

## **BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan**

**Report of the Executive  
Director Core Services**

### **Provision of Statutory Services to the Oughtibridge Valley Development**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To put arrangements in place to ensure that all residents of this development receive high quality and consistent statutory services as they move into this development pending a boundary review.
- 1.2 To agree to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to ask them to undertake a Principal Area Boundary Review specifically limited to the part of the boundary between Sheffield City Council and Barnsley MBC that passes through this development. This would enable the entirety of the development to move into the Sheffield City Council area so that Barnsley would no longer have any statutory responsibility for the provision of services to this area.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That a Service Level Agreement is reached with Sheffield City Council to provide services to this development.
- 2.2 That the council writes to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to request a Principal Area Boundary Review once the development is complete.

#### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 Outline planning applications for residential housing on the site that formerly housed Oughtibridge Mill were submitted jointly to both Sheffield City Council (SCC) and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) in 2016, with a reserved matters application setting out detailed plans for 290 new dwellings submitted to SCC at the start of September 2019 and due for determination by early to mid-December. A map of the development and surrounding area is appended.
- 3.2 A letter was received by BMBC and SCC from Bradfield Parish Council in March 2019, setting out a number of issues that the parish council had identified in relation to service delivery for the new properties once built. In essence, the core concern is that the new development is located within Barnsley, but it has no road connection to the rest of Barnsley without a long detour through Sheffield, which results in a number of potential issues detailed in the table below.

- 3.3 On receipt of the letter from the parish council, officers from BMBC and SCC began working together to fully understand the problem and determine what options might be available to mitigate some of the issues that arise from what is an unusual issue, particularly given the size of the development.
- 3.4 The site crosses the boundary between Sheffield and Barnsley, with a total of 290 dwellings proposed across the whole site, with a majority expected to be on the Barnsley side of the boundary.
- 3.5 Development proposals are for all properties to be connected to the highway network through Sheffield, with anyone wanting to reach the development from Barnsley having to travel through Sheffield to do so.
- 3.6 There is a reasonable expectation that residents will seek to access services in Sheffield, and that delivery of services by SCC may well be the most logistically simple approach (and therefore the most cost effective use of public funds).
- 3.7 If SCC were to accept responsibility for delivery of some or all services to properties on the BMBC side of the boundary, there are questions of democratic representation and accountability to resolve, namely that the area would be represented by Barnsley councillors who would have very limited influence over the delivery of council services to the development.
- 3.8 Properties on the Barnsley side of the border would pay council tax to Barnsley, but may predominantly use services provided by Sheffield.
- 3.9 The new properties will form part of the natural community around Oughtibridge and Wharnccliffe Side, which is covered by Bradfield Parish Council. The development also crosses the boundary between Bradfield and Wortley Civil Parishes, which are currently co-terminous with the LA boundaries. Properties on the Barnsley side of the boundary will not be subject to the Bradfield Parish precept but could be reasonably expected to access services provided by the Parish Council. For example, Bradfield Parish Council currently pays for the maintenance of the local park. BMBC had planned to undertake a Community Governance Review with the cooperation of Wortley Parish Council to remove the area of this development from the Wortley PC area prior to any houses being completed so they would not be liable for the Wortley PC precept.
- 3.10 In assessing key issues, officers have worked with a services to assess which services will experience the most challenges in providing their service to this development. These are:
- Highways maintenance and street-scene
  - Waste collection and disposal
  - Schools and education
  - Primary care services
- 3.11 Legal agreements are in place already for SCC to adopt the bridge being built to connect the proposed development to Langsett Road North, and for SCC to provide school places for the development should additional capacity be

required, with capital contributions agreed with the developer to support this. This reflects an assumption that the impact of service demand will be felt in SCC, as acknowledged in BMBC's Local Plan. Discussions are also ongoing as to whether SCC adopts the whole road network for the estate, given access to the development will only be through Sheffield.

- 3.12 There is agreement that for some services, service delivery will happen in, or is best undertaken in, Sheffield. In the case of primary care services it is accepted that residents of the proposed development are overwhelmingly likely to want to register with Oughtibridge GP Surgery; demand for library services is likely to be felt in one of the several Sheffield libraries that are closer than the nearest BMBC library; and waste collection will be logistically simpler for Sheffield, given it will have crews in the Sheffield part of the development already.
- 3.13 In addition to impacts on service delivery, there are other identified implications for BMBC and SCC, in relation to National Housing Targets, New Homes Bonus and council tax income. As noted above, BMBC have already agreed through our published Local Plan that because service demand from the development will be felt in Sheffield, the additional houses within the BMBC boundary will count towards SCC's housing target. This does not apply to New Homes Bonus or to Council tax income, which are received by the host authority.

#### **4. Proposal and justification**

- 4.1 Given that Sheffield City Council already provide statutory services to all the houses in the vicinity of this development and that there are significant logistical challenges to BMBC of providing services, in particular waste disposal and highway maintenance, it would be best for the residents of this new development if SCC provided these services.
- 4.2 Due to the complexities caused by residents paying council tax to BMBC and being represented by BMBC ward members but receiving services from SCC it would make the most sense for the entirety of this development to move into the SCC area.
- 4.3 The legal vehicle to do this is a Principal Area Boundary Review carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This review would take around 15 months. It is proposed that the council should write to the commission and ask them to undertake a review under the following conditions:
- 1) That the review only consider the area of this development and not the wider borough
  - 2) That the review not be concluded until after all houses in the development are completed so that BMBC receives the New Homes Bonus for the properties.
  - 3) That there are no wider implications for BMBC's ward boundaries as no currently occupied houses will be moving between Local Authority Areas.

4.4 As houses will be completed and occupied in advance of the PABR, that BMBC reaches a Service Level Agreement with Sheffield City Council to provide all statutory services to all houses in the development pending the completion of this review at which point SCC will be responsible for the services in perpetuity.

**5. Implications for local people / service users**

5.1 Only the future residents of this development are affected by this proposal. These residents would receive security as their services would always be carried out by the same authority to the same standard.

**6. Financial implications**

6.1 Agreement would have to be reached between SCC and BMBC on the cost of the provision of services pending the completion of the boundary review under the SLA.

6.2 It is likely that the residents of these houses will be paying full council tax and that the cost of these services will be met through the council tax received by these properties once they are occupied.

**7. Employee implications**

7.1 None

**8. Communications implications**

8.1 None

**9. Consultations**

9.1 None

**10. Appendices**

10.1 A map of the affected area is listed in Appendix 1

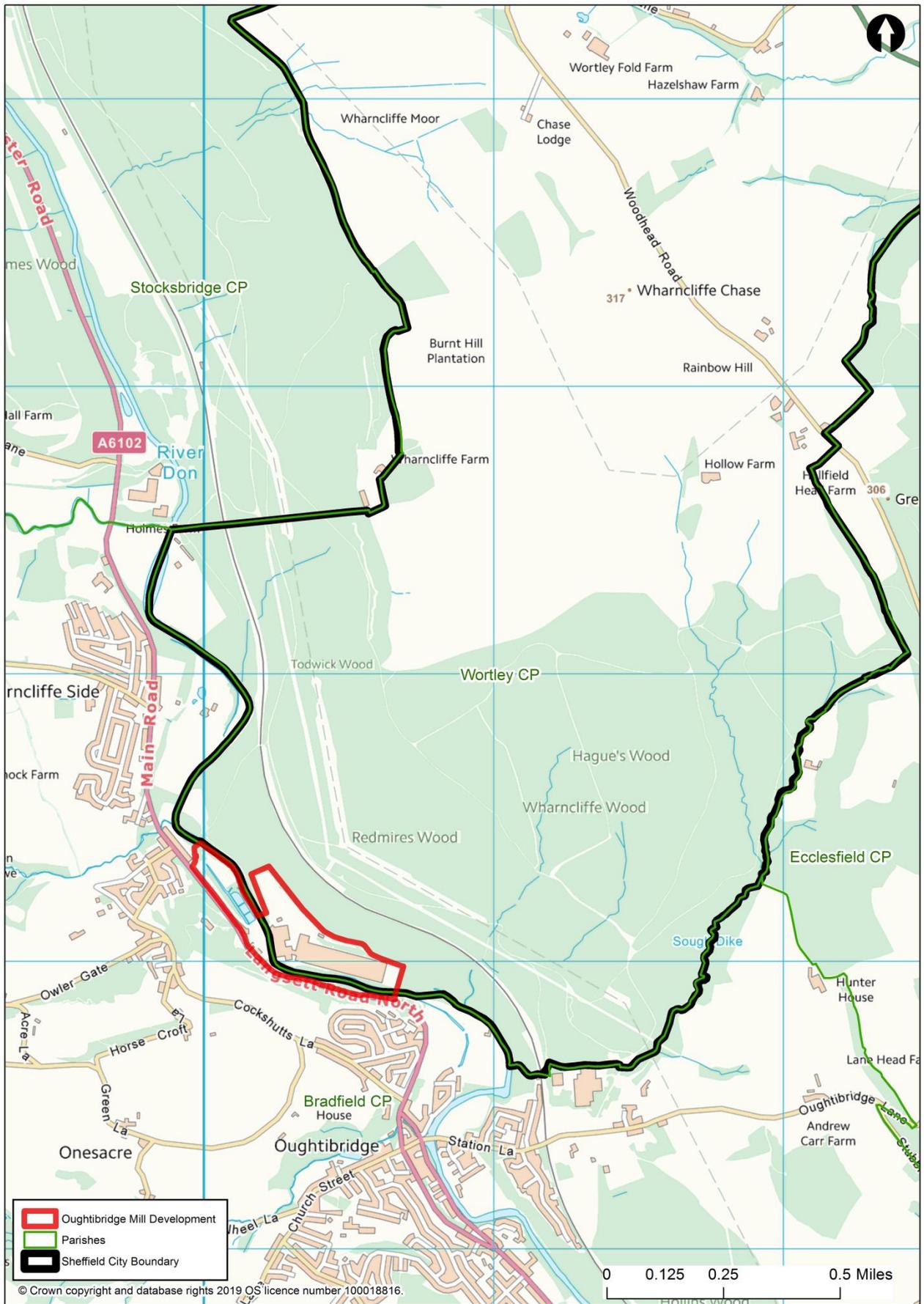
10.2 A map of the wider area of the development is listed in Appendix 2.

**11. Background papers**

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

**Officer Contact:** A.C. Frosdick **Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020

# Appendix 1 – Map of development and surrounding area





## **Appendix 2 – Wider area context**

