

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 8</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2018</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>RICHARD STEWART 595730 richard.stewart@south- derbys.gov.uk</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ELVASTON CASTLE MASTERPLAN</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ASTON</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03 &amp; EDS11</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the Elvaston Castle Masterplan, and the key considerations within this report.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To make the Committee aware of the proposed Masterplan, and the possible future developments at Elvaston Castle.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 Derbyshire County Council has recently prepared and locally consulted on a Masterplan for Elvaston Castle. This report sets out the vision for the development of the site, and its main components. The main considerations for the Council in terms of its planning function will be to balance the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets at Elvaston, impact on the green belt, biodiversity and highway safety, which will require careful consideration and detailed justification, as will any elements of Enabling Development proposed in order to support the Masterplan.

## **4.0 Detail**

- 4.1 The castle and gardens are on the national Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and have been for some time. The risk is based partly on the vacancy of a number of the buildings, lack of historic maintenance, albeit the County Council has recently been investing in addressing this, and high usage which has resulted in accelerated decay. The Masterplan provides an overall vision to enable a long-term viable use for the estate which would address the current issues and bring the estate back into a viable use.
- 4.2 The Masterplan sets out six 'guiding principles' which it intends will direct all future management decisions, whoever is responsible for the estate;
1. Freehold of the Estate will be retained by Derbyshire County Council (DCC);

2. A competent single management body (SMB) will control the overall governance of the estate with the balance of conservation, heritage and access at its core. ;
3. Financial sustainability will be fundamental to the delivery of the vision, facilitated by a business model that provides on-going reinvestment in the long-term stewardship of the Estate without eroding its significance;
4. The historic, landscape and biodiversity significance will be protected, conserved and, where sustainable, enhanced;
5. Public access to the gardens, parkland and house will be provided and maintained; the parkland at least will be free at the point of entry on foot. The stories and rich heritage will be understood, shared and celebrated;
6. People, community involvement and partnership working will be at the heart of all activities.

4.3 DCC is now working in partnership with the Elvaston Castle and Gardens Trust (ECGT) with the ambition of handing the running of the Estate to the Trust as the 'competent single management body'. This masterplan represents the joint ambition of the ECGT and DCC for Elvaston. The Trust itself has the following charitable objectives:

1. Conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Elvaston Castle, estate, gardens and surrounding area;
2. Education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment;
3. Development of the capacity and skills of members of the public so that they are better able to identify and help to meet their needs and participate more fully in society;
4. The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare and improving life conditions.

4.4 As part of the Masterplan the estate would have a varied and mixed use throughout with a central hub offering conference/event facilities and residential uses within the main castle, retail and commercial units within the courtyards and outbuildings and a degree of conversion and new build forming part of a scheme for Enabling Development. Phase one of the scheme would concentrate on this central hub area of the site with new access and car-parking created to provide a sustainable and long-term viable use and attraction. Phase Two would include conservation and restoration of the gardens.

4.5 Enabling development (ED) is a high test and a robust justification and financial breakdown would be required as part of any submission and be the minimum necessary to ensure the future of the estate.

4.6 The site is wholly within the Green Belt (GB) and as such the impact of any new development on the openness of the GB requires careful consideration. By definition, inappropriate development is harmful to the GB and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. It is likely that elements of the proposed development will need to demonstrate that 'very special circumstances' need to be considered in any formal decision.

4.7 Some significant elements of the proposed Masterplan to highlight include:

4.7.1 New access: This would run across the Registered Historic Park and Garden (RHPG). It would need to be demonstrated that the option chosen is the least harmful option and that justification is provided for the other options considered and the

necessity of relocating the car park and access to ensure the future of the estate. The Masterplan notes that the new access drive would be carefully designed to minimise its impacts, details of such will need to form part of any application taking the RHPG designation, impact on the GB and character into account. It also needs to be noted that the existing traffic situation within the area and especially at the A6 roundabout will require careful consideration and include discussions with Highways England, Derby City Council and the County Council as local Highway Authority.

- 4.7.2 Castle: Is proposed to use the ground floor of the Castle for functions/conferences/events with upper floors providing residential or hotel type accommodation; a long-term viable use that would see the building be brought back into use and provide a future source of income for maintenance of the Castle is envisaged.
- 4.7.3 New café: A new build café is proposed, which would require clear and convincing justification, especially as the estate has a wealth of historic structures including around this central courtyard area; therefore any new development such as the café will need to be justified and any potential harm considered in terms of its impact on the GB and heritage assets. It will need to be demonstrated that the use of the existing buildings for such purposes have been taken into consideration, and discounted for justifiable reasons.
- 4.7.4 Lower Stable Yard and Museum Buildings: These areas are proposed for retail, commercial and mixed uses. Generally the most appropriate use for any historic buildings is that for which it was intended. Any new uses for these buildings would need to be robustly justified, especially if there is a requirement for new buildings associated with the previous use of the buildings.
- 4.7.5 Kennels and saw yard residential area: Conversion of existing buildings is proposed to provide 4 units, and enabling development (ED) in the form of 12 new dwellings. The conversions would need to be considered in light of the proposals themselves which would need to maintain the significance of the buildings and the benefit of bringing these back into a long-term viable use. Consideration will need to be given as to how the area would be sub-divided which could have a further impact. The setting of these listed buildings, the location within the RHPG, and impact on the GB will need to be considered as part of any application. The ED would need to be appropriately justified.
- 4.7.6 Home Farm: Located outside the Registered Historic Park and Garden, but a historic farm complex. Currently the site is un-used and falling into disrepair. The re-use of the complex would be positive. Consideration will need to be given to sub-division of plots and the impact of residential conversion on the character of the complex. This area has also been highlighted for ED, which would need to be adequately justified and any proposals considered against GB policies.
- 4.7.7 Historic Gardens: As one of the key areas of significance and interest in the estate the proposed restoration is positive, although would require significant capital investment.

## **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The Elvaston Castle Masterplan could contribute to the Corporate Plan's vision to 'make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit' and in particular to the themes of:
- People: Keeping Residents happy, healthy and safe

- Place: Creating vibrant communities to meet residents' needs
- Progress: Encouraging inward investment and tourism opportunities

The key aims include:

- Increase levels of participation in sport, health, environmental and physical activities
- Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District
- Work to attract further inward investment

- 5.2 The Economic Development Manager generally welcomes the proposals for the estate, highlighting that the site has much untapped potential for job creation and for contributing to the local visitor economy, and as a local recreation facility in particular encouraging overnight stays.
- 5.3 As a visitor facility, the Estate is well positioned in terms of proximity to the major road network, to large urban centres and to East Midlands Airport, and it could be an attractive destination in a very accessible location, offering an historic country house and gardens, with an associated retail and food and drink offer, plus the potential for on-site accommodation and the hosting of large public events. However, expectations of a visitor attraction in terms of quality continue to rise, and encompass convenient access and parking, the food and drink provision, toilets and facilities, children's play areas, signage and interpretation, and the retail offer. These areas offer significant opportunities for employment creation and business development.
- 5.4 The South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020 includes the ambition 'To promote the development of the area's key sectors, such as manufacturing and tourism' and the Action to 'Protect the area's natural and historical assets and continue to develop the tourism product (e.g. Rosliston Forestry Centre, Elvaston Castle, Sharpe's Pottery Museum, visitor trails).
- 5.5 The Cultural Services Manager welcomes the Masterplan proposals put forward for the site. The site remains of strategic importance within the District overall and the North-East in particular as a key feature within the Green Infrastructure that provides access to high quality open space and opportunities for sport and recreation. This is crucial in making a contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities by encouraging active recreation, providing a venue for a day out and the pursuit of specialist activities, and as a location for inspiring events. The 'pull' of Elvaston as an improved venue will help with the tourism offer of the area, attract people from further afield and thus help to boost the local economy.

Given the planned development adjacent to the site its status becomes even more important. Projected growth in the District and beyond means that investment and support is required to help protect and enhance important sites as an increase in local residents and visitor numbers begin to put pressure on existing infrastructure, site capacity, and management requirements. The Masterplan addresses these issues whilst also looking to improve financial sustainability.

## **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 The Masterplan could help to meet the visions and aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Helping to ensure communities are vibrant and active where there is a strong sense of community, through encouraging increased community involvement and volunteering in the Elvaston Castle and Gardens Trust, improving the management of open space, improving the attractiveness of South Derbyshire

and increasing the number of people taking part in cultural activities. The development could help to create sustainable development, with a high quality development that minimised impact on the environment.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 9.1 Overall the intention to bring the estate back into a more active and long-term use with a public focus is positive and a number of elements of the Masterplan would result in an enhancement to the site including the restoration of the Grade II\* Castle and Registered Historic Park and Garden. The long-term sustainable vision would enable a number of assets to be removed from the national and local buildings at risk register.
- 9.2 Whilst limited detail has been provided due to the nature of the Masterplan and it will be these details that will indicate the degree of impact and harm that may arise from the proposed in terms of heritage assets, the Green Belt and potential conflict with the Development Plan. These matters would need to be balanced against the proposed enhancements, public benefits and very special circumstances associated with the proposal. A full and robust ED proposal will need to be submitted which details the financial aspects of the proposal allowing for the minimum ED necessary in order to repair the listed building(s) and minimum works necessary to bring any structures back into a long-term viable use.

## **10.0 Background Papers**

- 10.1 Elvaston Castle Estate Master Plan: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/leisure/countryside/countryside-sites/country-parks/elvaston/future/elvaston-castle-estate-master-plan.pdf>
- 10.2 Elvaston Castle Essential Repairs Report: [https://www.futureelvaston.co.uk/files/downloads/11-05-06%20Elvaston%20Vol%201%20Intro%20and%20Exec%20Summary\\_tcm44-174384.pdf](https://www.futureelvaston.co.uk/files/downloads/11-05-06%20Elvaston%20Vol%201%20Intro%20and%20Exec%20Summary_tcm44-174384.pdf)
- 10.3 Elvaston Castle Report on Future Options and Opportunities: <https://www.futureelvaston.co.uk/files/downloads/Jones%20Lang%20Laselle%20Options%20report%202013.pdf>
- 10.4 Historic England's guidance (Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places, 2008: <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places/enablingwebv220080915124334.pdf/>
- 10.5 Historic England 'At Risk' Register: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results?q=Elvaston&searchtype=har>
- 10.6 The South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020: <https://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/assets/attach/1526/Economic%20Development%20Strategy%202016%20-%202020.pdf>
- 10.7 The South Derbyshire Corporate Plan 2016-2021: <https://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/assets/attach/5029/Corporate%20Plan.pdf>