1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that: Cabinet resolves as follows:

1.1 That the Draft Roade Masterplan be referred to Economic and Environmental Review and Development Committee for consideration and then published for public consultation for a period of six weeks

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 South Northamptonshire faces the challenge of responding to the Government’s Growth Agenda and the proposed growth of the population of the District between now and 2026. The growth is likely to be focused on urban extensions to the towns and limited development in the villages. The East Midlands Regional Strategy states that a minimum of 330 dwellings must be provided per annum within the South Northamptonshire District up until 2026.

2.2 The Roade Masterplan is being produced to address how the village take advantage of limited development and might best accommodate the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and assist in addressing the current planning policy gap such as the lack of a Local Development Framework in particular the Core Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

The Purpose of the Masterplan

3.1 The purpose of the Roade Masterplan is to consider the future development of Roade village in a comprehensive, holistic and sustainable manner in order to provide both developers, the local community and local authorities with clear
guidance on the type and form of development that is considered appropriate in the village. This will help to inform land owners and developers in preparing planning applications and will assist South Northamptonshire Council in its consideration of proposals for development.

3.2 As the Interim Rural Housing Policy shows Roade is one of the most sustainable villages in South Northamptonshire and there is strong developer/landowner lead pressure for development. The Masterplan follows similar plans being prepared for Towcester and Brackley. Its primary focus is to consider how these growth pressures might best be planned and shaped for the future benefit of the village and to seek to establish a co-ordinated and sustainable plan for the village.

3.3 As a result of the pressure for growth, there is an opportunity to meet the aspirations of the village to secure its future as an attractive place to live and work by considering how it might best be expanded, enhanced and regenerated. The challenge will be to shape this growth so that the village uses its key opportunity sites and bank of existing brownfield land to enable appropriate redevelopment opportunities in order to cater for the existing and a growing population.

3.4 The preparation of the Masterplan for Roade will provide a clear spatial vision for the village and set a framework for the development of key opportunity sites. It will also enable the Council to take a proactive role in guiding future development within the village that prevents urban sprawl and one that helps to shape the growth of the village in a co-ordinated and sustainable way and that offers everyone a decent home that they can afford in a quality environment in which they want to live, now and in the future. The Masterplan will also examine ways of best integrating any new developments with the rest of the village.

4. THE MASTERPLAN

The Status of the Masterplan

4.1 Given the age of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) and the existence of more recent national and regional guidance combined with a number of particular local development pressures facing the village at the present time, there is justification for the preparation of this Masterplan at this time. The Masterplan will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications within Roade, alongside existing policy documents including the Local Plan, and will feed into the development of planning policy within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and other related local development documents.

4.2 The Masterplan will consider areas that are currently outside those covered by existing local plan policy (including for example land outside the adopted village confines), and therefore it will not be possible to adopt it as a supplementary planning document (SPD) as it has no statutory policy backing or basis and will conflict with the statutory Local Plan. Masterplans cannot therefore introduce ‘new’ policy that should only be introduced through inclusion as policy within the Development Plan to ensure that it is subject to independent testing.

4.3 If planning applications are submitted prior to the emergence of the Joint Core Strategy then the Masterplan will be used as a consideration in determination alongside other considerations including the Local Plan, regional and national policy
guidance. As a non-statutory statement of Council’s guidance the Masterplan will carry limited weight in the determination of such planning applications.

Key conclusions

4.4 The Draft Masterplan builds on extensive work undertaken by the local Parish Council and the local community in the form of the Roade Parish Plan and other discussions held with key stakeholders including a workshop held in 2009. From this work the Plan identifies an extensive range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in respect of the village including highway issues centred on the A508, out commuting and the demise of local employment opportunities and a lack of investment in play and sports facilities.

4.5 In view of the above and other identified issues a Masterplan has been prepared that seeks to balance an appropriate level of growth with the needs and aspirations of the village. It has been divided into the following key topic areas.

- Housing
- Movement and Access
- Employment
- Leisure, Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space
- Design
- Delivering the Masterplan – Developer Contributions

Housing

4.6 The Masterplan sets out the known level of developer interest in and around the village based on evidence provided in the recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It makes reference to the current shortfall in housing land availability across South Northamptonshire, the necessary introduction of the Interim Rural Housing Policy and the increased pressure and potential vulnerability of the Council's position in terms of controlling development in villages such as Roade.

4.7 The Plan sets out 3 options for growth ranging from small scale through to large scale growth that could potentially deliver a bypass for the village and concludes that a mid-range option would provide the best opportunity of seeking to address at least some of the issues facing the village in a co-ordinated way.

4.8 The Plan identifies four sites with opportunities for residential development that could yield approximately 500 new dwellings as follows:

- Pianoforte site (Ashton Road)
- Opposite Cricket Field, Northampton Road
- Hartwell Road/ Fox Covert Drive
- Land off Stratford Road (Chaplin’s Yard)

4.9 The Plan sets out important information in respect of the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs including the requirement for the Council to work with its preferred partner RSLs to secure the mix of housing the community needs and to deliver the housing objectives.
Employment and Economic Development

4.10 There are 2 key issues in respect of employment in Roade, firstly the loss of existing employment within Roade, and secondly the nature of Roade as a dormitory village with people commuting daily out of the village for employment purposes.

4.11 The Masterplan refers to the new Economic Development Strategy that has recently been adopted by South Northamptonshire Council and sets out its key aims for the rural areas including exploring opportunities to support agricultural and farm based industries, light engineering and support for farm diversification to strengthen the rural economy through the reuse of suitable rural buildings in appropriate locations for economic activities such as business units, offices and other appropriate business uses.

4.12 In addition to this The Plan considers that there is a need to provide for a range of new employment opportunities will be provided within Classes B1 & B2, including the provision of small high technology units and offices. The Masterplan considers that the car park serving the Pianoforte employment site would be an appropriate location for these new employment opportunities.

Movement and Access

4.13 The Plan recognises the pressure from within the village for both a new Railway Station and for a bypass to take through traffic out of Roade. However these would be major items of infrastructure that are beyond the remit of the Masterplan, the proper place for their consideration is the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The cost of providing a bypass is estimated to be in excess of £20 million. This is extremely unlikely to be funded from public funds, and would appear on present information and calculations to require developer funding of between 3,000 and 5,000 dwellings. This appears to be contrary to the wishes of the majority of local residents who are of the opinion that Roade should remain a village, and not become a town.

4.14 Northamptonshire County Council who are responsible for the Highways and Transport issues within Roade have advised that whilst the Transport Strategy for Growth has included Roade bypass as a possible scheme it is one where further evidence is needed. The evidence needed concerns the impact of growth in Northampton and Milton Keynes, strategic issues that are still to be determined. Given schemes that are already being progressed, current and expected levels of funding mean it is unlikely that anything would be built before around 2021. South Northants Council will seek to ensure that if any strategic development areas are proposed to the south of Northampton in the Joint Core Strategy that impact on traffic movement on the A508 then the effect of this on the village of Roade will be taken into account in terms of mitigation, including appropriate financial contributions towards the provision of a bypass.

4.15 In relation to Roade station, limited work undertaken in the late 1980s/ early 1990s suggested that there were no significant issues in building new platforms on the slow (Northampton) lines, although there would be a question of willingness to insert additional stops on the fast line. The big hurdle in terms of re-opening Roade is that of there being no adequate land available for car parking, for which no
solution has ever been seen. The number of stations re-opened currently and paid for by the public purse is also at a very low level. Another issue that would need to be considered if the station were to be re-opened without the provision of a A508 bypass would be the increased level of traffic that a station would attract in its role as a parkway station for either Northampton or Milton Keynes.

4.16 The Masterplan refers to the District Council’s new Transport Strategy. In respect of Roade, this Strategy considers that there is a the need to understand the issues that local communities face and consider areas where smaller measures and quick improvements can have a major impact on casualty reduction and improving the attractiveness of roads and streets and easing congestion. There is a need for better safety, security and health through measures such as:

- Safety of cycle and walking routes due to lack of signing, maintenance and lighting which undermines the willingness of the public to use those which are provided
- Air quality issues and noise in housing areas adjacent to key transport routes such as the A508;
- Management of traffic to avoid villages/ rat-running - this is frequently cited in planning consultations as a major issue for rural communities who are located on alternative routes between centres, such as Roade and the A508.

4.17 The Plan considers that it is important to improve accessibility and movement throughout the village and sets out a series of improvements to the local road network that will be funded from the new development opportunities.

4.18 Deteriorating air quality is an important issue on the A508. To help address this issue the Masterplan will seek contributions from those sites considered suitable for residential and employment development in the Plan towards a comprehensive study of the A508 and minor roads to determine the extent of air quality issues in the village. This work will include an action plan to mitigate issues.

**Leisure, Education, Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space**

4.19 The Masterplan identifies the key issues in respect of Leisure, Education, Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space to be as follows:

- Insufficient cemetery space for future
- Insufficient allotments
- Open space including the cricket pitch is under threat of development
- The medical centre is at full capacity with insufficient parking, and is disability unfriendly (lack of disabled access to the centre, doctors serve more than the 1 centre, inadequate parking and the need for extended services including a dentist and physiotherapist)
- The library is under used.

4.20 The Plan seeks appropriate contributions from the development opportunity sites identified in the Plan towards all of these facilities and specifically requires additional allotment and cemetery space to be provided for. In addition it is proposed that the ‘cricket field’ be transferred to the Parish Council at no charge in order to protect it from future development.
Design

4.21 The Masterplan considers that it is important that new development enhances rather than detracts from the quality of life in the village and its environment. Planning policies increasingly stress the importance of good design, both in terms of designing buildings to ensure that they limit the effect on carbon footprint, but also that good design is inseparable from good planning, is part of sustainable communities, and that it is part of making places better for people. In this regard it re-iterates the Village Design Statement for Roade that was prepared by South Northamptonshire Council in 1995 together with more recent work completed by West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Developer Contributions

4.22 As well as the key infrastructure requirements set out in the Masterplan the report also requires appropriate contributions to be made in respect of other important areas in accordance with the draft SNC Developer Contributions SPD, including:

- Policing and Community Safety
- Kerbside recycling
- Environment and Climate Change
- Flood Risk
- Economic Development
- Archaeology
- Historic Environment and Conservation
- Sustainability and biodiversity
- Section 106 monitoring costs

In addition to these County Council also seeks contributions for:

- Contribution to social service provision for care for the elderly
- Culture and libraries, Fire and Rescue (obligations to be sought by Northamptonshire County Council).

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Not adopting a robust Masterplan could increase costs as a result of the need to consider planning applications on an ad hoc basis and potentially defend planning appeals that are likely to be pursued if applications are refused in the absence of a robust policy background.

6. IMPACT ON EFFICIENCIES

6.1 Not preparing a Masterplan for Roade could lead to an increased workload in defending planning appeals as set out above that could impact on the ability of the Council to deliver other priorities.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS (INCLUDING REASONS FOR REJECTION)

7.1 The alternative option is not to prepare or consult upon the Masterplan. This should be rejected since, if a Plan is not prepared then there are likely to be increasing
development pressure within the village and potentially an increase in the numbers of appeals that will add uncertainty and increase costs. It is also important to give the local community the opportunity to be consulted on the Draft Plan. To adopt the Plan without this opportunity would not be in the interests of the district and its communities.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key decision (yes / no)</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Impact is more than £50,000 in revenue expenditure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Impact is more than £250,000 in capital expenditure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Impact is more than £5m Treasury Management investment of reserves</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Will have a significant impact on communities, usually in two or more wards in the district</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Forward Plan/Urgency</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Links to corporate priorities and policy framework</strong></td>
<td>This report is relevant to the Council’s corporate priorities, in particular:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Priority 2 “To preserve what is special in South Northamptonshire” -- (Objective 1: to ensure the Local Development Framework respects our local communities and the character of our villages and countryside) and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Priority 5: “To be known as a Council that protects the vulnerable” -- (Objective 1: To provide high quality local housing appropriate to the needs of all groups and supporting the needs of key workers).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risk management implications</strong></td>
<td>The Masterplan will be scrutinised as part of the consultation. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that is robust if an Inspector were to determine the document to be unsound it will need to be re-considered.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation undertaken</strong></td>
<td>The Masterplan has been prepared in consultation with the Roade Parish Council and other key stakeholders as well as officers from within the Council</td>
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<td><strong>Equalities and diversity implications</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Human rights implications</strong></td>
<td>None at this stage. Any specific implications arising from individual developments will be considered as part of the determination of the application</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crime and disorder implications</strong></td>
<td>None at this stage. Any specific implications arising from individual developments will be considered as part of the determination of the application</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Biodiversity implications</strong></td>
<td>None at this stage. Any specific implications arising from individual developments will be considered as part of the determination of</td>
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8. FORWARD PLAN/URGENCY (KEY DECISIONS ONLY)

8.1 Not applicable

Name Adrian Colwell
Title Head of Strategic Policy
Date 26th April 2010

Background Papers: Draft Roade Masterplan
Contact Officer(s): Andy D’Arcy – Lead Officer Planning Policy