

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 20 January 2025

**Report Title**

Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Rotherham West, Greasbrough and Rawmarsh West Wards

**Report Summary**

Bassingthorpe Farm is identified as a Strategic Allocation in the Rotherham Local Plan, including provision of around 2,400 new homes, 11 hectares of employment land, a local centre and a primary school. The draft Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more detail on existing planning policies to help bring forward the site for development.

The purpose of the Bassingthorpe Farm SPD is to:

- Guide submission of planning applications and ensure timely delivery of strategic infrastructure on and off site.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate social and community facilities.
- Support any future funding bids for national grant opportunities.

The Bassingthorpe Farm Strategic Allocation is pivotal to the delivery of Rotherham's Local Plan and Housing Strategy.

## **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approves public consultation on the draft Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with Assistant Director – Legal Services to explore collaborative arrangements and negotiate draft terms with the majority landowner to progress delivery of Bassingthorpe Farm.
3. Notes further reports will be submitted to seek Cabinet approval of the Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document following consultation and any proposed terms with the majority landowner for the delivery of the site.

## **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Draft Bassingthorpe Farm SPD

Appendix 2 Equality Part A – Screening

Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

Rotherham Core Strategy (2014)

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/guide-local-plan/2>

Rotherham Sites and Policies Document (2018)

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/guide-local-plan/3>

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Planning Practice Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

## **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Rotherham's Local Plan provides the policy framework for determining planning applications. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional advice and guidance to prospective developers and infrastructure providers. The draft Bassingthorpe Farm SPD offers detailed guidance to developers when preparing planning applications, to help bring forward development of the site in a way that meets the Council's objectives. Following public consultation, and subject to further Cabinet approval, the SPD would become a material consideration to be taken into account when determining planning applications.
- 1.2 Bassingthorpe Farm is identified as a strategic allocation in the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), to consist of around 2,400 new homes, a primary school, a local centre, employment land and commercial opportunities. This has been supported by technical work since the inception of the Local Plan, such as a concept framework and a more detailed masterplan to investigate the issues relating to delivery of the site. This previous work has been reviewed and key elements incorporated in the preparation of the draft Bassingthorpe Farm SPD.
- 1.3 Delivery of Bassingthorpe Farm could be through some form of joint working arrangement between the Council and Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estates as majority landowner. Work is ongoing to explore all opportunities for joint working and the legalities of delivering the strategic allocation through this route. However, all opportunities to bring forward delivery on site will be explored with the SPD setting the framework for all future development activities. The Council as local planning authority retains an independent role in determining future planning applications submitted for development of the site.
- 1.4 The delivery of Bassingthorpe Farm will make a significant contribution to meeting the Local Plan housing target, generating Council Tax receipts, and providing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income towards infrastructure provision. It will also play an important role in the growth of the wider area as it forms one of the largest housing growth zones in the Sheffield City Region.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Vision and principles**

- 2.1.1 The draft SPD sets out a vision for Bassingthorpe Farm accompanied by five place-making principles:
- Connected and integrated, ensuring Bassingthorpe is an outward looking integral part of Rotherham, including the town centre, proposed mainline station and adjacent neighbourhoods. The Council has a long term aspiration to support future development of

the tram/train network and will undertake work to explore the financial and engineering feasibility of this.

- Landscape focussed, making the most of its distinctive landscape setting and topography.
- Creating a heart within the community around a new local centre and job opportunities.
- Providing varied and distinctive character areas with a mix of house types, tenure and densities.
- Promoting sustainable stewardship bringing together public, private and community sectors and the delivery of quality well-designed places.

2.1.2 Two spatial concept diagrams in the SPD demonstrate these principles and will guide future detailed designs for Bassingthorpe Farm.

## 2.2 **Policy compliance**

2.2.1 The SPD references national planning policy guidance, the requirements of the Rotherham Local Plan and other adopted SPDs that will guide the preparation of future planning applications to deliver the strategic allocation. Analysis of the context of Bassingthorpe Farm is provided, promoting a clear response to the wider local environment within which the development will be located, and the surrounding historic environment and natural environment assets.

## 2.3 **School provision**

2.3.1 The proximity of local schools is noted, and access to schools is included on an accompanying Framework Plan. Most of the development site is at least 800 metres away from a local primary school, so a new primary school on site is required to meet future needs as well as in minimising travel for younger people and promoting active travel.

## 2.4 **Flood prevention**

2.4.1 The creation of a flood storage reservoir is identified on land at the north of the Bassingthorpe Farm Strategic Allocation; this will mitigate flooding of the Parkgate area from Greasbrough Dyke and Old Sough/Boundary Dyke.

## 2.5 **Topography**

2.5.1 The SPD considers the topography of the development parcels, views in and out of the site, and the slopes within the site. The topography of this site is such that consideration is given to the flattest areas for future development in the first instance and identifies those areas where intervention will be required to create viable development platforms.

## 2.6 **Climate change**

2.6.1 The SPD notes the requirements of Local Plan policies to mitigate impacts of climate change, the requirements for sustainable design and construction, and the need for proposals to endure and adapt to the predicted effects of climate change. As a key area to deliver growth in the heart of Rotherham, the SPD notes potential opportunities for Bassingthorpe Farm to connect into a private district heating network originating at the Templeborough Biomass plant.

## 2.7 **Spatial framework**

2.7.1 The SPD contains a spatial masterplan framework consisting of a series of coordinated and complementary plan layers that will guide the form and arrangement of future development parcels and green spaces. The plan layers are informed by consideration of the constraints and opportunities that exist on site and responds to existing policy requirements and stipulations. Several technical studies and baseline information have informed this framework. Further technical and design work may demonstrate that a higher number of homes can be achieved than the anticipated 1,950 to 2,500 homes. Key spatial principles are identified on the framework plan including:

2.8 **Principle 1: a considered development footprint** that has been carefully positioned and aligned to avoid impacts upon (and provide a sufficient standoff from) the following features which give the site its unique characteristics:

- Existing trees, hedges and woodland
- Clough Streamside
- Greasbrough Dyke
- Listed buildings at Bassingthorpe Farm (Grade II), Barbot Hall (Grade II) and Barbot Hall Farmhouse (Grade II)
- Impacts on the wider historical landscape
- Distinctive and/or valuable ecological habitats
- Local Wildlife Sites/ Regionally Important Geological Sites and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Public Rights of Way

2.9 The development area also takes into consideration physical constraints including:

- Contaminated land at the former landfill site
- Monitoring equipment associated with the former landfill site
- Made ground and bell pits / mine shafts
- Overhead cables and pylons
- Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) zone
- Topography and slopes

- 2.10 **Principle 2: strategic green space** providing a fundamental element of the framework plan, comprising a large area of retained green wedge to the southeast and two strategic east / west green corridors based around the watercourses of Clough Streamside and Greasbrough Dyke. Formal and informal open space provision will be delivered within the strategic green space established by the framework plan.
- 2.11 **Principle 3: Local centre.** The framework plan shows the co-location of a new mixed use local centre and a new primary school which together form a strategic community hub.
- 2.12 **Principle 4: employment and mixed uses** on a dedicated site to the eastern edge of the allocation area. Development here could be integrated with the existing employment area at Mangham Road; other opportunities for commercial activities are identified within this principle through opportunities to create workspace which contributes to a vibrant 'high street' character. The Local Centre could be designed to accommodate live-work space, co-working offices or workshops or standalone small scale employment space.
- 2.13 The SPD includes further framework plans including green infrastructure, urban design, and green spaces. A movement framework gives key requirements to guide all new development within the site, including design, speed, landscaping, management of surface water run-off. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity is promoted and connections to the wider open countryside via the public rights of way network noted and opportunities for active travel are highlighted throughout.
- 2.14 **Character areas**
- 2.14.1 Five character areas are identified within the strategic allocation: Clough Bank View; Bassingthorpe Springs; Bassingthorpe Village; Bassingthorpe Park; and Car Hill Rise. The key influences and landscape for each of the character areas is highlighted, including new planting and retention of existing areas of trees and hedgerows, and the existing density of development within nearby neighbourhoods and the anticipated density of future development noted. Significant detail is provided within each of the character area summaries regarding the design response anticipated from all new development proposals, including the use of materials and the preservation and creation of views from new development proposals to external notable assets and views to natural environmental features. Key arrival gateways are identified as are landscaping opportunities to specified boundaries of the character area.
- 2.15 **Phasing**
- 2.15.1 The draft SPD highlights the delivery and implementation responses required by future developers, informed by testing with a range of locally active housebuilders and developers. Further detailed work will identify the optimum phasing plan, taking into account the need for the early delivery of key infrastructure, such as the main street and primary school on site.

While development is likely to take place over 20 years, the SPD notes: “it is important to create a sense of place as quickly as possible within the defined character areas.”

## 2.16 **Infrastructure**

2.16.1 The early provision of community infrastructure such as the school and local centre and key transport infrastructure is recognised as being an essential requirement. This will reduce the impacts of the development upon the existing local highway network, and likely impacts on existing community infrastructure and to deliver good placemaking. However, it is noted that these aspirations must be balanced with the need to maintain development delivery and viability. A simplified table of necessary infrastructure requirements is included within the draft SPD. The SPD notes that it is essential to ensure sustainable management of the community assets can be provided for in the long term.

## 2.17 **Design codes**

2.17.1 Finally, the draft SPD sets out the next steps from the planning and design of new development proposals. The requirement and scoping for a site wide design code is included, with all aspects that a future code should consider and respond to. There is also a requirement for plot and area-based codes to inform detailed planning and reserved matters applications.

## 2.18 **Land ownership and delivery**

2.18.1 Despite the significant planning and master planning work completed to date, Bassingthorpe Farm is not progressing to delivery. The land that makes up Bassingthorpe Farm is owned (predominantly) by two landowners, the majority landowner with circa 75% of the landholding, Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estate (FWE), and the Council with the remaining circa 25%.

2.18.2 Both landowners have a clearly stated desire to see comprehensive, high-quality development at Bassingthorpe Farm and have explored a joint vision and set of objectives to achieve this, recognising that each landowner has different priorities within this shared vision and objectives.

2.18.3 A number of delivery options for Bassingthorpe Farm have been explored previously with the conclusion that a partnership approach with FWE represents the best way of achieving the desired comprehensive development. To date, however, no agreement between the landowners has been reached on how this partnership arrangement is formalised.

2.18.4 Both landowners recognise the need to formalise the means of landowner collaboration and bring a delivery partner on board, in some form, to help implement the proposal. FWE has expressed a clear desire to progress and build momentum to delivery, recently approaching the Council to explore what arrangements could be used to progress delivery of the site and enable the landowners to jointly procure a delivery partner.

2.18.5 Whilst there are a significant number of complex issues that will need to be fully explored in considering formal joint working arrangements with FWE, the previous discussions between the two landowners, and the recent discussions on joint vision and objectives for the site, offers a strong foundation to explore an appropriate delivery arrangement that is mutually beneficial.

2.18.6 Officers will appoint specialist legal and commercial advisers to explore arrangements and fully understand the implications for the Council in considering this approach and assist in negotiating terms with FWE. Any recommendation to proceed with specific arrangements and associated terms will be the subject of a future Cabinet report.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

#### **3.1 Option 1: approve consultation on the draft Bassingthorpe Farm SPD**

3.1.1 Approval of the draft SPD for consultation purposes and authorisation to explore collaborative arrangements with the other major landowner is required, so that any planning application for this land can demonstrate compliance with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy. This policy relates directly to delivery of Bassingthorpe Farm and states that a comprehensive Masterplan must be approved by the Council prior to consideration of any planning applications on land forming the strategic allocation. The policy states that planning applications, if for less than the whole development, must not prejudice the implementation of the whole Bassingthorpe Farm development and must include a phasing strategy to ensure the strategic social and physical infrastructure can be secured.

3.1.2 There may be higher risks of legal challenge to planning decision-making if the Council cannot demonstrate it has comprehensively considered the delivery of the strategic allocation in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS1. The adoption of an SPD to guide future development of the Bassingthorpe Farm Strategic Allocation will enable it to be a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications. It will ensure that all future planning applications are compliant with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy and appropriately reflect the detailed site development guidelines in the Sites and Policies Document.

#### **3.2 Option 2: do not approve consultation on the draft Bassingthorpe Farm SPD**

3.2.1 Bassingthorpe Farm is a large and complex strategic allocation; the lack of further detailed guidance provided by an adopted SPD could result in poor planning applications being submitted, that do not comprehensively consider the implications of their development on the remainder of the strategic allocation. Likewise, piecemeal development could impact on delivery of essential strategic and social infrastructure with knock on effects on surrounding communities.



- 3.2.2 The Council may fail to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land without timely delivery of the Bassingthorpe Farm Strategic Allocation and could be at risk of planning appeals on inappropriate sites within the Borough.
- 3.2.3 Without Council support for the SPD, and supporting technical studies, the attractiveness of the strategic allocation to potential developers will be reduced. There will be greater uncertainty regarding the delivery and timing of key infrastructure to support development on site. The Council as local planning authority may be required to determine piecemeal planning applications, without an approved SPD setting out the wider vision for the strategic allocation.
- 3.2.4 Not approving the draft SPD for consultation would prevent progress on delivering the strategic allocation for the reasons outlined above. This would leave the Council open to challenge on other non-allocated sites in the Borough.
- 3.3 Option 1 is the recommended option.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Preparation of the draft SPD attached at Appendix 1 has been undertaken by consultants appointed by the Council. This has included consultation with other relevant services within the Council including Transportation, Housing, Climate Change, Public Health, Ecology, Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RiDO), and Drainage, and with representatives of Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estates. It is anticipated that further engagement will be arranged during the consultation period to allow stakeholders to raise any specific questions and provide feedback on the detail of this draft SPD.
- 4.2 Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. This Statement sets out how the Council involves the public and stakeholders in producing planning policy documents and consulting on planning applications. A full consultation and communication plan will be developed. Consultation will involve engagement with the public and stakeholders through a series of in person events and drop-in sessions, accompanied by online accessibility to the document and response form.
- 4.3 Consultation will be undertaken via the Council's planning consultation website. This notifies interested parties (including statutory consultees, members of the public and other stakeholders) on the Local Plan consultation database and allows and encourages comments to be submitted online. A summary of the consultation plan is set out below.

**Where will the draft SPD be available to view?** The draft SPD will be available to view on the Council's planning consultation website, with links from the Planning Policy webpage and from the corporate consultations webpage.

A print copy of the draft SPD will be available to view at the Main Library in Riverside House during normal office hours.

**How will people know about the draft SPD?**

The Council's Planning Service maintains a database of those interested in preparation of the Local Plan and other planning documents. They will be notified by email of the consultation.

Notification will also be sent to any relevant stakeholders identified whose details are not currently held on the consultation database.

The Council's Planning webpages will be updated to provide details of the consultation and how to provide comments.

A notice publicising the consultation will be placed in the local press and a press statement will be issued.

**How can people comment?**

Comments are encouraged using the Councils planning consultation website but can also be made in writing via email or by post.

**5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is proposed to undertake public consultation over a four-week period in Spring 2025. The exact dates will be confirmed nearer the time.
- 5.2 Following consultation, any comments received will be considered in producing the final version of the SPD and a consultation feedback report prepared detailing the main issues raised and how these have been addressed.
- 5.3 A further report will be brought to Cabinet later in 2025 seeking adoption of the SPD. The timing of this further report will be dependent on the timing of the consultation and the volume and nature of the consultation responses to the draft SPD.

**6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 A revenue budget allocation of £250,000 was agreed by Council in 2022/23 to support the costs of any significant planning developments such as Bassingthorpe Farm. To date the costs incurred in developing this Supplementary Planning Document have been funded from this budget. There is an approved capital budget allocation of £328,993 which could be used to support the development of a joint working arrangement, if the Council determines this is the preferred option. In addition, the Council has submitted a bid to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local

Government (MHCLG) for £750,000 to the New Homes Accelerator Programme, which if successful can be used to fund the remaining SPD costs, including the consultation exercise, and the development of collaborative working arrangements.

- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications associated with recommendation 1 in relation to the public consultation.
- 6.3 The main body of the report refers to the engagement of specialist legal and commercial advisers, which will need to be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023, whichever is the applicable legislation at the time, as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 6.4 As options are explored in relation to the potential joint working arrangements it will be essential for procurement implications to be appropriately considered to determine the scope and application of the relevant procurement legislation.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The recommendations and options set out in this report are reasonable and in compliance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations 2012 (the Regulations). The Report specifically seeks authority from Cabinet to allow for a period of public consultation for the SPD referred to in the report; this requirement is in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations which sets out that consultation is a specific requirement to allow for the validation of an SPD.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The SPD is intended to assist in delivering the Council's strategy and policies set out in the Local Plan. These include promoting and delivering sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities, reducing pollution, and conserving and enhancing the quality of the built and natural environment.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The SPD is intended to assist in delivering the Council's strategy and policies set out in the Local Plan. SPDs provide guidance on the strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- 10.2 The published Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) that supported the preparation, examination and adoption of the Rotherham Local Plan provide

a comprehensive Equalities Assessment of all the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

10.3 Community and stakeholder consultations were undertaken at various stages of Local Plan preparation, and this resulted in further refinements to policy wording. At each stage of Local Plan preparation an IIA, including an Equalities Assessment, was prepared and refined to reflect the most up to date policies that emerged following consultation.

10.4 Supplementary Planning Documents promote the delivery of sustainable patterns of development and the creation of sustainable communities for all residents, businesses and visitors, and conserve and enhance the quality of the built and natural environment for the benefit of everyone. The Equality Screening Assessment is attached as an appendix.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this the Council has aimed to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a whole to achieve the same position by 2040.

11.2 The Carbon Impact Assessment attached as an appendix has been reviewed by the Climate Change Officer and Climate Champion.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 The implications for partners or other directorates are mainly associated with awareness of the preparation and consultation programme for undertaking the SPD, including commenting on the advice and further guidance provided within this SPD from specialist officers within the Council. Briefings and joint working will be undertaken as appropriate.

12.2 There are implications arising from the content of the emerging SPD for the other major landowner Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estates, who will also have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft SPD.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 The Council may be open to legal challenge should Supplementary Planning Documents not be prepared and adopted in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Legal advice will be sought as necessary.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Simon Moss, Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration & Transport

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

|   | <b>Named Officer</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive   | Sharon Kemp<br>OBE   | 23/12/24    |
| Strategic Director of Finance &<br>Customer Services<br>(S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger        | 18/12/24    |
| Assistant Director of Legal Services<br>(Monitoring Officer)            | Phil Horsfield       | 06/12/24    |

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