

## BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader Breckland Council

**To:** Cabinet 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Author:** Anna Graves, Chief Executive

**Subject:** Abbey Estate: Joint Working with Flagship Group

**Purpose:** Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Flagship Group, Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council

### **Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That Cabinet approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Flagship Group, Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Breckland Council's strategic vision is 'Breckland: A place where people and business can thrive', with the aim of ensuring Breckland remains a place that people choose to live, work, visit and enjoy.
- 1.2 We have been approached by Flagship Group, who own some 670 homes on the Abbey Estate in Thetford, to work them, Norfolk County Council and most importantly the local community to create meaningful change on the Abbey Estate. In our initial discussions we have agreed that this work must be led by the needs and aspirations of the local community. It is my belief that if we are able to agree improvements with all the parties, this will align very closely with the outcomes we are looking for and I am seeking Cabinet endorsement for this aspiration.
- 1.3 The Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to underpin this collaboration and it sets out the basis on which the three parties will work together.
- 1.4 The Abbey Estate was built in the late 1960's to provide homes for people moving from London under the town expansion scheme. The design of the estate lacks recreational facilities and in places creates opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Equally, the Abbey Estate has a strong sense of community and there is a passion for the area amongst residents. The Abbey Estate provides homes for 1,178 households and 670 of the homes are owned and managed by Flagship Group.

### **2.0 OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Approve the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 2.2 Do not approve the proposal, as Norfolk County Council and Flagship Group could develop the scheme between themselves without Breckland. If this route was taken, Breckland Council would remain a statutory consultee on any planning application.
- 2.3 Do nothing.

### 3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 The proposal is considered to align closely with Breckland Council's strategic vision and priorities for the five years 2019 – 2023 as agreed in our corporate plan. The rationale behind the proposal is to improve the physical, environmental and community elements of the estate in a manner agreed with the local community.

### 4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

4.1 The parties want to create meaningful change and enhance the Estate to achieve the following key objectives:

- Create places where people want to live.
- Develop thriving communities.
- Create safe, inclusive environments.
- Positively affect the environment to achieve improvements to deprivation indices.
- Actively promote Thetford as a destination of choice.
- Encourage economic investment and growth in Greater Thetford – enhancing opportunities for employment and prosperity

### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

#### 5.1 Constitution & Legal

5.1.1 The proposal is an executive decision under the Council's Constitution. It will publicly signal Breckland Council's intention to work with the other bodies and the local community. It does not prejudice the outcome or the feasibility of the work.

5.1.2 If the proposal is accepted, Breckland, Flagship Group and the County Council will work together, with the local community, to develop a shared vision for the estate. The public bodies will commit to providing strategic leadership and influence and seek to align the work with other activity in the Thetford area.

5.1.3 This Memorandum of Understanding will not be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights will arise between the parties. Nevertheless, the Memorandum of Understanding should be seen as a statement of intent and a shared commitment to deliver positive change to the Abbey Estate.

#### 5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 This programme of work fulfils the 'place' focused corporate priority as agreed in the 2019 – 2023 Corporate Plan for Breckland.

#### 5.3 Financial

5.3.1 None Directly from this report

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 No additional staff will be required, however existing staff will engage in the scheme as they would any other development

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 Thetford Priory, Thetford Castle, Thetford Boudica, Thetford Burrell

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 MOU Memorandum of Agreement

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**Background papers:-**

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service / Discretionary Service**

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A Memorandum of Understanding  
Appendix B A Vision for Meaningful Change: The Abbey Estate