Runnymede BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wednesday 1st February 2023

Parkside Regeneration Newsletter

February 2023

Welcome to the first Parkside Regeneration Newsletter, designed to keep you up to date regarding the exciting plans for New Haw. Thank you for signing up!

A newsletter will be produced every three months and will be sent to those that have asked to receive it. The newsletters will also be made available on the Council's website.

You can update your communication preferences by completing the form on the Council's website, e-mailing parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or calling 01932 425916.

Progress

Residents will be aware that the Council are in the early stages of exploring whether it will be possible to carry out a regeneration of the Parkside area.

Specialist consultants will be hired to assess the potential challenges we will face when undertaking the regeneration. Five companies have applied to carry out this complicated process, and Council Officers are currently reviewing who will be best to do it. Outcomes of the work will be used to inform the regeneration project.

Some challenges that we will need to overcome are already known. These include reducing the risk of flooding, protecting the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, removing or working around the overhead powerlines, protecting biodiversity, as well as others. It is possible that the contractors will identify other challenges, but it will also be the start of planning how to overcome them.

The Housing Committee, Chaired by Cllr Jacqui Gracey, has set ambitious aims for the project.

Cllr Gracey sets out the aims to "include improving the quality, quantity and range of social housing available, delivering new and improved community facilities, and new Independent Retirement Living accommodation, while meeting our environmental aims and ensuring regular and meaningful engagement with residents throughout the project."

The first stage of assessing the areas and preparing reports will be completed by Autumn 2023. Housing Committee will then decide whether to proceed with the concept design stage. Throughout the process we will update the website and provide newsletters to those that have registered.

You will be invited to share your views on the plans in due course. Consultation opportunities will be well advertised and those that have opted to be contacted will receive direct invitations.

Update on Resident Events

On 31st October and 1st November 2022 residents of the regeneration areas were invited to hear from Cllr Jacqui Gracey, Chair of Housing Committee and New Haw Ward Councillor along with Council Officers. Three events were held, one at Heatherfields, one at Woodham and New Haw Day Centre and a third on-line.

In total around 100 people attended the events. The key message was that the project is at the very early stages, and we acknowledge that communication is key. It is hoped that some early myths and rumours were dispelled and that attendees saw that the team were available to discuss residents' concerns.

Andy Vincent, Corporate Head of Housing, said "The regeneration of the Parkside area presents an exciting opportunity to provide desperately needed new homes that are highly energy efficient. We will keep residents informed and want to hear from them as the project moves forward."

The Council's website has been updated following the events, including answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

More events will be held in the future, in conjunction with the design team.

We recognise that it is important to provide more answers to the questions around what will happen, and we will continue to update residents as and when information is available.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the project, please go to the dedicated Parkside Regeneration pages of the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration

Alternatively contact the Parkside Regeneration Project Team via parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or 01932 425916

Yours sincerely

Mark Bawden
Housing Development Manager

Parkside Regeneration Newsletter

June 2023

Welcome to June's Parkside Regeneration Newsletter. This is the second newsletter. The first is on the Council's website for those that missed it. Newsletters will be produced four times a year and will be sent to those that have asked to receive them.

You can update your communication preferences by completing the form on the Council's website, e-mailing parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or calling 01932 838383.

For the reasons behind the regeneration and the aims of the project please go to the Parkside Regeneration pages of the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration.

Progress

Since the last Newsletter in February, we have been busy appointing consultants. We are pleased to announce that we will be working with Ridge and Partners - a large construction consultancy with an excellent track record of delivering similar schemes. Ridge will work with the Council on all the information that is needed to establish whether the regeneration of the Parkside area is possible and affordable.

A project of this scale is complicated. There have already been some delays during the process of appointing Ridge. We had hoped to have a significant update for residents in July 2023 but now we hope to be able to update residents to say whether we will proceed with the regeneration by January 2024.

Residents of the area may see surveyors at work in the coming months.

Current works in the area

Some of the empty houses are already having work carried out, so they can be occupied while we assess the options for the future. As, at this stage, no decision can be made regarding the regeneration we will continue to invest in the properties in the same way that we would with any other Council property. It is not an option to leave all of the properties empty and we will continue to maintain the area.

Soon, part of the car park at the top of Heathervale Way will be used as a site compound for a company that are installing highspeed broadband in the area. This work is not a Council project and it is not related to the proposed regeneration.

Update on Resident Events

We will let you know when you will next be able to meet with representatives from the Council. We want to be able to answer more of your questions and receive feedback regarding the plans.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the project, please go to the dedicated Parkside Regeneration pages of the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration. Alternatively contact the Parkside Regeneration Project Team via parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or 01932 425916.

Yours sincerely



Mark Bawden
Housing Development Manager

Parkside Regeneration Newsletter

Issue No. 3 September 2023

Welcome to September's Parkside Regeneration Newsletter. Previous newsletters are on the Council's website for those that missed them. We understand that residents especially want to know what is happening and therefore newsletters will be produced four times a year.

You can update your communication preferences by completing the form on the Council's website, e-mailing parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or calling 01932 838383.

What is currently happening?
The Council have appointed architects and surveyors to help assess what is possible for the Parkside area.

Architects are considering what mix of homes could replace the current properties. It is too early for a detailed design, but they are producing options for roads, the number of properties and enhancing green spaces.

Surveyors are considering various elements that will influence the design, for example the risk of flooding, the soil types and ground levels, the road networks, the local utilities, and others.

We are committed to considering the environment and the impact that the regeneration would have. Plans will need to be drawn up regarding local ecology as well as the areas near the Basingstoke Canal, which is a Conservation Area. We will also consider how best to reduce carbon emissions.

What will happen next?
Early next year we will talk to residents of the area. We will know more about what is feasible and Members of the Council's Housing Committee will decide whether to continue with the project. It is important to note that even at that stage we still will not know with certainty if it will happen. There will still be outstanding matters – not least of which is whether the project is granted planning permission.

Residents will be able to talk to the design team, including representatives from the Council, about what they would like the new scheme to include. This can then be considered as the plans develop.

How would the project be paid for?
This will need careful planning as the project moves forward. We already know that much of the accommodation in the area needs significant investment to make it more energy efficient. The plans for the regeneration are ambitious and therefore it will be very expensive. Either way a lot of money will be required.

The Council hopes to produce a mix of Council rented homes, low cost home ownership options and homes for outright sale. There will not be a reduction in the number of Council rented homes. The money from selling houses will effectively help to pay for the new Council homes.

The Council expects to access funding from Central Government and other sources for this sort of project.

Questions
If you have any questions regarding the project, please go to the dedicated Parkside Regeneration pages of the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration. Alternatively contact the Parkside Regeneration Project Team via parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or 01932 838383.

Yours sincerely



Mark Bawden
Housing Development Manager

Parkside Regeneration Newsletter

Issue No. 4 December 2023

Welcome to December's Parkside Regeneration Newsletter. Previous newsletters are on the Council's website for those that missed them. We understand that residents especially want to know what is happening and therefore newsletters will be produced four times a year.

You can update your communication preferences by completing the form on the Council's website, e-mailing parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or calling 01932 425916.

Update.
In the last newsletter, we explained that we would be asking the Council's Housing Committee whether initial investigations supported continuing with the regeneration project. Routine reports are presented to elected Members of the Committee to make sure that the project is proceeding as expected.

Ridge, our main consultants and designers, have done a lot of work exploring what might be possible. This work involves looking at the area and checking things like the flood risk, soil conditions, ecology (plants and animals), and many other technical elements that can influence what can be built. They have also started to look at how many new homes could replace the current properties.

One of the main risks to the project has been the potential for flooding in the area. Currently the Environment Agency deem the area to be at a high risk of flooding. This means that building new housing in the area would be very difficult. We now have specialist advice that states that this flood information may be wrong. The risk of flooding from the River Wey and Basingstoke Canal may not be as bad as was previously thought, although this is still subject to confirmation from the Environment Agency.

We are aware of localised surface water flooding. The plans moving forward will take account of these sorts of issues. Designs will aim to reduce flooding and protect new and existing homes in the future.

Presented with the above and other information in a detailed presentation and report, Members have agreed to the project proceeding to the next stage. There are still outstanding matters, but we can now start to think about designing the regeneration with confidence that it is now more likely to happen.

What will happen next?
Early next year we will talk to residents of the area. We now know more about what is possible although, as we have explained in the past, it will be subject to planning permission and available finances, so we still do not know with certainty if it will happen.

Residents will be able to talk to the design team, including representatives from the Council, about what they would like the new scheme to include. This can then be considered as the plans develop.

Questions
If you have any questions regarding the project, please go to the dedicated Parkside Regeneration pages of the Council's website: www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration. Alternatively contact the Parkside Regeneration Project Team via parksideregen@runnymede.gov.uk or 01932 425916.

Mark Bawden
Housing Development Manager