

AM 573-20

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2020

VISION FOR THE WATERSIDE

Report by: Steve Avery, Executive Director

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that a significant amount of new development is planned for the Waterside, as set out in New Forest District Council's Local Plan and to a lesser extent, our own Local Plan. These include allocated housing and employment sites such as Fawley Waterside and the expectation of a future application for the expansion of the Port of Southampton on land at Dibden Bay.
- 1.2 Given the significance of the Waterside and the level of development anticipated an informal public-private Steering Group and a public sector officer group have been formed between New Forest District Council (NFDC), the National Park Authority (NPA), Hampshire County Council (HCC), the Solent LEP and the major landowners: ABP, ExxonMobil, Solent Gateway, Barker Mill Estates and Fawley Waterside.
- 1.3 Whilst the District Council's Local Plan sets out the framework for much of the new development along the Waterside it has been agreed between officers from HCC, NFDC and the NPA that there is a need for a higher level document that sets out the shared vision and opportunity across the whole of the Waterside area. A draft 'vision' document has therefore been prepared by HCC, NFDC and NPA officers and Members of each authority are now being asked to endorse the draft vision document.
- 1.4 The draft document was considered by the Planning Committee on 15 September 2020 whereupon Members agreed to endorse the document for recommendation to the full Authority meeting, subject to an amendment stressing the importance of fibre broadband in addition to existing references to 5G in the area. Some Planning Committee Members also considered that there should be a greater emphasis on other Waterside settlements other than Totton and considered the importance of incentivising graduates and others who had attained particular skills to remain in the area.

2 The 'Vision for the Waterside' document

- 2.1 The draft document 'A Vision for the Waterside' is attached as Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The NPA's input has been focused on new environmental infrastructure provision and this is reflected in pages 10 – 12 of the attached document. Joint work with HCC and NFDC colleagues has included significant contributions from our Landscape Officer. The document also sets out a strategic approach to transport that reflects many of the wider transportation issues discussed in connection with the recent consideration of the planning applications for Fawley Waterside.

- 2.2 It is intended that the document should be very high level, setting out a collective assessment of the cumulative impact of the development aspirations for the area and an understanding of the total infrastructure needed to support and enable that development, together with the economic, social and environmental outcomes that need to be addressed as part of the shared vision.
- 2.3 The document sets out in simple 'bullet' form the issues that need to be addressed and the outcomes that need to be achieved across the area. More detailed workstreams and projects will be progressed around these specific issues and desired outcomes. Importantly it is envisaged that this document, amongst other things, will be used to support bids - most notably the bid currently being prepared by HCC for funding for improvements to the A326. It is considered critical to the success of this bid that there is a higher level document that demonstrates that all three authorities have a shared vision for the area.
- 2.4 Councillors at both NFDC and HCC have now endorsed the draft document at their respective Cabinet meetings on 2 and 29 September 2020. NFDC's endorsement was subject to an amendment to include graduate retention and additional investment in arts, culture and heritage (in the Social and Community Outcomes section). HCC's approval was subject to an amendment emphasising the critical importance of digital connectivity for the area.
- 2.5 Subject to the Authority's endorsement today, the next steps would be to update the document with the various amendments referred to above and to then get the document professionally designed and published, using HCC's in-house design team.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- a) **That the Authority endorses the Vision for the Waterside document attached as Appendix 1 subject to an amendment stressing the importance of fibre broadband in addition to existing references to 5G in the area; and**
- b) **Authority be delegated to the Executive Director to make and agree minor amendments to the document in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.**

Contact: Steve Avery

Equality Impact Assessment:

There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.