

Frequently Asked Questions on LRIE Project Refresh

30 May 2022

Q1 What is the LRIE Project Refresh?

The LRIE Project Refresh sets out the next stages for delivering regeneration on the council-owned London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) on the outskirts of Newbury Town Centre. The delivery strategy set out in the report supersedes the development brief drawn up by consultants, Avison Young, and approved by Executive in November 2020. It outlines a fresh approach for the site which focuses on job creation, attracting investment to Newbury and achieving carbon neutrality.

Q2 How has the council's approach changed?

The 2020 development brief set out development options for the estate based on a mixture of commercial and residential uses. The delivery strategy now includes:

- A move away from the residential-led approach ;
- A focus on attracting investment in employment space and jobs that aligns with carbon net zero ambitions;
- A commitment to working in partnership with leaseholders and potential partners to grow current LRIE businesses in a sustainable way and encourage new businesses;
- A sustainable design-led approach to place-making to create an appealing destination for businesses that includes seeking external funding for public realm improvements.

Q3 What led to this change in approach?

Much has changed since the previous development brief was drawn up, and the LRIE redevelopment project needs to be ready to grasp opportunities when they arise. During 2021 and early 2022, the LRIE consultant team delivered a high-level Environmental Report to explore concerns raised during an earlier public consultation and carried out soft market testing with potential development partners.

At the same time, we have been reviewing the LRIE project against the district's ambitions to be carbon neutral by 2030 and fundamental changes in the local, national and global economies as they transition to meet Carbon Net Zero targets and post-Brexit trading conditions, deal with the impact of the Covid pandemic and – most recently – feel the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine

Q4 If the refreshed approach is approved, what happens next?

If the delivery strategy for LRIE is approved by the Council's Executive, then within the next 12 months, local businesses, employees and residents can expect to see:

- Work underway on place-making including environmental improvements and flood risk mitigation work;
- One or more planning applications submitted for the former depot site;
- Negotiations underway with leaseholders to provide the certainty needed to stimulate private sector investment;
- LRIE renamed following a schools competition.

Longer term objectives for the site, expected to be achieved by 2030 include:

- Former depot and playing field sites redeveloped for employment use;
- At least £250,000 private sector investment in LRIE by existing businesses;
- 30% increase in Council income from rent and rates on the former depot and playing field sites, for investing in vital public services to benefit residents;
- 300+ existing jobs safeguarded and at least 200 new jobs created;
- Carbon neutrality in line with our carbon net zero ambitions.

Q5 What are the council's plans for the playing field site?

Redevelopment of the playing field provides the Council and potential development partners with the flexibility to expand and/or relocate existing businesses, attract more businesses to the area and to provide place-making elements including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and biodiversity. It is particularly important because the playing field is one of only two land parcels on the site currently within the Council's direct control – the rest of the site is leased and is home to around 36 businesses. Retaining the playing field in recreational use would limit LRIE's potential to achieve economic regeneration, investment in green growth, more and better quality jobs and making a positive contribution to carbon neutrality.

The council remains committed to the provision of playing pitches for the benefit of the local community, as set out in our Playing Pitch Strategy. You can find out more about our plans on our website at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/manorparkpitch> and <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/39457/Newbury-Sports-Hub>.

Q6 Will there be a further opportunity for interested parties and the public to comment on issues in connection with the LRIE site?

Yes. Redevelopment on the LRIE site will require planning permission and the first planning applications are expected by mid 2023. Notice of planning applications will be published in site notices and in appropriate media such as the Newbury Weekly News. Interested parties and members of the public can go on-line at the [WBC Planning Portal](#), view the applications and submit comments.

Q7 How will the council ensure that local people are informed about progress?

We are developing a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that project milestones are celebrated and progress – including forthcoming planning applications - is shared quickly and effectively with stakeholders. This includes press and media statements, updates on our social media channels and in residents' newsletters and the publication of key reports and documents on our dedicated website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>.

Q8 How can I be kept informed or get involved?

You can check out our dedicated website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>, where we publish regular updates. You can also sign up via our website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/newsletters> to receive our residents' newsletter by email direct to your inbox.