Step proposals in Appendix 5 (Next Steps) be endorsed and that:

1. The steps costing up to £5,000 from the existing budget be agreed;

2. That an exemption is agreed to the Code of Procurement Practice (Section 6.3) to appoint Plincke to provide an ongoing project management role for the best part of a year ahead at a cost of not more than £25,000 .

3. That tenders be sought for design consultancy work of up to £50,000.

2.5 That the additional funding of £75,000 in total is agreed from the 2016/17 Contingency Budget.

3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In September 2015 the Executive agreed, amongst a number of things that:

(i) Noted the latest position in respect of St Mary's Lands (SML);
(ii) Agreed to commission a review of the Council's previous Strategy, Regeneration Master Plan and Management Plan from Plincke Landscape;
(iii) Agreed an exemption to the Council's Code of Procurement to continue to utilise the previous experience from this consultancy, at a cost of up to £20,000 to be funded from the Service Transformation Reserve; and,

(iv) The review work was to be overseen by the St Mary's Lands Working Party.

3.2 In essence the proposal was to re-engage the consultants (Plincke) who assisted the Council in the original work on a Strategy, Regeneration Masterplan and Management Plan from 1999 to 2006. The Company and personnel had the background knowledge, experience and independence to assist with a more facilitative, rapid and inclusive development of the work needed which are not otherwise available within the Council.

3.3 The proposal was in 3 stages: (i) to review; (ii) to understand the issues; and, (iii) to build a consensus. The original brief is attached at Appendix 1. A fourth stage was anticipated once the outcome of the first 3 stages is complete. It was estimated that these 3 stages will cost up to £20,000 and if a fourth stage is required, further consideration and agreement would be needed as to how this is funded and procured. It is envisaged that the Working Party will re commence and would oversee the work of the consultants.

3.4 The Working Party (see Annexe 1 for its membership) has met 3 times in addition to a wider meeting to discuss the findings of stage 1. The consultant has met all of the parties to establish all the issues and a SWOT analysis has been developed. On the back of that analysis, a series of proposals, prioritised by the Working Party have been developed which the Working Party now wants the Executive to endorse for the purposes of public consultation only at this stage. The SWOT analysis is attached at Appendix 2, the proposals for consultation are at Appendix 3.

3.5 The proposed means of consultation are set out at Appendix 4 and are suggested by the Working Party as the most appropriate way to engage the local community.

3.6 Once the consultation is complete the responses will be assessed and the Working Party will consider any revisions. At that point the Executive will be asked to consider endorsing a finalised version of the masterplan and any actions necessary to implement it.

3.7 All those involved in the Working Party have approached the work and the issues with a positive approach and they should be thanked for their time and effort.

3.8 Given that commitment from all participating bodies to make things work and to resolve previous differences and the momentum it has created; it is important that this opportunity of momentum is not lost. Consequently, a number of next steps to maintain that momentum, ensure some early wins and allow progress on the more substantive elements is proposed at Appendix 5. The first of these can be accommodated within the existing budget. The other two – project management and design consultancy are not and will need funding from the Contigency Budget. It is suggested that the project management role is carried forward by Plincke for which an exemption from the Code of Procurement will be necessary, while the design consultancy work should be tendered.

4 POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1 The FFF Programme is designed to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Warwick District and to that end amongst other things it contains a number of significant projects. St Mary's Lands is one of the Council's key projects in the FFF Programme. Therefore, this report should be seen as the way forward for implementing one of the Council's key projects.

4.1.2 The FFF Programme has 3 strands and the impact of this report's proposals in relation to each of them is as set out below:

Service

Maintain or Improve Services – the proposals may allow for the area overall to be enhanced and more specifically enabling the existing facilities and services to continue to be operated and indeed to be enhanced.

People

Engaged and Empowered Staff – the proposals will be helpful in engagement terms as they will involve a range of staff across the Council and to empowerment since they will be helping to deliver schemes of direct benefit to the local community.

Money

Achieve and Maintain a Sustainable Balanced Budget – the proposals may help the Council in addressing its financial revenue situation via making better use of its physical assets.

4.2 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

4.2.1 The Council has approved a Sustainable Community Strategy for Warwick District (SCS) which has Prosperity as one of its five key themes. Under this theme priorities relevant to St Mary's Lands are:

- Ensuring effective promotion of the district to attract growth;
- Making better use of public assets to increase financial rewards;
- Incentivising growth of existing businesses and attracting inward investment.

To do this the Council has committed itself, among other things, to:

- Using public land/assets to stimulate growth;
- Ensuring a co-ordinated approach to inward investment.

4.2.2 The proposals are especially important to this theme given the significant impact it has on Warwick town's local economy by virtue of the numbers of visitors it could attract each year.

4.2.3 The proposals are also relevant to the SCS in respect of its Health and Well Being theme since many of the organisations' activities encourage people to participate in sporting and cultural activities, especially for younger and older people. Moreover, the SCS seeks to aid those areas of social and economic deprivation in the District to improve them to the level of the District overall.

The Forbes Estate is part of one such area of deprivation. This is also likely to aid the Council's Safer Communities work.

4.2.4 Part of SML is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and all of it is part of a Conservation Area. There is also a significant Listed Building (the grandstand). Consequently, the area is important to the Council's SCS agenda relating to promoting Sustainability. No impacts are likely in respect of the SCS's Housing theme.

4.3 Local Plan

4.3.1 The Council has also agreed a strategy statement "The future and sustainable prosperity for Warwick District" which amongst other things seeks to:

- Support the growth of the local economy; and
- Maintain and promote thriving town centres.

4.3.2 The Council has determined that a spatial masterplan should be developed for St Mary's Lands via public consultation as it recognised that it is an essential community amenity that needs to receive the necessary investment to enable its attractions and operations to prosper.

4.3.3 The Local Plan - Publication Draft has a specific proposed policy for St Mary's Lands as follows:

"3.142 The Council will therefore work with the operators of the Racecourse to bring forward a Masterplan for the area which;

- *ensures the ongoing vitality and viability of the Racecourse;*
- *protects and enhances the significance of the Listed Building and Conservation Area and their setting;*
- *retains the land for public recreation;*
- *protects and enhances biodiversity within the Racecourse as well as links to the open countryside and other areas; and*
- *restricts uses to those associated with visitor accommodation, recreation, leisure and horse racing"*

This requirement picks up the non-Local Plan overall strategy for St Mary's Lands adopted in 1998 and the regeneration master plan agreed in 2004 which both are reviewed as part of this work.

4.4 The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy

4.4.1 The Strategy highlights the need to support community football pyramid teams such as RCWFC with adjustments to facility provision where required. This is underpinned by a priority across the district to retain the number of grass pitches, improve the quality of these pitches, and provide more mini and junior pitches to meet demand now and in the future.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

5.1 The Executive had agreed a budget of £20,000 for the work to which this report relates. There is £5,000 within that sum available to fund the next steps proposed at Appendix 5 part (1).

5.2 However, there is no funding presently available for steps (2) and (3) at £25k and £50k respectively. It is suggested that this £75k can be funded form the 2016/17 Contingency Budget which currently has an unallocated balance of £230,000.

5.3 At this stage there are no proposals developed enough to be able to state with a very high level of confidence to members that such an investment would deliver a financial return. In effect the funding sought at 5.2 above is needed in order to develop a business case for actual investment, as such it ought to be regarded as feasibility funding which of course runs the risk of not generating a return.

5.4 However, funding for the masterplan proposals (if and when agreed) would be over a 10 year period and is likely to come from a variety of sources not just this Council. The overall intention would be to use one set of funds to lever in funds from other sources. As the landowner though, the Council is likely to benefit from such investment both financially and non-financially even if these benefits cannot yet be quantified.

5.5 There are at least two proposals that would require some commercial/legal advice should they be supported at consultation and the Council subsequently endorses them for inclusion, these being the golf club and hotel proposals. Such advice is likely to generate an upfront cost to the Council but this will be a matter for subsequent deliberation.

6 RISKS

6.1 The table below intends to summarise the key risks and mitigations relating to the proposals set out in this report.

Risks	Mitigations
1. That a masterplan cannot be agreed because of the relations between various parties on the SML Working Party deteriorate further and agreement cannot be reached.	1. The proposed approach seeks a facilitated approach to resolving the different views and priorities of various participants so this should minimise this risk but should it still remain then as landowner the Council will have to take the determining role.
2. A negative response to the public consultation questions the direction of the masterplan proposals.	1. The masterplan has been developed by all members of the Working Party, who represent a broad cross-section of interest groups. Consideration is being given to how these groups can take a more active part in the consultation process. The risk of not involving the Working Party directly in the consultation is that it will be seen as a solely Council initiative as opposed to one with broad, organisational support.

3. Loss of momentum between the Working Party developing the masterplan and its eventual adoption.	1. In parallel to the consultation exercise some further project development work can be put in place. This further work can be funded from an under-spend from the originally approved budget of £20,000.

6.2 The development of a master plan for St Mary's Lands will be accompanied by a more detailed risk register as will each of the individual projects referred to within this report where the Council is to take the lead operationally.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Options have been considered as part of the development of the proposals at Appendix 2 (SWOT analysis) and summarised at Appendix 3, and if members are not happy about any specific element it is better to let it be addressed as part of the public consultation process than to stop it being considered at all.

7.2 More generally the Executive could decide not to agree to consult the public on the proposed options which would have a reputational impact on the Council having in effect given the Working Party the job of overseeing the work of developing a masterplan and so it is not suggested that this is an appropriate option to consider.

Annexe 1 Membership of the Working Party

Warwick District Council – Cllr Bromley, Butler and Margrave

Warwick Town Council – Cllrs Grainger and Da Cruz

Warwickshire County Council – Cllr Holland

Friends of St Mary's Lands – Nigel Hamilton and Anthony Butcher

Golf Course – Phil Sharp

Warwick Racecourse – Andre Klein

Racing Club Warwick – Gary Vella

Warwick Corps of Drums – John Morton (sub Ron Everett)

Hill Close Gardens – Jane Sault

Appendices

Appendix 1- Brief previously agreed
Appendix 2 – SWOT Analysis
Appendix 3 – Summary of the Proposals
Appendix 4 – Outline of the Consultation Strategy
Appendix 5 – Key Next Steps

Appendix 1 – Brief for Review of Strategy, Regeneration Masterplan and Management Plan for SML

Stage 1. Review

- Undertake a site visit to review the delivery of the Management and Maintenance Plan, including the status of the individual tasks and objectives
- Compile an updated assessment of the Common's ecological value, including a biological records search and a preliminary assessment of habitat groups and current status. Where required, make recommendations for any further more detailed habitat surveys
- Meet with WDC maintenance team to finalise the review of the MMP and discuss the constraints and opportunities of management going forward
- Compile the current strategic documents including the regeneration masterplan and Council's strategic vision for the site
- Liaise with the key stakeholder groups via a presentation and discussion at a St. Marys Lands Stakeholder Group meeting. The purpose of the meeting would be to explain the outcomes of the MMP review and agree the next stages.

Stage 2. Understanding the Issues

- Undertake a consultation process with key stakeholders to understand their specific aims and aspirations for the open space. I would propose that the stakeholders are consulted individually via a series of meetings / workshops to build up a detailed picture of the different agendas for the Common, including the racecourse, golf course, caravan club, and landscape / amenity groups. Allowance for up to 10-workshops of approximately 2.5 – hours each
- Prepare a summary report and SWOT analysis identifying the key areas of conflict, tension and agreement between the multiple stakeholder groups
- Benchmark the Council's current strategy and objectives of regeneration masterplan with the outcomes of the consultation responses
- Summarise a series of potential action points that could be taken to mitigate the areas of conflict / tension. Where the action points have a potential revenue or capital cost implication, provide an indicative cost estimate
- Issue the summary report for initial WDC officer comment.

Stage 3. Building Consensus

- Meet with WDC officers to review the outcome of the SWOT analysis and action points. Agree which recommendations can be developed in more detail
- Prepare any initial amendments to the regeneration masterplan and forward to WDC officers for comment
- Advise upon any sources of external funding or potential partnership arrangements that may help build capacity to respond to the identified issues and opportunities
- Attend a presentation to Council Members setting out a way forward including a more developed costed action plan, updated regeneration masterplan and outline programme
- Make any adjustments to the above following Councillors' review
- Circulate the action plan to the stakeholder groups as a proposed 'way forward' document and seek their comments / input
- Meet with WDC officers to report back on the consultees responses to the way forward action plan and agree revisions
- Prepare a final way forward action plan document and undertake a presentation to the stakeholder group to discuss the next stages and programme.
- Once stakeholder support is agreed, undertake a general consultation exercise to members of the wider community to build awareness of the masterplan and proposed action plan
- Finalise any further changes to the regeneration masterplan including the identification of potential works and sequencing to achieve the action plan outcomes based upon the outputs from all consultees.