

# MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013/2014 REPORT NO. 101

**MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**  
Cabinet – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**REPORT OF:**  
Director of Regeneration, Leisure  
and Culture

Contact officer and telephone number:  
Paul Walker extension 3805  
E mail: [paul.walker@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:paul.walker@enfield.gov.uk)

Marc Clark extension 5537  
Email: [marc.clark@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:marc.clark@enfield.gov.uk)

Agenda – Part 1	Item: 14
<b>Subject:</b>  <b>Meridian Water: Development Opportunities</b>	
<b>Cabinet Members consulted:</b> Cllr Del Goddard, Cabinet Member for Business and Regeneration; Cllr Andrew Stafford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report concerns development opportunity areas that are located within the boundaries of the Meridian Water Masterplan. In particular it focuses on the Council potentially acquiring some land that is identified as being in the early phases of potential development in the Masterplan. It is suggested that such an approach be supported because the acquisition of the sites would support the delivery of some of the projected early phases of development and potentially enable the completion of new education and rail infrastructure to be properly sequenced with the delivery of new homes, which is very desirable from a regeneration perspective.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes that there is the potential for the Council to acquire some land at Meridian Water that could support its regeneration agenda.
- 2.2 That the potential acquisition of land that could assist the regeneration of Meridian Water be approved 'in principle', subject to appropriate terms and conditions being agreed.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As Cabinet will know Meridian Water comprises approximately 85 hectares in the south east of the borough and is one of the largest developable areas of land in North London. Located within the Central Leaside growth area and the Mayor of London's wider Upper Lee Valley Opportunity Area it has significant development potential.
- 3.2 Your adopted Core Strategy (2010) identifies the potential for up to 5,000 new homes and up to 3,000 new jobs to be created in this area, along with the necessary community and other infrastructure that would be needed to support a new sustainable neighbourhood of this scale. Your Core Strategy also sets out the intention to provide further guidance on the implementation of relevant planning policies and this has taken the form of a Masterplan which has been prepared with the benefit of consultant support from LDA Design, BNP Paribas Real Estate, Oxford Economics and the Jonathan Roberts Consultancy.
- 3.3 Following public consultation last year, a draft Masterplan was presented to the Local Plan Sub-Committee for consideration on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013, where it was resolved that it should be adopted as planning and urban design guidance. During the appropriate period this decision was called-in and the matter was subsequently referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013, where after due consideration, it was, by resolution, adopted.
- 3.4 The Masterplan sets out the proposals detailed below in the context of a number of unique mixed-use neighbourhoods that when built out could accommodate up to 5,000 new homes and up to 3,000 new jobs:
- A 2-form entry primary school; an all-through school; a University Technical College; a new local centre offering new health and library facilities, community rooms, a police presence and local shops;
  - An appropriate mix of residential, retail, community uses and open spaces, integrated into the wider development;
  - High quality public realm and development of an exemplar quality at a human scale, with buildings that are flexible, adaptable and responsive to the environment;
  - A new Causeway providing an east-west route connecting all parts of Meridian Water, linking new and existing communities, the station and the Lee Valley Regional Park;
  - New open space located at the heart of the community;
  - Phase 1 of the proposed Lee Valley Heat Network supplying low carbon, low cost heat to new homes and businesses in the area;

- Higher density development close to Angel Road Station (soon to be renamed 'Meridian Water') which will enjoy the benefit of improved rail services (four trains per hour) and a new public transport interchange;
- A section concerning delivery, which looks, at a broad-scale, at how the Masterplan could be made to happen. Amongst other things this includes a commentary on development guidance and phasing, and also provides an action plan to help inform future work on the project.

## **4. EMERGING PROJECTS**

4.1 The Council has been pursuing development at Meridian Water from around 2008, if not earlier, and the recently adopted Masterplan represents the achievement of a key milestone in moving towards actual physical development, and the clear intention is that the exciting vision it provides will serve as a gateway to the future, enabling land-owners and the private sector to confidently bring forward Masterplan compliant proposals through the development management process and then to site, providing the new homes, other facilities and jobs that we all want to see. This prospect seems all the more likely given the improving market conditions in London and the South East, the adoption of the Masterplan itself, which provides a flexible framework for investment and development, and the emergence of a number of key infrastructure projects which include:

- Rail improvements – recent announcements by Network Rail and the GLA confirming the allocation of approximately £80m of investment to upgrade Angel Road station and to increase train frequency through the Stratford, Tottenham and Angel Road will mean that services to Meridian Water will dramatically increase in the short to medium term. This will be a catalyst to unlocking development potential, particularly in the Meridian Angel and Gateway neighbourhoods which will also benefit from a new public transport interchange around the station. Train services could improve as early as 2017. This supports higher density development around the station as an early phase of development as advanced in the Masterplan.
- In May 2013 the Secretary of State for Education approved the London and Community Learning Trust's (LCLT) application for a new primary school in Meridian Water to open in September 2014. The new school will be located close to the existing community of Upper Edmonton in the Meridian Angel Neighbourhood. The Masterplan supports LCLT's aspirations and demonstrates how this would be achieved through the siting of a new school in this area.
- The Lee Valley Heat Network is a new city scale decentralised energy network that will capture low carbon heat from the Edmonton Eco Park and other dedicated Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plants and supply energy to buildings and industry across the Lee Valley for use in space heating and hot water production. The Network is being

delivered in partnership with The Mayor and adjoining boroughs and Phase 1 could deliver heat to Meridian Water from 2015 onwards.

- Rays Road Open Space – work is already underway to transform this derelict site that sits between Montagu Industrial Estate and a residential section of North Edmonton into a new public open space known as Angel Gardens. This £1.6m scheme is funded by both the Council and the GLA through its Pocket Parks Programme.
- Preparation for delivering the Legible London way-finding system in Meridian Water has also begun. The system provides clear, consistent signage for pedestrians within an area and will be implemented in 2 phases to encourage walking and cycling throughout Meridian Water.

## **5. ENABLING EARLY PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 The delivery of the complete vision that is the Meridian Water Masterplan will take several years to achieve and it is generally envisaged that new development will unfold from East to West across the site, as indicated in the Masterplan's phasing strategy, which is a reasonable approach given the existing geography and disposition of undeveloped, underdeveloped and developed land. But this also brings into focus, especially given the quantum and timing of new rail and education infrastructure, the desirability of ensuring that an appropriate type and scale of development comes forward in the Meridian Angel Neighbourhood, which the Masterplan identifies as an early phase of development. To this end the Council has been in discussions with a major land-owner in this area with a view to securing appropriate and timely development. These discussions have resulted in the Council being presented with an opportunity to acquire some land.
- 5.2 The acquisition of this land can, 'in principle', be regarded as a strategic land acquisition that would help to enable the development of key sites within the Masterplan area. Indeed, they are all identified as being within the first three phases of development, and on that basis alone they could all be recommended for purchase, subject, of course, to the appropriate demonstration of best value.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The following options have been considered:

- Declining the possible purchase of the package of sites potentially available to the Council has been considered, but rejected due to the uncertain timescales associated with their owner bringing the sites to market and securing development.

- The purchase of the sites on an individual basis has been considered ‘in-principle’, but this is not an option open to the Council at this time as the opportunity is only available as a package.
- The use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land that comprises the opportunity, either as a package or individually has also been considered, and has not been ruled out if circumstances indicate that this is a reasonable course of action to pursue, but this is not the Council’s first preference given the negotiations that are currently taking place with the land-owner.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 To provide a greater level of certainty over the timescales associated with the development of three early start sites in Meridian Water and their relationship with significant rail and education infrastructure, and to increase developer and stakeholder confidence in the delivery of the Masterplan.

## **8. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **8.1 Financial Implications**

- 8.1.1 These matters are commercially sensitive and are therefore set out in the Part 2 report.

### **8.2 Legal Implications**

- 8.2.1 The general power of competence in s1.1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Cabinet with the power to approve this project. The general power of competence states that “A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do”. Section 2 sets out the boundaries of the general power, requiring local authorities to act in accordance with statutory limitations or restrictions.
- 8.2.2 By virtue of S.120 Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to acquire property by agreement for the purpose of the improvement or development of their area notwithstanding the fact that it may not be required immediately for that purpose. In addition the Council has powers under s.227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to acquire land by agreement for ‘planning purposes’.
- 8.2.3 Where agreement cannot be reached as to the acquisition of properties to facilitate land assembly for the purposes of providing a redevelopment scheme the Council does have the power under various enactments to acquire properties compulsorily. A resolution of Cabinet is required to make a

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and the detail of the resolution sought including the extent of the land to be acquired and the powers to be used would therefore need to be the subject of a further report.

8.2.4 Further advice is set out in the Super Part 2 report.

### 8.3 **Property Implications**

8.3.1 The acquisition of the properties in question would facilitate the delivery and implementation of the Meridian Water Masterplan. However, an appropriate level of due diligence, site investigation work and so forth will need to be undertaken.

8.3.2 The holding strategy for these properties must take into account the liabilities associated with retaining the properties in a vacant state, and an appropriate budget will need to be set aside.

## 9. **KEY RISKS**

9.1 Key risks considered are:

- Taking no action could result in development not coming forward in a timely way, or not in concert with supporting infrastructure that is already in the pipeline, leaving an undesirable disconnect between the provision of new rail and education infrastructure and the provision of new homes, which is one of the Mayors key priorities.
- The package of sites have slightly different development prospects and timescales, so there is a risk that the Council could be servicing the loan obtained to fund this purchase for a longer period than first anticipated, thus incurring additional revenue costs, before they could be disposed of, although these may be relatively modest.
- Given the nature of the land, there is a danger that decontamination and the removal of redundant structures could take longer to achieve than anticipated, although the further application of due diligence could reduce these particular risks.
- There is a risk that development could be affected by flooding given the provisions of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, where some of the land is within a 1:100 year flood risk area. This can be mitigated through the measures set out in the Masterplan and through the implementation of appropriate design solutions.
- Any land acquired would need to be appropriately managed and secured to provide a satisfactory level of amenity, safety and security.

## **10. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 10.1 The acquisition of the land in question would enable the early development of new homes in Meridian Water in conjunction with the delivery of new education and rail infrastructure. Their subsequent development would be guided by the Meridian Water Masterplan which, amongst other things, seeks to achieve fairness for all, sustainable growth and the development of strong communities.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The draft Meridian Water Masterplan was subject to an initial Equalities Impact Assessment/Analysis (EqIA) to ensure that consultation promoted equal opportunities. During the master-planning process, demographic data was collected in relation to residents of Edmonton in order to determine which groups to target for community engagement and to also help assess the equalities issues the Masterplan proposals will need to consider.
- 11.2 These issues were summarised in the final EqIA report that was reported to the Local Plan Cabinet Sub-Committee at its 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013 meeting.
- 11.3 Any further equalities impact issues will be examined at the planning application stage on individual sites.

## **12. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 Delivery of a comprehensive regeneration scheme at Meridian Water is a corporate priority within the Council's Business Plan for 2012-15. Completion of the Masterplan, and the delivery of phased infrastructure improvements including increased rail services, station improvements and new homes will help to meet Outcome 2.10 of the Business Plan; to improve the quality of life of residents through the regeneration of priority areas and to promote growth and sustainability.

## **13. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 A component of the Masterplan concerns the need to improve access to healthy living corridors. Meridian Water adjoins the Lee Valley Regional Park, the rivers and open spaces within which offer significant recreational and environmental benefits as do the series of reservoirs immediately to the south of the area. The Masterplan seeks to maximise this potential for existing and new residents by improving east/west and north/south connections through a network of open spaces. Improved connections will help deliver healthy living into the heart of the new development and reconnect the nearby communities

with the Park. The Masterplan creates opportunities for formal and informal recreation and leisure, urban agriculture and outdoor learning. It draws the community and landscape together combining healthy living into the daily structure and form of Meridian Water. In accordance with the Core Strategy it required the delivery of new health facilities to support the new communities and suggests these should be located within Meridian Central neighbourhood or where benefits from the co-location of services can be realised.

13.2 In relation to the possible purchase of land, it will be necessary, through the process of due diligence, to establish the extent of contaminated land and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure its suitability for projected end uses.

13.3 The Council would also need to ensure that any acquired land was properly managed in order to provide a satisfactory level of amenity, safety and security.

### **Background Papers**

None.