



Rugeley Town Council

Rose Theatre and Community Hall
Taylors Lane
Rugeley
Staffordshire
WS15 2AA

Tel: 01889 574074

Our Ref: RTC.08.17

8th September 2017

Glenn Watson
Planning and Economic Development Services Manager
Cannock Chase Council
Civic Centre
Beecroft Road
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 1BG

Dear Mr Watson

Rugeley Power Station Development Brief – Consultation Document

Further to your presentation on 30th August 2017, Rugeley Town Council considered their responses and have asked me to make the following points which refer directly to the above Supplementary Planning Document. Rugeley Town Council understands that the demolition and clearance of the site will take between 3 – 4 years. In addition to this will be the need for remediation of the site to clear it of contaminants and pollutants. This remediation could be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion depending on the development phasing of the site. However, no work can take place until the current owners sell their business to a new owner willing to undertake the work.

- This situation is not ideal as the planning permissions will be piecemeal and there is concern that the flow and continuity between developments may be lost. This is of further concern as the site straddles three political boundaries (Armitage and Handsacre Parish Council; Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council; Rugeley Town Council). Each lead council (Cannock Chase and Lichfield) has a different approach to planning interpretation and Rugeley Town Council are keen to see agreement on the variances covering the whole site before development is agreed e.g. the ratio of affordable housing differs between CCDC and LDC and Rugeley Town Council would prefer to see an agreed average rate set for the whole development
- Cannock Chase Local Plan is ending in 2028 and Lichfield Local Plan ends in 2029. Given the timescale before any building work can take place, it is likely that the development will take place in the new local plan term rather than the current plan life. Rugeley Town Council are concerned that proposed regeneration, (redevelopment of Rugeley bus station and markets), due to take place in the current local plan life time may be





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delayed. Rugeley Town Council is seeking assurances that the regeneration of the town centre will continue without delay. It is also important that any planning document consider the future size and needs of the town post development of the power station in order to make meaningful comments on the redevelopment of the market hall and bus station.

- There has been much focus on the Community Infrastructure Levy and ongoing Council Tax that will stem from the new development. The beneficiaries of this funding will be the Brereton and Ravenhill PC, Armitage and Handsacre PC, Cannock Chase DC and Lichfield DC. It is clear that Rugeley Town, which will be the economic focus for the housing developments, will not benefit from this income. This is a great concern for Rugeley Town Council. It may be that this funding is the only opportunity Rugeley Town Council has to secure funding to assist with infrastructure links between the new development and town.
- During the presentation the district councils expressed their disappointment that the leisure facilities on the current site are already closed in preparation of possible sale and redevelopment of the site despite this being some time away. The SPD identifies the desire to have replacement leisure facilities on the site. Councillors wish to bring to the district councils attention that whilst some local development of leisure / open space would be appropriate, there is an existing leisure centre and swimming pool which may benefit from improvements / expansion which is more centrally placed and serves the whole town rather than just the new housing.
- The development of green space is an important part of new development. The Town Council currently support and promote the idea of an Urban Orchard and Councillors are looking to ensure that future planning briefs / guidance consider stressing that new tree planting include an element of fruit trees throughout the site.
- Rugeley has a tight political boundary around it which prevents large areas of new housing being added. The Town Council are seeking reassurance that the housing allocation for Rugeley town is absorbed within the power station development housing development.
- There is little guidance for economic development on the site – be it commercial/retail or business. Councillors are seeking assurances that the development not detract from town centre development. It is important to the vitality of Rugeley Town Centre that the key retail development





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remains in the town centre rather than being dispersed through the new housing area.

- The access routes for pedestrians / cycles to and from the new housing to the town centre need to be carefully considered to promote use. Desire lines of pedestrian traffic should be considered and pathways created to be open and inviting to encourage use. Equally when car journeys are made to the town centre, parking availability and additional opportunities from the redevelopment of Market Hall and the bus station should be considered. With housing close to the river and canal, this brings an additional opportunity for tourism promotion.
- At present, tourism is very much on the back foot in Rugeley. The proximity of the town to the canal and the river provides a great opportunity for boaters / walkers / cyclists to stop off in the town. The Town Council is keen to see the SPD consider physical links from the waterways into the town centre with financial support for way marking / information signage / tourism promotion.
- There is concern that the new housing development essentially may create a 'dormitory suburb' of Rugeley rather than a vibrant expansion of the town. It is important that the new development looks to Rugeley for its economic / business / employment and educational needs rather than to more distant urban areas.
- The SPD identifies the need for a new primary school on the site to support the new development. The new development will bring people of all ages though and this will have an effect on the local secondary school (The Hart School) which will be fed by the primary school. There are concerns that the school may not be of a sufficient size in its existing form to house additional classes in each year group through the school. Consideration should be given to development of the Hart School.
- There are already on going issues with the lack of driver facilities and lorry parking for the Amazon warehouse. It may be suggested that purpose built hard standing be created to service this need.
- Concerns have been voiced about the overall development on a flood plain with a high water table level. Assurances are sought that development on the site would not be affected by flooding of the river and the raised water table. The flood relief works at Hagley Fields are protection from the west rather than the east.





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- Since the redevelopment of the Horse Fair road system, congestion is a key issue through the town. Assurances would need to be given that traffic analysis was undertaken to prepare the arterial roads for the increase in traffic – not just from the housing but to accommodate all the site clearance and development traffic ahead of residents moving in.

Since writing the above, the Town Council have learnt of the possible use of the power station site as a storage compound up to 2029. This is of great concern to the Town Council and the people of Rugeley. Over the past 12 – 18 months, there has been a steady increase in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in and around Rugeley and Brereton. The town centre in Rugeley is seeing a decline in footfall as more shop units are closing. The economic and learning opportunities available for post 16 year olds in Rugeley are also limited. There are no seats of higher or further education (except for Sixth Form at Hart School). The young adults are required to attend Stafford, Cannock or Lichfield. Support for young adults to readily access academic opportunities and employment opportunities could be further developed.

As an aside to the above consultation feedback, Councillors have also asked that information is made clear concerning the possible redrawing of the political boundaries for Rugeley Town Centre and Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council. The additional housing development in the neighbouring parish will have an impact on the electoral numbers. Please can you advise if this would affect the parish boundaries?

Yours sincerely

Hilary Goodreid
Locum Town Clerk
Rugeley Town Council

