

Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note:

Preparing Concept Plans and Masterplans

The purpose of this note is to underline the importance of policy 12 (Design) and related text of the Cornwall Local Plan 2010 – 2030 Strategic Policies and section 2.20 (Design Quality) of the prevailing Site Allocations DPD; and to ensure developers and promoters are clear as to the expectations of the Local Planning Authority with regard to Concept Plans and Masterplans.

The following notes provide additional guidance with regard to the requirement within most of the site allocations policies of the Cornwall Site Allocations DPD, to prepare a 'Concept Plan' or 'Masterplan' for an allocation, prior to the submission of planning applications for the whole, or part, of the site.

Firstly, the terms 'Concept Plan' and 'Masterplan' were deliberately used within the Allocations DPD policies to recognise that there are different levels of detail that the Council would expect from an applicant, depending upon the proportion of the land within their control; with a 'Concept Plan' requiring fewer background assessments to inform its development and less detailed resolution, compared to a Masterplan. It is likely that, when preparing a Masterplan, a design and development team would, in any case, first wish to create and present a Concept Plan as part of their engagement and consultation process with the Council and other local stakeholders.

The proportion of an allocated site that is within the control of an applicant will determine whether they should be preparing a Concept Plan or full Masterplan in support of an application:

- If an applicant has control of land that forms approximately two-thirds or more of the allocation, it would be anticipated that a Masterplan is prepared for the entire site allocation;
- If an applicant has control of less than two-thirds of the site allocation, a Concept Plan would be expected for the entire allocation, with additional detail provided for the land within their control.

A successful Concept Plan or Masterplan will set out how to create and sustain an excellent place to live, work and play, and will determine the overall quality of the place and its inherent sustainability as a development proposition.

Regardless of whether you are preparing a Masterplan or Concept Plan, it would need to demonstrate a good level of understanding of the site and its wider surroundings; provide a holistic vision for the development of the site; properly plan for key infrastructure (including green infrastructure) in a coordinated way across ownerships; ensures that surface water drainage and flood risk has been considered and mitigated; and it would have been through a stakeholder engagement process.

Table 1	Concept Plans	Masterplans ¹
Engagement	Provide evidence of engagement throughout the development of the Concept Plan / Masterplan with Divisional member(s); Town/Parish Council; relevant Cornwall Council officers; and local residents	
Landowners	Provide evidence that all landowners within the plan area have been engaged (or there has been reasonable endeavours to engage) in the development of the plan and there is evidence of support from the relevant landowner(s) in relation to the location of any strategic infrastructure required within the site	Provide evidence that all landowners within the masterplan area are engaged in the development of the plan and all (or the vast majority) support the final masterplan, including all landowners that are required to deliver any strategic infrastructure and/ or be parties to any joint development agreement
Connectivity	The Concept Plan / Masterplan should consider connectivity beyond the boundary of the site; recognising the community/neighbourhood that the site is creating or connecting into. The Plan should demonstrate how the site will connect into adjoining built areas, adjoining site allocations and wider green infrastructure; prioritising sustainable modes of transport and therefore focusing not only on vehicular routes, but also pedestrian / cycle links and public transport routes (<i>Existing public rights of way and promoted walking & cycling routes are available on the Councils mapping resource on its website</i>)	

¹ The information contained within the Masterplan section is not supposed to represent an exhaustive list of what makes a good masterplan, instead it just highlights some of the core elements that we would expect to see. Additional content and associated background assessments will depend upon the site in question.

<p>Layout</p>	<p>The Concept Plan should set out the core components and proposed organisation of the whole site, by establishing the urban structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary and secondary vehicular routes, giving regard to providing feasible block depths - Key walking and cycling routes within the site that link to external connections - The pattern of retained and new ecological assets including trees and hedges and other habitat that will provide and enhance overall biodiversity - Identifying the key areas and types of green infrastructure, including public open space, green linkages and the general areas proposed for strategic drainage and attenuation - For mixed use sites, set out the location of the different land-uses. - Identify the location of local retail centres, schools, civic buildings or any other community hub(s) 	<p>The Masterplan should set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary, secondary and tertiary vehicular routes as a logical and clear 'street hierarchy', ensuring appropriate block depths are created for the different uses that they serve - Key walking and cycling routes that link to external connections - The pattern of retained and new ecological assets including trees and hedges and other habitat that will provide and enhance overall biodiversity (incl. how a 10% biodiversity net gain will be provided) - Identifying the key areas and types of green infrastructure, including public open space, green linkages and areas set aside for drainage and attenuation. - Disposition of the different land-uses - Location of any local retail centres, schools, civic buildings or any other community hub(s) - How the density of residential development might differ across the site and in relation to public transport stops/corridors - Location of key frontages and landmark or focal buildings
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<p>Strategic Infrastructure (defined as Green Infrastructure & other infrastructure set out within the site allocation policy)</p>	<p>It is expected that the Concept Plan / Masterplan demonstrates a holistic vision for the delivery of strategic infrastructure. The Plan should set out the location of this strategic infrastructure, as well as its deliverability within an appropriate timescale, if it is located, in part/full, on third party land.</p> <p>Green infrastructure should form a coherent multi-functional network throughout and between sites, ensuring a 10% biodiversity net gain is delivered.</p> <p>A strategy for surface water drainage is a vital consideration and could in certain circumstances need to allow for 'exceedance events' or natural run off occurring from third party land adjacent to the site. Concept Plans should provide some of the core principles/locations for the strategic drainage infrastructure; whereas Masterplans should provide a detailed strategy, backed up by percolation rates etc.</p>	
<p>Landscape Setting & Site Topography</p>	<p>The Concept Plan should be developed with regard to visually sensitive areas within the site, when considered from the wider area</p> <p>It would be expected that the design and layout of the concept plan has regard to the topography of the site (Contour maps can be made available by Cornwall Council)</p> <p>The Concept Plan needs to identify areas of the site where gradients may preclude normal development practice or make it more challenging and these need to be clearly included amongst the site constraints that may limit the development yield</p>	<p>Undertake an LVIA to inform the form and layout within the site</p> <p>When the topography within a site could influence the layout of the masterplan, it would be expected that a full topographical survey is undertaken</p> <p>A drawing establishing the strategy for 'cut and fill' and demonstrating how this has been minimised should be prepared</p>

Other technical assessments	Utilise the Council's online mapping to help understand the constraints and opportunities within and near to the site, which can inform the development of the concept plan. This can include the location of historic assets within or close to the site; landscape and environmental designations; mining features; Tree Preservation Orders; Areas of Flood Risk, etc.	The masterplan should be developed with the support of the technical studies that would normally be expected of a detailed masterplan or outline planning application (e.g. Heritage/Archaeological Assessment; Ecological Assessment (incl. completion of the Defra net gain metric); Drainage / Percolation Assessments; Transport Assessment; etc). The studies to be undertaken should be informed through early engagement with the Local Planning Authority
Character	Identification of some broad design strategies that respond to local conditions and distinctiveness would be encouraged and these need to be clearly set out in the Design and Access Statement.	<p>The masterplan should evidence and commit to design parameters that are consistent with local design guidance, including the Cornwall Design Guide and relevant policies, including character statements in Neighbourhood Plans and the Cornwall Distinctiveness Strategy.</p> <p>Analysis of local or, other appropriate and distinct forms of architecture and urban design (blocks, streets and spaces) should be discussed. Sample 'urban tissue' studies (to include car parking) should demonstrate how these might be deployed to achieve the densities that are aimed for in the Masterplan</p>

<p>Key Information to be provided</p>	<p>The Concept Plan document should capture the information required in the table above. The document should set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the vision for the site; • diagrammatic plans, with commentary, for each of the relevant themes discussed above; which leads to • the overall illustrative concept plan for the site. <p>Notes / illustrations / best practice examples to communicate the design/character that is being sought, will be welcomed. Finally, the document should also set out the engagement activity undertaken.</p> <p>The diagrammatic drawings do not need to be as precise as conventional Parameter Plans, but the presentation needs to be sufficiently robust in order provide the Local Planning Authority with confidence that a successful and coherent site-wide solution is achievable.</p> <p>The proposals set out within the document should be used as the basis of any future detailed masterplanning and Design & Access Statements</p>	<p>The Masterplan document should incorporate the following Parameter Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use • Areas of Potential Built Development • Net Residential Densities • Access and Movement within and beyond the site • Building Height • Green Infrastructure provision, including habitat retention and gain, landscape and Open Space Structure • Legibility Plan (An 'urban design framework' showing key structuring elements such as Edges, Quarters, Nodes, Landmarks, Key Views In/Out) <p>The document should be structured to lead the reader through a logical development of the vision and design solution, which explains the rationale for the overarching Illustrative Layout plan for the site</p> <p>The masterplan should also capture the other requirements set out in the table above, including the engagement activity.</p> <p>Notes and Illustrations discussing Character should be set out within the Masterplan document, but also contained within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the application. Furthermore, the parking strategy for each parcel within the layout will be a major determinant of its Character and this should be clearly set out in the document</p>
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Early engagement with the Local Planning Authority is strongly encouraged, so that the Council is able to support the development of a high quality Concept Plan / Masterplan. This will also enable early discussion on whether there are any other important aspects that the Concept Plan / Masterplan should cover, beyond what is discussed in this note, to reflect any site / development specific aspects to the proposed scheme. The Council can also support the engagement activity through its PACE (Pre-application Community Engagement) process – details are available on the Council's website. Furthermore, use of the Cornwall Design Review Panel is also encouraged, to support the development of the masterplan.

Planning applications for an allocated site, which has the requirement for a Masterplan / Concept Plan, will only be welcomed when the Concept Plan or Masterplan is complete and has the support of the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, it would be expected that there is a clear consistency of approach that runs from the Concept Plan / Masterplan through to the planning application and its Design and Access statement.