

## **The Bush Framework Masterplan**

### **Report by John Blair, Director Corporate Resources**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement by Cabinet of the finalised Bush Framework Masterplan. A copy of the Masterplan has been placed in the Members' Library.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1** Midlothian Council, Scottish Enterprise (SE) and the University of Edinburgh (UoE) commissioned Land Use Consultants and a supporting consultant team to prepare a strategic framework Masterplan for the various clusters of specialist bioscience research and business at the following locations:

- Bush Estate (Edinburgh Technopole);
- Easter Bush ;
- Pentlands Science Park;
- The Biocampus ; and
- Roslin Biocentre.

For the purposes of the study, the area has collectively been defined as 'The Bush'.

- 2.2** The study presented an opportunity to consider the co-ordinated further development of the Bush framed against the ongoing challenging economic climate in combination with a strategic review of recent planned developments.
- 2.3** The document sets out, in detail, the findings of the study and concludes with a series of strategic recommendations and a Masterplan to guide future development. The Action Plan element of the document, which is, in essence, the key part of the overall study, is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Key elements of the Action Plan comprise:
- Liaison between key stakeholders to establish a Bush governance structure;
  - Use the Masterplan as a basis for further consultation with key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland and utility service providers; and
  - Develop strategies for environmental improvements, road and junction design, branding, signage and a path network.

- 2.4** The Masterplan is not a constricting ‘blueprint’ but a structured approach to the further development of the Bush, with flexibility to capitalise on new and emerging opportunities.

### **3 Report Implications**

#### **3.1 Resource**

The Action Plan element of the Masterplan will be driven forward by senior officers from the Council, SE and UoE. It is envisaged that key Edinburgh Science Triangle (EST) stakeholders will also be involved.

The cost of the study, which amounted to £40,000 was met by the Council (£20,000), UoE (£10,000) and SE (£10,000). Driving forward the Action Plan will involve the need to lever in funding from a wide range of sources including the SG, key partners identified in this report and potential European funding sources.

#### **3.2 Risk**

Failure to participate in driving forward the Action Plan contained in the document would potentially put the Council out of step with the priorities and actions of key partners such as SE and the UoE. This would lead to a risk of the Council and science sector partners potentially missing out on project investment opportunities.

As can be seen from the attached appendix, there are potentially a wide range of actions included in the Action Plan. There is a risk of some degree of delivery failure if these areas are not adequately resourced. This will require to be the subject of further discussion between partners.

#### **3.3 Policy**

##### **Strategy**

Driving forward sustainable economic development in Midlothian is a key priority for the Council and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) partners. The Masterplan closely links to a wide range of existing strategic documents including:

- SG Economic Strategy and associated SG strategies;
- The emerging Midlothian Economic Recovery Plan (MERP);
- SE Business Plan;
- Midlothian Economic Development Framework (MEDF) and associated economic sector action plans;
- Midlothian Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement;
- Strategic and emerging Local Development Plans for the area; and
- UoE Strategic and Estates Plans.

## **Consultation**

Throughout the preparation of the Masterplan there has been detailed consultation, with a range of key stakeholders, including SE, UoE and EST.

## **Equalities**

A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken, and is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

## **Sustainability**

There are no sustainability issues at this stage although appropriate Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) clearance will be required. Steps have been instigated to obtain this clearance.

## **IT Issues**

There are no IT issues associated with the proposals outlined in this report.

## **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1** The continuing development of the Bush is central to supporting the emerging Midlothian Economic Recovery Plan and key economic sectors such as Life Sciences and Animal Biosciences. This will also fit closely with the priorities highlighted in the Scottish Government Economic Strategy and the aims/objectives of Scottish Enterprise and the University of Edinburgh.
- 4.2** It is estimated that there are around 1,700 employees based at the Bush. It should be noted not all of these jobs are science related. Some relate to service category occupations such as security and catering.
- 4.3** The challenge for the Council and partners will be to continue to drive forward the development of the Bush in a sustainable manner in the face of ongoing extremely challenging economic conditions. However, the potential benefits are enormous and cover a wide spectrum from increased economic spend in the local area to enhanced employment opportunities for Midlothian residents.
- 4.4** In terms of the next steps, the Masterplan will provide:
  - An overarching framework Masterplan for the various sites and organisations within the Bush;
  - A supporting strategy document for funding opportunities and promoting investment;
  - A strategic reference document for determining relevant planning applications; and
  - A strategic bridging document to link to the emerging Economic Recovery Plan and relevant economic sector action plans.

Liaison between senior officers from key partner organisations to drive forward the strategic objectives contained in the Bush Masterplan is currently commencing.

## **5. Recommendations**

### **5.1 Cabinet is recommended to:**

- i. subject to formal completion of strategic environmental assessment, endorse the content of The Bush Framework Masterplan which has been prepared jointly by the Council, Scottish Enterprise, and the University of Edinburgh;
- ii. agree that the Council, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and the University of Edinburgh, drives forward the action plan in consultation with other relevant stakeholders;
- iii. consider the equalities impact assessment attached to this report;
- iv. consider arrangements for a formal launch of the Masterplan; and
- v. agree to receive further progress reports.

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**Background Papers:**      Bush Framework Masterplan