



**REPORT of
PLANNING POLICY WORKING GROUP**

**to
COUNCIL
12 DECEMBER 2024**

**PLANNING POLICY WORKING GROUP REVIEW OF THE MALDON AND HEYBRIDGE
CENTRAL AREA MASTERPLAN**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Council the recommendations of the Planning Policy Working Group (PPWG) following Councillor J C Stilts' Motion to the Council on 14 December 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan Action Plan work is permitted to continue until after the Local Development Plan (LDP) Review is completed;
- (ii) That the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan is reviewed for relevance thereafter as part of LDP Review or subsequent processes.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on 14 December 2023, it was 'Resolved that an immediate review of the 2017 Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan and Action Plan be brought forward through the Planning Policy Working Group'. Such review 'encouraged officers to bring the review forward at the earliest opportunity' but 'within the time constraints and budget they currently had' (Minute No. 401 refers).
- 3.2 The Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (CAMP SPD) was adopted by the Council in November 2017 as a SPD to expand upon the Maldon District LDP Strategic Policy S5 *Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Objectives*. The CAMP SPD was a requirement of the LDP and covered a period of over ten years setting out an action plan which identified 18 spatially specific projects to be worked on during that time to meet the LDP's Strategic Policy S5 Objectives. The CAMP projects were prioritised in 2017 as short term (up to 5 years), medium term (5 - 10 years) and long term (10 years+).
- 3.3 CAMP, as an SPD, is not part of the statutory Development Plan, rather it elaborates on the details of how LDP's Strategic Policy S5 Objectives could be achieved. The Strategic Policy S5 Objectives and Key Projects are however set out on pages 36-39 of the LDP which reinforces their presence in planning policy.
- 3.4 During March to July 2024, meetings, presentations, and structured site visits with the PPWG were carried out to the CAMP's three sub-areas ('*Maldon Central*' - the 'Market Town' focus of Maldon's High Street; the '*Leisure Quarter*' - focussed on the District's most visited places at Hythe Quay and Promenade Park and the '*Causeway*

Regeneration Area’ - focussed on the District’s largest employment area in Heybridge) as follows:

- 3.4.1 **14 March 2024** focused on familiarisation with the CAMP Action Plan with accompanying Masterplan Priority Programme 2018-2023 and the current Masterplan Priority Programme 2022-2027. These five-yearly priority programmes are monitored via the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) Project Board, (Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and performance monitoring to the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee (PGA). It was noted that five of the 18 CAMP Projects have been delivered or are now BAU (Business As Usual) activities in the first five years up to 2022 to meet the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives and Key Projects. A further two projects have been delivered in 2023 from the current Masterplan Priority Programme 2022 - 2027. The remaining 11 projects have actions and timelines to progress to 2027 (**APPENDIX 1**). The PPWG were also informed of new and emerging strategies and plans that strengthen the CAMP evidence base that have been since adoption in 2017 to progress CAMP projects especially for ‘connectivity and movement’ by sustainable means in the ‘entire central area’, public realm and landscaping enhancements, regenerative site development projects and mitigation of flood risk. Four ‘options’ were presented to the PPWG to inform a recommendation back to the Council (**APPENDIX 2**). Consequently, the PPWG requested separate, structured sites visits to the three sub-areas to better understand how the CAMP projects are meeting the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives.
- 3.4.2 **3 June 2024** – Site Visit 1 to Maldon Central (High Street to Hythe Quay including public car parks) **APPENDIX 3** refers.
- 3.4.3 **7 June 2024** – Site Visit 2 to the Leisure Quarter (Promenade Park and its environs including the England Coast Path, waste depot, recycling centre, Millennium Wood (Battle of Maldon Millennium [991AD to 1991]) and Blackwater Leisure complex) **APPENDIX 3** refers.
- 3.4.4 **10 June 2024** – Site Visit 3 to the Causeway Regeneration Area (Station Road, Bates Road, The Causeway and Heybridge Creek) **APPENDIX 3** refers.
- 3.4.5 **26 July 2024** – CAMP Review Summary Meeting – All PPWG Member questions, observations, comments, and ideas from the three site visits were captured during the visits and presented back to the PPWG. After the comprehensive review of CAMP, the PPWG made their informed decision for the recommendation back to the Council feeling that this should incorporate a combination of Options 1 and 2. The PPWG requested an All Member Briefing be held on its CAMP Review prior to reporting back to the Council for Members ‘to be clear on the relationship between Strategic Policy S5 ‘Maldon and Heybridge Central Area’, LDP, and the Maldon and Central Area Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (CAMP SPD) and any review of either as part of the LDP Review or subsequent processes’.
- 3.4.6 **16 October 2024** – All Member Briefing ‘PPWG CAMP Review’ (Presentation in Background Papers).

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 At the CAMP Review Summary Meeting on 26 July 2024 PPWG considered the four Options presented to them at the start of the CAMP Review on 14 March 2024. **APPENDIX 2** refers. PPWG agreed a combination of Option 1 and Option 2 was appropriate as set out in the ‘*Recommendations*’ to this Report at 2(i) and 2(ii). The

following conclusions were presented to the CAMP All Member Briefing on 16 October 2024.

- 4.2 Delivery and progress of CAMP Projects via the monitored Masterplan Priority Programmes are meeting the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives via public and private sector investment and regeneration in the Causeway Regeneration Area and supporting and promoting tourism in the most visited places in the District at Hythe Quay and Promenade Park. It is evident that this is also supporting the maintainance of the Maldon High Street retail function, whilst helping it diversify by adapting to behavioural changes brought on by Covid-19, the growing trend of on-line shopping, and access to the High Street by more sustainable travel modes, since CAMP SPD was adopted in 2017.
- 4.3 BAU through the separate Member-led groups including the Maldon High Street Focus Group, Climate Action Working Group, Asset Management Working Group, Coastal Flood and Management Working Group, Car Park Task and Finish Working Group and the Council's function as the Local Planning Authority for planning applications, conservation and heritage and planning enforcement in the Maldon and Heybridge Area, ensures CAMP Projects are visible in their progress, are still a mechanism for change in activities to manage, implement or investigate CAMP Project progress and delivery.
- 4.4 Partnership working with Essex County Council as the Highway Authority is supporting the 'connectivity and movement' and climate action priorities to 'reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions' (GGEs) from transport to improve air quality Projects in CAMP. The recent All Member Briefing on the draft Maldon District Future Transport Strategy on 2 September 2024, the report to Council on the Essex Transport Strategy Framework Consultation (12 September 2024 report to Council) and commencement of the Maldon and Heybridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) are prioritising sustainable travel and active travel in the CAMP defined area; CAMP therefore remains relevant to help define the strategic context for development and change in its area.
- 4.5 Because of changes to the NPPF in December 2023 after the Motion was carried and the proposed changes to the updated NPPF in September 2024 (due to be decided on by Spring 2025), PPWG will continue to review the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives via the ongoing LDP Review.
- 4.6 The '*Recommendations*' in this Report following the 14 December 2023 Motion to Council are based on a comprehensive review of CAMP by PPWG between March and July 2024 and by updating all Members on 16 October 2024 at the CAMP Review All Member Briefing.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 Supporting our communities

- 5.1.1 Access to quality public open space, community facilities and options for active travel are the Objectives of CAMP Projects to meet LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives.

5.2 Enhancing and connecting our place

- 5.2.1 Sustainable transport options as alternatives to car travel to reach employment, leisure and recreation and to access facilities and services are the Objectives of

CAMP Projects to meet LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives. Active travel for health and wellbeing and delivery of highway infrastructure for safe, dedicated routes are Objectives of CAMP Projects to meet LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives.

5.3 **Helping the economy to thrive**

5.3.1 CAMP SPD is an economically driven Masterplan to support the local commercial, retail and tourism economies meeting the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives and thus supporting significant housing growth in Maldon and Heybridge.

5.4 **Smarter finances**

5.4.1 The range and status of the Maldon & Heybridge CAMP supports the compilation of bids for third party funding by providing evidence of coordinated action and investment for multiple outcomes.

5.5 **A greener future**

5.5.1 CAMP projects consider sustainable and active travel modes in its connectivity and movement framework where dominance of the motor vehicle causes poor air quality and congestion impacts. CAMP projects consider electric vehicle (EV) charging implementation and flood resilience infrastructure to lessen the impacts of climate change meeting the LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – As an SPD, CAMP has been through public consultation with residents, businesses and visitors and significant stakeholder engagement with key partners and statutory consultees prior to its adoption. The CAMP and LDP Strategic Policy S5 Objectives ensure the District's main commercial, retail and tourism economies are sustained and improved.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – The CAMP SPD is adopted by the Council and can be reviewed as part of the ongoing LDP Review. CAMP SPD supports risk management and provides opportunities to other council and partner projects.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.

Background Papers:

Maldon District Local Development Plan 2024-2029, Maldon District Council (MDC), 2017
Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD, MDC, 2017
Lower High Street Action Plan, MDC, 2020
Air Quality Management Area Action Plan, MDC 2020
North Quay Regeneration Development Brief SPD, MDC, 2020
Climate Action Strategy, MDC, 2021 (under review)
All Member Briefing PowerPoint presentation

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