

**GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF MASTERPLANS**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report sets out the Council's requirements for the preparation and submission of Masterplans in accordance with the provisions of the current Development Plan and national guidance.

1.2 Masterplanning is regarded by Argyll and Bute Council as a process which can positively contribute to sustainable development and help raise the standards of design throughout the area. It is also considered that Masterplanning helps the Council assess, at an early stage in the development process, the interrelationships of layout, design, access, existing transport infrastructure and sustainable modes of travel, landscape and ecology, open space provision and integration of a proposed development with existing communities.

1.3 The concept of Masterplans can mean a variety of different things depending upon the circumstances within which they have been prepared. In the context of Argyll and Bute they are used predominantly in two circumstances. The first relates to development proposals on sites which have been identified as Potential Development Areas (PDAs) in the Argyll and Bute Local Plan that require a Masterplan to be produced where planning consent is not being sought for the whole of the PDA. The second is where large scale, multi phased and strategically important developments are proposed, often where the Council takes a lead role and there is a need for coordination to bring forward delivery.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- a) Agree that where proposals for development of Potential Development Areas are submitted that these should be accompanied by a Masterplan which demonstrates how the proposed development will relate to the wider area and any parts of the Potential Development Area which do not form part of the application site, and that the publicity and consultation**

**arrangements for the Masterplan and planning application run concurrently for a minimum 21 day period;**

- b) Agree that where proposals for development are accompanied by a Masterplan the description of the proposal should make reference to the availability of the Masterplan and be advertised accordingly;**
- c) Agree that where a Masterplan for a Potential Development Area is not submitted at the same time as a planning application, then the developer will be required to cover the costs of advertisement and consultation arrangements, and that as a minimum these would be an advertisement in the local newspaper and a minimum 21 day consultation period;**
- d) Agree that where a Masterplan is required for a major phased urban expansion or regeneration project being taken forward by the Council prior to the submission of any planning consent that publicity and consultation will be for a minimum of a 28 day period.**

### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 In the context of Argyll and Bute the use of Masterplan has been mainly associated with areas of large-scale change such as town extensions; regeneration projects associated with town centres; major housing and tourism developments; and places where significant environmental assets require protection. Following adoption of the current Local Plan in 2009 Masterplans have also been required for Potential Development Areas (PDAs) where developers wish to adopt a phased approach to their proposals. The Council considers that Masterplans associated with PDAs can be useful in order to raise design standards, address potential constraints that have been identified in published mini briefs including potential cumulative effects and ensure the best use of land. The Masterplan needs to comply with the development principles as set out in the PDA schedules contained within the Written Statement of the Local Plan that have been subject to Council approval following extensive public consultation.

3.2 The Council considers that Masterplans associated with PDAs should contain the following information:

- (i) an indication of the developer's intended vision for the site and an explanation as to how the form of the development will achieve that vision;**
- (ii) an indication as to how the proposed development will be implemented;**

- (iii) **an indication of the proposed phasing of the development that provides reassurances that none of the site will be sterilised for future development;**
- (iv) **an indication of the location and type of uses to be provided;**
- (v) **an indication of the location and amount of public open space to be provided within the development;**
- (vi) **an indication of how the proposed development will be integrated with existing communities, the natural environment and the topography of the site;**
- (vii) **an indication of pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements to the site, proposed internal road, footpath and cycle infrastructure and linkages with external access networks;**
- (viii) **an indication of the landscaping regime proposed for the site and the measures to be taken to protect and enhance any important existing landscape features contained in the site.**

### **MASTER PLAN FORMAT ASSOCIATED WITH PDAs**

3.2 In broad terms, a Masterplan comprises an illustrative plan and accompanying written text describing how an area will be developed and how the masterplanning process has been taken forward. It is based upon an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development.

### **THE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN**

3.3 The preparation of an illustrative plan is a key element in the Masterplan process as it indicates in visual terms the proposed development that is subject of the Masterplan. It is considered essential that this element of the plan should relate directly to the written text and be easy to interpret, incorporating, for example, a combination of photographs, sketches, computer based images and figure/ground diagrams indicating the form of the particular development proposed.

3.4 In straightforward developments, simple but well presented diagrams, together with a concise and clearly written text is generally considered to be sufficient to convey the basic essentials of a Masterplan.

3.5 The illustrative plan should include the following details and information:

- **the location of the site and the boundaries of the development in relation to surrounding areas of land / adjacent developments etc;**
- **a visual representation of land ownership;**
- **identification of significant site features and constraints including possible mitigation measures;**
- **the distribution of existing and proposed land uses within the site;**
- **an indication of the built form of the proposed development i.e. massing, height, density, orientation, grids/blocks;**

- an indication of how the development has been integrated with adjacent communities;
- an indication of access arrangements for pedestrians, cycles where appropriate, public and private transport within and outwith the Masterplan area; and
- an indication of landscaping and open space provision.

## **WRITTEN TEXT**

3.6 The contents of the written text that accompanies the Masterplan should be concise and focused on providing the following information:

### **(i) Background Information**

- The name of the development;
- Details of the applicant / agent; and
- Details of any Development Brief previously prepared for the area.

### **(ii) Site details**

- Location and site plan;
- Description of the site;
- Planning history of the site; and
- Ownership details

### **(iii) Site and area analysis**

- Context – including a concise vision statement
- Identity – a description of the physical, social and economic elements of the area;
- Appraisal of accessibility to and from the site;

### **(iv) Integration**

- How the development will be integrated with the existing community, natural environment and the existing topography of the site;
- The measures to be taken to protect and enhance any important existing landscape and geological features contained in the site.
- How the development will be physically accessed in terms of the different modes of transportation.

### **(v) Proposed development programme**

- How the development will be phased and implemented.

- 3.7 The Masterplan in order to become a material consideration is required to be subject of public consultation and in the context of a PDA requires to be submitted with any planning application proposed for part of the site and suitably advertised in a locally circulating newspaper. Members of the public will thereafter have a minimum period of 21 days to comment on the content of the Masterplan and any comments received will be taken into account by the Council as planning authority. Developers are also strongly encouraged to consult with the Council and local communities prior to the submission of the Masterplan as part of the planning process. Details of this public engagement and how this has influenced the content of the Masterplan can also be included within the written text of the Masterplan.
- 3.8 Where a PDA Masterplan is submitted late as part of a planning process the applicant will be required to advertise the Masterplan at their cost, in a locally circulated newspaper, and allow a minimum period of 21 days for the public to make comments. The applicant is further advised that a late submission will also be required to be copied to the relevant Community Council and Local Members for their consideration. Developers are however strongly advised to submit their Masterplan at the same time as their planning application for partial development of a PDA identified in the Local Plan.

### **EVALUATION OF THE MASTER PLAN**

- 3.9 All Masterplans submitted to the Council in association with PDAs will be subject to evaluation by the Council and if necessary, forwarded to all relevant consultees including local Community Councils and where considered appropriate Architecture and Design Scotland. The evaluation process undertaken by the Council will include an analysis of the Masterplan submission in terms of the contents of the written text and illustrative plan as detailed above. It should also be noted that all planning applications required to be accompanied by a Masterplan will be considered by the PPSL committee. Individual neighbour notification will however be restricted to properties within 20 metres of the site edged red as part of any planning application submitted.
- 3.10 Following approval by the PPSL the Masterplan associated with a PDA will be regarded as a material consideration that will provide a context for deciding any future planning application within the PDA. It should be noted that all Masterplans are indicative and not prescriptive in nature.

### **MASTERPLAN FORMAT ASSOCIATED WITH STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT SITES**

- 3.11 Where a site is considered to be of strategic importance to Argyll and Bute and/or associated with a major phased, urban expansion or regeneration project, or being taken forward by the Council Masterplans will be required to

have a greater level of detail provided and subsequent public consultation. This will include the use of focus groups where appropriate to help form the content of the Masterplan and the requirement to hold at least one public meeting to allow members of the public to engage in the process. A minimum of 28 days public consultation will be required from the approval of the draft Masterplan by the Council's Executive and the publication of an appropriate advert in a locally circulating newspaper and the Council's web site. Following final approval by the Council's Executive the Masterplan will then be considered as non statutory planning guidance.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 Masterplans are intended to provide the necessary vision and strategic direction for the future growth and development of a clearly identified area. In the context of Argyll and Bute Masterplans are primarily required for Potential Development Areas where a submitted planning application does not cover the entirety of the site and strategically important, multi phased sites, or regeneration sites that are often being taken forward by the Council prior to the submission of any planning consent. This report outlines and seeks approval of the content required for acceptable Masterplans including the level of public consultation considered necessary for both types of Masterplan and approval process.

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

PERSONNEL	None
FINANCIAL	None rising directly from the report
EQUALITY	None
LEGAL	None

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