

<b>Report of:</b>	Richard Horniman - Director of Regeneration Councillor Ashley Waters - Executive Member for Regeneration
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive - 11 May 2021
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<b>Subject:</b>	Adoption of Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan
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**Summary**

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
<p>That Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. adopts the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan, to enable the Council to control development proposals brought forward by private sector landowners and developers in the area; and</li> <li>2. delegates authority to the Director for Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any subsequent minor amendments to the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan.</li> </ol>

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Key decision:</b>	<b>Confidential:</b>	<b>Is the report urgent?</b>
Decision	Yes	No	No

<b>Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan</b>		
<b>People</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Business</b>
The Masterplan aims to enhance and extend existing habitats whilst creating a wide range of new habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife, in order to deliver a net gain in biodiversity, climate change resilience and ecosystem services to the wider environment. One Planet Living Principles are fully designed into the Stainsby Masterplan and	The Masterplan aims to provide high-quality new homes whilst increasing and enhancing green spaces by proposing a mixed and balanced community set within an outstanding and engaging landscape, which includes the creation of a new Green Flag country park.	<p>The proposed new Country Park at Stainsby will be the 'jewel in the crown' of the new development and accessible to new and existing residents alike, creating positive perceptions of our town on a national basis.</p> <p>The scheme will help the Council underpin its Medium</p>

these identified opportunities for each of the One Planet Living principles, helping the town to become absolute leader on environmental issues.		Term Financial Plan by the generation of Council Tax income.
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<b>Ward(s) affected</b>
This report affects Ayresome, Kader and Trimdon Wards. The Ward Members have been consulted on the Masterplan and the outcomes of the consultation.

### **What is the purpose of this report?**

1. In preparing the Masterplan, the Council is not seeking to develop the Stainsby site. Nor is it seeking to introduce a link road. The aim of the Council is to ensure the best possible development should a private sector scheme come forward.
2. The report seeks to adopt the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan, and delegate authority to the Director for Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any subsequent minor amendments to the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan.

### **Why does this report require a Member decision?**

3. Whilst not part of the Council’s Policy Framework, the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan establishes guidance concerning how the Council would like to see the allocated housing site at Stainsby (known as ‘Brookfield’ in the adopted Local Plan) developed and achieve an appropriate quality of development. The Masterplan will become a material planning consideration in the determination of future planning applications. Such decisions fall within the remit of the Executive.

### **Report Background**

4. The Executive approved the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan for the purpose of public consultation in December 2020. As detailed in that report, the Masterplan is a culmination of a significant amount of background work and numerous public consultation events following the adoption of the site as a housing allocation in the Local Plan 2014.
5. Following its approval, the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan was initially subject to public consultation between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 1st March 2021. However, due to a minor, short-term technical issue with the externally-hosted consultation portal, the closing date for the consultation was extended to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 in order to ensure that nobody was disadvantaged as a consequence of this.
6. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, the entire consultation was undertaken remotely, using the approaches set out below:
  - Emails and letters were sent to statutory consultees, and other consultees included within the Council’s planning consultation database (1,501 in total);

- Letters were sent to addresses living within the site or in close proximity to the site, as would be the case for planning applications (731 in total);
- Site notices were placed in prominent locations within and adjacent to the site;
- A press release raised awareness of the consultation;
- The Council's social media channels were utilised to raise awareness of the consultation. A total of 57,131 people engaged with campaign organically via the Council's Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter pages. In addition, a paid sponsored campaign was also conducted to reach people living in Middlesbrough specifically, and reached a total of 62,283 accounts via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram;
- The Masterplan, and various background and informative documentation, was placed on the Council's website and consultation portal, with hard copies being made available upon request. A total of 3,506 website visits were recorded; and
- Planning officers have been available to discuss the briefs via telephone and email throughout the consultation period.

### **What is a Masterplan?**

7. Masterplans are valuable tools in the planning and development process. The Council uses them to aim for the best possible design for development sites that are already identified in the Local Plan by expanding on established policy requirements. They set out detailed design guidance that the Council expects to achieve and are used as a basis for negotiating with developers to achieve high quality schemes. Masterplans also tie in with a national planning push for developments to meet local standards of beauty, quality and design.
8. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan is ambitious, requiring future developments on the site to incorporate a top quality country park, a large proportion of green space and community facilities, alongside new housing. It aims to try and safeguard against a poor quality development that is not reflective of local need. Poor quality and ill-thought-out developments are a real risk if there is no masterplan in place. A recent example of a masterplan working to positive effect is in Nunthorpe, where a planning application did not meet its expectations and planning permission to build was refused on design grounds. A subsequent appeal to the planning inspector was also dismissed due to design considerations.
9. It is important to recognise the limitations of what masterplans can achieve. Critically, they cannot rewrite or delete Local Plan policies. Local Plans are prepared using an extensive evidence base and subject to independent examination before being adopted by the Council. Masterplans can only expand on how the Council wishes to see existing policies delivered on Stainsby if, and when, private landowners or developers decide to bring the site forward for development.
10. Masterplans are also unable to dictate what will be submitted in planning applications, and do not give certainty to a specific development going ahead. Whilst masterplans will be taken into consideration, the Local Plan policy remains the primary consideration and applications that are aligned to the policy will normally be approved.
11. There are certain aspects of the development process that masterplans cannot control, such as:

- The decision of landowners to sell private land;
  - Private developers purchasing land;
  - Private developers making a planning application;
  - Recommendations and requirements made by statutory consultees, such as Highways England; and
  - Planning permission being granted by the planning committee.
12. Ultimately, the decision to bring Stainsby forward for development, and the delivery of the link road, will be one taken by private landowners. The Masterplan identifies the location of a road should it be required. Any future planning application would consider the impact of traffic and the necessity of a road. The Masterplan provides the best opportunity to ensure that the Council gets the quality of development it seeks if the site does come forward.

### **Summary of Consultation**

13. Responses were received from 265 individuals and organisations. The key issues raised during the consultation, and the Council's response to these, are set out below. Whilst a significant number of the comments received were objecting to all or part of the Masterplan, and principally against the inclusion of a link road (by far the biggest issue), a large number also had positive comments to make on how to improve the Masterplan. These have been taken on board as appropriate and summarised below. It should also be noted that there was also a sizeable portion of people commenting who were in support of the road and the proposals in the Masterplan.
14. It should be noted that a significant number of responses did not specifically relate to the Masterplan, but other Council documents such as the Local Plan and its background evidence. It is not appropriate to address these issues through this report. Instead these matters will be picked up through the preparation of the new Local Plan.
15. Similarly, a number of responses highlighted issues that will need to be taken into account through separate processes at a later date, such as through future planning applications and the Country Park Management Plan. As such, this report will not specifically address these issues, but they will be considered as part of the preparation of the Management Plan.
16. Full details of the consultation responses are set out in the Report of Consultation (Appendix 1).

### **Link Road**

17. The issue that generated the highest number of responses and dominated the consultation exercise was the inclusion of the link road within the Masterplan. Whilst some people were supportive of both the principle of having a link road and the preferred route, others submitted objections. Many of the objectors simply did not agree that a road linking through to the Mandale junction was necessary or desirable, with the impact on Mandale Meadow being cited as the main concern. Many of these objectors suggested that a loop road, with the road coming back out on to Low lane, was preferable.

18. Those who indicated their support for the link road recognised that the alternative options had already been considered and that it would be necessary to support the housing development. It was also recognised that the link road was part of the wider package of infrastructure that would benefit the wider area.

### ***Key Issues Raised***

- No Road/No Road through Mandale Meadow;
- Alternative Road - A19 Overpass;
- Alternative Road - A19 Slip Road;
- Alternative Road - Loop Road;
- Loop road would put too much pressure on Low Lane/Acklam Road;
- Full business case should be prepared for each option;
- Issues with Speed Limit and Road Safety;
- Scheme will Cause more Traffic & Congestion;
- Supportive of the link road;
- Improvements need to Mandale/A1130 roundabout;
- Road is too wide;
- Issues with existing Jack Simon Way; and
- Impact of road on Local Wildlife Site.

### ***Response to the issues raised***

19. The link road is part of the adopted Local Plan policy for the site. Various studies have concluded that the provision of a link road connecting the A1130 to the B1380 is essential not only to serve the new housing development at Stainsby, but also to provide additional capacity to the local road network to support the wider housing growth programme set out in the Local Plan. A number of those that support the road do so on the basis of the wider benefits that it will deliver for the surrounding areas.
20. Highways England were consulted on the Masterplan. In their response they have made no commitment to the provision of the link road, only recognising that further information is required to fully assess its impacts upon their network. Highways England have, however, recognised that a key stress point on their network is the A19/A174 junction and, as such, they will resist proposals which add to that stress, and are seeking mitigation measures that will help alleviate these issues.
21. Differing alignment options, as have been suggested, have been assessed independently by external Transport Consultants. This assessment utilised the Department for Transport's Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) and using a scoring methodology established that a through route from Low Lane to Mandale Road was the most appropriate solution. The Masterplan follows this recommendation and sets out the Council's preferred alignment for the link road, running along the western part of Mandale Meadow.
22. The most 'popular' alternative route option was a loop road that provides a connection to the B1380 only. This option has already been assessed and discounted as it will not provide sufficient capacity for the planned housing development and it would exacerbate the congestion problems at the A19/A174 junction. Some objections were received highlighting the pressure this option would place on Low Lane and Acklam Road.

23. Furthermore without a through road the development would become a cul-de-sac which is not generally conducive to running viable bus services. The lack of high quality public transport would fundamentally undermine the sustainable aspirations of the development which will detrimentally impact the authority's highways strategies in managing demand on the network and will increase car dependence. This increased dependence on private car travel will affect wider areas of Middlesbrough, increasing queuing, delay, reducing air quality and the health of the town.
24. The alternative route across the A19 was also put forward through the consultation. Again, this has already been assessed and discounted due to the significant additional costs associated with its construction, and the increased visual intrusion for existing housing. In addition, some of the route would lie outside of the Middlesbrough Council area, meaning the Council would not be in a position to ensure its delivery.
25. The other additional suggestion was to restrict traffic on the link road to electric/hydrogen/public transport only. This option would not address the primary issue of congestion, particularly at the A19/A174 junction, but also on the wider local road network including at Marton Road and Acklam Road. It would also be difficult to enforce such a route without expensive infrastructure, which would become redundant within a relatively short space of time as car manufacturers phase out petrol and diesel engine production over the next 10 years or so. Potentially, such a solution could also increase pollution levels to unacceptable levels on other key routes in Middlesbrough.
26. In summary, no additional viable options for the link road have been put forward during the consultation, and it is considered that the existing option of creating the link road along the western part of Mandale Meadow should remain within the Masterplan. It would be for any future planning application to ultimately consider the impact of traffic and the need for a road. The proposed route has been aligned as far to the west of the site as possible to maximise the distance from adjacent residential areas.

### **Country park/green space/play areas/nature/habitats**

27. The impact of the Masterplan on the provision of green space was another key consideration for those responding to the consultation. Many people focused on the proposals affecting Mandale Meadow, both in terms of the loss of land and the impact on its current character, including its ecological value, and the potential conflict between the road and wildlife. Some simply did not want a country park, and others highlighted concerns about specific elements of the approach set out in the Masterplan.
28. Others recognised the potential benefits of the proposals, including a higher overall amount of public open space provision, better play facilities for children and new sports facilities. Others recognised the opportunities that could be brought about through the Masterplan, such as opportunities to enhance meadows and incorporate new habitats into sustainable drainage schemes, and other ways in which the biodiversity of the area could be enriched for the benefit of the local and wider communities.

## ***Key Issues Raised***

- Loss of greenspace;
- Nature and habitat destruction/impact of road on local wildlife site;
- New planting should be with native species;
- Paths are too wide / unnecessary;
- Lighting of Streets will be bad for nature;
- Covenant Removal;
- No play or sport provision;
- No benefit of having orchards/allotments;
- Support play/sport/youth facilities;
- Too many formal play areas identified;
- Support landscaping proposals;
- Enhancement of existing meadows;
- Retention of green space is encouraging;
- No country park needed/wanted;
- Concerns over the management of the country park;
- Concerns over Green Space Management;
- Better play facilities for Children;
- Positive towards the country park/nature reserve;
- Loss of farmland;
- Sustainable Drainage should be designed to incorporate habitats and look natural; and
- Conflict between road and wildlife.

## ***Response to the issues raised***

29. The Country Park is part of the adopted Local Plan policy for the site. Many of the respondents highlighted the value of the existing Mandale Meadow and expressed objection to the potential loss of this open space. There were also a number of respondent who were supportive of the proposals to provide a Country Park, new sport and play facilities, and habitat enhancements.
30. It is recognised that a portion of Mandale Meadow will be lost to the development of the road, and that this will have an impact on that particular open space. However, the Masterplan, in line with adopted policy, sets out the Council's commitment to mitigating this loss by substantially increasing the overall amount of public open space. The Masterplan will be amended to make clear that the remaining part of Mandale Meadow will be retained, as much as is possible, in its current condition and integrated as such into the Country Park. It is considered that through the implementation of the Masterplan that there will be a significant net gain to the wider community through the provision of a country park.
31. There were some concerns raised about specific design aspects of the country park, in particular the provision of footpaths and their proposed widths being too wide, thus leading to unnecessary loss of green space and impact upon wildlife and ecological habitats. Footpaths could also not be in keeping with some of the existing areas, bringing an artificial, man-made element to otherwise natural areas. It is recommended that the footpaths be removed from Mandale Meadow and some of these other areas and that the Masterplan be revised to be less prescriptive regarding their nature.

32. With regards to play areas, there was support for new facilities, although some people raised concerns over their potential to become a focus for anti-social behaviour. The large number of areas identified was also questioned given that their catchments significantly overlap and, as such, could exacerbate some of the anti-social behaviour issues highlighted. It is recommended that the plan showing such spaces be removed and the text of the Masterplan enhanced to require developers to provide such open space in accordance with identified requirements/standards.
33. One of the issues raised is that the sustainable drainage schemes (SUDS) should not be engineered but designed to form part of the wildlife network and contribute to the increase biodiversity of the site. It is recommended that the wording of the Masterplan is strengthened to reflect this commitment.
34. Concerns were also raised over the future management of the Country Park. The Masterplan highlights the Council's commitment to take responsibility for the ongoing management once the country park has been established. The details of this have yet to be established, and will not be known until a later date. If there is insufficient existing capacity and capability for the Council to do this then additional resources will need to be procured. However, it will be necessary to bring a management plan and associated costings before Executive for further approval at the appropriate time.
35. A number of respondents raised the issue of nature and habitat destruction, and the impact of street lighting on nature. There is an existing Local Wildlife Site that will be affected by the development of the link road. This site was identified before the Local Plan was adopted, and the established approach is to ensure that there is an overall net gain to biodiversity as a result of development. Whilst it is accepted that the proposals will result in the loss of some existing habitats, the Masterplan will ensure that these will be minimal and that there will be significant overall gains to habitats and nature. It was suggested that new planting should focus on native species, and this will be considered in detail at a future date through the Country Park Management Plan. The Masterplan will also be amended to ensure that appropriate wildlife corridors that avoid any conflict with the link road be sought. Future planning applications must be subject to an ecology assessment, which will assess the existing situation and set out details of how the development will mitigate for the loss of any habitats. Street lighting is an essential part of any development that helps to ensure human safety. The Council will commit to minimising the impact of street lighting on nature by seeking habitat creation away from areas where street lighting is necessary.
36. Whilst some people thought the creation of orchards and allotments were good ideas, a number questioned the demand for these and raised questions about how they would be managed. In particular, concerns were raised that fruit trees would be susceptible to vandalism. Others thought that the local population's needs were already sufficiently catered for through orchards at Nature's World and Larchfield.
37. In summary, it is recommended that the Masterplan be amended to clarify that the remaining part of Mandale Meadow and other established wildlife habitats will be retained, as much as is possible, in their current condition. In these areas it will be necessary to remove footpaths and be less prescriptive over their widths. Additionally, the Masterplan should be amended to:



1. be clearer on the provision of formal play areas;
2. strengthen wording to reflect the commitment to incorporate habitats into SUDS;
3. seek to establish appropriate wildlife corridors to avoid any conflict with the link road; and
4. minimise the impact of street lighting on nature by seeking habitat creation away from areas where street lighting is necessary.

### **Design/layout/facilities/general details**

38. The purpose of the Masterplan is to set out a vision, and detailed guidance, for how the Council would like to see the Stainsby site developed out. The overall aim is to ensure development of high quality, with well-designed homes and layouts that are conducive to a healthy and happy life. The Country Park will be a substantial area of green space, which will have multiple functions and serve the wider population of Middlesbrough. The Council considers that the approach to setting out these requirements in a masterplan will provide a greater level of certainty over what will be delivered.
39. Many of the responses recognised the value in the Masterplan-led approach to securing good quality development with the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support it. Others raised concerns over some of the detailed designs illustrated in the document. A key point raised was the level of detail set out in the Masterplan which could have an impact on bringing good quality development forward should circumstances change.

### ***Key Issues Raised***

- Masterplan is too detailed/inflexible which could prevent alternative, good quality design coming forward;
- Insufficient consideration given to the historic environment, including impact on Stainsby medieval village and the wider archaeological interest in the site;
- Garages are too small;
- Gardens are too small;
- Boundary treatment concerns;
- Improved housing design is needed;
- Suggested Green Energy Housing;
- Security/safety issues;
- Privacy concerns;
- Covid Pandemic means rethink needed;
- Risks of antisocial behaviour;
- Inadequate consultation undertaken/plans are confusing;
- Provides a benchmark for future development;
- Positive towards the overall development;
- Positive towards the provision of new school and amenities, proposed in right location;
- Job creation;
- Boundary should be extended to include application site for new retail at Low Lane;
- Timing of delivery of new facilities;
- Agree overall but would prefer an alternative route for the link road;

- Provision of an independent access for farm vehicles from Stainsby Hill Farmstead to A19 bridge to enable access to farmland to west of A19; and
- Stainsby Hill Farmstead should be linked for access purposes to adjacent new housing to enable segregation from farm traffic.

### ***Response to the issues raised***

40. It is recognised that, in parts, the Masterplan sets out very detailed requirements, particularly with regards to footpaths, play areas, boundary treatments, feature walls, and the widths of roads, pavements, gardens etc. Whilst the Masterplan aims to strike a balance between being prescriptive and being flexible, both developers and members of the local community highlighted the drawbacks of including very detailed requirements. We have, therefore, re-considered our approach and have concluded that some changes can be made to ensure more flexibility and less restrictive design through development, yet providing sufficient detail to guide required development and design outcomes. The recommended changes are detailed in the 'Changes to the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan' section below.
41. It was suggested that the boundary be extended to include proposed retail at Low Lane, currently subject to a planning application. The Masterplan includes a proposed local centre that is central to the overall Stainsby scheme, which is considered to be a more sustainable option. The proposed location is also contrary to adopted Local Plan policy, and as such cannot be considered as part of the Masterplan. It is, therefore, not recommended that the boundary be amended in this location.
42. With regards to Stainsby Hill Farmstead, it is accepted that the Masterplan doesn't properly reflect the intention to retain the existing farm buildings and access to them via the A19 bridge, and maintain access between the farmstead and land in their ownership which forms part of the holding to the west of the A19. The Masterplan will be amended to maintain access to these areas.

### **Health/Noise/Pollution**

43. The Masterplan seeks to achieve a quality development alongside a Country Park that will provide access to high quality public green space for future and existing residents, to help improve quality of life. Some of the responses agreed that the additional green space being provided by the Masterplan would have a positive impact on people's physical and mental health.
44. A small number of people raised concerns that the development at Stainsby would result in additional pollution, including noise, whilst others highlighted the potential health impacts arising from losing green space.

### ***Key Issues Raised***

- Environmental issues – noise and pollution; and
- Mental and physical health.

## ***Response to the issues raised***

45. It is recognised that development can result in noise and environmental pollution, both in terms of the construction phase and from the use once complete. Similarly, the occupiers and users of the development can be affected by pollution. These issues can only be properly considered at the planning applications stage, where these matters will be subject to detailed assessment and consideration, taking into account existing levels of noise and other pollution. Environmental Health legislation and controls can be used to control these so they do not breach acceptable levels. It is also recognised that the health benefits associated with the provision of such a significant amount of open space significantly outweigh any negative impacts, and will not only provide benefit to the local community but also the wider area and help deliver the Council's Green Strategy and achievement of the One Planet Living objectives.
46. A number of respondents did highlight the positive benefits that green space has on people's mental and physical health. Concerns were raised that the loss of green space, and development in general, would have a detrimental impact on health. However, a key component of the Masterplan is to provide a significant increase in the amount of green space available through the creation of a country park. Whilst some losses to existing space will be necessary to accommodate the road, it is considered that the benefits of implementing the Masterplan would outweigh these drawbacks. The need for new housing development is well established and there are significant benefits to people's wellbeing through the provision of good quality new housing.

## **Speed limit/parking/public transport/pedestrian & cycling**

47. The Masterplan sets out some key principles regarding layouts, roads, pedestrian and cycle links, and public transport. The overarching aim is to create a sustainable development that is not dominated by the private car, provides facilities and infrastructure in a central location that minimises the need to travel, and provides the opportunity to use non-car modes of travel that provide links to the wider area.

## ***Key Issues Raised***

- Reduce Speed Limit;
- Meadow Car Park;
- Existing parking issues on Jack Simon Way;
- Off Street Parking to Stop Traffic Congestion;
- Cycle route should be extended to include JSW;
- Support public transport;
- Bus Route Dependant on Bus Companies;
- No Buses through Estate;
- Road is too narrow to accommodate buses;
- Lack of Public Transport;
- Support pedestrian and cycling infrastructure;
- Discourage Vehicle; and
- Electric vehicle Charging Points.

## ***Response to the issues raised***

48. Some people questioned whether the 30mph speed limit for the primary road was appropriate for a residential area, whilst others sought confirmation that 20mph would be applied through the scheme. A hierarchy approach to the highway network has been taken from primary through to tertiary routes. At each stage the function of the highway changes and becomes more informal from a traffic movement priority to a sense of place. The primary road will not have direct frontage access but will still include design measures to restrain vehicle speeds. Reducing the primary route to 20mph would diminish the impact of implementing lower speed limits (20mph) on adjacent residential roads served from the primary route. This approach is consistent with what can be seen elsewhere on the network.
49. It was suggested that the car park shown at Mandale Meadow wouldn't be suitable for all users, particularly as it would be necessary to cross the link road to access the main part of the Country Park to the south of the road. However, locating the car park to the south of the road would take up more meadow space. The exact location and details of proposed car parking will form part of detailed planning applications. However, the Masterplan proposes numerous high quality crossing points which seek to restrain vehicle speeds, enable pedestrians/cyclists to safely cross in two movements and will link car parking to the Meadow and the rest of the Country Park.
50. Some responses suggested that the proposed cycle route should be extended to include the existing section of Jack Simon Way. The existing development served from this road was brought forward without a Masterplan so limited space is available making it difficult to retro fit cycle facilities. However, this is a priority for the authority and options will be considered to ensure that continuous cycle facilities are provided between Mandale Road and Low Lane.
51. Similarly, the issue of on street parking along Jack Simon Way was raised. As the existing development was brought forward without masterplan this is not something that can easily be changed. New development will not have the same impact on Jack Simon Way if implemented in accordance with the masterplan. Traffic Regulation Orders or other measures could be implemented on the existing section of Jack Simon Way, should they be deemed necessary.
52. Public transport was also raised, with some people supporting bus routes and others disagreeing. Some people questioned whether bus companies would want to route buses through the new development, which we think they will given the road layouts in the Masterplan. It was suggested that the roads would be too narrow to accommodate buses, but the width of both the existing sections of Jack Simon Way, and the proposed link road, are in accordance with national guidance to allow two-way bus movements.
53. It was suggested that the Masterplan should include measures to discourage vehicle use. It is considered that the Masterplan and highway layout have sought to enable all future residents to be within nationally recognised walking distances of public transport and, together with other sustainable initiatives (including the design of the layout), will seek to promote sustainable travel. Connectivity has been planned into the Masterplan to enable adjacent residential areas to easily access services and facilities within the scheme. Such an approach could increase patronage on bus services and integrate the development into surrounding areas, increasing the attractiveness of and commercial viability of services to operators. The Masterplan

seeks to facilitate the delivery of a highly sustainable community and as such public transport forms one of many options in reducing dependence on the private car.

54. Requiring electric vehicle charging points was also suggested. The Council will look to secure the installation of charging points within car parks. Responsibility for electric vehicle charging within residential properties will be the responsibility of the housebuilders, and the Council will proactively work with them and support the provision of such infrastructure.

### **Need for housing/greenfield vs brownfield development/house value reduction**

55. The Stainsby development is a key component of the Housing Local Plan, adopted by the Council in 2014. It is a strategic development site that, along with a package of other housing sites across the borough, aims to deliver the identified housing requirement to 2029. The overall level of housing being delivered in Middlesbrough is important not only to meet identified needs, but also to support the wider economic growth objectives of the area.

### ***Key Issues Raised***

- Housing numbers in the Local Plan should be revisited;
- No more house building required;
- Resistance to greenfield development/brownfield development should be pursued instead;
- House Value Reduction; and
- Developers Control / Local Plan Number Increase.

### ***Response to the issues raised***

56. The overall need for additional housing is established in the Local Plan, and the site is allocated for the uses set out in the Masterplan. Therefore, this issue is beyond the scope of the Masterplan consultation. Furthermore, recent research undertaken on behalf of the Council for the Local Plan review has concluded that 400 dwellings per annum will be required across the borough to meet our needs. This figure will be examined at the Local Plan examination, along with all the evidence and representations made on the issue. The site at Stainsby is an established strategic site that will make an important contribution to meeting existing and future housing needs.
57. The Council is committed to delivering new housing on brownfield sites wherever possible. However, there is insufficient brownfield land that is available and deliverable for housing development. Of the land that is available, not all of it is appropriate for all types of housing. As such, greenfield land is vital for meeting the quantity and range of housing that is required.
58. The value of existing houses, and the impact that new development has on their value, is not a material planning consideration. In any case, the value of property is dependent on a range of factors, and it is not possible to quantify the specific impact that new development has on values.

## **Changes to the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan**

59. It is recommended that a number of key changes be made to the Masterplan as a result of the consultation, primarily to enhance the wildlife credentials of the site and strengthen the Council's ability to achieve a high quality of design. These are contained in the revised Masterplan attached at Appendix 2, and the key changes are outlined below.
- Remove some of the very detailed requirements, providing more flexibility;
  - Remove the plan showing the provision of play areas but in doing so strengthening the text to ensure that required standards and provision are met throughout the development leading to a more balanced approach to providing green space to support the new development;
  - Remove footpaths as shown within the Mandale Meadow, Blue Bell beck, Saffwood Beck, and Acklam Meadow areas, and be less prescriptive over their requirements and nature;
  - Remove references to specific sizes shown in the cross-sectional diagrams regarding the size of dwellings, parking, roads, pavements, gardens etc.;
  - Require that Sustainable Drainage seek to maximise the use of natural features incorporating ecology and habitats, rather than seeking hard engineered solutions;
  - Seek solutions to establish appropriate wildlife corridors to avoid any conflict with the link road;
  - Minimise the impact of street lighting on nature by seeking habitat creation away from areas where street lighting is necessary;
  - Providing reassurance that existing cherished areas such as Mandale Meadow and Bluebell Beck will be retained in their current state as much as is possible and incorporated into the Country park whilst achieving key aspects of the overall development;
  - Removing the specific design options for feature walls;
  - Incorporating and protecting the access routes between Stainsby Hill farm and the remaining agricultural land holdings to the west of the A19;
  - Encouraging electric vehicle charging in homes and the provision of charging facilities within public car parks;
  - Providing car parking to both the north and south of the link road at Mandale Meadow; and,
  - Including details of what the submission requirements will be for any planning applications.
60. In addition it is proposed to tidy up the Masterplan by addressing typographical errors, and remove inconsistencies.

### ***Next Steps***

61. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan has been finalised, taking into account all of the comments received, with some amendments being made in view of the issues raised. The final version of the Masterplan is attached at Appendix 2.
62. Following its adoption, the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will be used as a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications.

## **What decision(s) are being asked for?**

63. That Executive:

1. adopts the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan, to enable the Council to control development proposals brought forward by private sector landowners and developers in the area; and
2. delegates authority to the Director for Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any subsequent minor amendments to the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan.

## **Why is this being recommended?**

64. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan is a key Council document that reflects our ambitions for high quality housing alongside the provision of a country park. The Masterplan will help to clarify the Council's expectations for the delivery of a high quality development scheme whilst, at the same time, reducing risk and uncertainty for future developers.

## **Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended**

65. **Not to adopt the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan.** This will mean that there will be an absence of guidance on the expectations for the country park and the key layout principles, type of housing and quality of development that the Council will be seeking at Stainsby. There will be less certainty for future developers and a potentially higher risk that the country park would not be delivered.

## **Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)**

### ***Legal***

66. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan sets out the Council's expectations for the development at Stainsby. There are no statutory requirements relating to the preparation of such guidance.
67. Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the legislation and latest Government guidance on undertaking public consultations in view of Covid-19.
68. Once adopted, the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for the site.

### ***Financial***

69. The costs associated with the preparation of the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan, and the associated consultation, have been met from established departmental budgets.
70. It is anticipated that the Masterplan will help deliver development that will broaden the Council Tax base and increase revenue. This is critical for the financial sustainability of the Council and will help achieve the objectives of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

71. The housing development aspect of the Masterplan will be brought forward by private developers. The wider infrastructure costs, including the country park and the link road, will be funded through financial contributions from the housing developers of the Stainsby site, developers of other housing sites in the south of the borough that will benefit from the provision of this infrastructure, and already secured S106 contributions. Where possible this will be enhanced through taking advantage of grant opportunities as and when they arise.
72. The Country Park Management Plan, including associated costings, will be the subject of future consideration and approval by Executive.
73. With the introduction of net biodiversity gain, the Country Park provides an opportunity to secure funding from other developments to increase and enhance biodiversity value, further increasing the value of the Country Park to local communities.

### ***Policy Framework***

74. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will support the delivery of a country park, housing and a new community hub on land at Stainsby that has been allocated in the Housing Local Plan (2014), which is part of the Council's Policy Framework.
75. The adoption of the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will not alter the Policy Framework.

### ***Equality and Diversity***

76. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan has been subject to an initial Impact Assessment (IA), which accompanies this report (see Appendix 3). This identifies that a full IA is not necessary.

### ***Risk***

77. The Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will have a positive impact on the Council's risks. It will support the delivery of the Council's housing growth programme, which is critical for the successful delivery of the MTFP (O1-051 and O1-045).
78. Should the scheme not be approved, it could create a pressure on the 5 year land supply, and lead to unallocated sites outside of the Local Plan being developed.
79. If poor economic growth occurs, then this will reduce public and private sector investment in the town and the development of Stainsby will be at risk (Risk: 01-005).
80. It is proposed in the Local Plan that Stainsby will deliver a mix of dwelling types including 3-4 bed detached and semi detached dwellings, aiming to deliver housing to help retain its economically active population. If insufficient Council Tax Band D+ properties are built this may result in further population decline which will impact upon the Medium Term Financial Plan (Risk: 01-029).
81. The high level risks mentioned above, which are identified in the Strategic and Directorate Risk Registers, will be reduced as a consequence



## **Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)**

82. Once adopted, the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan will be a material planning considerations in the determination of any future planning applications.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Report of Consultation on the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan
- Appendix 2 – Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan (revised document)
- Appendix 3 – Initial Impact Assessment of the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan

## **Background papers**

<b>Body</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Middlesbrough Council	Stainsby Country Park (formally known as Stainsby/Stainsby Detailed Masterplan)	December 2020
Middlesbrough Council	Stainsby Draft Masterplan and Next Steps	January 2019
Middlesbrough Council	Stainsby Masterplan (including Stainsby North)	September 2018