

Masterplans and Development Briefs in Dartmoor National Park



Guidance Note

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This guidance note has been prepared to provide stakeholders and developers with an outline of the Authority's expectations in respect of the process of preparing and approving Masterplans and Development Briefs for sites within Dartmoor National Park.
- 1.2. The Authority has identified in its Development Plan (the DMD) a number of site allocation proposals within the larger settlements in the National Park. These sites are strategic allocations aimed at meeting community needs for affordable housing or other infrastructure, or as specific redevelopment opportunities.
- 1.3. Some larger allocations, including CHG2 (mixed use development at Bretteville Close, Chagford), ASH2 (redevelopment at Chuley Road, Ashburton) and BCK3 (redevelopment at Devonia Products Mill, Buckfastleigh) refer specifically to the need for any planning application to accord with a Masterplan for the entire site prepared in association with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the Authority.
- 1.4. In addition to these specific requirements Policy DMD45 states:

"Applications on specific sites allocated in the Development Plan should be supported by a development brief or masterplan for the entire allocated site, prepared in association with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the Authority; this may also apply to other unallocated sites which may come forward. The development brief or masterplan should demonstrate how the proposal will help sustain the vibrancy of the community and contribute towards meeting the settlement vision over the plan period."

2. What are the aims of a Masterplan or Development Brief?

- 2.1. A Masterplan or Development Brief is a "blueprint" for the development of a site; both approaches require those with an interest in the site to work together, reaching an agreement as to what form the scheme should take. A Masterplan is a comprehensive exercise exploring the site and local issues in detail whereas a development brief is less detailed and sets out some general guidance, for example around what needs to be included on the site and how the site can be accessed. Both exercises should result in a scheme prepared jointly by stakeholders which will form a template for subsequent planning applications at the site.

2.2. The processes should explore the opportunities and potential difficulties of the site and use these to inform what the development will look like. The stakeholders should therefore be involved in:

- highlighting local issues including what is special about the area;
- identifying local desires and ambitions for the site and the wider community;
- considering the challenges in delivering a scheme on the site;
- balancing the ambitions of the scheme to ensure it is reasonable and viable;
- ensuring that the development is of a high quality and locally distinctive.

2.3. A Masterplan or Development Brief should consider how the development fits with the surrounding environment, and where necessary be informed by detailed consideration of, for example, landscape and visual impact assessment, ecological appraisal, historic environment appraisal and design or character appraisal. It should assess in detail and respond to specific site issues such as flood risk, contaminated or unstable land, heritage assets and protected species.

2.4. The final scheme should be consistent with the development plan, and where applicable address the specific requirements of the allocation proposal. It should address where appropriate:

- Sustainable development, including energy efficiency and on site renewable energy
- The provision of affordable or other housing to meet local needs
- Development or retention of employment space
- Supporting or improving community services and facilities
- The need for open, sport or recreation space, and green infrastructure
- Connectivity by foot, bicycle, public transport and other means
- On site and community infrastructure

2.5. The final scheme should be deliverable and respond to the identified needs of the community. It is therefore expected that a Masterplan or Development Brief will address matters of phasing (including linkage with investment in local infrastructure) and viability. Affordable housing requirements should be evidence based and appropriately structured and phased to meet local needs.

3. Who should be involved in preparing a Masterplan or Development Brief?

3.1. A wide range of people and organisations (or 'stakeholders') with an interest in the site should be involved, including:

- The local community (individuals and community groups)
- The National Park Authority
- The District and County Councils
- Other specialist organisations (e.g. the Environment Agency)
- The landowners and developers
- The Parish Council
- Other interest groups

3.2. Every effort should be made to engage a wide range of interested parties in the exercise, including hard to reach groups. Publicity and material should be appropriate

for the broad range of stakeholders, with 'plain English' summaries of technical document where appropriate. The process undertaken should be appropriate for the scale of the scheme but would normally involve surveys, workshops, public meetings and reasonable publicity in the local area. The Masterplan or Development Brief should be published for public consultation for a period of not less than 4 weeks.

3.3. The Authority will not prescribe how a Masterplan or Development Brief should be prepared, however they may typically follow the process set out below:

Stage 1 - Study area appraisal including information gathering, site assessment, liaison with stakeholders, leading to a short scoping document and potentially the formation of a steering group;

Stage 2 - Definition of key issues and options. Planning and preparing for stakeholder workshops;

Stage 3 - Stakeholder engagement workshops followed by preparation of draft Masterplan or Development Brief;

Stage 4 - Stakeholder consultation on draft proposals;

Stage 5 - Preparation of final Masterplan or Development Brief proposals and submission to the National Park Authority for approval.

4. What is the status of a Masterplan or Development Brief?

4.1. The final scheme, as amended following public consultation, should be submitted to the National Park Authority together with a summary of the process undertaken to prepare the scheme, and a summary of the public consultation exercise.

4.2. The Masterplan or Development Brief will be considered by the Authority prior to any planning permission being granted. Where a Masterplan or Development Brief is required but has not been undertaken, a planning application may be considered not to be consistent with Development Plan policy. In assessing a Masterplan or Development Brief the Authority will consider:

- The process undertaken in preparing the masterplan or development brief, including:
 - the range of stakeholders engaged in the process ;
 - whether that engagement and consultation can be seen to have influenced the final scheme.
- The content of the masterplan or development brief, including:
 - its consistency with the development plan and in particular the requirements of any specific site allocation;
 - how the proposal will help sustain the vibrancy of the community and contribute towards meeting the settlement vision over the plan period;
 - the deliverability of the scheme.

4.3. On the basis of the above the Authority will determine either to approve the submitted scheme, or to not approve the scheme. If the Authority determines not to approve it will state clearly the reasons for this decision, and the expectations of any further evidence, stakeholder engagement or consultation which may be required.

- 4.4. Approved Masterplans and Development Briefs will be a material consideration in determining any planning application for the site. Any planning application which is subsequently submitted for the site should be consistent with the approved masterplan or development brief. It is important to understand that a Masterplan or Development Brief is not itself a grant of planning permission, and its approval does not constitute the National Park Authority granting planning permission for development at the site.
- 4.5. Where a Masterplan or Development Brief previously approved by the Authority is considered to be out of date the Authority may require that it is updated, or a new scheme prepared prior to the determination of any application at the site.

5. Contacting the National Park Authority

5.1. Masterplans and Development Briefs may well be undertaken by developers, or organisations acting on their or the Authority's behalf, which have particular expertise in this type of work. They will normally involve a number of specialist officers at the National Park Authority. Principal contact regarding Masterplans and Development Briefs will be with Dan Janota or David Lillington in the Forward Planning and Community service:

- **Email - forwardplanning@dartmoor.gov.uk**
- **Telephone – 01626 832093**
- **Write to – Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Bovey Tracey, NEWTON ABBOT, Devon TQ13 9JQ**

6. Further information

- 6.1. Further information on the development plan is available on the Authority's web site at www.dartmoor.gov.uk/planning. Other useful information can be found through the following organisations:
- Design Council CABE - www.designcouncil.org.uk/
 - The Planning Portal - www.planningportal.gov.uk/