

## PORTFOLIO HOLDERS BRIEFING

12 JANUARY 2022

### RATCLIFFE-ON-SOAR POWER STATION PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER

- 1 Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) is working with the owners of Ratcliffe on Soar Power station (Uniper) to explore options for the redevelopment of the site. They have decided to take things forward through a Local Development Order and RBC has published outline proposals for a first stage of informal public consultation.
- 2 The consultation closed on Monday 10 January 2022. It had been intended to take a report to the Local Plan Committee on 26 January 2022 to formally agree this response. However, following discussion with Legal Services it has become apparent that any such member decision would have to be via Cabinet rather than Local Plan Committee. The next available Cabinet meeting would be 1 March 2022, which is significantly beyond the end of the consultation period.
- 3 Therefore, it is now proposed to take a report to the Local Plan Committee for noting only. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A of this note.
- 4 Appendix 1 of the Committee report sets out the officer-level comment which have been submitted to RBC in order to meet the deadline, but subject to formal agreement under the Council's delegation scheme to the Strategic Director of Place (Section 7, paragraph 5.2.1).
- 5 However, before formally agreeing the Council's responses it is considered appropriate to ascertain as to whether there are any additional comments that as Portfolio Holders you would wish to make.

#### **Recommendation**

**That the Comments at Appendix 1 of Appendix A of this note form the Council's response to the consultation on the proposed Local Development Order at Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, subject any additional comments that the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Infrastructure wish to make.**

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



## LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2022

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>RATCLIFFE-ON-SOAR POWER STATION PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Councillor Keith Merrie 07596 112270 <a href="mailto:Keith.merrie@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">Keith.merrie@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Background Papers</b>	<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework</a>  <a href="#">National Planning Practice Guidance</a>  <a href="#">Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station site: LDO initial public consultation</a>  <a href="#">Planning Advisory Service advice on Local Development Orders</a>	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	The response to the consultation is met through existing staff resources. <b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	No specific legal implications arising from the content of this report <b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b>	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	No staffing implications associated with the specific content of this report. Links with the Council's Priorities are set out at the end of the report. <b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b>	
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	This report gives the Committee information about the proposed Local Development Order for the Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station site and provides a proposed response to the initial public consultation to set out matters of interest and concern to this council.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE NOTES THE RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE RATCLIFFE-ON-SOAR POWER STATION PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER AS SET OUT AT APPENDIX 1</b>	

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station is situated to the north of the district boundary in the borough of Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire. The power station has been operating for more than 50 years and will close at the end of September 2024 in line with government policy to end coal-fired power generation.
- 1.2 Along with East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster (EMAGIC) in North West Leicestershire and the East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) in South Derbyshire, the site is covered by the East Midlands Development Company which is charged with co-ordinating and delivering the regeneration of the three sites. The three sites also comprise

the East Midlands Freeport. Freeports are a flagship government programme to encourage investment, innovation and job creation.

- 1.3 Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) is now working with the power station's owners, Uniper, to explore options for the redevelopment of the site. They have decided to take things forward through a Local Development Order and RBC has published outline proposals for a first stage of informal public consultation.
- 1.4 The consultation closed on Monday 10 January 2022 and to meet this deadline, Appendix 1 has been submitted to RBC as officer-level comments. These have also been discussed and agreed with the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Infrastructure respectively. Therefore, this report is for noting only.

## 2. WHAT IS A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER?

- 2.1 A Local Development Order is made by a local planning authority and it effectively grants permitted development rights for specified types of development in a defined location. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages their use to help provide certainty, speed up the planning process and where the approach would achieve social, economic and/or environmental benefits. The [Planning Advisory Service](#) reports that "LDOs can help enable growth by positively and proactively shaping sustainable development in their area. They can play an important role in incentivising development by simplifying the planning process and making investment more attractive".
- 2.2 The government wants to see development brought forward quickly in Freeports and this can be facilitated by using LDOs.

## 3. WHAT IS PROPOSED?

- 3.1 The site is some 265Ha and is situated to the north and south of A453 Remembrance Way. It comprises the current power station, the coal stockpiles, the operational power plant, eight cooling towers, supporting buildings and facilities, ash management operations and a National Grid substation.



- 3.2 The site has two access points with A453 dual carriageway which connects to M1J24, located in North West Leicestershire. It has good freight connectivity as bulk goods can be transported in and out of site by both rail and road. The East Midlands Parkway station on

the Midlands Main Line is immediately to the west. The site also benefits from high-capacity energy supply infrastructure as a legacy of its power station use.

- 3.3 On the northern part of the site a planning application for an energy from waste facility (the East Midlands Energy Re-Generation Centre (EMERGE)) was approved in June 2021 subject to the completion of a legal agreement. North West Leicestershire District Council was consulted on the application and raised no objections (application reference 20/01962/NAC).
- 3.4 The emerging proposals for the site seek to deliver:
- A zero-carbon technology and energy hub for the East Midlands
  - High-skilled jobs
  - Modern industrial and business uses, served by on-site sustainable energy generation and storage
  - Advanced manufacturing, for example for production of electric car batteries
  - A hub for research, development, and innovation, through links with universities, business support organisations and established industry.
- 3.5 The exact mix of uses is not fixed but could include the following:
- Industrial, manufacturing and data operations with high energy demands
  - Low-carbon and green energy generation
  - Energy storage
  - Advanced manufacturing
  - Logistics
  - Research and training facilities
  - Other complimentary uses
- 3.6 The consultation material suggests that the proposal could create some 7-8,000 direct jobs as well as indirect jobs elsewhere through supply chains etc.
- 3.7 Redevelopment is expected to come forward in three main phases as follows:
- Phase 1: Large areas of the site are available or could be made available for redevelopment relatively easily such as under-utilised areas to the north of the A453 and the area in and around the ash fields to the south. The construction of the EMERGE Centre referred to above is expected to begin during this time.
  - Phase 2: Following the closure of the power station in late 2024, the land associated with the coal stockpile will be released, and development can take place in this area.
  - Phase 3: Following the power station closure, the main power generation buildings, cooling towers and other structures will be decommissioned, demolished and the land remediated after which the third phase of redevelopment can begin.
- 3.8 The proposed LDO will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment and a transport assessment. Whilst on-site car parking and electric vehicle charging will be provided, the emphasis will be on improving sustainable access over car use, including by:
- exploring the feasibility of a direct pedestrian/cycle link from East Midlands Parkway Station
  - improved bus access to and through the site
  - potential extension of the Nottingham tram network
  - upgrading the walking and cycling routes to and within the site

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR NWL?**

- 4.1 The response to this first stage consultation is included as Appendix 1 covering the following main points:
- in principle support for bringing forward one of the Freeport sites

- need for the transport assessment work to fully consider the impacts on the strategic road network in particular on J24M1 and the local road network taking account of committed developments and commuting traffic
  - consideration how to specify uses in the LDO so they match the vision for the site
  - consideration of the impact of any supporting uses
- 4.2 The response incorporates views from the local ward member Cllr Sewell in respect of traffic volumes, risks of rat-running, air quality implications, sustainable transport connections and the safe transportation of waste.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following completion of the consultation, the timetable thereafter is as follows:
- statutory public consultation on a draft LDO in Spring/Summer 2022
  - LDO adoption in Autumn 2022
  - detailed plans for each phase will be subject to a separate application for approval by RBC from 2023 onwards
  - Construction to start from 2023 onwards

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	The content of this report is particularly linked to the priority for supporting businesses and helping people into local jobs
Policy Considerations:	National Planning Policy Framework
Safeguarding:	None specific
Equalities/Diversity:	None specific
Customer Impact:	None specific
Economic and Social Impact:	The proposal has the potential to generate significant benefits for the economy of the wider area, particularly as part of the wider Freeport area.
Environment and Climate Change:	The proposal has the potential to be an exemplar for low/zero carbon technologies. It will also help to keep a large scale brownfield site in productive use.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	This is the first stage of consultation. Further stages are set out in the body of the report.
Risks:	None specific from the content of this report at this stage but redevelopment has the potential to have implications for the Council's emerging Local Plan. The LDO, if confirmed, will streamline development on this site coming forward and thereby help to 'de-risk' the success of the Freeport and DevCo initiatives.
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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Draft Response to Rushcliffe Borough Council**

#### **Overall**

North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) welcomes the fact that the borough council and the site owners are working together to bring forward the site efficiently and making use of the Local Development Order process both to enable and to control development.

The site is key component of the East Midlands Freeport and NWLDC supports in principle proposals which will enable the success of this initiative.

#### **Transport**

NWLDC notes that a Transport Assessment will be undertaken as part of the LDO preparation process. The assessment must take full account of development commitments in NWLDC in addition to the proposals themselves and their effect on the capacity of both the strategic and local road networks. It is important that consideration is also given to the North West Leicestershire Local Plan Review, currently underway, which may need to focus a significant amount of development in the vicinity of East Midlands Airport and J24 M1. It is also important that National Highways, and Leicestershire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Derbyshire County Council as respective Highway Authorities are fully engaged in any assessment. Leicestershire County Council is currently undertaking strategic transport modelling for Leicester City and Leicestershire. The data and underpinning assumptions being used by the Highways Authorities could usefully be shared to ensure there is a consistent basis for analysing the cross-boundary highways implications of the proposals.

NWLDC has particular concerns about the potential impact that the proposals could have on the capacity of J24 M1, and of A50, A453, A6 and A42 to accommodate further development in view of the economic significance of this locality. National Highways will be a key consultee in this regard.

Further it is noted that the proposals are estimated to generate 7-8,000 additional jobs and workforce may be drawn from the local area, including the towns and villages in the north of North West Leicestershire such as Kegworth and Castle Donington, as well as further afield. The Transport Assessment must include realistic assumptions for these commuting patterns so there is a robust assessment of the impact on the local roads serving these settlements including any risk of rat-running through such places, and the improvements which may be needed as a result, to be incorporated in the LDO's requirements. Construction traffic must also be directed away from these villages and the transportation of any waste to the site must be done in a safe manner.

The use of sustainable transport should be maximised where possible including by rail. It is noted that an option to be considered is the extension of the current tram network to the power station site. Such an extension has the potential to carry on into Leicestershire, potentially serving key economic generators at the East Midlands Airport and East Midlands Gateway. It is important that such a potential opportunity is explored as part of these considerations rather than just stopping at the County boundary.

#### **Proposed uses**

NWLDC notes that the vision for the site has an emphasis on innovative and sustainable businesses. Consideration could be given to how this can be controlled through the LDO and whether specifying acceptable use classes will be sufficient. As an example, the site's size, location and transport connections could make it particularly attractive for all types of strategic distribution.

The initial list of uses includes supporting uses. In view of the eventual scale of the site and number of employees, this may include uses such as convenience shopping, cafes, takeaways and gym/s. RBC may want to consider setting size parameters for these types of uses to avoid creating a new local centre which draws trade from established centres elsewhere.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

In addition to the above, NWLDC considers that key matters which the LDO supporting evidence must address include, amongst others:

- a robust assessment of the visual and landscape impact of the proposals, including from key public vantage points in NWL
- flood risk
- ecological impacts and the opportunities for biodiversity net gain
- air quality, including during construction
- noise.

RBC will need to satisfy itself that it has sufficient evidence on these matters to determine the content of the LDO and that the LDO itself will secure the sustainable development on the site.