



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Meeting Minutes 25.03.25

1. Welcome

2. Apologies

Cllr Qaisar Abbas.

3. Agree Previous Minutes 28th January 2025

Minutes were agreed.

4. Guest Speakers

Mark Bradbury, Thurrock Council

The chair introduced Mark Bradbury whilst commenting that community engagement is paramount for the regeneration project to work.

Mark started off with a recap on what had been said at previous meetings; and that the council is currently working in partnership with ECF (English Cities Fund), which is a group comprising Homes England (50%), Legal & General (25%), Muse (25%).

Muse started work on a business plan in November, with an expected completion date of May 2025, to establish how much of the previous plan is now relevant, viable and deliverable before the plan is put before cabinet in the summer for a decision on the way forward and whether to partner with Muse.

The business plan does not go into detail but there are some proposed changes to the scheme, the current focus being on agreeing high level principles and costly items.

The half-time report is looking carefully at 3-4 areas of development, and the next stage will be to seek funders.

Dialogue is ongoing with Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency which funds new affordable housing, and who had previously agreed some funding.

Muse (Phil West, James Stockdale, Duncan Cumberland)

Muse deals with urban regeneration focusing on brown field sites, is committed to the project, wants to keep to the vision and is focussed on sustainability.

Grimshaw Architects (Kirsten Lees, Louise Jarvis, Dimitra Christodoulou)

Grimshaw is looking at placemaking to ensure the town centre works, there is connectivity, and sustainable growth.

The plan is to create different areas with different characters and respond to landscape context e.g. the marshes and the SSSI; and to investigate what type of homes are currently needed and where they will be positioned within the scheme.

Changes being considered:

1. London Road Alignment

The proposed new road over the railway incurs high infrastructure costs, creates a problematic interface with the town centre as well as severing the town centre from the waterfront.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

The idea is to remove the closeness of the visual impact of the new road, move the station to within the town centre, have the new road traverse around the rear of the town centre, create pedestrianised links from the four terraces east of the level crossing to the town centre and create low density residential dwellings on the north side of London Road east of the level crossing.

Grimshaw's key objective is to connect the town centre to the riverfront through a balance of mix of scale and open space proportionate to the development, and provide community facilities such as a health centre, dentist, nursery; to have a range of open spaces with different typologies and from the station's location to create no more than a 10 minute walk across the entirety of the development.

2. Town Centre

The two squares were said to be oversized public space, the proposed station building was described as a visual barrier and that there was an unresolved interface to Phase 1A.

Concern was raised over reducing the size of the squares as they had been designed with the idea of pop up uses, café seating, and to create an open feel; that there should be larger green spaces instead of small areas and that as the school will have its own outdoor space much of the green space should not be placed adjacent to the school as had been suggested this evening.

The response was that one would get lost in the size of the currently proposed squares, that green spaces would be dotted about and that Grimshaw's will work with the council regarding open spaces.

3. Film Studios

This area amounting to 135,000 sqm is under review and it is proposed this space be used in a different way.

It was asked if the intention is for a mix of housing and employment use instead, and if there is to be light industry that flexibility is built in.

Mark Bradbury responded that the area already has plenty of large warehouses and the council were not looking at including large warehouses within the regeneration scheme.

4. Under Utilised Site Areas Within Quarry

5. New Primary School

Its location is being reviewed with the idea of bringing it closer to the town centre.

6. Building Ratios

Currently there is a high apartment to houses ratio (houses 23%). Due to current market needs consideration is being given to increasing the housing ratio.

From The Floor

It was asked why the site of the regeneration did not include the Garrison estate and concern was expressed over the viability of the estate's shops through the creation of a new town centre.

Cllr Watson responded that the regeneration scheme can only be applied on the designated footprint and rather than putting local shops out of business the proposed plans should stop



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

any monopoly because with the planned new road/bridge the town centre will be within walking distance of the estate.

Concerns were expressed about increasing population numbers impacting on already poor local facilities, and how in the past High House was promoted as bringing in job prospects, life, and community adhesion, but in reality it was viewed as segregation by affordability. Cllr Watson replied that you cannot create community without infrastructure, and of the lack of intention to create a gated community.

The need to ensure and maintain sufficient infrastructure was voiced as a new town centre is likely to attract many people to the area, particularly with the decline in Grays. It was said there will be a good proportion of affordable housing and open spaces for cafes etc. for people to utilise.

Mark Bradbury said although this is being called a town centre it is not strictly speaking a town centre; and that from the outset both quality and legacy will be looked at and an estate management strategy employed to avoid the need for council expenditure.

Infrastructure And Funding

The plan is to start with infrastructure, commencing with the heavier infrastructure, and Paul Moore from Watermans is working with C2C.

The site has been put forward to government as an accelerated site; government is showing keen interest; government funding will be sought very early in the process.

A large proportion of land is already in council ownership, giving the project a base from which to start despite planning consent changes being required.

Infrastructure subsidy monies are available but require a strong business case, including stewardship and a long term vision that will stand the test of time.

The council intends working with local people to encourage local businesses on a low cost basis as opposed to chain stores, however this will depend upon the final partnership.

5. Matters Arising and Updates

Cllr Abbas

A van went down the bank of Jarrah Cottages today due to a broken/damaged manhole cover and has been reported to the relevant teams; fly tipped mattresses on the Mardyke estate have been removed and the council is gathering evidence against a potential offender; rubbish and noise around the Amazon truck parking site has been reported to both the council and site operator; cycle shelter on Dartford-Thurrock crossing has been relocated to near 859 London Road, RM20 3AT; Cllr Abbas organised the 6th Annual International Women's Day Conference in March; Cllr Abbas paid tribute to Alan Gosling who passed away in February.

Cllrs Watson and Green

Work has included getting trees cut down; grass cutting; investigating prolific fly tipping in bins; Mulberry Drive complex roof fixed, and a new carpet installed; Hub Pantry is now open on Saturdays. The councillors have met with Highways to discuss erection of a buffer by Jarrah due to the two recent accidents; the councillors are working with Housing concerning the rat infestation on the Garrison estate; they have met with the community group at High House – if you want to become involved with this group please contact the forum's chair; and are supporting the Hub's VE Day street party event.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

The councillors confirmed they have raised resident concerns with Planning about the VOSA site and the retrospect planning application.

Cllr Watson confirmed she had spoken with the Gosling family who decided to have a private funeral and a memorial service for Alan.

The funeral has already taken place, and the memorial service will be in May.

A question was asked if there could be a plaque to Alan to which the response was that there is a recently unveiled plaque in the Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre.

Police

There is now some funding for the community side of policing so rather than losing PCSOs it is hoped they will be retained and for there to be more officers on the streets.

Nuisance bikes at South Ockendon were mentioned and the police reported that the problems at Davey Down are occurring on private land rather than public land, meaning they cannot act.

Heavy use of the ANPR system is employed around vehicle crime.

It was felt more 'coffee with cops' events were needed to build trust, and it was suggested they could be held at the Hub, the Pantry or at Mulberry Drive.

The officers confirmed they have a special team who work with schools throughout the borough and are involved with Harris Academy Riverside.

6. AOB

Feedback is being sought on the emergency services training that took place at Esso and the Forum hopes to have a speaker come to talk about emergency services' plans for this area. The chair and vice-chair attended a 'Regeneration of Thurrock' meeting which turned out to be more of a sales pitch for developers.

Local forums have now gained recognition so in future will be able to input as to how they would like to see S106 monies spent and the details of an agreement.

Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre has Gurkha events on 20th April and 17th August.

Vineyard Way properties have all been sold with some now being inhabited but Sanctuary Housing are not carrying on with the promised works in this area.

The Lower Thames Crossing received government go ahead today.

The daffodils on the boat on Stonehouse Roundabout are providing a good display.

VE Day 80th anniversary, 8th May. If you would like to help by volunteering, please contact the forum chair/vice-chair.

There is an online pharmaceutical needs assessment survey until 7th April should you wish to take part - consult.thurrock.gov.uk/pna-2025

7. Next Meeting

Tuesday 27th May 2025, 7.30pm at St Stephen's Church Hall.

Speaker - Sanctuary Housing.