

Scrutiny Briefing Note

The Communities Scrutiny Panel have asked to monitor progress on the following issues. This briefing contains the latest position as at 22/03/2021.

Subject: Depot Rationalisation Update

In February 2020 Cabinet approved a project to rationalise Depot sites, proposing to close the outdated Gilbey Road Depot and move all staff and services to the Doughty Road Depot, which would be redesigned and improved for this purpose. The creation of a single depot in the town centre would:

- Provide capacity for a cohesive workforce that is based in 3 closely located buildings (Municipal Offices, New Oxford House and Doughty Road Depot).
- Provide services and staff with a fit for purpose, high quality working environment.
- Bring economic benefits to the town centre by increasing the number of employees and partner organisations in the area.
- Utilise current parking provision within the town centre, which has the capacity to accommodate the expected increase in staff owned vehicles.
- Utilise land at Doughty Road, which is not suitable for residential development, rather than leaving it vacant and subject to void property charges.
- Reduce the general running costs for the service, by the provision of a new depot that is more energy efficient, requires less maintenance and utilises modern technologies for the generation of power.
- Reduce maintenance and running costs of one depot rather than the two current depots.
- Improve service efficiencies by reducing duplication of work, reducing travel times and allowing for the sharing of resources.
- Encourage greener, environmentally sustainable outcomes as the central location of the depot would reduce travel to work for staff who can access bus and train routes or cycle to work and improve the carbon footprint of service by the efficiencies mentioned above. The remodelling of the Doughty Road site also allows for the introduction of environmentally sustainable features such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points.

A project team has been set up which reports to regularly to a wider Strategic Group and oversees the Construction Work Task and Finish Group, Stakeholder Group and Communication Workstream. Work has been ongoing from late September to prepare for project initiation with the first full project group meeting being held on 18th January. The following actions have been taken:

- Initial intrusive surveys completed, including traffic management surveys.
- First stage consultation with all affected employees (Engie and NELC) held and a consultation Q&A document shared based on comments and feedback from all meetings.
- Currently in detailed design stage: Results from surveys and feedback from first consultation taken on board for this stage and workshops planned with affected teams to consider what is needed in detailed design.
- Pre-application made to planning and discussions been held regarding high level design.
- Workshops held between Planning and Engie to discuss environmental factors and drainage, highways design and planning and ecology following pre application.
- Press release on proposed plans made and introductory letter drafted to share with residents and businesses, giving them the chance to put forward their views and ask questions about the proposals.



As part of the high-level design a new main entrance way has been proposed on to Peaks Parkway at the junction with B&Q. This would see most of the traffic entering and exiting the depot using this access, meaning less traffic using the Doughty Road entrance. Traffic management assessments have shown that this will not impact significantly on the flow of traffic on the Parkway, given that most vehicles will be entering and exiting the depot outside of peak times. The findings of the traffic assessment will be taken back to Cabinet with a full report on the project to date in June 2021.

The project team will present a full update to Communities Scrutiny Panel on the project to date and invites input from the panel before returning to Cabinet for its decision to proceed.

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