

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 25
FEBRUARY 2026



Title of Report	STENSON GARDENS UPDATE	
Presented by	Richard Blunt Leader of the Council	
Background Papers	Cabinet October 2024 Coalville Regeneration Framework (2023) Council Delivery Plan Council 22 February 2023	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	It is proposed that the next stages of work for Stenson Gardens are funded from the Council Regeneration Capital programme where an allocation has previously been agreed at Council on 22 February 2023.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The Stenson Square site is predominately located on land owned by North West Leicestershire District Council. At its periphery the proposals extend on to Leicestershire County Council Highways land. Public realm works will be undertaken using Permitted Development rights so do not require a specific planning consent. All procurement activity associated with consultant appointments, the preparation of RIBA Stage 4–5 documentation, and subsequent contractor procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.	
	Signed off by the Deputy Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	The project will be delivered using existing Economic Regeneration staff resources.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To introduce the Stenson Gardens project to the Community Scrutiny Committee, setting out the business case, progress to date and providing an opportunity for Members to comment on the RIBA Stage 3 design proposals for the public realm.	

Recommendations	THAT COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 1) NOTES THE FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION CARRIED OUT 8 OCTOBER 2025 2) PROVIDES COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON STENSON GARDENS DRAFT RIBA STAGE 3 PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET AT ITS MEETING ON 24 MARCH 2026.
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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The regeneration of Coalville is a key priority within the Council Delivery Plan and the Stenson Gardens project is one of the flagship schemes highlighted in the Coalville Regeneration Framework.
- 1.2 The creation of Stenson Gardens will contribute to the Council's long held ambition to deliver the Prince's Foundation '4 squares' strategic vision for Coalville.
- 1.3 The Stenson Gardens project comprises two principal parts; firstly the creation of a new public realm to the front of Stenson House, incorporating London Road car park, and secondly the redevelopment of the now cleared former Council offices site for residential use.
- 1.4 Through work by Ove Arup (a leading land use consultancy), the public realm element of this project has been progressed to RIBA Stage 3 designs (a level of design evolution sufficient to show general arrangements and material choices). The associated proposals for residential development on the former Council offices site have been developed in parallel up to RIBA Stage 2, also by Ove Arup. RIBA Stage 2 residential designs are concept design only.
- 1.5 The project has benefited from cross-party input from members during the design process to date.
- 1.6 There has also been input from stakeholders such as the Registrar's service, Citizens Advice Bureau and Council staff that work from Stenson House to inform the design. In addition, a public engagement session was held on 8 October 2025. The feedback report is appended here at Appendix 1 and a draft response to comments raised at the engagement session is appended at Appendix 2.
- 1.7 Engagement with the Council's Planning Service has clarified that the public realm proposals that have been developed to RIBA Stage 3 do not require the making of a separate planning application but can be delivered under Permitted Development rights.

2.0 NEXT STEPS - PUBLIC REALM

- 2.1 To move from the current stage of development towards construction, it is necessary to undertake RIBA Stage 4 activities including preparation of a detailed Specification of Works and other documents that can be used to procure a contractor (tendering exercise).

2.2 At this stage it is anticipated that, subject to advice from the procurement team, the contractor will be procured using a mini competition or direct award from a framework.

2.3 Any procurement route selected, whether through a framework mini-competition or compliant direct award, will be assessed and documented in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 duties of fairness, equal treatment, and integrity.

3.0 NEXT STEPS - RESIDENTIAL

3.1 The next stage to progress the residential element of the project is to make an outline planning application for this part of the site. This will derisk the residential development project and give confidence to potential purchasers when the site is placed on the market as well as increasing the land value.

3.2 There is not sufficient internal capacity and expertise to take forward the residential development in-house, so it is intended to place the land on the market with planning consent.

3.3 Consultancy support will be required to make and progress the outline residential planning application including commissioning all supporting documentation e.g. Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.

4.0 FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Ove Arup has provided a fee quotation of £156,258 to progress the public realm element of the project to the point at which a Construction Contractor can be appointed.

4.2 As described in Section 2 above, this quotation is believed to offer good value to the Council because of retained knowledge and project continuity. The fee can be met from the existing capital programme allocation subject to moving the required sum from the development pool to the active programme.

4.3 A full report on the cost of construction will be presented to Cabinet on completion of contractor procurement prior to the award of contract.

4.4 It is expected that the net proceeds from sale of the former Council Offices site will make a significant contribution towards recovering the public realm works costs.

5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

5.1 The desired outcomes for the Stenson Gardens project are as follows:

- To create a high quality visually attractive arrival point in the town, at the junction between two key roads and outside Stenson House.
- To create a space from which residents can draw civic pride, but which can also be used for socialising.
- To link the London Road public car park (adjacent) to Stenson House.

- To support the use of Stenson House particularly by the Registrars Service by providing an attractive environment for wedding photographs etc.
- To guide pedestrians towards the town centre and the town's other public places such as Memorial Square, and Marlborough Square.
- To create a wider attractive environment for high quality residential accommodation on the former Council Offices site.
- To create an attractive street scene on Whitwick Road.
- To continue to provide vehicular access for residents on Park Road.
- To continue to provide vehicular access for the Coalville Bowls Club.
- To ensure through good design that the residential development and Stenson House and Stenson Square Gardens operate in a co-ordinated way.

6.0 PUBLIC REALM PROPOSAL - DETAILED OVERVIEW

- 6.1 The draft general layout arrangement and designs for the public realm are set out in the attached appendices (Appendices 3-7).

7.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

- 7.1 A community engagement exercise was conducted to seek input from the public and stakeholders into the Stenson Gardens project. Key takeaways from the exercise include:

- Suggestion to include a water pump – given that the town pump was located in the vicinity of Stenson Gardens.
- Desire to ensure that any public realm improvements are properly maintained in the future
- Concerns that the public realm works will attract anti-social behaviour
- No strong support for either the public realm or the housing elements of the scheme, largely citing that Council funds could be better spent elsewhere.
- Opinion was divided regarding the best form of tenure new housing could take (e.g. social housing or market housing).

- 7.2 Please see both the post engagement feedback report and the 'you said, we did' document appended at Appendices 1 and 2. These comments have been taken on board by the design team when preparing the RIBA Stage 3 draft designs.

8.0 LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

- 8.1 Part of the RIBA 3 design proposals include proposed resurfacing work to Leicestershire County Council (LCC) footways on Whitwick Road and London Road, adjacent to the Stenson Gardens site. Approval for resurfacing of the public footway with a material consistent with that proposed to be used in Stenson Gardens will require LCC consent and approval for this is now being sought.

9.0 PROJECT RISKS

- 9.1 Detailed project risks are identified in the RAID Risk Register and include materials availability, contractor pricing, further pandemics, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), inflation etc.
- 9.2 The project timetable has been assessed in the context of the anticipated LGR timeline, and a delivery plan will be maintained to ensure continuity should governance arrangements change.

10.0 PROJECT TIMESCALES

- 10.1 Ove Arup have advised us as part of their fee proposal for RIBA Stage 4-5 that they are likely to require 15 weeks from appointment to prepare documentation ready for contractor procurement.

11.0 APPENDICES

The appendices can be viewed by following the links below:

[Appendix 1 – Public engagement feedback report](#)

[Appendix 2 – Draft Response to Engagement](#)

[Appendix 3 – Draft General arrangement drawing](#)

[Appendix 4 – Draft Outline specification](#)

[Appendix 5 – Draft Stage 3 Design Report](#)

[Appendix 6 – Draft Stage 3 Lighting Design Report](#)

[Appendix 7 – Illustrative drawing of Stenson gardens](#)

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Planning and regeneration
Policy Considerations:	Coalville Regeneration Framework
Safeguarding:	Principles of safeguarding have been taken into account through the design process
Equalities/Diversity:	The public realm has been designed for all users
Customer Impact:	Creation of new public amenity space for enjoyment and relaxation (wellbeing/quality of life)
Economic and Social Impact:	Outline planning permission for circa 40 new dwellings in Coalville Creation of new public amenity space for enjoyment and relaxation (wellbeing/quality of life)
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	Climate resilient planting in Stenson Gardens public realm Tree planting Sustainable Urban Drainage Greening of London Road car park Provision of 4 EV charging points Bio diversity improvements
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Community engagement event undertaken on 8 October 2025 – please see attached feedback report Engagement with stakeholders undertaken as part of RIBA 3 design works e.g. Leicestershire Police Designing Out Crime Officer, Registrars Service, Citizens Advice Bureau, NWLDC staff using Stenson House
Risks:	See 9.0 Project Risks section
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