

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and livestreamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors J Cottee (Vice-Chairman), M Barney, R Butler, A Phillips, V Price
and L Way

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| R Hepwood | Clowes Developments |
| R Hull | Homes England |
| A Malik | Clowes Developments |
| J Richards | Clowes Developments |
| J Todhunter | Clowes Developments |
| L Young | Homes England |

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| C Evans | Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property |
| H Tambini | Democratic Services Manager |

APOLOGIES:

Councillors N Clarke and J Stockwood

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 January 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Vice-chairman.

17 Update on Fairham Development

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth updating the Group on the Fairham Development.

Mr Robert Hepwood, Mr Ali Malik, Mr James Richards and Mr John Todhunter from Clowes Developments and Ms Rachel Hull and Mr Lewis Young from Homes England attended the meeting, to assist with consideration of the item.

Mr Hepwood, Mr Malik, Mr Richards, and Mr Todhunter delivered a presentation, which was divided into six sections detailed below, with an

opportunity for questions and responses between each section.

- Overview of project.
- Design.
- Neighbourhood centre.
- Public transport and travel networks.
- Sustainability in new homes and commercial.
- Employment

The presentation commenced with an overview of the project, which covered the following issues:

- Details of the Notice of Planning permission.
- Masterplan – Phasing plan:
 - Housing – 13 phases
 - Commercial/employment
 - Neighbourhood centre
 - Landscaping
 - Sports pitch
 - Ecological area
- Key project milestones achieved and to deliver between May 2019 to March 2023.
- Site progress:
 - Extensive highway and drainage infrastructure
 - Ground investigations and earth modelling
 - Archaeological survey work
 - Installation of site wide utilities
 - Installation of sustainable urban drainage systems
 - Construction of a primary sub-station
 - Re-use of leftover tram spoil left from the creation of the Tram Park and Ride
 - Main access works on road linked to Park and Ride nearing completion
 - Strategic new foul sewers constructed to cater for entire development
 - Several new employment deals signed
 - Installation of tree planting on northern boundary
- Site progress – images and drone footage.
- Future milestones.

Councillor Phillips referred to the 13 house building phases and asked when it was envisaged that the final phase would be completed, when would the fees charged by the management company for managing the green spaces commence for residents, and would the fees also be phased in.

Councillor Phillips also asked what was the likelihood of there being noise pollution from the commercial area to the residential area and would there be any mitigation measures put in place.

In respect of the phasing, Mr Todhunter advised that the phasing had been set up in strategic parcels, so that the market would not be saturated, with a maximum of six phases at any one time, and it was anticipated that the last phase would go over in 2030, with the last build out in 2035.

Mr Hepwood confirmed that the management company was very close to being in place, and it was proposed that upon completion of each phase, it would be handed over to the management company, to ensure that open spaces would be managed from the start. Mr Hepwood advised that there was considerable landscaping linked to each phase, and that would be laid out and ready before people moved in and confirmed that in the beginning the fees would be pro-rata.

Mr Todhunter went on to say that the way the management company would be set up, the management charge to the householder would be capped for the first few years; however, the actual management fees charged every year were actual fees incurred by the management company, so for the first few years the costs to the residents would be lower, with them increasing later as more phases were completed.

Councillor Way referred to the timeframe for residents moving in, in late 2023, and the proposed later dates for the completion of the school and health centre and asked what residents were supposed to do before those facilities were completed in 2025.

In respect of schools, Mr Todhunter stated that the County Council had confirmed that there was sufficient spare capacity in at least three surrounding schools, including at Clifton. In respect of health provision, the Group was advised that again there was sufficient capacity around the development; however, many of the buildings themselves were not fit for purpose and so the idea was to look at the opportunity to amalgamate some of those into a new centre.

Mr Hepwood went on to say that the delivery of the school was a delicate balance, as it would be inappropriate to provide a school too soon, as it could be open but without any students, and if that happened, there was a danger that it could be filled by students who lived outside of the development. He also hoped that the timescales referred to in the Section 106 Agreement would be bettered, as having those facilities in place would also help to improve house sales.

Councillor Way stated that she had a great deal of concern about management companies and how they often imposed additional onerous charges on things that had little to do with the management of open space, and asked Mr Hepwood if he had any thoughts on that matter.

Mr Hepwood advised that he did and stated that this issue was being taken very seriously. The Group noted that there were very few developments of this size in the country, and in particular not with the amount of landscaping and public open space that was proposed, and the quality of the landscaping and its future maintenance at a reasonable cost to residents was very important. Talks were currently underway with a major organisation with an extensive track record, and it had been agreed that once residents had moved in, if they were unhappy with the delivery and maintenance of the open space, they would have the ability to take back control themselves, with a fall back Community Trust Company set up. Mr Hepwood concluded by advising that he

had every trust in the company that had been chosen, the confirmed house builders had also been involved and were happy with the proposals to manage the site.

Councillor Barney asked a series of questions.

In relation to the school and health centre, were talks taking place with the Academy Trusts and health care providers, particularly in respect to the recent problem at Gotham, where the health centre had burned down.

Was asbestos on the site, or was it a rumour, and if it was present, had it slowed down progress and was it under control.

Where would the development's foul discharge drain to and where would the clean-up station be.

What businesses would be moving into the commercial properties and what was the rationale in place to choose them.

Finally, since the Fairham development had been granted permission, there were now many more new developments, including the proposed Local Development Order, which were promising an extensive programme of cycleways across southern Nottinghamshire, and it was a concern that Fairham would be an obstacle to connectivity for those other ambitious plans, and he asked if a collaborative approach could be taken on this.

Mr Hepwood confirmed that asbestos had been encountered on the site in some old farm building rubble, it was not the most hazardous type of asbestos and was being appropriately dealt with and he stated that it had not delayed matters. Mr Todhunter went on to advise that a Mediation Strategy was in place, and it was anticipated that work would commence in about five weeks, and it would take five to six weeks to remove the asbestos, recycle the other material there and clean the top soil, with all of that certified cleaned material then being used on the site and taken to the receptor site across the other side of the A453. The Group was advised that a further smaller site had also been found, and that would be treated in the same way.

Councillor Cottee reminded Councillors that there were slides to come in the presentation and the points raised by Councillor Barney could be covered then.

Councillor Butler was pleased to see the progress being made and again referred to the sensitive issue of the use of management companies and asked that the issue be treated seriously and stated the importance of ensuring that the future monitoring of the management company would be assured.

Councillor Butler went on to mention design, including the inclusion of tree lined boulevards, and sought assurance that the chosen developers would keep to that ethos.

Councillor Butler concluded by asking about public transport and how the early occupiers of properties would access this, compared to later on when more phases had been completed.

In respect of the earlier question related to foul discharge, Mr Malik advised that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken with Severn Trent to ensure that this would be dealt with correctly and advised that there was an oversized off-site sewer, which would cater for the entire site.

The presentation continued.

- Details of the design.
- Design team and consultants – led by Adam Architecture.
- Design code – Sitewide Design Code.
- Design code – Approval process.
- Design process:
 - National Planning Policy
 - Local Plan Policy
 - Design Code
 - Building for Life
 - National Building Regulations
 - Local and National Highway Standards
 - Individual Housebuilder Pledges
- Design process:
 - Tenders
 - Housebuilder Plans submitted
 - Plans reviewed by Adam Urbanism
 - Planning application submitted
 - Plans assessed by statutory consultees
 - Plans considered by Rushcliffe Borough Council

Mr Todhunter summarised that the overall goal was to ensure consistency across the site, with cues being taken from the surrounding areas to ensure that the local vernacular was mirrored, whilst ensuring that the developers flair came through. The drive was to ensure quality and the Group was reminded that the final applications would be signed off by Robert Adam Architect, only when they were 100% acceptable.

The presentation continued.

- Neighbourhood centre plan.
- Proposed neighbourhood centre timetable from March 2024 to 2025.

Mr Todhunter advised that in respect of the question regarding the delivery of the school, the County Council had requested that the building be completed, including facilities such as the gym and the kitchen, with the rest being left as a shell, and as the development grew, the classrooms would be fitted out, as required. Mr Hepwood went on to advise that discussions were taking place with the Education Authority and meetings were planned with the Academy Trusts. The Group was advised that the school could potentially be built and delivered by Clowes, which could accelerate the timescales. In respect of the question regarding the situation at Gotham and its health centre, Mr Hepwood confirmed that Clowes would be happy to talk to the relevant people and help if possible.

Councillor Butler referred to the existing problem of traffic congestion associated with school drop offs and asked if it would be possible within the proposed school grounds to have a dedicated area off the public highway as a drop off zone.

Mr Todhunter advised that there would be a dedicated drop off area on Nottingham Road and the possibility of having a circular route within the grounds was being considered for buses and cars. In respect of the car parking across the other side of the road, that would be required, as some people would want to go shopping after dropping their children off at school. Mr Malik went on to advise that in respect of traffic modelling this was a challenge, with an am/pm peak and then less between and to ensure that a correct balance of function and timing was achieved.

The presentation continued.

- Public transport and travel networks:
 - Bus services
 - Bus stops
 - Tram services (existing)
 - Tram passes
 - Future tram extension and new stations
 - Cycleways
 - Pedestrian links
- Public transport plan – map.
- Footpaths and cycle routes – map.

Councillor Barney was encouraged to see the proposed provision of footways and cycleways, stating that a considerable amount of land was required to have a cycleway that met current standards and asked if there would be a guaranteed arterial route all the way through the development.

Mr Todhunter confirmed that there was a strategic route from north to south, with the important element being to separate those from the traffic, and so many of the strategic routes were planned within the green open spaces to allow movement to the school, sports, and recreational areas throughout the site. The Group was advised that there would also be strategic footways and cycleways against the main spine road too as it ran from north to south. Mr Malik reiterated that in terms of strategic routing, the main loop road did have a foot/cycleway to provide connectivity, a safe, quality walking environment, access to bus stops and for the housing.

The presentation continued.

- Sustainability in new homes and commercial.
- Landscape and green spaces.
- Landscape tracker plan.
- Biodiversity.

Councillor Price referred to electric vehicle charging points and asked what plans were in place to ensure that there would be adequate provision.

Mr Todhunter advised that this would be the responsibility of the house builders on individual plots.

Councillor Price noted that many houses would be built with south facing roofs and hoped that there would be solar power generation on those roofs and asked how that would be achieved.

Mr Todhunter stated that again this would be the responsibility of the house builders and the trend was to have panels on roofs, as well as installing air source heat pumps, and whilst it might not be seen on the first phases, as the legislation had not been in place for those, they would be incorporated into the later house building phases. Mr Malik went on to advise that a strategic view would also be taken in respect of those charging point locations, for example as part of the neighbourhood centre development, and it was anticipated that there would be a range of charges, as technology advanced.

Mr Todhunter advised that in respect of the question regarding how delivery of green spaces would be assured by the housebuilders, he stated that it would be assured as Clowes would be delivering it themselves.

Councillor Way stated that it was very positive to have an overarching point of view, including the interconnectivity between the phased sites, which would encourage people to walk. Councillor Way asked why there were no solar panels on the roofs of the commercial buildings. She went on to ask about buses and questioned if the new development would have any impact on the one local bus route currently operating.

Mr Todhunter hoped that with the increased patronage, there should be more buses, and confirmed that there would be a slight diversion to the current bus route. In respect of the inner loop within the development, if the bus companies did not feel that there would be sufficient patronage, they might choose not to operate; however, that would be a separate bus route. Mr Todhunter concluded by stating that he hoped with over 3,000 houses eventually being built that there would be sufficient patronage for bus frequencies to increase. Mr Malik went on to advise that discussions with bus operators had already begun and would continue as the phasing commenced and the bus operators would see the potential and how it would work for them. The Group noted that all the bus stops would have real time information, which again would enhance the service and potentially increase patronage.

Mr Richards added that Rushcliffe Borough Council would shortly receive two planning applications for the installation of solar panels on the roofs of two of the commercial units currently being constructed.

Councillor Phillips asked if the sports fields would be grassed rather than using an artificial surface, and Mr Todhunter confirmed that they would be grass, and that there would be a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) adjacent to that and confirmed that there would be no floodlights.

Councillor Barney welcomed the proposed connectivity of the site and asked that when each section was sold to developers, would there be any mechanism in place to prevent ransom strips, and were there any currently in place, which

could act as an obstacle, and Mr Hepwood confirmed that there were no ransom strips.

The presentation continued.

- Employment.
- Commercial Area Masterplan.
- New occupants.

Councillor Phillips referred to the green spaces and the commercial site and to the fact that they would be open to everyone and asked if it would be the same management company responsible for those green spaces as for the residential areas.

Mr Richards advised that it would be a different management company, and a separate management company had been set up called the Fairham Business Park Management Company Ltd, the directors of which would be the owners of the businesses. The Group noted that Clowes currently held the preferential share in that company and that would be retained until the site was built out, to ensure that during its development all control would remain with Clowes. This would ensure that the management of this part of the site would never fall onto the residential areas.

Councillor Cottee advised that he was very impressed with the work already undertaken and the future plans and thanked all the representatives for attending the meeting and giving such an informative presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group agreed that the progress on site was in line with the original aspirations for the site; and
- b) that the governance arrangements were in place to support delivery of a high quality site.

18 **Work Programme**

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which detailed the proposed Growth and Development Scrutiny Group Work Programme for 2023/24.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work programme detailed below be approved by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

19 July 2023 (provisional date)

- Review of Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium
- Biodiversity net gains – New legislation
- Work Programme

4 October 2023 (provisional date)

- How the Borough works with partners to plan for the infrastructure required to support growth
- Work Programme

3 January 2024 (provisional date)

- Sewerage infrastructure and discharge within Rushcliffe
- Work Programme

6 March 2024 (provisional date)

- Work Programme

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN