



## **Growth and Development Scrutiny Group**

**Wednesday, 14 October 2020**

### **Abbey Road and Crematorium Update**

## **Report of the Executive Manager - Transformation**

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To provide an update to the Group in relation to two key Council projects. Firstly, in relation to the sale of Abbey Road, former depot, in West Bridgford, for housing development. The Group received a previous presentation regarding this scheme in October 2019 and it was recommended for the purchaser of the site to report back to the Group at a later date.
- 1.2. The second key project is the new crematorium; at the Cabinet meeting of 14 July 2020 it was resolved that the Corporate Overview Group allocates the appropriate scrutiny group to consider and make comment on key elements of design prior to build tenders being advertised for the construction. Growth and Development Scrutiny Group was selected to undertake this task.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Notes the update on the progress of Abbey Road development.
- b) Considers and makes comment on the key design elements for the Crematorium.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. To update the Group on the progress of the two projects following their previous scrutiny of them.
- 3.2. To support work undertaken to deliver a modern and accessible crematorium for the residents of Rushcliffe.

## **4. Supporting Information**

### **Abbey Road Background**

- 4.1. The Group received a previous presentation regarding this scheme in October 2019 and it was recommended for the purchaser of the site to attend a future meeting.
- 4.2. Since the previous meeting, significant works have been undertaken on site, demolishing all buildings and undertaking some remediation works. Negotiations have been ongoing with the developer and contracts are due to exchange within the next two weeks.
- 4.3. The developer has, throughout those conversations, made it clear that it will adhere to the Design Code set out to the Group at the previous meeting. Members will recall that this was an expectation of the Council. The Group also set out three further environmental improvements to be considered, as set out below, and the developer will provide further detail in its presentation:
  - Permeable paving where possible
  - Rain water harvesting
  - PV panels on all appropriate roofs
- 4.4. The developer has made small changes to the masterplan layout: the main change is to the blocks of flats, which were to be at the entrance to Abbey Road and Buckfast Way, which is proposed to be a row of terrace houses at Abbey Road and three apartment blocks at the Buckfast Way entrance. These changes further enhance the high-quality designed scheme. The revised masterplan (which is in draft form only and yet to be reviewed by planning officers) is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.5. The scheme still provides 30% affordable housing, with a mix of 16 one bedroom apartments and seven two bedroom houses for affordable rent and shared ownership. This is an improved mix compared with the original masterplan and meets the current demands for affordable and shared ownership housing in the area.
- 4.6. The developer will attend the meeting to further set out the timeline of the scheme and provide additional details to those set out above.

### **4.7. Crematorium Background**

- 4.7.1. The Council commissioned independent experts in the bereavement sector to undertake a study into the need and feasibility of developing an additional crematorium in Rushcliffe. The study indicated that a new crematorium in Rushcliffe could expect to undertake in excess of 1000 cremations annually, without accounting for population increases. With the threshold of viability currently at 750 cremations annually, a new crematorium is considered both a necessary piece of community infrastructure and a financially viable proposition.

- 4.7.2. The site at Stragglethorpe was selected as best meeting a wide range of requirements and was purchased with full planning permission by the Council in January 2020.
- 4.7.3. Following a procurement process, Ridge and Partners were appointed on 15 September 2020 as the Council's project manager, architect and cost consultant. Over the coming months, officers will work closely with Ridge to finalise the designs and specification in order to procure a construction partner. The timeline for the opening of the new facility is spring 2022.
- 4.7.4. The current designs are based on work by a third party in order to secure planning permission for the crematorium. At the inception meeting with Ridge, they highlighted changes that could be made to improve the facility in terms of use of the internal space, position of car parking and changes resulting from a shift in trends in the market. The plan at Appendix B shows the site layout as per the planning application, which will be subject to change but will remain in line with the planning permission.
- 4.7.5. The Council has asked Ridge to focus on the corporate objective of 'The Environment' and ensure the crematorium will include carbon offsetting, and energy efficiency measures as far as is practicable within the budget envelope and scope of the planning permission, in line with the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.7.6. The Council not only aims to fill a need in the community for a new facility, it intends for it to be inclusive to all and provide facilities for large and small ceremonies, for all faiths and to meet the current and changing demands of the community.
- 4.7.7. Key design and operational features currently include:
- A single storey building of approximately 500sqm incorporating a single chapel with capacity for 120 mourners, with potential for overflow space.
  - Car parking for 90 vehicles.
  - Electric, rather than gas cremator, in an effort to support carbon neutral target.
  - A strong belt of woodland at the northernmost part of the site, set around a swale with wildflower meadows and memorial woodland dominating the northern half of the site.
  - Partially screening from view by strategic planting and landscaping.
  - Chapel garden to be visible from within the chapel and is proposed to include a reflective water feature.
- 4.7.8. The next steps are to work with Ridge to develop detailed designs and tender documentation to appoint a contractor to build the crematorium. It is expected construction of the facility will start on site in May 2021, with the facility opening in spring 2022.

## 5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. Risks have been considered at every stage of both projects and will continue to be assessed and reviewed throughout. As part of the project management of the crematorium, a risk register will be a standing item on the agenda at all meetings.

## 6. Implications

### 6.1. Financial Implications

- 6.1.1. The Council has made a capital provision of £6.5m for the purchase of land and the construction of a crematorium, including the land acquisition, and associated legal costs.

### 6.2. Legal Implications

- 6.2.1. Both developments will be constructed in accordance with applicable regulations.
- 6.2.2. The terms of any contracts entered into will be subject to legal review and the relevant procurement regulations.

### 6.3. Equalities Implications

- 6.3.1. The Abbey Road development will be built to 'Building for Life' standards that will support a mix of housing close to public transport and amenities that that will encourage a diversity of homeowners.
- 6.3.2. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the next phase of the design work for the Crematorium.

## 7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Abbey Road: Providing 76 new high-quality homes in West Bridgford including 30% affordable.  Crematorium: Sensitive after-life care and bereavement services are an essential part of the quality of life for residents, their friends and family members. This scheme will provide timely services in a peaceful location with modern and flexibly sized accommodation.
Efficient Services	Abbey Road: The capital receipt will support the delivery of the Capital Programme with such resources being finite, enabling the efficient delivery of services.  Crematorium: This is an opportunity for the Council to invest its capital in new services for its residents which will be run in an

	efficient manner with high levels of care and customer service for the bereaved as the priority.
Sustainable Growth	Abbey Road: Redeveloping a brownfield site in an urban area to an exemplar housing scheme. Providing up to 30% local jobs during construction.  Crematorium: The level of housing growth in the Borough is 13,150 during the life of the Local Plan. This will lead to an additional population growth and the crematorium is an example of the community infrastructure that is needed to support population growth.
The Environment	Abbey Road: The housing will have eco credentials and a lower carbon output than traditional housing.  Crematorium: The designs for the crematorium will include carbon offsetting and energy efficiency measures as far as is practicable in line with the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral.

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Notes the update on the progress of Abbey Road development.
- b) Considers and makes comment on the key design elements for the Crematorium.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Leanne Ashmore Executive Manager Transformation <a href="mailto:LAshmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk">LAshmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	Report to Cabinet 13 November 2019, 'Strategic Land Acquisition for Potential Crematorium'  Report to Cabinet 9 December 2019, 'Crematorium'  Report to Cabinet 14 July 2020, 'Crematorium Update'  Report to Cabinet 9 October 2018, 'Proposal for the Abbey Road Site'  Report to Cabinet 9 July 2019, 'Abbey Road

	<p>Progress Report' Report to Cabinet 12 November 2019, 'Abbey Road – Depot Redevelopment'</p> <p>Outline Planning Application May 2019</p> <p>Report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group 15 October 2019, 'Abbey Road - Depot Redevelopment'</p>
<p><b>List of appendices:</b></p>	<p><b>Appendix A</b> - Abbey Road revised masterplan <b>Appendix B</b> - Proposed Crematorium site plan</p>