

The council has received over 300 responses to the draft city centre masterplan. Unfortunately it is not possible to respond to everyone individually, so instead we have put together a set of 'frequency asked questions' to try to address the more commonly asked questions.

1) What is the purpose of the masterplan?

The city council is required to produce a number of documents which set out our planning / development strategy for the city.

This is referred to as the Portsmouth Planning Policy Framework (PPPF), and is made up of:

- the [Portsmouth Plan](#) (also known as the Local Plan) which was adopted in January 2012. This plan guides the development of the city up to 2027. It sets out the amount and type of development the council wants to see in the city;
- the [Site Allocations Document](#) that allocates and identifies areas for protection and development to meet the targets of the Portsmouth Plan;
- [Area Action Plans](#) (AAP) which provide detailed guidance for specific areas such as the Southsea Town Centre Area Action Plan;
- [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\)](#) which provide more information to support the planning policies contained within the Portsmouth Plan. These can be topic or area based such as the city centre or residential parking standards;
- the [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) (CIL). This is the levy rates that the council applies to new development. The monies raised will be used to fund new infrastructure. CIL in part replaces the old system of 'planning obligations' (referred to as Section 106 agreements).

The city centre masterplan is a SPD and is designed to supplement policy PCS4 of the Portsmouth Plan. Policy PCS4 defines the boundary of the city centre (and the character areas within it). The purpose of the plan is to provide further guidance and help shape future planning applications in areas 1 – 4 of the defined city centre.

The masterplan does not repeat other policies in the Portsmouth Plan which will apply to all proposed development in the city centre. Pages 8 – 9 of the draft masterplan briefly sets out what these policies are, for example, Policy PCS15 – Sustainable design and construction.

The masterplan does not grant planning permission. Any development proposals set out in the plan will require the submission of a planning application which must include much more detailed information about the proposed development, including architectural drawings. The masterplan only sets out an indication of the scale of buildings and types of land uses which will be acceptable.

2) Why are you not looking at other areas of the city, such as Tipner, Fratton Park, the Hard, Hilsea and Cosham?

The council has produced plans for some other areas of the city such as a masterplan for [The Hard](#) that was approved in 2010. In addition, the Portsmouth Plan covers many larger strategic sites within the city including Tipner (Policy PCS1) and Fratton Park (Policy PCS7).

Planning permissions have been granted at Tipner. These include new slip roads off the M275, a new park & ride facility, new housing and employment space. You can find out more about the whole Tipner project on the council's website at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/8781.html.

The council will also be producing a Site Allocations Document that will identify other sites in the city needed to accommodate such new development as housing and employment land which are necessary to meet the objectives of the Portsmouth Plan.

3) Why are the council planning for retail-led schemes given the current economic climate and impact of internet shopping?

As previously stated the purpose of the masterplan is to supplement the policies in the Portsmouth Plan and follows national guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. It is the Portsmouth Plan which sets out the overall amount of new retail floorspace required in the city over the next 15 years and the most appropriate locations for this retail.

The Portsmouth Plan is supported by a retail study ([Portsmouth Shopping Study](#)), which looked at the impact of the recession, internet shopping and future economic growth. The study confirmed that Portsmouth city centre continues to decline in terms of its competitiveness when compared to rival centres. Results showed that spending which should be taking place in Portsmouth is being lost to other areas, particularly Southampton and Chichester.

The report also stated that whilst internet shopping is taking some trade away from the traditional high street and consumer confidence and spending has fallen, when analysing medium and long term trends there is still a substantial need for additional retail floorspace in Portsmouth's city centre.

The report concluded that there was a need for 47,210 m² net of shopping floorspace in the city centre up to 2027. This is based on a market share uplift of 3.6% for the city centre, based on its current underperformance. Whilst the Portsmouth Plan contains ambitious growth targets, they are proportionate to the city centre's role as an economic, social and cultural focus for southeast Hampshire.

As the purpose of the masterplan is to supplement the policies set out in the Portsmouth Plan, it is appropriate that it encourages and plans for new retail uses in the city centre.

4) The Council should prioritise Southsea and Gunwharf Quays over Commercial Road. The proposals will also have a detrimental impact on Southsea (potential loss of Knight & Lee).

The council has a retail strategy based upon three distinct and complementary retail destinations, Commercial Road, Southsea and Gunwharf Quays.

The council sees the main retail 'centre' of the city as Commercial Road. Numerous studies over the years have shown that Portsmouth City Centre continues to decline in terms of competitiveness when compared to rival centres (as referred to in the previous question). We need to plan for and encourage a breadth and depth of retail across the city to make it more attractive to shoppers and businesses.

Gunwharf Quays has a niche role as a retail and leisure destination. The retail on offer is different: factory outlet stores rather than traditional high street stores. The council would want this to continue rather than to divert trade away from Commercial Road. Gunwharf Quays offers something different to complement Commercial Road and offers something unique for the city.

The council adopted an [Area Action Plan for Southsea](#) town centre in 2007. The plan was prepared to ensure that Southsea did not suffer adversely as a consequence of increased retail at the city centre and includes a specific policy to retain at least two floors of retail at the Knight & Lee (John Lewis) store if it relocates. The action plan envisages that Southsea will be repositioned as a location for independent specialist shops, boutiques and restaurants and in this way will complement the retail offer at the city centre and Gunwharf Quays.

Although there will undoubtedly be a consequence for Southsea as a result of additional retail development at the city centre, this should not threaten the viability of the centre. The general character of Southsea town centre and recent environmental improvement schemes means that it is well placed to continue performing as one of Portsmouth's main centres.

5) What happened to previous proposals for the Northern Quarter? What is the role of Centros? Why is Centros not delivering the road?

The council is continuing to work with its developer partner, Centros, to secure the comprehensive redevelopment of the northern part of the city centre (including the former Tricorn site), now known as the Northern Quarter.

For a number of reasons, including the economic climate, the previous planning permissions (granted in [2006 and 2008](#)) were not implemented and have now lapsed.

Whilst Centros are still committed to delivering a mixed use development, the scheme will not be able to fund the new highway layout which was included in the previous 2006 planning permission.

A possible new road alignment is shown in the Portsmouth Plan (policies PCS4 and PCS17). An alternative, and practically / financially, more deliverable route is being proposed in the masterplan (pages 13 - 18). This is the council's preferred route and is broadly based on the previous Centros plan which had planning permission.

In recognition of the importance of the new road alignment to the prosperity of the city, the council has taken responsibility for delivering the new road layout and is exploring a number of funding options including, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) and prudential borrowing.

It is anticipated that a new planning application for the Northern Quarter, and an application for the new road layout, will be submitted in the autumn of 2013.

6) The masterplan should provide for local traders / businesses not 'high street chain stores'. What is the council doing to attract new businesses?

Whilst the masterplan can encourage development to cater for local traders and businesses, the planning system cannot require this. The planning system can only grant permission for types of land use, such as retail or cafes. It cannot specify the occupier of the premises.

The purpose of the masterplan is to provide a planning framework to shape and guide future planning applications / developments within the city centre. The document will be used to attract investment and businesses into the city as development opportunities in the city centre are clearly identified in the plan, together with the vision for improving transport and the quality of the streets and spaces. The masterplan also aims to encourage a mix of uses, such as hotels and offices, and a choice of restaurants and cafes in order to promote the viability and vibrancy of the city centre.

7) The council should limit the number of takeaways and 'fast food' outlets in the city.

The masterplan supplements policy PCS4 of the Portsmouth Plan which seeks to restrict the number of takeaways in the city. This policy is referred to in the planning policy section of the masterplan (pages 8 -10 of draft masterplan).

Hot food takeaways fall within land use class A5. Policy PSC4 states that the Commercial Road shopping area must retain at least 75% of its frontage in class A1 retail use. The policy also states that in the Guildhall Walk, planning permission will not be granted for drinking establishments (class A4) and takeaways (class A5) if more than 50% of the total frontage of Guildhall Walk and King Henry I Street are already in these uses.

8) What decisions have been made about the relocation of the Market Traders (formerly located in Charlotte Street)?

The council carried out consultation on the relocation of the market traders in 2005 / 2006. The preferred option was to relocate the traders to Commercial Road South / Edinburgh Road which will be pedestrianised.

The circumstances in relation to the relocation of the market have not changed since this work was undertaken and it is still the intention that market traders will move to this location.

You can view reports about this issue, which include the history of exploring an alternative location, here

- [25th Sept 2006](#)
- [20th Nov 2006](#)

9) The council should provide a roof / cover all of Commercial Road and any new shopping development

The council does not consider it practical or desirable to cover the whole of Commercial Road and any new shopping development with a roof.

10) Transport / Access issues

- **What transport assessments have been done?**
- **Why is the council not building more roads / building a flyover?**
- **Why is the council not promoting other forms of transport such as Monorail or a Tram system?**
- **The council should provide cheap car parking / the council should provide a cheap and reliable bus service.**
- **The council should move Wightlink Ferries from Old Portsmouth to the Port – this will help to reduce traffic congestion.**

As part of the Portsmouth Plan, the council assembled a large and comprehensive evidence base to assess the impact of development on demand for transport. This included the documents: [‘Assessing the Impact of the Harbours Authorities’ LDF Proposals on the Strategic Highways Network’](#) and the [‘Western Corridor Transport Strategy’](#).

The first document examined where the pressures on the strategic highways network would occur and the second document looked at more localised impacts and the mitigation measures that would be required to lessen the local and strategic impacts, albeit restricted to the western corridor where the majority of proposed new development in the city will take place.

The general strategy for the Portsmouth Plan is to locate major development in areas around public transport hubs or in corridors where there is good access to public transport and goods and services, with the aim of reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of modes of transport other than the private car.

Both the Portsmouth Plan and the [Portsmouth Local Transport Plan 3](#) note that existing and future demand will be managed through the location of development, appropriate parking standards and the requirement for travel plans for residential, business and retail development, and schools. In terms of new transport infrastructure, the plans propose a package of measures that enhance more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and public transport, but also includes some localised highway improvements to facilitate development of strategic sites, such as those in the city centre.

The proposed new city centre road layout is a significant piece of infrastructure which will enable the delivery of the individual development sites, as well as helping to encourage the use of more sustainable modes through facilitating new bus lanes and strategic routes, and providing better access for pedestrians and cyclists.

The overall strategy is also reliant upon the planned Park and Ride facility at Tipner and a bus based rapid transport system. Providing parking outside of, but serving, the city centre will help promote economic development and regeneration without adding to congestion. A city the size of Portsmouth, with its competing demands for space, needs a Park and Ride to be able to continue to grow but this needs to be achieved without increasing pressures on the highway or increasing parking in the city centre.

The council is aware that the new residential and employment development which will take place in the city in the coming years, coupled with a potential increase in car use by existing residents, is likely to increase the use of the local road network. Options suggested during consultation on the masterplan, such as the creation of a flyover and building larger roads / more roads into the city centre or providing a monorail / tram system are not viable because of cost or land availability.

The council's preferred approach to mitigating the impact on the local road network is through increasing walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The new city centre road layout will help to deliver priority bus lanes and a high frequency bus service to the city centre (Bus Rapid Transit) which will be a significant improvement in public transport provision.

The purpose of the city centre masterplan is to supplement the policies in the Portsmouth Plan. The schemes in the masterplan link elements of the wider Portsmouth Plan and Local Transport Plan together, for example linking proposals to pedestrianise parts of Hampshire Terrace and Isambard Brunel Road, which aim to minimise traffic congestion and manage traffic flows, with the new city centre road. All these highways proposals will be subject to more detailed design work and in some cases will require the submission of a planning application. It is at the planning application stage that the precise detail of the road junctions, pedestrian crossing etc. will be finalised.

The planning system cannot control the pricing of the car parks or bus services in the city. In addition, the pricing of some car parks in the city are outside the control of the council as they are in private ownership. The council is, however, aware that the pricing of car parks and public transport is very important and that a balance should be achieved between providing good quality attractive car parking in the city centre and encouraging people to use public transport.

The Portsmouth Plan and city centre masterplan aim to support the viability of public transport routes by proposing higher density development around important hubs and corridors. The council will continue to work in partnership with bus operators through the work of the council's sustainable transport team to try to address issues of pricing and reliability in relation to bus services.

On the issue of Wightlink Ferries, this proposal has not been included with the city centre masterplan as firstly it is outside the area of consideration for the masterplan and secondly at the time the Portsmouth Plan was finalised it was not possible to demonstrate that such a scheme was deliverable as Wightlink Ferries had expressed a desire not to relocate. However, if in the future Wightlink Ferries wish to relocate their operations to the Port, the council will work them to find a suitable solution.

11) Do not pedestrianise Stanhope Road and Station Street

The masterplan does not propose the pedestrianisation of Stanhope Road and Station Street. The only additional pedestrianised areas proposed in the draft plan are:

- Commercial Road (south) to the junction with Station Street, and Edinburgh Road to the junction with Stanhope Road;
- Commercial Road / Isambard Brunel Road between the junctions with Station Street and Greetham Street;
- Hampshire Terrace / Lord Montgomery Way between the junctions with Waltham Street and Wiltshire Street.

12) Flood Risk - What is the flood risk in the area? Why are the council proposing development in such a high flood risk area?

The flood zones maps, produced by the Environment Agency, classify land based on the probability of flooding. In Portsmouth this is based upon probability of tidal flooding. The definitions of the three flood zones are set out below.

Flood Zone 1 - Low Probability

This zone comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding from the sea (<0.1%) in any year.

Flood Zone 2 - Medium Probability

This zone comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding from the sea (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.

Flood Zone 3 - High Probability

This zone comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

The whole of the area covered by the city centre masterplan is within flood zone 1, an area of low probability of flooding.

13) Environmental Impacts - What evaluation has the council done to assess the impact on the environment? Why are the council not doing a full environmental impact assessment?

As part of preparing the Portsmouth Plan, the council had to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment, a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulation Assessment (in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning Act 2008 and Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012).

The purpose of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was to determine whether or not the plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan, and the extent to which its implementation will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. This process included looking at any potential impacts on biodiversity.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) looked at the possible effects of the proposed plan on the nature conservation interests of protected areas in and around the city.

The SEA / SA and HRA carried on the Portsmouth Plan are available to view on our website at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/7923.html and www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/24333.html.

When producing Supplementary Planning Documents, such as the masterplan, the council has to 'screen' the plan to see whether or not it is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This screening process includes assessing the masterplan against a set of criteria (as set out in the SEA regulations).

Whilst there is no statutory reason to undertake a SA of the masterplan, the council has also considered whether a SA is needed, and whether an HRA is required.

The SEA, SA and HRA 'screening' report on the masterplan can be viewed at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/25964.html.

The council determined that the masterplan is unlikely to have significant environmental, social or economic effects beyond those of the Portsmouth Plan policies that it supplements. This 'parent development plan document', (the Portsmouth Plan) has already been subject to HRA and SA incorporating SEA.

This does not mean that potential environmental impacts of the proposals will not be assessed in the future but that these impacts will be considered again at the next stage of the planning process i.e. at the detailed planning application stage.

When more detailed proposals come forward on individual sites, planning applications may be subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and more detailed HRAs. For example, the previous planning application for the Northern Quarter was accompanied by a detailed EIA which considered issues such as air quality, noise, wind and traffic. It is highly likely that any new planning application for Site 1: Northern Quarter will require a detailed EIA.

14) The masterplan should include proposals to 'open up' remove the Victoria Park (i.e. to remove boundary hedges and railings) and to expand the park onto the Zurich site.

Victoria Park is on English Heritage's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England' because of its special historic interest. This special status is based on the survival, quality and interest of the Park's historic layout and structures. The formal setting of the Park, including its boundary treatment, is part of its historical importance and therefore the council would not support the removal of hedges and railings to 'open up' the Park.

In addition, the 'Zurich site' (sites 4 and 5 in the masterplan) is in private ownership and funding has not been identified to facilitate the extension of the park onto this site. The focus of the masterplan is on resolving the poor interface between the park and adjoining development on this site, providing enhanced entrances to the park from Station Square and Stanhope Road and increasing surveillance of these entrances.

15) How will the proposals be funded?

When the masterplan is finalised, the council will be committed to the ideas it contains. The guidelines laid out in the document will govern the future development of the city centre, whether that development is by public bodies like the council or by private companies.

The council will have an important role in making many of these ideas a reality but it can't deliver them on its own or all at once. Many of the proposals will depend on private investment and part of the purpose of the masterplan is to facilitate that investment. Some may be paid for as part of planned works such as the Local Transport Plan, grants from funding bodies and monies collected from CIL (the Community Infrastructure Levy).

16) What are the timescales for the development to happen?

The proposals in the masterplan cover the period up until 2027. The timing of development will depend upon developers coming forward with detailed proposals, including how they are going to address any infrastructure requirements. Some sites, such as the Northern Quarter, are already progressing and as previously stated a new planning application is anticipated in the autumn of 2013.

17) Why haven't you consulted all residents / business individually?

Prior to public consultation on the city centre draft masterplan the city council sent letters to all homes and businesses in the area covered by the plan, along with notifications to all those people and organisations who had previously asked us to be kept informed about the city centre masterplan. We also sent a leaflet to every residential household in the city telling people about the consultation and letting them know how they could comment. In addition, we published a range of information about the consultation on our website, issued press releases to the local Portsmouth News (a number of articles appeared in the paper during the consultation and carried out various consultation events at public locations throughout the city. Officers attended residents association / neighbourhood forum meetings to discuss the draft plan and met with businesses (e.g. the City Centre Retail Steering Group and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce).

The council has produced a '[Statement of Community Involvement](#)' which sets out how people can get involved in the production of planning documents and how they can ensure that they are consulted on planning applications.