

10 July 2013		ITEM: 13 01104225
Cabinet		
PURFLEET CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT		
Report of: Councillor Andy Smith, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Highways and Transportation		
Wards and communities affected: West Thurrock and South Stifford		Key Decision: Non-key
Accountable Head of Service: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration, CEDU		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive		
This report is public.		
Purpose of Report: Provide Cabinet with a 6 month progress update on the Purfleet Centre Regeneration Project as required by the Cabinet approval given on 13 June 2012.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an update on progress since January 2013 on the Purfleet Centre Regeneration project. Activity covers three areas at present; promotion of an outline planning application, procurement of a private sector partner and land assembly.

The Purfleet Centre Regeneration project is a major part of the Council's regeneration programme and good progress has been made within the reporting period. The Council issued a Decision Notice for the approval of Outline Planning Permission for the scheme on 23rd May 2013. The Council is continuing negotiations with shortlisted parties with a view to selecting a developer partner by the autumn.

The Council's efforts to acquire the remaining land required to deliver the scheme are on-going. No acquisitions have taken place during the report period. Work continues to prepare for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) should it not be possible to acquire all the land by negotiation.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 That Cabinet note the progress made on the Purfleet Centre Regeneration Project since January 2013.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1. The Purfleet Centre regeneration project seeks to create a new heart and community hub for Purfleet which, at a local level, delivers new and better quality housing, new job opportunities, enhanced social infrastructure, high quality public realm/open space and improved public transport infrastructure. At a strategic level, this vision supports the wider economic growth objectives of the Council with the establishment of around 1,560 new employment opportunities and providing up to 3,000 high quality new homes to support new business both locally and regionally.
- 2.2. The following provides a short update on the Purfleet Centre regeneration project since it was last reported to Cabinet in January 2013. Reports to Cabinet are required on a 6 month basis under the project governance arrangements.
- 2.3 The work of the Council falls into three workstreams as follows:
- Promotion of an Outline Planning Application for the scheme.
 - Procurement of a private sector development partner – this is being conducted using the OJEU Competitive Dialogue procedure
 - Land acquisition. The scheme covers 58Ha of brownfield land in total and of this approximately 55% of the site is in the freehold ownership of the Council. The Council is seeking to acquire the remaining land, preferably within the partnership structure.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

Outline Planning Permission

- 3.1 Members will recall the Council's Outline planning application was considered by the Planning Committee on 20th December 2012 and Members resolved to refer the application to the Secretary of State under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, advising that the Council is minded to APPROVE the application subject to completion and signing of a planning obligation under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 3.2 The Council has now received confirmation from the Department for Communities and Local Government that the Secretary of State will not call-in the application and will leave it to the Council to determine the application.
- 3.3 The Council and Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) have completed the S106 agreement for the application. The agreement reflects the terms presented to the Planning Committee in December 2012.

- 3.4 Subsequently, the Council has approved the outline application and published the Decision Notice on 23rd May 2013. This has been advertised in the local press and on the Council's website. Members should also note that reaching this key milestone meant the scheme became eligible for inclusion in the Regeneration & Renewal / Planning Magazine Top 100 Regeneration Projects list and was listed joint 22nd nationally. The list is attached as Appendix A and allows comparison of the Purfleet project with other high profile projects.
- 3.5 Approval of the outline permission has been welcomed by developers bidding to partner the Council to deliver the scheme. Once a developer is approved, further detailed planning work will still be required. This will be undertaken on a phase by phase basis. Each subsequent application will provide an opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to influence the scheme further and will require the approval of the Council's Planning Committee.

Procurement of a Developer Partner

- 3.6 The Council invited a number of developers to participate in a Competitive Dialogue process in August 2012 and has since shortlisted two consortiums to compete for the scheme. Discussions with both parties have continued since January and bidders continue to develop their proposals and negotiate a potential agreement.
- 3.7 Neither the Council nor potential partners wish to see negotiations become protracted. However, it is recognised by all involved that for a scheme of this complexity and in challenging economic conditions, negotiations are taking longer than they might have done pre-recession. The Council has been clear it wishes to see tangible progress in the near future and is working with prospective partners to complete the process by this autumn. The proposed solution will be brought to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.8 Alongside the discussions with developers, officers have taken steps to understand the potential benefits of alternative Council led delivery arrangements potentially available via changes to the Local Government Finance system.

Land Acquisition

- 3.9 The Purfleet Centre site covers 58 Hectares in multiple land ownerships. The Council presently owns approximately 55% of the land required for the scheme.
- 3.10 Discussions with other landowners are on-going and being managed by the Council's retained advisers (CBRE). Some landowners wish to determine the terms the Council can offer whilst others wish to wait and see how the scheme develops in the coming months before considering their position. Should it not be possible to agree terms through negotiation, the Council will need to decide whether to make a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to deliver the land for scheme. Cabinet will recall that on 9 November 2011 it gave in principle approval to the use of CPO powers to facilitate the project.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 The recommendation asks Cabinet to note the progress being made in progressing the scheme, in accordance with the reporting requirements.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 In addition to the consultation activities reported to members previously, the following recent activity should be noted:
- 5.1.1 On 29th January 2013 Officers made a presentation to the Purfleet Community Forum informing them of recent progress and collating feedback.
- 5.1.2 Further consultation with stakeholders, including the local community, will continue throughout the project as appropriate.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1. The project will deliver the outcomes envisaged within the Community Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy and the Community Regeneration Strategy and set out in the LDF Core Strategy. The Council supports the development of approximately 3,000 new homes and associated employment, retail and community facilities in Purfleet.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652 010**
sclark@thurrock.gov.uk

This report provides an update to Cabinet on the progress of the Purfleet Centre proposals. As an update it does not seek any financial approvals over and above those already provided.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Philip Cunliffe-Jones**
 Telephone: **extension 2822**
 E-mail: **pcunliffe-jones@thurrock.gov.uk**

For a scheme of this scale the Council must anticipate using compulsory purchase powers and make preparations to do so when the time comes. However, the Council should also undertake informal negotiations in parallel with such preparations with those whose interests are affected, and treat their concerns with respect. Government Guidance particularly recommends early

negotiations with statutory undertakers such as Network Rail, but the Council's agents have written to all parties.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct equality or human rights issues to note at this stage. There may be issues which need to be considered as these proposals are progressed and these will be addressed as part of the proposed project activities.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

N/A.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Cabinet Report 16 January 2013
 - <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1540/Committee/368/Default.aspx>
- Cabinet Report 13 June 2012
 - <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1534/Committee/368/Default.aspx>
- Cabinet Report 09 November 2011
 - <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1216/Committee/337/Default.aspx>

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix A. Regeneration & Renewal Top 100 Regeneration Projects

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