



Report to: Cabinet Meeting – 10 December 2024

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Paul Peacock - Strategy, Performance & Finance
 Councillor Emma Oldham – Climate & the Environment
 Councillor Lee Brazier – Housing
 Councillor Rowan Cozens – Heritage, Culture & the Arts

Director Leads: Matthew Finch, Director - Communities & Environment
 Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officers: Andrew Kirk, Business Manager - Environmental Services, Ext. 5577
 Steve Chitty, Major Capital Projects Delivery Manager

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Key Decision
Report Title	Proposals for the Future Development of the Brunel Drive Depot Site
Purpose of Report	To put forward proposals for the future development of the Brunel Drive depot site, Farrar Close and the glass recycling facility at the Lorry Park, following a strategic review of the Council’s future needs from the sites.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) approve the future development plan (Option 4) as set out in the attached study at Appendix A and described in the report; b) approve that a planning application is prepared and submitted for the permanent siting of the glass bulking facility at the Lorry Park in Newark; c) approve a first phase investment of £669,000 including contingency, inflation, and fees, at Brunel Drive and Farrar Close and equivalent budget being added to the Capital Programme for 25/26, in line with the timescales and phasing set out in the report; and d) Delegated authority be given to the Council’s Directors of Communities and Environment and Housing Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, to tender and deliver the phased programme of investments in line with the indicative timescale set out in the report.

<p>Alternative Options Considered</p>	<p>The study appended to this report sets out that it is not operationally, legislatively, or financially cost-effective for the Council to try to accommodate <u>all</u> of its future needs on the existing Brunel Drive and Farrar Road sites., as well as accommodating the glass bulking facility on that site.</p> <p>The Council could look to purchase a wholly new site, but this would be financially prohibitive and is not necessary given the ability to accommodate much of the Council’s operations on the existing site, whilst taking advantage of some buildings on the site which are no longer required or soon could be surplus to requirements.</p> <p>The Council could look to find an alternative site for the glass bulking station now situated on the Lorry Park. However, this would require the purchase or lease of additional land and the additional construction of a glass bulking facility, which already exists on the Lorry Park. This option would carry unnecessary additional costs. Furthermore, suitable locations are likely to be very challenging to find in order to meet the Environment Agency’s permitting regime and planning permission. Efforts to find an alternative site to the Lorry Park in 2023 did not yield a suitable alternative.</p> <p>The Council could forego the income generated through a glass bulking site and simply take the glass to the Veolia Materials Recovery Facility at Mansfield. In this way the Council would preserve the much-requested kerbside glass recycling service, but would lose a significant quantum of the forecasted £165,000 annual income being generated through the current model, which offsets some of the costs of providing the service.</p>
<p>Reason for Recommendations</p>	<p>The recommendations align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to the environment and climate change, whilst waste and recycling always features at the top of any resident polling about the services provided by the Council which matter most to them. The proposals are the most cost-effective in the circumstances and are legislatively and operationally deliverable. They facilitate effective changes in the use of buildings which are no longer required. They also facilitate the Council’s ability to accommodate the long-term delivery of new services from the existing site, including food waste, and in time may open up exciting opportunities to enable public access into the Council’s museum store. Whilst there has been a prolonged impasse in terms of national waste and recycling policy and how that is to be funded, the previous Government stated they would not be funding new depots or changes to depots with the rollout of a kerbside food waste collection service and there is no real reason currently to believe that stance will change. As such, Councils will need to arrange and fund their own requirements, which is what these proposals do.</p>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Brunel Drive depot in Newark is the base for the Council's Environmental Services. This includes waste and recycling, parks, grounds maintenance and cleansing, fleet maintenance and some office accommodation. The site also contains the Council's Museum Store, which contains close to 100,000 objects.
- 1.2 The service has undergone significant changes since its construction in the early 2000s. This has included the rollout of the sliver, recycling bin service, the delivery of an in-house garden recycling service in 2020, which has experienced rapid growth, and latterly, in April 2024, a kerbside glass recycling service. The expansion in service delivery has necessitated a significant increase in the number of refuse vehicles and the need to accommodate the vehicles of new employees who have been taken on to provide those services.
- 1.3 Additionally, there has also been significant growth in the Council's cleansing and grounds maintenance operations over the same period. This has included new cleansing vehicles associated with the Housing Revenue Account Grounds Maintenance service returning in-house, new commercial work for town and parish councils and vehicles associated with changes required by the Environment Agency for the separate collection of certain materials. Similarly, the expansion in the services have necessitated more employees and the need to accommodate their vehicles on the site.
- 1.4 In 2023, Cabinet approved the introduction of a new kerbside, glass recycling service. This was in no small part a response to consistent resident feedback showing the importance residents attached to the waste and recycling services delivered by the Council, but also their frustration that as a result of the long-term contractual arrangements between the County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority, and its contractor, Veolia, glass was effectively non-contract waste and was not collected from the kerbside.
- 1.5 In the model approved by Cabinet, it was agreed that the Council would collect, bulk and then sell-on the glass it collected from the introduction of a kerbside service, with the aim of off-setting some of the costs of providing the service. As such, the Council needed to identify a location to site a bulking facility. The location adopted was the Lorry Park, as it was in the Council's ownership, already accommodated large trucks and given its distance to housing in the vicinity, had the most chance of being granted an Environment Agency permit to be used as what is known as a 'transfer station'. Brunel Drive was considered but given the proximity to dwellings and its already considerable spatial challenges, it was not deemed viable at that time and would instead require further detailed assessment.
- 1.6 As such, an Environment Agency license was sought and granted for the Lorry Park whilst following extensive acoustic studies and no highways objections being raised by the County Council, the bulking station was granted planning permission in late 2023. However, as a result of some member concerns over the potential impact on residents, the planning committee agreed a temporary permission of three years. The bulking facility has been operational since April 2024 and no complaints have been received from residents, whilst the EA's view from site inspections is that it is one of the best-run and operated stations they have come across.

- 1.7 Next door to Brunel Drive is Farrar Close, which was formerly the base for housing colleagues when housing services were delivered by the Council's Arms-Length Management Organisation, Newark and Sherwood Homes. As well as providing office accommodation, the site is also home to workshops, stores, messrooms and extensive parking for the vans which at one time would have been stored overnight on the site.
- 1.8 Both facilities are joined at the western end of the site, but have historically been, practically divided through the installation of a metal fence. Farrar Close can also be accessed through another access and egress and it is the name of this road which gives the site its name.
- 1.9 In 2020, the Council took the decision to bring its housing function back in-house. In October of 2023, some housing colleagues vacated the offices at Farrar Close and began working from Castle House leaving the office block vacant. The stores function continues to operate from the separate Stores building at Farrar Close and whilst the workshops are no longer used for their primary function, they have been used most recently for additional storage.
- 1.10 Situated on the Brunel Drive side of the site, there is also the Council's Museum Store, which houses close to 100,000 objects within our collection. Whilst some limited public access can be arranged via appointment, opportunities are limited by the site only being accessible during the depot's operating times and via a security barrier and vehicle access strategy that is shared with a significant number of 32 tonne refuse collection vehicles, as well as other dedicated fleet vehicles. Within the refreshed Community Plan, 2023-27, there is the new objective to 'Celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging'. It is underpinned by several actions aimed at further promoting art, culture and heritage and has a specific action to 'Examine further ways to take art and artefacts out into areas of the community that are not geographically close to our museum and heritage buildings'. In addition to taking artefacts out, better access to the resource centre would also enable more residents to have contact with their history and heritage within the resource centre.
- 1.11 Finally, members will be aware that the national policy context in relation to waste and recycling has been in a state of uncertainty since late 2018 when the National Waste and Resources Strategy was published, only to be replaced by 'Simpler Recycling' in early 2024. One of the objectives set out through Simpler Recycling was a commitment to the rollout of a national, weekly, kerbside collections of food waste, which were due to start in the rest of England in 2026 and Nottinghamshire in 2027. Nottinghamshire was granted more time as a result of the long-term contractual arrangements between the County and Veolia over waste and recycling disposal.
- 1.12 Prior to the election NSDC, like many other Councils, received a capital allocation from DEFRA to plan for the purchase of equipment needed for the rollout, including a significant number of dedicated food waste vehicles. At the present time, NSDC has challenged that allocation as we believe it understates the true costs we would face and we await the outcome. Furthermore, with a relatively recent change in Government, we've yet to hear the detail on whether the new administration will continue with the proposals that have been laid out in statute, but commitment was given to improving recycling services through the recent budget. What is clear, however, is that unless the current requirements are changed, NSDC will have to deliver a kerbside, food waste

collection service, through a further, significant expansion in vehicles. The previous Government also made clear that it would not be funding new depots or investments to depots to facilitate a new food waste service and no view to the contrary has yet been expressed by the new Government.

- 1.13 Given the context above, officers have been working with consultants to identify if, and how, all the above could be accommodated on the Brunel Drive and Farrar Close sites. This analysis has produced a short and medium development plan to enable the Council to meet the national policy context it is operating in and aspirations set out by residents and contained within the Community Plan. It does so whilst maintaining operational efficiency, taking advantage over recent changes in the Council's structure and with a view to minimising investment costs and protecting revenue streams.

2.0 Proposals/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 **Appendix 1** gives a detailed analysis of the Brunel Drive site and Farrar Close and their current make-up. The analysis specifically looked at trying to accommodate all the Council's current and future needs from the site – a permanent, glass bulking facility, ten new food waste vehicles, new staff vehicles and better visitor access into the museum store.
- 2.2 The appended analysis identified four potential Master Plan options which would be accommodated in three phases. Options 1 and 2 were discounted from the outset.

Option 3

- 2.3 Phase 1 would include works to allow the relocation of refuse trucks to enable the construction of the glass bulking facility. This would require extensive civils works (detailed in the Appendix) and has an associated cost plan of £615,790.
- 2.4 Phase 2 would include works to allow the construction of a glass bulking facility which would necessitate a requirement for extensive environmental additions given its proximity to commercial and residential properties. The forecasted cost plan for this phase is £1,730,663.
- 2.5 Finally, Phase 3 would focus on works to enable improved visitor access to the museum store. The forecasted cost plan for this element is £609,473.
- 2.6 As such, the total cost of this option to host all the Council's requirements on a single site is £2,955,926, not including fees, inflation and contingency. Notwithstanding the very significant capital costs of this option, the officer team would still have concerns in relation to vehicle movements on site, as well as the ability to obtain an EA permit and any associated planning permission. This is an option that as well as being financially significant, is not likely to be practically deliverable.
- 2.7 As such, a preferred solution has been identified which would retain the glass bulking facility at the lorry park, whilst undertaking a more cost-effective package of works at the Brunel and Farrar Close sites, to enable the Council to meet its future needs and aspirations within the community plan. This option would focus on better utilisation of the existing spaces and opportunities to refocus elements of the former housing

operations that are now surplus to requirements. It also proposes a phased approach based upon a critical path of operational requirements, with a cost plan for each phase.

Option 4 Brunel Drive Development Plan

Phase 1 – 2024/25

- 2.8 The first phase of the critical path is to apply to remove Condition 9 of the existing permission, which restricts the operation and requires the facility to be removed by 30 November 2026. The successful determination of the application will mean the facility is sited on the Lorry Park permanently. Members will be aware that plans to move the Lorry Park to an alternative location have so far proved financially unviable even with grant funding. As such, those plans are not being progressed. The inclusion of the glass bulking facility at the site, with the associated income that it generates has, in effect, only increased the financial challenge that would be faced.
- 2.9 Additionally, when granting the temporary permission of three years, the service had not yet commenced, and some planning committee members were concerned not to detrimentally worsen the quality of life for residents living close to the existing lorry park. The service started in April and, to date, there have been no complaints arising from the bulking site on the Lorry Park
- 2.10 It is therefore proposed that an additional £5,500 is allocated for professional fees, to enable submission of discharge of condition 9 of the existing planning permission.

Phase 2 - 25/26

- 2.11 The second phase would focus on the demolition of the offices previously occupied by housing services and other enabling works, to accommodate vehicle requirements for a rollout of a kerbside food waste collection service in 2026/27, as is currently set out in statute. The actual physical works would need to be put into a specification and delivered in 2025/26 to enable a food waste fleet to be accommodated in the following year. This phase of work has been forecasted at £469,490, with an additional requirement of £89,510 contingency inflation and £140,000 in professional fees. This phase at a total of £669,000 would have to be built into next year's capital budget.

Phase 3 – no sooner than 26/27 and subject to separate decision

- 2.12 Finally, phase three would afford safer and improved access to the resource centre and would be made available should there be changes to the current housing stores. This is a phase that would be subject to a separate project to review the housing repairs service model and location. It is also timed to coincide with the practical completion of the Castle Gatehouse project, given the complexity and significance of this project with colleagues in Heritage and Culture being focussed on its successful delivery. A phase three would therefore commence no sooner than 2026/27. Whilst this phase would be subject to a further decision point, the current estimated cost is £642,869, with an additional requirement of £122,131 contingency, Inflation and £191,000 in professional fees. This phase at a total of £956,000 would have to be built into the Capital budget in 2026/27 with a view to reviewing the timescales during phase 2.

3.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN24-25/2402)

- 4.1 Option 3 described at paragraph 2.1 to 2.6 at a cost today of £2,955,926 would cost in total c£4m to deliver over the proposed phasing. This is not the preferred option.
- 4.2 Phase 1 seeks to discharge a condition on the existing planning permission for the glass recycling transfer station at the Lorry Park, which will involve some additional surveys and professional fees at a cost of £5,500. This is a revenue budget requirement to progress this, which can be funded from the Corporate Contingency budget.
- 4.3 The preferred option described at 2.8 onwards has been costed at today's prices and without contingency at £1,112,359. Assuming inflationary increases of 5% in 25/26 and 3% in 26/27, contingency at 10% and professional fees being 25% of the total cost, the assumed cost increases are shown in the table below.

	Phase 1 2025/26 £	Phase 2 2026/27 £	Total £
Current Construction Costs	469,490	642,869	1,112,359
Inflation	38,510	52,131	90,641
Contingency	51,000	70,000	121,000
Updated Construction Total	559,000	765,000	1,324,000
Professional Fees	140,000	191,000	331,000
Total Budget Required	669,000	956,000	1,655,000

- 4.4 The financing of the scheme, at this point will be assumed worst case scenario as borrowing. Where possible this will be reduced with Capital Receipts or the Capital Reserve to reduce the impact on the General Fund.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Interest on borrowing	26,562	60,022	60,022
Minimum Revenue Provision	0	13,980	33,100
Total Impact on Revenue	26,562	74,002	74,002

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.